

BATTLEGROUND by Paul Gasser, Elder, Etz Chayim-Tree of Life Messianic Congregation, Las Cruces, NM, and a graduate student in JSI University.

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. (Deut. 6:4 ESV)

The Hebrew word for hear is “shema”. The Hebrew understanding of this great word is to “hear, listen and obey.” We most often fail to understand the depth of this word. Or maybe we just choose not to bring in the full understanding because it would make our life “more difficult” if we did. The motive in your heart will tell you where you currently stand with God.

To hear: Strong’s H8085 hear (785x), hearken (196x), obey (81x). To hear something has the understanding of to perceive with the ear the sound made by someone or something. There does not necessarily have to be any understanding or any attention given to the sound. Just the simple fact of acknowledgement of the sound. Is this what level God wants us to hear from His Word? Of course not. Yet we need to first perceive that God is talking to us.

To listen: To listen to something is a much greater level of comprehension. Unlike hear, listen has the understanding of to give one's attention to a sound. We must focus our attention to the Words God speaks. This is an action, not a desire. With that focus, we begin to learn the importance of what is being said and how we are to apply it to our lives. Giving our attention to something is not just a fleeting moment either. It takes time to listen. Not just during the time something is said, but after it has been said in order to fully understand. Yet, does God want us at this level as well? No. He wants us to be even greater when it comes to His Word.

To obey: Comply with the command, direction, or request of (a person or a law); submit to the authority of. Carry out a command or instruction. Behave in accordance with a general principle, natural law, expected moral law, etc. God’s Torah gives us 613 commandments, or ‘laws’ He wants us to follow. Some are positive commands “You shall”. Some are negative commands “You shall not”. The problem with us is we try to figure out which commands we “need to follow” and which ones we can ‘get away with not following’ by justification, reasoning it out of it’s importance, not knowing how to do it 100% correctly, or just plain picking and choosing (like getting a meal at Golden Corral or Furr’s).

You shall walk in all the way that the LORD your God has commanded you, that you may live, and that it may go well with you, and that you may live long in the land that you shall possess. (Deut. 5:33 ESV)

Here we see we are to walk in all of God’s teachings and instructions. Walking in this way means to “DO” them...not try to figure out a way not to. Only when you do Torah, does a person finally understand the instructions in a much deeper, more meaningful way. Then you know why God asks us to live that way and why it brings life instead of death. When we choose not to follow them for whatever reason, we miss out on so

much and we then walk in curses and death. By not following Torah, you are also giving the adversary legal right to torment you. Is that worth the short lived “benefit” of the sin? That is your battleground. To figure out why you do not want to do Torah.

Shavua Tov!