

ONE TORAH FOR ALL

Zerubbabel ben Emunah
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Hearing His Voice

Walking in the Spirit

The subject of this study is perhaps the most important of all subjects, and certainly one of the most pervasive throughout Scripture. Why is it one of the most important, perhaps even the most important? Without the aspect of hearing His Voice, YHWH can and will do nothing in our lives. It is through the hearing and obeying of His Voice, that all His blessings flow to us, including salvation. Without hearing His Voice we cannot and will not be filled with His Spirit. His Voice is the central aspect of what Torah is, as Torah is actually a written record of His commandments given by His Voice. If one attempts to obey the Torah commandments without hearing His Voice, it becomes an exercise in legalism. Obeying His commandments without hearing His Voice is dry and lifeless.

We want to examine this subject carefully and as fully as possible. We will begin by examining the Scriptural history of hearing His Voice. We will also examine some of the hindrances to hearing His Voice. Then we will examine some of the practical aspects of hearing His Voice, such as: "How does one hear His Voice?" "What does His Voice sound like?" "How do we know when it is His Voice, and when it is not His Voice?" We will examine the importance of testing the spirits to make sure that what we are hearing is His Voice and not the voice of some deceiving spirit.

The other aspect of hearing His Voice that impacts us today, is that His Torah states that when we begin to hear and obey His Voice in the latter days, then He will bring us back from our captivity where He has driven us. That one aspect alone should wake us up and get our attention so that we can begin to hear His Voice in order that He will take note of us and bring us back into the land that He promised to our fathers Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'aqov.

In the Beginning

16 And YHWH Elohim commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat

17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it; for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

B'reshit 2:16-17

YHWH spoke this command directly to Adam. Adam knew YHWH's Voice personally and intimately. There was no mistaking that this commandment was from His Creator. This commandment contained both a positive and negative commandment. The positive commandment was that they had permission to eat of every tree in the garden. The negative commandment was that there was only one tree in the garden that they could not eat from, the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

After YHWH Elohim had given this commandment to Adam and Chavah, the devil, that serpent of old, came to Chavah and deceived her into taking of this fruit and eating it, and also giving it to Adam who was with her. After this happened, we find these words recorded in the Scriptural record.

And they heard the Voice of YHWH Elohim walking in the garden in the cool of the day; and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of YHWH Elohim amongst the trees of the garden.

B'reshit [Genesis] 3:8

Please notice that Adam and Chavah heard the Voice of YHWH walking in the garden. (The Voice of YHWH is one of many manifestations of YHWH; this is why I capitalize *His Voice*.) When they heard His Voice walking in the garden, they hid from His Voice. One thing that we need to see in this passage that hinders one's hearing His Voice, is one's own sin. When there is sin present that has not been dealt with through repentance, it obstructs one's hearing of His Voice. This has been true from the beginning and is still true today. Sin gets in the way of our hearing. Sin causes us to turn a deaf ear to YHWH. Sin causes one to hide from the sound of His Voice. This can be done in many ways, but it will often in some way involve having a lot of loud sound; i.e., music, TV, or something, which helps to drown out the sound of His Voice. There are many ways to drown out the sound of His Voice, whether with noise of some kind, or just some kind of business or distraction, none of which will help further one's spiritual life.

When YHWH sent an emissary named Moshe into the court of Pharaoh, Pharaoh responded that he did not have to listen to YHWH's Voice.

1 And afterward Moshe and Aharon came, and said to Pharaoh, "Thus says YHWH, the Elohim of Israel, 'Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.'"

2 And Pharaoh said, "Who is YHWH, that I should shema to His Voice to let Israel go? I know not YHWH, and moreover I will not let Israel go."

Shemot [Exodus] 5:1-2

Pharaoh was not going to listen to or obey YHWH's Voice because he did not know who YHWH was. And because Pharaoh did not know who YHWH was, he was not interested in anything that YHWH had to say, whether it was to him or to anyone else. Pharaoh simply couldn't care less.

From this we learn that a person needs to know who YHWH is, before he will be interested in hearing His Voice, let alone obeying His Voice.

and without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing to Him; for he that comes to Elohim must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that seek after Him.

Ivrim [Hebrews] 11:6

If a person does not know who YHWH is, then how could he be interested in anything He would have to say? He would not. But this is not quite so cut and dried as we will see a little later in this study.

This next incident is quite revealing in the life of Israel as a nation. YHWH has led His people out of Egypt, out of bondage and has led them to the foot of Mount Sinai. Here YHWH tells Moshe to prepare the people, for in three days, on the third day, YHWH will come down upon the mount in the sight of all the people and give them the Torah. So this happens, and as YHWH begins to give His people the Torah, He gets through the first Ten Commandments before the people balk. That is where we pick up the story in this next passage.

18 And all the people perceived the thunders, and the lightnings, and the voice of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled, and stood afar off.

19 And they said to Moshe, "You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not Elohim speak with us, lest we die."

Shemot [Exodus] 20:18-19

The people of Israel witnessed YHWH come down on the mountain and begin speaking to them. As they witnessed this, they became frightened. At that point, the people spoke as one to Moshe and said that they had heard enough. They did not want to hear any more directly from YHWH. They wanted YHWH to speak to Moshe and then Moshe would tell them all that YHWH commanded, but they did not want to hear directly from YHWH any longer.

When I read this and realize what was happening in this passage, it just really saddens me. It greatly saddens me! So from the time of Adam and Chavah to this point in the life of Israel as a nation, not much has changed. People are still in sin and attempting to hide from His Voice. The only way to not live in sin is to be able to hear His Voice and then to obey Him. If we cannot hear His Voice, then we are in very serious trouble.

Please note in this next passage what YHWH says He will do when we do obey His Voice.

to love YHWH your Elohim, to obey His Voice, and to cleave to Him; for He is your life, and the length of your days; that you may dwell in the land which YHWH swore to your fathers, to Avraham, to Yitzchak, and to Ya'aqov, to give them.

Devarim [Deuteronomy] 30:20

It seems that when we begin to hear His Voice and to obey Him, then He is our life. If we are not obeying His Voice, then He is not our life. We cannot have it both ways. If we truly want YHWH to bring us into the land He promised to Avraham and to Yitzchak and to Ya'aqov, then we are going to have to learn to hear and obey His Voice. Otherwise, we just can't get there from here.

Just to make sure that we truly understand the seriousness of hearing and obeying His Voice let us examine this next passage of Scripture.

19 "And it shall be, if you shall forget YHWH your Elohim, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that you shall surely perish.

20 As the nations that YHWH makes to perish before you, so shall you perish; because you would not listen to the Voice of YHWH your Elohim."

Devarim [Deuteronomy] 8:19-20

Please note that the penalty for not hearing and obeying His Voice is death. Now if that doesn't get your attention, then I suggest that you are already dead and may just as well stop reading and go do something else. However, if YHWH does have your full attention now, then our lives depend upon being able to hear and obey His Voice. This is the most serious thing that we can ever set our minds and hearts to do, to hear and obey His Voice! Hearing and obeying His Voice is the summation of the whole counsel of Scripture. Let us look at some passages in which YHWH is telling us the importance of hearing and obeying His Voice.

“And when YHWH sent you from Kadesh-barnea, saying, ‘Go up and possess the land which I have given you;’ then you rebelled against the commandment of YHWH your Elohim, and you believed Him not, nor listened to His Voice.”

Devarim [Deuteronomy] 9:23

In both of the previous two passages the Hebrew word from which “listened” is translated is the word “shema”, which means to hear and obey. YHWH had given our fathers a direct command to go into the land and possess it. They rebelled against His Voice and did not obey. The result was that an entire generation perished in the wilderness because of this hardness of heart in refusing to listen to and obey His Voice.

Here is another passage as well.

“But it shall come to pass, if you will not listen to the Voice of YHWH your Elohim, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes which I command you this day, that all these curses shall come upon you, and overtake you.”

Devarim [Deuteronomy] 28:15

Again, this is the word “shema,” indicating that we are expected to hear and obey His Voice. The remainder of chapter 28 (that is from verse 15 through verse 68) gives great detail of all the curses that YHWH will pour out upon us if we fail to hear and obey His Voice. I would highly recommend stopping here and reading this chapter to get the full impact of just how serious YHWH is about us hearing and obeying His Voice. Let us pull out two more verses from this chapter to see that YHWH is emphasizing that He really does mean it.

“And all these curses shall come upon you, and shall pursue you, and overtake you, till you be destroyed; because you listened not to the Voice of YHWH your Elohim, to keep His commandments and His statutes which He commanded you.”

Devarim [Deuteronomy] 28:45

“And you shall be left few in number, whereas you were as the stars of heaven for multitude; because you did not listen to the Voice of YHWH your Elohim.”

Devarim [Deuteronomy] 28:62

Lest there be a person reading this that would entertain the thought that he could get away with not hearing and obeying the Voice of YHWH our Elohim, make no mistake about it, YHWH will pursue anyone who is foolish enough to think that they can do whatever they want to in their own heart without any repercussions from their actions. YHWH knows and He watches over His word to see who

will do it to bless those who will hear and obey His Voice and to curse those who will not hear and obey His Voice.

I don't know about you, but I surely do not want to live under the curses of YHWH! Pharaoh surely did not fare too well! Neither will anyone else.

After the people had entered into the land that YHWH had promised them, they served YHWH all the days of Yehoshua's life. Near the end of his life he gathered the people and they testified that they would continue to hear and obey His Voice.

And the people said to Yehoshua, "YHWH our Elohim will we serve, and to His Voice will we listen and obey."

Yehoshua [Joshua] 24:24

However, the Scriptural record tells a very sad story indeed. For as soon as that generation had passed, and a new generation had risen up, they stopped hearing and obeying YHWH's Voice. I am sure that this did not happen all at once, but was most likely a little bit here and little bit there. Then after a time, before they knew it, they were serving false gods instead of YHWH our Elohim who brought us out of the land of Egypt.

6 Now when Yehoshua had sent the people away, the children of Israel went every man to his inheritance to possess the land.

7 And the people served YHWH all the days of Yehoshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Yehoshua, who had seen all the great work of YHWH that He had wrought for Israel.

8 And Yehoshua the son of Nun, the servant of YHWH, died, being a hundred and ten years old.

9 And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the hill-country of Ephrayim, on the north of the mountain of Ga'ash.

10 And also all that generation were gathered to their fathers; and there arose another generation after them, that knew not YHWH, nor yet the work which He had wrought for Israel.

11 And the children of Israel did that which was evil in the sight of YHWH, and served the Ba'alim.

Shophetim [Judges] 2:6-11

If there is anything at all that this passage teaches us, it is the importance of one generation training the next generation how to hear and obey His Voice. Apparently, the previous generation was somewhat slack in training the next generation. Notice verse ten above, it states that the next generation did not know YHWH. Now if there was ever a shameful statement about a previous generation, that is it! And just exactly why did the next generation not know YHWH? Was the previous generation keeping the commandments as they should? Let us take the commandments of Pesach, for example. These commandments are designed so that when we keep Pesach properly, our faith is passed on to our children. Why didn't the next generation know who YHWH was? How could they have been keeping Pesach properly? It does not seem like they were.

Brethren, when one generation properly hears and obeys His Voice, its faith cannot help but be passed on to the next generation. But if we are just going through the motions and it is not being done from a heart of love, but a legalistic observance of His laws, then how can we expect our children to follow us in our faith? We cannot!

Let us examine King Shaul's life briefly and see what we can learn from it.

1 And Sh'muel said to Shaul, "YHWH sent me to anoint you to be king over His people, over Israel; now therefore listen [shema] to the Voice of the words of YHWH.

2 Thus says YHWH Tzavaot, I have marked that which Amalek did to Israel, how he set himself against him in the way, when he came up out of Egypt.

3 Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and ass."

Sh'muel Aleph [1st Samuel] 15:1-3

Now this is a pretty straightforward commandment from YHWH. King Shaul was to go and make war against Amalek, and to kill him and all his people, and all their animals, and none were to be spared; not one was to be left alive. Did King Shaul hear and obey the Voice of YHWH?

9 But Shaul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them; but everything that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.

Sh'muel Aleph [1st Samuel] 15:9

King Shaul made the decision not to kill the king of Amalek, Agag. Furthermore, they selected the very best of all the livestock and kept it for themselves. Let us see what YHWH has to say about this.

10 Then came the word of YHWH to Sh'muel, saying,

11 "I regret that I have set up Shaul to be king; for he has turned back from following Me, and has not performed My commandments." And Sh'muel was distressed; and he cried to YHWH all night.

Sh'muel Aleph [1st Samuel] 15:9

We do not know how long Shaul had been king over Israel when this happened. However, he was made king in chapter twelve and he was rejected as king in chapter fifteen. It does not seem that he was king for very long before he threw it all away by not listening to and obeying YHWH's Voice. While YHWH rejected Shaul as king, Shaul had a different take on what he did and did not do.

20 And Shaul said to Sh'muel, "I did obey the Voice of YHWH, and have gone on the mission which YHWH sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.

21 But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the devoted things, to sacrifice to YHWH your Elohim in Gilgal."

Sh'muel Aleph [1st Samuel] 15:9

King Shaul's take on this whole thing, is that he *did* obey the Voice of YHWH, at least as far as going on the mission to destroy the Amalekites. The only problem was, that he did not obey YHWH on every single point of the command that he was given. Yes, King Shaul went on the mission. Yes, King Shaul destroyed all the Amalekites. Well, all but one. The problem here, is that when YHWH gives us a command, we do not have the option of obeying it in the way that we see fit. He expects us to obey exactly what *He* commands us to do. In this case, YHWH had commanded King Shaul to kill the king of the Amalekites. Furthermore, YHWH had also commanded King Shaul to kill all their livestock. King Shaul only killed the stuff that they didn't want.

It seems obvious that King Shaul knew full well what he was commanded to do by YHWH. He chose not to obey it to the letter. The result was that YHWH rejected him from being king. Please take careful note of what YHWH says through the prophet.

22 And Samuel said, "Has YHWH as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the Voice of YHWH? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of YHWH, He has also rejected you from being king."

Sh'muel Aleph [1st Samuel] 15:9

What YHWH wants and desires from each and every one of us is for us to hear and obey His Voice. It is the greatest honor that we can bestow upon Him. It is the purest form of worship, to hear and obey His Voice.

If a person hears His Voice and does not obey it, YHWH likens it to witchcraft and idolatry, both of which carry the death penalty. This is very serious to YHWH and it had better be to us!

Let us return to Devarim to see what else YHWH has to say about this subject.

14 "For these nations, that you shall dispossess, they listen and obey them that practice witchcraft, and to diviners; but as for you, YHWH your Elohim has not allowed you to do so.

15 YHWH your Elohim will raise up to you a prophet from the midst of you, of your brethren, like to me; to Him you shall hearken;

16 according to all that you desired of YHWH your Elohim in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the Voice of YHWH my Elohim, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not.'

17 And YHWH said to me, 'They have done well what they have spoken.'

18 I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like you; and I will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I shall command Him.

19 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken to My words which He shall speak in My name, I will require it of him."

Devarim [Deuteronomy] 18:14-19

YHWH clearly does not want us to be like the people of the nations around us that go to those who practice witchcraft, sorcery and divination. He has clearly forbidden this of us. What He has given us in place of this is that He will raise up another prophet like Moshe that we are to listen to and obey. Anyone not listening to His Voice through this prophet like Moshe will be judged accordingly.

We are not to be like our fathers that said that they no longer wanted to hear YHWH's Voice from the top of the mountain out of the midst of the fire; rather we are to listen to the Voice of Him who YHWH will send that we may have life. Of course, we know that this prophet who was to come that would be like Moshe is Yeshua our Mashiach. Let us see what He has to say about this subject.

1 "Amein, amein, I say to you, He that enters not by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

2 But he that enters in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

3 To him the doorkeeper opens; and the sheep hear His Voice; and He calls His own sheep by name, and leads them out.

4 When He has put forth all His own, He goes before them, and the sheep follow him; for they know His Voice.

5 And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers.”
Yochanan [John] 10:1-5

When I first had sheep I lived in a place that did not really have fences. So I built a fold, a small pen with a shelter in which they would stay during the night. Each one of the sheep knew its name very well. I could go outside at anytime and call them by name and they would come running. In the evening they would follow me right into the fold so I could shut the gate and keep them safe for the night. I was their shepherd and they knew my voice. The interesting thing is, that when one of my sons would try to put them into the fold for the night, they always had trouble. Even though my sons knew all the sheep by name, the sheep knew that their shepherd was not there and would not cooperate.

This is the picture that Yeshua is giving to us here. He is saying that His sheep know His Voice and will listen to it and obey what He tells them. However, they will not listen to the voice of a stranger.

But herein lies the great difficulty today. From the looks of things not very many people actually know the sound of His Voice. Strangers come and confuse the sheep and scatter the sheep and kill and maim the sheep until the sheep are running to and fro and they do not know who to listen to. This is a great concern. More than anything else, we need to take the time to learn to recognize His Voice so that we will not be led astray by those who are not from Him.

But even His very own talmidim did not seem to understand what He was trying to teach them.

This parable spoke Yeshua to them; but they did not understand what those things were which he spoke to them.

Yochanan [John] 10:6

So Yeshua had to explain it further; may we glean from His additional teaching as well.

7 Yeshua therefore said to them again, “Amein, amein, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.

8 All that came before Me are thieves and robbers; but the sheep did not hear them.

9 I am the door; by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and go out, and shall find pasture.

10 The thief comes not, but that he may steal, and kill, and destroy; I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly.

11 I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.

12 He that is a hireling, and not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, beholds the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep, and flees, and the wolf snatches them, and scatters them;

13 he flees because he is a hireling, and cares not for the sheep.

14 I am the good shepherd; and I know mine own, and mine own know Me,

15 even as the Father knows Me, and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.

16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear My Voice; and they shall become one flock with one Shepherd.”

Yochanan [John] 10:7-16

The thing that we want to take note of here is that His sheep know His Voice. The question this poses for us today is this: do you know the sound of His Voice? If you cannot say a resounding “Yes!”, then do

not feel badly, because you are not alone. There are many today that are His sheep who are not sure what His Voice sounds like. Hopefully, by the end of this teaching you will be equipped to learn how to recognize His Voice. Furthermore, the more familiar that we become to hearing His Voice, the less likely it becomes that we will be deceived by the one who breaks in to steal, kill and destroy.

So if you desire to know His Voice better than you already do, then keep reading. On a note of interest, in verse sixteen we see that Yeshua our Mashiach makes a reference to sheep of another flock that also will learn to hear and obey His Voice. The sheep in that other flock are the sheep of Ephrayim. We are just now coming into the understanding of what it means to be a part of His flock and to hear and obey His Voice. So do not allow the thief who would destroy you to steal your joy or crown, but keep striving to learn to hear His Voice. He has the words of life, listen to Him.

So Now What Do I Do?

16 "This day YHWH your Elohim commands you to do these statutes and ordinances; you shall therefore keep and do them with all your heart, and with all your soul.

17 You have today declared YHWH to be your Elohim, and that you would walk in His ways, and keep His statutes, and His commandments, and His ordinances, and listen to and obey His Voice."

Devarim [Deuteronomy] 26:16-17

If you are reading this, then you most likely are already a talmid of Yeshua our Mashiach. If by some chance you are not, then you need to do that first of all. Once you have done that then you need to be filled with His Spirit. Being filled with His Spirit is essential to walking a victorious life. In fact, you cannot be victorious with any degree of consistency without the infilling, indwelling presence of His Spirit. Beyond that, at some point you need to make a full commitment to keep His Torah. The two verses above is a great place to start. Just pray those two verses as a prayer from your heart to YHWH and He will hear you. Once you have done that in all earnestness, then learning to hear His Voice becomes an everyday learning experience.

Remember, this is a learning experience. Do not expect to get it right the first time or even every time. When you mess up and make a mistake and don't quite get something right, then do whatever repentance and restitution is necessary, come to YHWH and ask Him what lessons are there for you to learn so you can better hear and obey His Voice. Then move on, don't beat yourself up or allow the enemy to beat you up.

So that the Torah is become our tutor to bring us to Mashiach, that we might be justified by faith.

Galatians 3:24

Okay, so the Torah is our tutor. What does a tutor do? A tutor is a teacher who gives personal one on one instruction so that the student is well versed in the subject being taught. In this case, we are being taught about Mashiach. And our teacher is the Torah. And herein lies a very great difficulty; those of us coming out of western Christianity do not know Torah! So, how can we truly know about Mashiach without knowing Torah? That is a real problem. It is like building a house upon the sand; when the storms of life come, the house falls. It is no wonder that so many people are led astray by so many who are claiming to be someone in our world today.

Here is what we need to do. We need to read and study Torah over and over again. Let it saturate our lives, especially those sections in which we have recorded in the Torah the words of YHWH. These sections are a record of His spoken words. It is these words that will really help us to learn to hear His Voice. Read them out loud to yourself. Listen carefully to them as you read them.

Be still, and know that I am Elohim;

Tehillim [Psalm] 46:10

We need to quiet our hearts, our minds, our souls, and our spirits. We need to be able to hear the stillness. Then in the stillness of that moment, read His words and listen carefully for His Voice as you read them. The more that you read and listen, the more familiar that you will become with hearing His Voice.

Also, in your prayer times, do not forget to just spend time listening. Meditate upon those passages that you are learning which are a record of His Voice. Listen carefully, He will be speaking to you.

And in like manner the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered;

Romans 8:26

There will be many times in our lives in which we just simply do not have the words to express what is in our spirits. The emotions that we may be feeling may be rather overwhelming to the point that our spirits are quite literally wrestling within us. When we are in these times, it will be beneficial and cathartic for us to get alone with YHWH and just let those feelings and emotions be displayed however they will come forth. For me, those times are often manifested with tears, sometimes with tears of joy, sometimes with tears of sorrow, and sometimes just tears.

One thing that we need to realize here, is that the enemy of our spirits, Satan, will make many attempts to trick us into listening to his voice, rather than the Voice of YHWH.

And no wonder; for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.

Qorintyah Bet [2nd Corinthians] 11:14

YHWH has ordered His creation in such a way that His Voice is the quietest one we hear. Satan's voice on the other hand is quite loud. Satan's voice is also quite persistent and demanding in getting us to follow what his desires are. YHWH on the other hand is a perfect gentleman and is patient towards us and asks us to test the spirits to make sure that what we are hearing is from Him and not from the enemy. YHWH also allows us time to go through the process of testing these spirits so that we do not make errors and follow after the wrong leading. Remember, part of the fruit of the Spirit is patience.

1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of Elohim; because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

2 Hereby know you the Spirit of Elohim; every spirit that confesses that Yeshua Mashiach is come in the flesh is of Elohim;

3 and every spirit that confesses not Yeshua is not of Elohim; and this is the spirit of the antichrist, whereof you have heard that it comes; and now it is in the world already.

4 You are of Elohim, my little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world.

5 They are of the world; therefore they speak as of the world, and the world hears them.

6 We are of Elohim; he that knows Elohim hears us; he who is not of Elohim hears us not. By this we know the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

Yochanan Aleph [1st John] 4:1-6

This is one of those passages that has been misappropriated and misapplied simply because the time has not been taken to understand the historical context of the letter and especially this passage. When one takes the time to understand the historical background of this passage, then the application of what this passage contains will be solidly grounded and help to keep one on the straight and narrow.

The main thing about this letter from Yochanan is that he was writing it to combat Gnosticism. This was a system of belief that predates the coming of Messiah and when He came there were adherents to the Gnostic discipline that came into the early faith, but did not shed all the tenets of Gnosticism. One of the main tenets of Gnosticism is that matter is evil. The way this played out to those who had accepted Yeshua as Mashiach, was that they believed that He did not, and could not, have had a physical body. Or, if He did, then the Spirit of Mashiach left the physical body of Yeshua before He died upon the cross.

Understanding this, one can easily see what it is that Yochanan is saying about testing the spirits. Since there were those who believed and taught that Mashiach did not have a physical body, only the appearance of a physical body, then in order to test those spirits that were teaching such, would be to simply ask them if Yeshua Mashiach came in the flesh. If the answer was no, then one immediately would know the one being questioned was Gnostic in their beliefs and practice, and were not of the truth.

What this teaches us then, is that while verses one through three gives us instructions on how to specifically test the spirit of Gnosticism, it is not a specific test for all spirits. Verses 5-6 then contain the general principle of testing the spirits. What we need to learn from this passage is to understand the type of spirit one is dealing with, in order to know how to test that particular spirit. This is where His Spirit helps us to know the specifics of how to test any given spirit. Basically, then for any given error, there is a specific passage or passages of Scripture that one can bring forward to test the spirits with on any given subject.

The principle contained in verses five and six is that the Spirit of YHWH in one person will hear and listen to the Spirit of YHWH in another person. If one who claims to have His Spirit does not listen to another who does have His Spirit, then it is likely that the one who will not listen does not have the Spirit of YHWH. And if he does, then He is not listening to His Spirit, nor is he allowing His Spirit to have control. Either way it is an indication of a problem that one needs to investigate rather than ignoring.

It is when an unclean spirit enters into the situation and acts or speaks through a person because they are not being diligent in testing the spirits that are giving them thoughts and ideas. All thoughts and ideas that come into our hearts and minds are not from our heavenly Father. And this is true whether a person has walked with YHWH for a short time or all their lives. The difference should be that the longer one has walked with YHWH the quicker these spurious thoughts and ideas are rejected. This is where the life of study will come into play. The more we study and apply His written word to our lives, the more He will have to draw upon in testing these thoughts and ideas (spirits) that come into our minds and hearts, whether they are from an outside human source, either from YHWH or an unclean spirit, or from within ourselves.

An unclean spirit will often plant an idea or a thought into a person's mind in the first person. For example, an unclean spirit will not say, "You should take that apple, because you are hungry and you don't have enough to pay for it." No, what an unclean spirit will do is phrase the thought something like this, "I should take that apple. I don't have enough money and I am really hungry and YHWH will understand." In the first instance one would most likely recognize that this was not his own thought and reject it out of hand. However, because these unclean spirits are lying spirits, they attempt to trick us into accepting and believing that the thought is our own by making one think that it was their own thought, when in fact it is not our own thought. This way, if the unclean spirit can get us to "own" the thought, the likelihood of our acting upon it is much greater. When we remember this and test the thoughts according to what Scripture teaches us, testing even our "own" thoughts, it will save us much heartache.

One of the ways in which a spirit that is not from YHWH can be detected is who is being elevated. When a person has to always be spouting their own personal qualifications, and those qualifications are not exalting YHWH, then one has a right and duty to question where that spirit is from. The Spirit of YHWH exalts Yeshua our Mashiach, not us! Remember that, for it can spare you from a lot of heartache. Also, use it to test what is coming out of your own mouth: Is what I am saying exalting Yeshua or myself? Do not be deceived by faulty reasoning. Be brutally honest with yourself and it will pay the high dividends of eternal life!

Prayerfully read what YHWH says through the prophet Yermeyah.

21 Thus says YHWH Tzava'ot, the Elohim of Israel; "Add your burnt-offerings to your sacrifices, and eat the flesh.

22 For I spoke not to your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices;

23 but this thing I commanded them, saying, 'Listen to My Voice, and I will be your Elohim, and you shall be My people; and walk you in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you.'

24 But they listened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in their own counsels and in the stubbornness of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward.

25 Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt to this day, I have sent to you all My servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them;

26 yet they listened not to Me, nor inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff; they did worse than their fathers.

27 And you shall speak all these words to them; but they will not listen to you; you shall also call to them; but they will not answer you.

28 And you shall say to them, 'This is the nation that has not listened to the Voice of YHWH their Elohim, nor received correction; truth has perished, and has been cut off from their mouth.'"

Yermeyah [Jeremiah] 7:28

YHWH clearly states that He did not command those coming out of Egypt concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices, rather what YHWH desired then and what YHWH still desires of His people, is to hear and obey His Voice. But notice what YHWH says in verse twenty-eight. He says that because His people did not listen to and obey His Voice, they rejected correction and the result is that truth has perished.

My brethren, if we are to have any hope whatsoever of being restored to the land He promised to our fathers, then we have to be able to hear and then obey His Voice. One of the important aspects of

hearing His Voice is receiving correction. So here is a question for each one of us to carefully and prayerfully ask ourselves and to ponder before Him. Do I accept Your correction, Abba YHWH?

Let me tell you straight out, sometimes that correction hurts!

7 It is for chastening that you endure; Elohim deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father chastens not?

8 But if you are without chastening, whereof all have been made partakers, then are you bastards, and not sons.

Ivrim [Hebrews] 12:7-8

When was the last time that you received chastening by YHWH? Do you realize that YHWH only disciplines and chastises those who are His sons? If you are not receiving chastisement from YHWH, then you need to make sure that you are, in fact, His son!

The point here, is that if we hear His Voice correcting us, we should submit to what He is telling us and make the appropriate changes. If we cast aside the gentle correction of His Voice, then we can expect to receive chastisement. If the chastisement does not get one to change his direction and head back towards YHWH, then one's eternal destiny hangs in the balance and could be irrevocably lost.

1 "And it shall come to pass, when all these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before you, and you shall call them to mind among all the nations, where YHWH your Elohim has driven you,

2 and shall return to YHWH your Elohim, and shall sh'ma His Voice according to all that I command you this day, you and your children, with all your heart, and with all your soul;

3 then YHWH your Elohim will turn your captivity, and have compassion upon you, and will return and gather you from all the peoples, where YHWH your Elohim has scattered you."

Devarim [Deuteronomy] 30:1-3

YHWH was telling the people of Israel through Moshe nearly 3300 years ago, that we would receive both the blessings and the curses. However, if we would bring them to mind later from all the places where YHWH our Elohim had driven us into the four corners of the earth, then He would remove our captivity and bring us once again back into our land, the land He promised to Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'aqov. However, this promise is conditional. We have to remember what our part is that we need to repent of in our Torahless lives and return to YHWH through Yeshua our Mashiach and learn to hear and obey His Voice. When we do this, then He will bring us back to the land of our fathers.

Even before we got to where we are today, scattered throughout the nations of the world, and have completely lost our identity as His people, YHWH provided a way for us to return even way back then. He knew what we were going to do before we did it. That does not mean that He caused it, He just knows how dark the hearts of His creation are, and the direction that they always tend to go, away from Him.

8 "And you shall return and obey the Voice of YHWH, and do all His commandments which I command you this day.

9 And YHWH your Elohim will make you plenteous in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your body, and in the fruit of your cattle, and in the fruit of your ground, for good; for YHWH will again rejoice over you for good, as He rejoiced over your fathers;

10 if you shall obey the Voice of YHWH your Elohim, to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this book of the Torah; if you turn to YHWH your Elohim with all your heart, and with all your soul.”
Devarim [Deuteronomy] 30:8-10

Notice that in order to procure all the blessings of YHWH our Elohim, then we must return to YHWH our Elohim and shema His Voice, hearing and obeying Him in all things. We must first do this as individuals, but then especially we must do it as a people, as a nation. We are in the beginning stages of doing this as individuals, but have only just begun to hear and understand what this means for us as a nation. Yes, we know that we need to do it as a nation, but in our fierce individualism of the west, it is difficult for us to really take hold of hearing and obeying His Voice as a body, His body.

We need to read the above passage several times. Let the words sink into the depths of our spirits. Let us fully realize that this prophetic word was given for us, for our generation of His people. Notice that for us there is no exception clause in this promise of restoration. To be restored we must keep the whole Torah, leaving nothing out of it.

This presents to us an immediate difficulty, namely the sacrificial system. We cannot do this at present because there is no mishkan or temple. However, prophecy indicates that in these latter days, it will be rebuilt or resurrected. Once that happens, then we will be free to bring His offerings to Him. The question will be, will you? Will you clearly hear His Voice in this matter? Or, will you reason it away saying that you don't have to do this because of the work of Mashiach? Do you realize that such reasoning is saying in essence, that Mashiach did away with the Torah? This cannot be true as you already know.

This is brought forward in this discussion to point out the importance of hearing His Voice and discerning it from our own thoughts and faulty understandings. If a person is incapable of sorting out what is His Voice and what are his own thoughts, then what hope does such a one have of eternal life? It would seem quite slim to us.

11 “For this commandment which I command you this day, it is not too hard for you, neither is it far off.

12 It is not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it to us, and make us to hear it, that we may do it?’

13 Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it to us, and make us to hear it, that we may do it?’

14 But the word is very near to you, in your mouth, and in your heart, that you may do it.”

Devarim [Deuteronomy] 30:11-14

These verses are part of the prophecy that was given to Israel in Moshe's day concerning the generation of our day. Verse 14 is the key to truly understanding this prophecy and specifically who it was given to. This was not true of that generation in Moshe's day, for the commandments were given to Moshe, which he then wrote down and placed in a book as a record. It was not written on their hearts, but it would be written on the hearts of a later generation, namely ours.

31 “Behold, the days come,” says YHWH, “that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah;

32 not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which My covenant they broke, although I was a husband to them,” says YHWH.

33 “But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” says YHWH; “I will put My Torah in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their Elohim, and they shall be My people.”
Yirmeyah [Jeremiah] 31:31-33

The major problem with the covenant given from Mount Sinai is that it was not internalized by the people. Yet, through the prophet Yirmeyah, YHWH states that there will come a time when He will internalize His Torah in His people by writing it upon our hearts. He did this through the ministry of Yeshua. It is just now beginning to bear fruit for His earthly kingdom by many people waking up to what Scripture actually teaches in regards to His Torah.

As many are coming to this realization, the tendency is to throw everything of Christianity out and go with Judaism. However, this is far from a wise decision. Why? There is some truth in Christianity that is necessary to preserve. One aspect is walking in the Spirit, which is akin to hearing and obeying His Voice. We cannot afford to lose this truth or this knowledge, for it is the key to being restored back to the land YHWH promised to Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya’aqov. If a person cannot hear His Voice to obey it, then at some point along the way of restoration, such a person will fall by the wayside and lose out.

**19 “I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse; therefore choose life, that you may live, you and your seed;
20 to love YHWH your Elohim, to obey His Voice, and to cleave to Him; for He is your life, and the length of your days; that you may dwell in the land which YHWH swore to your fathers, to Avraham, to Yitzchak, and to Ya’aqov, to give them.”**
Devarim [Deuteronomy] 30:19-20

The key to obeying Torah is being able to hear His Voice. If one cannot truly hear His Voice, then it follows that one cannot truly obey His Voice. Therefore, we must put everything else aside and focus all our energies into learning to hear His Voice; it quite literally and spiritually is a matter of life or death. Furthermore, YHWH Himself admonishes us to please choose life. This is not only for ourselves, but also for our children. May we show ourselves wise in this age by hearing and obeying His Voice.

“and your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, ‘This is the way, you walk in it;’ when you turn to the right hand, and when you turn to the left.”

Yeshayah [Isaiah] 30:21

The more that a person learns to hear and recognize His Voice, the more the above passage will come into play in a person’s life. There will be times when all we hear from our heavenly Father is silence. Do not be alarmed by this. It does not mean that we have turned off the way and have gone astray. Quite the contrary, it most likely means that we are walking on the straight and narrow path and He has no need to direct us. This, of course, is only true if one is actually one of His true children.

As one learns how to walk the straight and narrow way and becomes adept at doing this, YHWH many times will not need to give us daily, moment by moment guidance. Much like our own earthly children when they are learning to walk, when they are just learning, many times we stay very close for support and for comfort and encouragement when they fall. However, after they have mastered the art of walking, we do not even give it much thought on what they are doing. We just try to give direction when direction is needed.

Likewise, when we are first learning to walk in the way, His Spirit gives us constant and consistent guidance. However, once we know what we are doing, and if, in fact, we are ready to help others learn how to walk in the way, His Spirit does not need to give us constant help and direction. It is when we begin to veer off of the path that His Spirit will get our attention and direct us back into the way. This is part of the maturation process that He will take us through.

It will be those times when He needs to give us specific directions and commandments, that we will be able then to hear them clearly and without confusion, because we have matured in our walk with Him and know His Voice.

3 For what the Torah could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, Elohim did sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh;

4 that the ordinance of the Torah might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.
Romans 8:3-4

The Torah is not able to strengthen us in our physical beings because it is not naturally a part of us. However, when a person comes to Mashiach through faith, He then writes that same Torah upon our hearts. It is then that His Spirit has something tangible to work with in leading and guiding us to walk in the straight and narrow way. Without the Torah being written upon our hearts, we could not know the boundaries of the straight and narrow way. It is the Torah that sets those boundaries. It is His Spirit that opens our eyes to see what and where those boundaries are so that we can walk within them.

But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of Elohim dwells in you. But if any man has not the Spirit of Mashiach, he is not His.

Romans 8:9

Living and walking in the Spirit is only made possible by the indwelling presence of His Spirit. For, if His Spirit is not present, then it becomes impossible to walk in it. Furthermore, it is the presence of His indwelling presence, via His Spirit, that quickens a person's ears and hearing, in order that one can hear and obey His Voice. To walk in the Spirit is virtually identical to hearing and obeying His Voice. In order for this to become a reality, one must belong to Mashiach.

For as many as are led by the Spirit of Elohim, these are sons of Elohim.

Romans 8:14

We need to clearly understand that Satan cannot afford for you and me to clearly hear His Voice, for when we clearly hear, then it follows that we will want to obey His Voice. So he does whatever he can to interfere with that hearing process. And if he can impede one's hearing, particularly during the learning process, so that what one ends up with, is a deformation of a person's spiritual hearing from what it should and could be, then he will be better able to thwart a person's efforts in living a victorious life for Him.

But do not fret.

You are of Elohim, my little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world.
Yochanan Aleph [1st John] 4:4

While it is good and well that we understand how the enemy works, we should not overly focus upon his doings, but rather, pour most of our effort and devotion into learning His truth and learning to hear His Voice.

This reminds me of the banker who was training a new teller and was asked by his new employee how he would be able to spot a counterfeit bill if he came across one. The wise banker told him that the best way to spot a counterfeit was to become extremely familiar with the real deal.

Likewise, for us as well, the best way to be able to distinguish between His Voice and the voice of another is to become familiar with His Voice. It is by spending time with his sheep that a shepherd trains his sheep to know his voice and to respond to it, thereby not responding to the voice of a stranger. So we too, should spend time with our Shepherd so that we become familiar with His Voice, thereby making it much more difficult to be led astray by the voice of a stranger.

This means that we should spend time reading His word. This is not the same as reading what other people say about His word. If one only reads what others say about His word, then how will they know whether or not what they are reading is faithful to His word? Then we also need to spend time in prayer. We need to spend at least as much time listening as talking. Actually, as one grows, more and more time should be spent in listening rather than in talking. If this is done frequently and constantly, then it will be much easier for a person to determine how faithful and true something is when he hears or reads it.

Then, spending time with His people, listening to their experiences and testimonies will also help one sharpen his own listening skills.

As iron sharpens iron; so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.

Mishle [Proverbs] 27:17

One word of caution, we need to always let Scripture judge, measure and validate our experience to make sure that we stay on the correct path; not the other way around. We should never let our experience judge and or validate Scripture. Doing this is a sure way to walk off into heresy and to follow the lusts of the flesh.

Summation

When one begins to see the importance that YHWH places upon hearing and obeying His Voice, then we are looking at the central theme of Scripture! This is so essential and vital to the message of YHWH to us that this even envelops the concept of Mashiach. Mashiach is quite literally the Word made flesh. We could just as accurately say it this way. Mashiach is quite literally His Voice made flesh. This is quite evident when we consider this prophetic passage.

And they heard the Voice of YHWH Elohim walking in the garden in the spirit of the day; and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of YHWH Elohim amongst the trees of the garden.

B'reshit [Genesis] 3:8

YHWH in the form of His Voice was walking in the garden. This is a clear manifestation of Mashiach prior to His incarnation.

Furthermore, YHWH told us through the prophet Moshe that the prophet who was to come in the likeness of Moshe, if a person would not listen to Him, then he would have to answer for it according to his sin. In other places YHWH tells us, that in order for us to be restored to our land, then we are going to have to do whatever it takes to learn to hear and obey His Voice.

Considering the sorry state of affairs in the Messianic and Nazarene world today, it would seem that many are not doing too well in this area. It would seem that we need to all go back to kindergarten and relearn how to hear His Voice properly so that we are not deceived by those who are in reality, wolves in sheep's clothing. If we want to be able to tell the real deal from an imposter, then we need to know what the real deal actually is!

Learning to hear His Voice is not really all that difficult. The most difficult aspect is the time it takes to do it. One is going to have to invest a lot of quality time to learn how to do it right. And in our fast paced, instant, self-gratifying, self-absorbed society, this is a pretty tall order. It is going to take the following to get it done and get it done right.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 meekness, self-control; against such there is no Torah. Galatians 5:22-23

It is going to take His Spirit residing in us. It is going to take patience, diligence and determination for us to learn His Voice. The truth is we should set out to know His Voice better than we know our own!

My prayer and hope for you is that you will come to know His Voice intimately. That you will cherish each word and savor it with great enjoyment as each and every word He speaks to you personally is the very essence of life for you.

Amein and Amein.

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