

## Doctrine of Shema

Rom 10:9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

Rom 10:10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

1. Some have thought in error that these Scriptures require belief and confession for salvation. Paul uses the most sacred Shema to explain the correct meaning of Rom 10:9-10.

1.1 To understand these two verses, it helps to know that Romans, chapters 9, 10 and 11 should be set apart in parentheses. Within these three chapters Paul appeals to his beloved comrades--his fellow Jews.

1.2 In a Church Age letter written to mostly Gentiles at Rome, Paul elects to pause and speak directly to Israel.

2. The Shema ritual gets its name from the first word of Deu 6:4. The word is Shema; it introduces the verse. It is the Kal imperative of the verb Shama, meaning "to hear or to listen." "Shema Israel" could better be translated, "Hear up Israel." The imperative demands Israel listen and listen they have done throughout history. On every weekly sabbath, Saturday, each service is opened with the Shema.

2.1 "Shema Yisrael" rings the Hebrew of Deu 6:4. This quote has been heard for thousands of years wherever and whenever Jews meet to worship on their weekly sabbath.

Deu 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:

2.2 Before quoting Deu 6:4, Paul paraphrases Moses' admonition to Israel found in Deu 30:11-14. Moses and Paul urge Israel to stop trying to do things for salvation and accept the salvation doctrine which is in their mouths, "the Shema."

Deu 30:11 For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off.

Deu 30:12 It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?

Deu 30:13 Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?

**Deu 30:14 But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.**

2.3 Rom 10:5-8 is, in part, a paraphrase of Deu 30:11-14.

Rom 10:5 For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.

Rom 10:6 But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:)

Rom 10:7 Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)

Rom 10:8 But what saith it? **The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart:** that is, the word of faith, which we preach;

3. What word of faith is Paul talking about that is in the mouth of the Jews? It's the Shema.

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD” is a very poor translation given the failure to translate a plural noun as plural and the poor translation of Hayah, a supplied verb. Hayah, as we have noted in our study of the creation and restoration, has several legitimate translations, depending on the context. Gen 1:1-2

Gen 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

Gen 1:2 And the earth was (**Hayah translated was is better translated "became"**) without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

3.1 Let's see what Deu 6:4 looks like in the Hebrew: “Shema Yisrael Yehovah Elohenu Yehovah Echad.” Literally, from the Hebrew we have “Listen-up Israel, the Lord, our plural God, the Lord, One.” Ellipsis demands the translator to supply verbs, and we, as Church Age saints, have the help of Paul to assist in our translation.

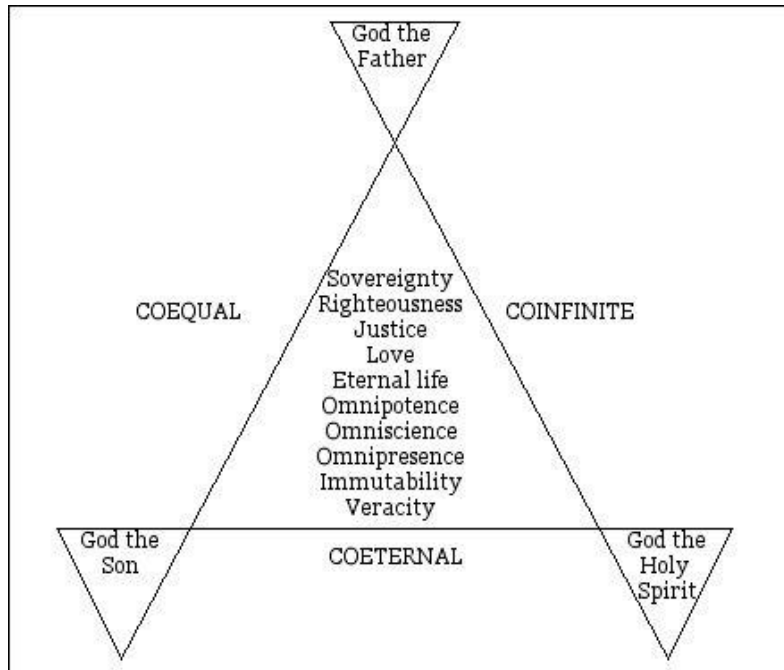
3.2 We begin with the Kal imperative of the Hebrew verb Shema followed by the proper noun singular of Yisrael. Clearly “Listen Israel” or “Hear Israel.”

3.3 Next we have the proper noun singular Yehovah; it is what we call the tetragrammaton or revealed member of the Trinity. Yehovah, we know from the context, is the Lord Jesus. Literally Yehovah is one member of the Trinity.

3.4 There is no following verb so we must supply a verb. We should supply the “to be” verb in its simplest form, that being Hayah, translated into English as “is, are, was, were or become or became.”

3.5 Then we have the proper noun plural of El, usually written as Elohim except when accompanied with a suffix Nu. The suffix Nu is the third person pronoun used as a descriptive, thus “our plural God.” In our verse, the two together anglicized, appear as Elohenu.

3.5.1 Elohenu is literally “our plural God.” We know the Trinity is a plural God manifested by three personalities: a Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This plural Hebrew noun for God refers to all three members of the Trinity--coequal, coinfinite and coeternal.



3.6 This ends the first phrase, so what do we have so far? "Hear up Israel the Lord is our plural God, i.e., the Triune God of Israel."

3.7 Now for the second phrase. The phrase begins with Yehovah, a singular proper noun usually translated Jehovah or Lord; it is what we call the tetragrammaton or revealed member of the Trinity, Who we know as the Lord Jesus. However, literally, as earlier noted, He is simply one of the members of the Trinity--Elohim.

3.8 Again we are faced with no verb therefore Hayah, the "to be" verb, is again selected. Given Paul's teaching we know it must be rendered "became." So far, in our second phrase we have "the Lord became." And then we have the simple cardinal number Echad, which can also be translated either as "one" or "unique."

3.9 Translation: Listen up Israel and pay attention. The Lord Jehovah is our plural God; the Lord Jehovah became one and unique.

4. Paul is stressing the need for Israelites to become, by faith real or spiritual Jews. Paul is making clear the purpose of the Shema: it is for Israel to believe what is in their mouths and be saved, an act which will move them from being simply ethnic Jews to a "real Jews." The purpose then of the Shema is to put the right words in their mouths, which is as Paul declares, "the words which we preach."

4.1 There is a difference between an ethnic Jew and a real Jew, as the Scripture says in Mal 1:2-3: "Jacob I love and Esau I hate." Jacob was an ethnic believing Jew and Esau an ethnic, unbelieving Jew.

Mal 1:2 I have loved you, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the LORD: yet I loved Jacob,  
Mal 1:3 And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness.

5. Moses understood this need, ergo in Rom 10:9 Paul tells his Jewish friends the Shema is in their mouths and will bring salvation if they would but believe it. Paul quotes Moses as his documentation.

Rom 10:8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;

6. The Shema of Deuteronomy was quoted twice daily in synagogues all over the Roman Empire. And even today it is recited each and every Saturday.

Deu 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:

Expanded Translation: Listen up Israel, the revealed member of the Godhead is also One of the personalities of the Trinity--the revealed personality of the Trinity--the Messiah became unique and One.

7. It has long been understood that Deu 6:4 is the essence of Judaism. Example: On page 549 in Will Durant's Book, The Story of Civilization - Caesar and Christ, the following appears:

"Several Rabbis were executed for disobeying this injunction (to stop teaching Judaism) ... Akiba, at age 95, insisted on teaching his pupils; he was imprisoned, condemned and died we are told with the basic tenet of Judaism on his lips, "Hear O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord is One." Deu 6:4

8. This confession is well recognized by Moses and Paul as the entrance to salvation, i.e., simply believe what you daily recite and it matters not if you recite it and then believe it or you believe it and then recite it.

8.1 The key, of course, says Paul, is to believe what you have been saying for so many years.

9. In essence Paul is saying Christ is the unique One of the Trinity, so just accept Him and be saved; it is in your mouth, so believe what "is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach."

10. Again the verses:

Deu 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:

Rom 10:9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

Rom 10:10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

11. Christians, like many Jews, have been confounded by these Scriptures. Some purporting that these two verses, Rom 10:9-10, require something besides faith in Christ for salvation, i.e., confession before men. How blasphemous!