

Introduction:

- Many people think of discipleship as a New Testament concept. Mostly because we see the word disciple in the NT and those who followed Jesus were called disciples. Is. 8:16 is the one use found in the OT. *“Seal the law among my disciples.”*
- We see discipling actually taking place in the garden of Eden as God gives instruction to Adam and Eve. Noah had disciplined his sons, for ‘the righteous’ entered the Ark. Abraham heard God’s voice and followed His instruction. They believed in God, heard God and followed God’s leading (teachings) and they led their families to believe also.
- The formal discipling of the nations actually begins with Israel after the Exodus.
 - Israel needed discipling. They had been 400 years in Egypt and in many ways had forgotten God.
 - Once delivered from Egypt, their hearts were still full of rebellion towards God. They actually made a gold calf in just a few day after being delivered.
- In Dt 6:1-8, Moses declares to the nation of Israel where all true discipleship begins. *“Here O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One. You shall love the Lord with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your strength.”* Two truths. God is One. Love Him with everything you have.

I. First Things

- A. It is important to understand that what we are now reading in Deut. 6 is God and Moses getting the people back on course after the gold calf fiasco. God was ready to kill them all and would have if Moses had not interceded for them. Everyone has taken a brief repose from what would have been a fatally awkward moment. God through the prophet Moses now begins a process of systematically discipling a nation.
- B. The word, hear, comes from the Hebrew word Shema. **Shema**- means to perceive a message to give attention to what is heard. As we discovered last week, to hear - means to perceive, to understand and now it demands a response. *“How do I live what I have perceived?”* To hear requires focus.
- C. Did you know that this is the core/central part of the Jewish faith? It is called the Shema. It is the beginning focal point of the Jewish faith. It was where the Jew focused. The starting point of the Jewish faith walk begins here at the Shema. It is what Jesus quotes as the greatest commandment in Mark 12:29-30 *Jesus answered him, “The first of all the commandments is: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. ³⁰ And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment.* NKJV
The Shema.
 1. Jews as they were going to the gas chambers would recite the Shema.
 2. The day was started with the Shema and it ended with the Shema.

3. They encouraged one another with the Shema.
 4. The Shema was the last word that one said before death.
 5. It was the first spiritual thing a parent taught their child.
 6. It was proclaimed on Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement).
 7. It was written in the Mezuzah—a scripture box fastened by the door.
 8. It was written in the phylacteries that were bound to the forehead and arms.
- D. Are you starting to see that this portion of scripture was the starting point that God used in beginning to disciple a nation? We are studying this because we are purposing to be better disciples. And if God would start with Israel at this point then we should connect there also.
- E. The Shema is not a prayer! It is called a prayer in many places even in Jewish writings, but it is not a prayer.
1. It is the Word of the Lord to Israel! It is a powerful foundational revelation of God.
 2. It is the foundational starting block of all that God is discipling Israel in.
 3. The Shema is not about behavior modification it is about God apprehending the heart of a people.
 4. The Shema is the Jews supreme affirmation of God's oneness and uniqueness.
 5. Often the eyes were covered during the quoting of the Shema, for purpose of no distractions.
- F. Those who heard and embrace (live out Shema)..
1. ...were now God's witnesses. Their very lives would now testify of Him.
 2. He who says the Shema bears witness to the world of who God is.

II. What are we to hear?

- A. God is One—end of the matter—Love Him.
- B. Bunny trail! In the Hebrew alphabet, the letters are also used for numbers. So each letter has a numeric value.
1. The word for love is ahava—aleph, hei, bet, hei. The numeric value of those letters is thirteen
 2. The word for 'one' is echad. The numeric value for echad is 13.
 3. If you add these two principles of the Shema together you get 26. The Hebrew character for 26 are YHVH or the word YaHVeH. So 13 is a blessed number for the Jew. In fact, next to the Shema the next most quoted thing in the Hebrew faith is Ex 34:6-7, the 13 attributes of God (there are 13 attribute of God revealed in Ex 34:6-7: 1 &2 God. 3 Omnipotent (El) 4 Merciful 5. Gracious 6 slow to anger 7 Abounding in loving kindness. 8 Truth 9 He remembers love for 1,000s 10 Forgiving sin 11 and rebellion 12 and error 13 and cleanses or doesn't cleanse the unrepentant.
 4. I took the 'bunny trail' to show how passionate the Jewish people are about the

revelation of God, the centrality of God to life, and the importance of the Word.

- C. The first thing that we are to hear and respond to is: Dt. 6:4 “**Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One!**”
1. The Lord is One. Singular! “The verse concentrates on the fact that there is one God and that Israel owes its exclusive loyalty to him.”¹
 - a. James 2:19 **You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!** NKJV
 - b. 1 Cor 8:5-6 **For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords),⁶ yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live.** NKJV
 2. Aaron and Israel had just made and bowed down to a gold calf. The Egyptians had a god for everything. What we learn from this is that we as fallen humanity are very susceptible to many gods. This is prominent in our world! If you are of a ‘one God’ persuasion you are a target in a world of many gods and many ways. You are politically incorrect.
 3. The first thing that God is establishing is:
 - a. God is our God, Alone
 - b. God alone is our God
 - c. There is but one God and He is our God.
 - d. The Lord is God, Worship Him only.
 - e. He is our God and there is no other!
 4. The fact that God is one emphasizes His Kingship.
 - a. There is but one God
 - b. This demands intimacy—we want to know him.
 - c. That is why whole hearted love is commanded—you can’t love any other.
 - d. Therefore study of the Word is expected so that you can know God better—which in turn stirs intimacy with Him and wholeheartedness from us.
- D. This takes us to the second part of the Shema—Love the Lord with...
1. You cannot love someone you do not know. This is why God is starting this intense discipleship process with the children of Israel. He wants us to love Him and be loved by Him.
 2. You can like someones appearance, you can read about them, you can admire them but until you know them you cannot love them.
 3. The Hebrew word for feelings is the action that results from them. In other words, love is connected to actions or commands; said another way, because God is love it stirs me to love and in turn keep commands not out of order given but a heart

¹ Harris, R. L., Harris, R. L., Archer, G. L., & Waltke, B. K. (1999). Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (electronic ed.) (30). Chicago: Moody Press.

expression.

4. Heart- לֵבָב (lēbāb). **Heart, understanding, mind** (also used in idioms such as “to set the heart upon” meaning “to think about” or “to want”). In its abstract meanings, “heart” became the richest biblical term for the totality of man’s inner or immaterial nature.²
 5. Soul—nepeš—appetites, desire, life or in the living of life. Connected with actions taken in life.
 6. Strength - meod- מְעֹד (mě’ōd) **exceedingly, much, force, abundance**.³ With intensity, vitality, the whole self not in a half hearted way.
 7. These three words: heart, soul and strength were chosen to reinforce the absolute singularity of personal devotion to God. Thus *lēbāb* denotes the intention or will of the whole man; *nepeš* means the whole self, a unity of flesh, will, and vitality; and *mě’ōd* accents the superlative degree of total commitment to Yahweh.⁴
 - a. 2 Kings 23:23-25 *But in the eighteenth year of King Josiah this Passover was held before the Lord in Jerusalem.* ²⁴ *Moreover Josiah put away those who consulted mediums and spiritists, the household gods and idols, all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, that he might perform the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiyah the priest found in the house of the Lord.* ²⁵ *Now before him there was no king like him, who turned to the Lord with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses;* NKJV
- E. We are to hear and respond to the fact that the only One God is our God! Therefore love him. All our discipleship rests on this fact alone.

Conclusion:

- Disciples grow best when they know what they are, when they plan to grow, when they are in accountability with others, and with the help of the Holy Spirit.
- Giving yourself to God is an awesome thing. Giving yourself to become His witnesses in the earth in nation changing.
- Love Him with all your heart, soul, mind, strength.

² Harris, R. L., Harris, R. L., Archer, G. L., & Waltke, B. K. (1999). Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (electronic ed.) (466). Chicago: Moody Press.

³ Harris, R. L., Harris, R. L., Archer, G. L., & Waltke, B. K. (1999). Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (electronic ed.) (487). Chicago: Moody Press.

⁴ Harris, R. L., Harris, R. L., Archer, G. L., & Waltke, B. K. (1999). Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (electronic ed.) (487). Chicago: Moody Press.