

Righteousness by Faith—Becoming the 144,000

PART I — “If you will Obey My Voice”

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Are we ready for end-time events? Adventists have been talking about the Second Coming from their beginning. We make charts and time-lines and think we know exactly how things are going to happen. But are we as ready as we think we are for Jesus to come?

- What do we really understand about the Plan of Salvation as it applies to us right now?
- Will we have enough oil when the call goes out to meet the Bridegroom?
- Where has Jesus been for 2000 years and what’s the delay in His return? Does this have anything to do with **us**?
- Are we “just waiting,” and “Jesus could come any day” as some of our pastors are saying?
- Or is there something else we need to be doing **now** in preparation?

These are just some of the questions I hope to answer during this series of talks.

When I began preparing for these talks, I was surprised at the animosity that I heard from others over the topic of Righteousness by Faith. As I was soon to find out, much of this posturing was due to unresolved controversies in Adventism that I knew nothing about.

Maybe you’ve heard of some of them:

- Is “perfection” a dirty word? Can we achieve righteousness today? And does this happen before or after the Second Coming? Are we waiting for the Latter Rain of the Holy Spirit to make this happen? Because Mrs. White says that would be a “terrible mistake.”
- Is there such a thing as “Original sin?” How is it that we all sin and are not offered the same chance that Eve had?
- Can we keep the Feasts of God without a Jerusalem temple? And how do the Jews fit into the plan of salvation? Are they still the people of God? Is Jerusalem still the city of God?
- Would God ever require another Jerusalem temple?
- Can we actually keep God’s law? Or is promoting the Commandments legalism?
- What is our responsibility regarding the three Angels’ Messages?
- Do we have a role to play in the plan of salvation and if so, WHAT IS IT?
- If Jesus is waiting for us to be sealed, does this mean we are controlling God?

But as these talks were developed, I found that many of the age-old problems in Adventism are put to rest by the new light that God is shining on His Word today. So, even if you hear words that begin to strike panic in your mind, or even if you feel that I am trespassing on “proven ground,” please give me a chance to show you what God has been showing me.

I think that we can all find these words of Mrs. White to hold true today:

“Age will not make error into truth, and truth can afford to be fair. No true doctrine will lose anything by close investigation.” (White, *Counsels to Writers and Editors*, p. 35.)

As we go through these sessions together, let us then follow in the spirit of James and practice his words when he said,

“My beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.” (James 1:19-20)

If you hear new information during our time together I hope you will look into the messages for yourself in your own studies. Move forward in truth, trusting God.

I pray diligently for the Holy Spirit’s presence to be with us during this time and I hope you will add your prayers to mine.

Let us grow in new light from the Scriptures as we look forward to the soon return of Jesus.

Two Commandments

During our time together this week we are going to look at a very important passage in Scripture. We will come back to these words again and again.

I would like you to turn with me in your Bibles to Exodus 19. And if you have a Bible marker, I’m going to suggest that you highlight this passage because I’m sure that your studies will take you back to these words many times.

You have noticed, haven’t you, that some texts are more profound than others? This is one of those passages in Scripture that holds a vital key message about the entire Plan of Salvation. Jehovah says to the Children of Israel,

🔑 Exodus 19:4-6:

“You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to Myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”

In these verses God established Himself as the Deliverer who brought the people out of their captivity in Egypt with great power and a stretched out arm. He calls Himself “the Great Eagle” as we also see in Ezekiel 17.

Then He gives us the most simple and yet profound summary of His Plan of Salvation. These key words outline our entire talk this week:

IF: This little word tells us that God’s plan was destined to be conditional and would be built on obedience to God.

🔑 You will obey My voice:

This is the first commandment that God gave at Sinai and we will see that it is the most important of them all because it is the key to developing righteousness and being reunited with God.

Keep My Covenant:

God's second command has far-reaching implications. A covenant is a contract between TWO parties. By asking us to join with Him in a Covenant, God was telling us that His plan would require agreement between both us and God. We would have to work in cooperation with God for the Plan of Salvation to be successful.

You shall be to Me a special treasure:

It would be our greatest gift to God if we would cooperate with His plans. The "treasure" does not point to us as being great. But it will be a treasure to God if we give Him our cooperation.

For all the earth is Mine:

God will use this union between Himself and His Covenant People to reach out to the entire world with His salvation. Even as God called together a special people, He was already thinking beyond them about the implications our obedience to God would have on the entire world.

You shall be to Me a Kingdom:

Fundamental to God's Plan of Salvation, He would need to build a Kingdom.

Priests and a Holy Nation:

God is seeking priests to serve Him and a Nation that would bring honor to Him. Both of which are *Holy*.

These people would have the honor of being witnesses of the Lord's righteousness, His love, His purity, His mercy, His power. And they would testify to the world that God is good.

Lo and behold, at the far end of the Bible we see that God is still looking for these two groups. It must be important to God to build this kingdom comprised of ***Priests and a Holy People***. We read more about them in Revelation.

Revelation 7:3-4, 9

"Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice ... saying 'Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.' And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand ... were sealed."

"After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands."

Who are these 144,000 and the victorious Multitude who are clothed in white robes?

Answering this question is the purpose of this series. But let's back up and start at the beginning.



Obey My Voice

Today we are going to focus on these words:

“If you will indeed ‘Obey My Voice,’

Let’s look at these words in the Hebrew:

If you will **indeed obey My voice, is**

Shama qol shama

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In other places in Scripture we find the Lord’s name included. They say,

Shama qol Yehovah* or *Shama qol Yehovah Elohim

But what does this mean?

Qol is simply the word “voice.”

But we need to look at the word ***shama*** more carefully because this command has profound meaning.

Shama is repeated twice in this and other passages which gives us the meaning **“indeed obey.”** Or in another place ***shama shama*** is translated as “carefully obey.” Saying the word twice in a passage gives the word emphasis. It tells us to: ***really pay attention to this concept. It’s IMPORTANT!***

Definitions

Strong’s Concordance tells us ***shama*** is a primitive root meaning:

“to hear intelligently—often with the implication of attention and obedience.”

Brown-Driver-Briggs adds this meaning:

**... to hear or perceive by ear,
... to hear with attention or interest,
... to consent, yield or agree,
... to understand,
... to obey or be obedient.**

Throughout the Bible it is translated to mean,

“Listen, hearken, hear, obey, heed” ... All these words are the word ***shama***.

The Hebrew language carries more depth of meaning than we can find in English. When God asks us to ***shama qol Yehovah***, He is asking that we:

- **HEAR** with our ears
- **YIELD** to the voice of God
- Contemplate the words long enough to **UNDERSTAND** them
- and then translate our understanding into acts of **OBEDIENCE**.

“Shama qol Yehovah” means to:

HEAR/YIELD/UNDERSTAND/OBEY the voice of Jehovah.

Let’s look at each of these meanings more carefully to see how **shama** goes from hearing into obedience.

Hear – the physical sound—or sight of words on the page.

We often accomplish at least this much, even when reading through our Bibles quickly. *But this is as far as some people get when they read but do not really believe God. I think another way of saying this is that the words **GO IN ONE EAR AND OUT THE OTHER.***

This stage is simply giving in to listen. It is as if doing a double-take and saying, “What did you say again?” Technically, this is placing the words into our short-term memory.

Do you remember the last time you couldn’t find your keys—or your glasses—because you set them down without thinking about what you were doing? When you went to look for them you had no idea where they were because your mind never registered the “when and where” that you tossed them. God is asking that we commit His words at least as far as our short-term memory and say to ourselves, “I should probably give some thought to these words from God.”

Yield – Accept, believe, take the words into ourselves.

We may not realize this, but everything we hear, we filter through our thoughts—often judging before we even think about what was said. God is also asking that we allow His words to get past our own filters. That we put the value of God above our own thoughts or reactions.

Think about this for a minute.

We put the value of God above our own thoughts or reactions.

If God said it, it must be important. We need to choose to give God’s words a place of importance that is high above everything else that we think or feel, even if we don’t understand them yet.

To **YIELD** to God is **a willingness** to listen to what God is saying and to put our own thoughts on pause. This is a choice we can all make right now, right here in this meeting. To obtain righteousness, we must choose to put God first. And keep making the same choice at every crossroad.

This is the stage where most people fall off track and don’t follow through to righteousness. And this is a problem. Scripture says,

“You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!” James 2:19

The problems is, that the **demons don’t YIELD to God.**

Have you ever had a conversation with someone and, before you are finished speaking, they cut you off and start talking about what **they thought you were going to say**. And it **wasn't what you were going to say?**

Their thoughts were louder in their head than your words were. They didn't "yield" or, they didn't take in your words at all or even consider them. Do we listen to God this way?

Shama is asking us to believe in God. Because **He is speaking**, combined with the fact that **He is God**, we **should learn to automatically yield** to His authority.

Do we believe that God is God? Then why don't we yield to Him?

Understand – **Shama** asks us to "hear intelligently."

This means that we wait long enough before turning on our own ideas until we actually understand what God is trying to tell us. The more we understand, the more our faith will increase.

If we listen to words with the idea that **we need to understand them**, we will recognize **when** we don't understand. That will lead to more discussion with God until we do understand.

Peter said that "**no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.**" (2 Peter 1:20-21) When we **hear, yield** and **pause long enough** to let the Bible explain itself, believing what God said, then we will **understand** what God is trying to say to us. Do we believe that God is able to teach us precept upon precept, line upon line, so that we might go forward?

This takes a distrust of ourselves and a trust in God to let **HIM be our understanding**.

Obey –

When we fully understand and believe that God knows better than we do, then we will turn God's words into actions—into **obedience**.

And this action will be a "righteous act" because it was directed by God.

What God is asking here is that we Hear with our ears, let the understanding settle into our minds and then become so deeply rooted that it becomes our obedience—our righteousness.

This is the same thing when you ask your son to take out the trash. When he doesn't get it done, you say to him, "Why didn't you listen to me?" You don't mean literally, "**Why didn't the sound my voice vibrate on your eardrums?**"

What you are saying to him is, "**Why didn't my speech become your obedience?**"



This is the same thing that God is asking for. Don't just **read** your Bible, but **yield** to His word, **understand** it and **obey**.

✂ ***This seemingly simple command from God is the key to understanding Righteousness by Faith.***

By saying to the Children of Israel in the Old Testament, ***"If you will indeed obey My voice,"*** God presented them with an invitation to become His Special Treasure. Haven't the Apostles been saying these same things for ages? Consider these verses. They are painting the same picture of Righteousness by Faith as does the simple word, ***Shama***.

Romans 10:17

"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

Hebrews 11:6

"Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."

We can see that "believing God" and "diligently seeking Him" is what the word ***shama*** is asking when it requires us to HEAR/YIELD/UNDERSTAND/ and OBEY.

In the symbolism found in the Sanctuary, there was a Bronze Laver for washing that stood outside of the entrance to the Holy Place of the Temple. In King Solomon's temple, it was a mighty artifact that stood above a dozen oxen.

Washing in the laver was spoken of by Paul when he said, "washing of the water by the word."

"That He might sanctify and cleanse [His Church] with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish." (Ephesians 5:26-27)

The laver makes sense when you are talking about washing. But where does "the Word" fit in?

It is from the words ***shama qol, Obey My Voice***, that the pieces all fit together.

And we can see here in Paul's imagery that this washing by the Word of God—*the voice of God*—would lead to a pure church, prepared to meet her Saviour. It is the process of being of being immersed in His Word that we get to know who God is and that He is purifier of men.

And it is by yielding to Him in everything that He commands that—as a church and as a people—we can accomplish that purity.



The Voice of God

God's Word, whether it is spoken by God as it audibly thundered from Sinai,

- whether it has been written down by the Prophets over long ages,
- whether it comes forth from the lips of a humble Jesus or
- whether it comes to us in the “still small voice” of the Holy Spirit,

... it gives us a window into the heart of God.

It tells us of His tears, as in Jeremiah 9 when God wanted to weep fountains of waters over the slain of the daughter of His people. It tells us of His anger as He grabbed Ezekiel by a lock of his hair and lifted him up from the earth. It speaks words of Passion as the king wooed his beloved Shulamite shepherdess. And how nice it would be to hear **these** words come from God someday, “*Well done, My faithful servant. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*”

But instead, time after time, what we hear from the Lord is pleading and entreaty, asking that if we would but “Hearken unto the voice of the Lord, thy God,” we would live. Sometimes I think the Lord sounds like a broken record as He pleads for us to **hear, hearken, listen and obey.**

And ***we can obey. IF we would but shama qol Yehovah.***

In John 8, as Jesus spoke to the Pharisees who believed in Him, he said,

“If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.” ...

But to the Pharisees who were resisting His every entreaty, He came straight out and asked them why they didn't obey the voice of God!

“Why do you not understand My speech?” Why don't you “***shama qol?***”

“... Because you are not able to listen to My word.” “He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God.” (John 8:31, 43, 47)

This conversation that Jesus had with the Pharisees, shows us a little more about how our key verses from Exodus 19 are a profound part of the Bible's message. This concept will come to life for you. Now that you see it, you will be able to see that it is a wide-spread and significant part of the Bible.

At Sinai, with these simple words,

Shama qol Yehovah,

Jehovah asked for a pure church that would stand before Him, faultless in righteousness and faith. Simply because we **HEAR/YIELD/UNDERSTAND/OBEY** the voice of God, He will be able to form us into ***His Kingdom of Priests and a Holy Nation.***

***It is the obedience to the word of God
that will become the righteous actions that we do.***

Abraham

In his obedience to God's Voice, Abraham shows us the full package of how ***faith becomes works.***

Abraham may have started out on shaky ground when he did not understand that God meant to give him a miracle baby and thought that he should bring that about by having a “child of the flesh” as any other man could do.

But once Abraham saw the power of God to give him a “son of promise,” then Abraham’s **belief grew into faith**. And so Scripture says,

“He believed in the Lord and He accounted it to him for righteousness.” (Genesis 15:6)

But Abraham continued to grow in his faith in God and turned that faith into righteous works, as Scripture says,

“Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My Laws.” (Genesis 26:5)

Do we realize that Abraham kept all parts of God’s Law even 430 years before the Law was given to Moses at Sinai?

Abraham kept God’s *mitzvah, cuqqah, and Torah*. This fact helps settle some of the controversy in Adventism today. Yes, the Law of God existed before the Exodus from Egypt, before there were any Jews, before the first temple or even before Jerusalem was founded.

commandments • statutes • Torah

And these *mitzvah, cuqqah and Torah* contain God’s true worship, the weekly and yearly Sabbaths, as far back as the time of Abraham and even earlier.

Here in this verse in Genesis 26 we again find the key to Righteousness by Faith.

🔑 Abraham **obeyed My voice [shama qol]**

... and kept My Commandments [mitzvah], My statutes [cuqqah] and My law [Torah.]

The Voice of God is able to keep us on the straight and narrow path. But only if we listen and obey. It is just this simple:

In our obedience to the voice of God, we will be turned to righteousness.

Obedying our own voice will never lead to righteousness.

God said to Adam, “because you have hearkened [shama] unto the voice [qol] of your wife, and have eaten of the tree, of which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the land for your sake ...” (Genesis 3:17)

“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.” (Proverbs 14:12)

But true faith leads to righteous works ...

In Romans 6:16, Paul shows us another picture of obedience leading to righteousness when he says,

“Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one’s slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?”

In the book of James, we also see how this kind of “obedience” to God is called “faith” and how this true and obedient belief in God will lead to righteous works.

James 2:14-24

“What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works?... Faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, ‘You have faith, and I have works.’

“Show me your faith without your works, and *I will show you my faith by my works.* ... Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar?

“Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? And [Abraham] was called the friend of God.... You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.”

New Testament

This concept of *shama qol* in the New Testament too where God is still seeking His beloved bride. Do you recognize the same command in Revelation?

“He who has an ear, let Him *hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*”

In Talk 5 this week, we will find out that this verse is given to us for the final purification of His church. So even all the way into Revelation, God is still looking for a people who will hear Him.

And He has given a special blessing on those who do!

I just wanted to point out to you how widespread this concept is.

As it turns out, the whole book of John is talking about the “Voice of God.” I’ve heard it said that the Gospel of John is the “love gospel,” but I think it is better stated that it is all about the “voice of God.” Here’s where I see this:

John begins with this verse:

John 1:1

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

Then throughout the book of John we see Jesus as the spokesman for God as He says,

John 12:47-49

“And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the

last day. For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak.”



Jesus is saying that He will not judge anyone who refuses His voice. He speaks the words that His Father gave Him to speak. So it would be the same as refusing the voice of God to refuse the words of Jesus. This **“refusal to hear and obey”** is what will judge us in the end.

Jesus said to the people, **“My sheep hear My voice.” My sheep *shama qol*.**

Ten Commandments

The more we consider this phrase—***Shama qol Yehovah***—the more we will begin to see God’s Ten Commandments in a different light than we have ever seen them before.

The church has been accused of holding up the Commandments as a big TO-DO list. Or we have been accused of trying to work our way to heaven by following a legalistic list of do’s and don’ts.

But with the concept of *Shama qol Yehovah*, **everything changes!**

Look at Exodus chapters 19 through 34 as a whole—as God dealt with the people on Sinai. What we find here is that the first command that God gave from Sinai was in chapter 19 where He said,

“If you will indeed obey My voice.”

After that He moved into chapter 20 where He gave the “Ten Commandments” as we think of them.

Can we look at these Commandments in a completely different way now? Instead of a list of do’s and don’ts, they become the **result** of our obedience to the voice of God.

God said, *If you obey My voice, ...*

then you will have no other gods before Me and you will not bow down to them.

If you obey My voice, ...

you will remember the Sabbath to keep it holy.

If you obey My voice, ...

you will not murder, steal, covet, lie or commit adultery.

God is saying that our obedience to His voice will lead us to righteousness!

He will be there as the Still Small Voice in our ear reminding us of the details. He would say,

... Even if you lust after a woman, it would be adultery.

... If you hate your brother, it will be the same as murdering him.

... That even the seemingly harmless act of gossip will assassinate the character of another person.

... Or, even as He spoke to Cain, “if you do well, you will be accepted, and if you do not do well, sin lies at the door.”

The Ten Commandments are actions that come as a result of listening to God.

The Ten Commandments are not the only things that God has asked from us. They are just the outline and do not contain all of the details.

After all, what commandment **did Eve break** when she ate the fruit? Was, “Do not eat of the fruit in the midst of the garden” on the list of 10 Commandments? Eve’s sin was that she did not **obey the voice of God**.

... Eve did not ***shama qol Yehovah Elohim***.

And a million years down into eternity, when you are in the New Earth, when God asks you to go do something, are you going to answer Him, “Well, I didn’t see that written on the list ...”?

The 10 Commandments are a good outline of the living principles of God’s Government, and we need to align ourselves with His laws if we expect to live among holy beings, but, if we have God’s voice speaking to us, He will give us the finer details of the Law.

He will tell us, “ ‘This is the way, walk ye in it,’ whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left.” (Isaiah 30:21)

What we need to do is to ***HEAR/YIELD/UNDERSTAND/AND OBEY the voice of God***.

Luke 8:20-21

“And it was told [to Jesus] by some, who said, ‘Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see You.’ But He answered and said to them, ‘My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it.’”

This is a profound statement by Jesus regarding the concept of “*shama qol*.” He is telling us that those who ***both hear and obey His voice***, are those ***He considers as His family!*** We will see that this becomes an essential ingredient in becoming the 144,000.

If you take home nothing else this entire week, make sure you understand this commandment from God because it is most essential to our righteousness.

God ***IS*** asking that we stand before Him blameless. But He is also giving us every possible blessing to make it easy for this to happen. And one of the most profound aids that He gives us is His voice speaking in our hearing.

After spying out the land, I want to deliver a good report to you. Others have become righteous in the sight of God. So can we!

- **Consider Enoch who “pleased God.”**
- **Elijah was filled with the Holy Spirit and God took him also.**
- **Moses and Abraham were friends of God.**
- **“Simeon ... was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.” (Luke 2:25)**
- **Noah, Daniel, and Job will be delivered by their righteousness.**

- God said to Elijah, “I have 7000 reserved unto Me who have not bowed the knee to Baal, neither have they kissed him.”

And even the humble parents of John the Baptist are given this glowing report in Scripture,

“And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless.” (Luke 1:6)

And we have these words from Mrs. White:

“Christ does not lessen the claims of the law. In unmistakable language He presents obedience to it as the condition of eternal life—the same condition that was required of Adam before his fall. The Lord expects no less of the soul now than He expected of man in Paradise, perfect obedience, unblemished righteousness. The requirement under the covenant of grace is just as broad as the requirement made in Eden—harmony with God’s law, which is holy, just, and good.” (White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 391.2)

But the very good news is that He will guide us into Righteousness. We do not have to do it alone.

Two Things to Consider

Now, before we close for today I have two more concepts that I want to put out there for you to consider.

1 Up until now we’ve talked about how listening to God’s words—utilizing the complete meaning of the word **shama** (HEAR/YIELD/UNDERSTAND/OBEY) can work to produce obedience and righteousness. But I want you to consider that man *always* has a choice. At any point in the process he could decide to accept or reject God.

- He could either decide to open up his Bible and read or he could refuse, choosing to do something else with his time. This would be his choice to HEAR ... or NOT. But let’s say he does decide to read.
- Once he reads he could decide to YIELD or not. How many times have we seen this? They say, “Yeah, the Bible says Sabbath is the seventh-day, BUT” ... (“I keep Sunday because that was the day Christ arose from the dead” ... or “I think any day is okay” ... or “well, I like my church and they worship on Sunday”). All of these comments show a lack of willingness to YIELD to God’s word. But let’s say he thinks keeping Sabbath on the seventh-day is okay ...
- But there’s a ball game that he really wants to go to or maybe a special one-day sale he wants to catch. Did “UNDERSTANDING” of what it means to “rest” really happen?

Do you see where I’m going with this? We **ALWAYS** have a choice. At any point in the process we could decide to stop the forward progress. But if we do, was righteousness achieved? If we stop, did we really do what God asked of us?

Our efforts will be insufficient if we go only part way. “Close” will **not be good enough**. It would be like the man who went in to the wedding without a wedding garment on. Anything less than 100% shows that we chose **our will** over God’s.

2 My second point is that when God brings something to our attention and offers us that choice, our decisions lead in one of two pathways.
Consider these verses:

Exodus 8:32

“But Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also; neither would he let the people go. “

Hebrews 3:14-15

“For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, while it is said: ‘*Today, if you will hear His voice (shama qol), do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.”*

Do you see the contrast here?



Persistent refusal to obey leads to hardened hearts—NOT good.

But trusting, believing and yielding to the word of God leads to hearts of flesh where God’s Spirit can dwell. These are hearts that have been open to the word of God and washed from their impurities by the truth that is found in Scripture.

The choice is ours to make but God desires that we should choose Him and choose life!

Deuteronomy 30:19-20

“I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.”

When we hear the word of God, it is our choice to HEAR/YIELD/UNDERSTAND/ and OBEY. *Will we shama qol Yehovah Elohim and live?*

I’ve already heard several speakers talk about some of the controversies we have over doctrine and the problem that this causes. We need a way to get past those difficulties and still be friends. The message of *shama qol* gives us that way to find unity as a body of believers.

When we realize that God has ONE true way, when we all choose to align ourselves under One Captain, then all we need to do is follow His command.

By allowing the word to wash us, we can find that fellowship, but only if we are each listening to God.

For now, know that God needs us to get to know Him. He needs a relationship with us. And any good relationship has to be founded with communication. By listening to God we can start to learn

about this Wonderful, Amazing God that we have who loves us beyond anything we can even imagine.

I hope you gained a blessing from our time together today. I certainly enjoy looking into God's word and understanding the deeper meanings.

In the next talk I am going to take a look at the phrase: ***"Keep My Covenant."***