

## Doctrine of Shema

1. Some have thought in error that Rom 10:9-10 required belief and confession for salvation. Paul uses the most sacred **Shema** to explain the correct meaning of these verses.
2. 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.
3. In a Church Age letter written mostly to believing Gentiles in Rome, Paul elects to pause and speak directly to Israel.

Rom 1:1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God --

Rom 1:2 the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scripture

Rom 1:3 regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David

Rom 1:4 and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.

Rom 1:5 Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith.

Rom 1:6 And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

Rom 1:7 To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

4. 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, “Listen-up, Israel.” The imperative demands Israel listen, and listen they have done throughout history. On every Sabbath, Saturday, each service is opened with the **Shema**.

5. “**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. The KJV translates the Hebrew of Deu 6:4.

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

6. 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 mouth, 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.

7. 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;

8. What word of faith is Paul speaking? What is in their mouth? It's the Shema.

8.1 "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one" is a very poor translation, a failure to translate a plural noun as plural and a poor translation of **Hayah**, the supplied verb. **Hayah**, as we have noted in our study of Creation and Restoration, has several legitimate translations, depending on the context.

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

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

8.1.1 How do we know **Hayah** is mistranslated? Because Isa 45:18 tells us the earth was not created without form and void; but rather, the original Creation was created perfect.

Isa 45:18 For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, **he created it not in vain**, (*Hebrew Tohu*) he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else.

8.2 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 a verb and we, as Church Age saints, have the help of Paul to assist in our Translation.

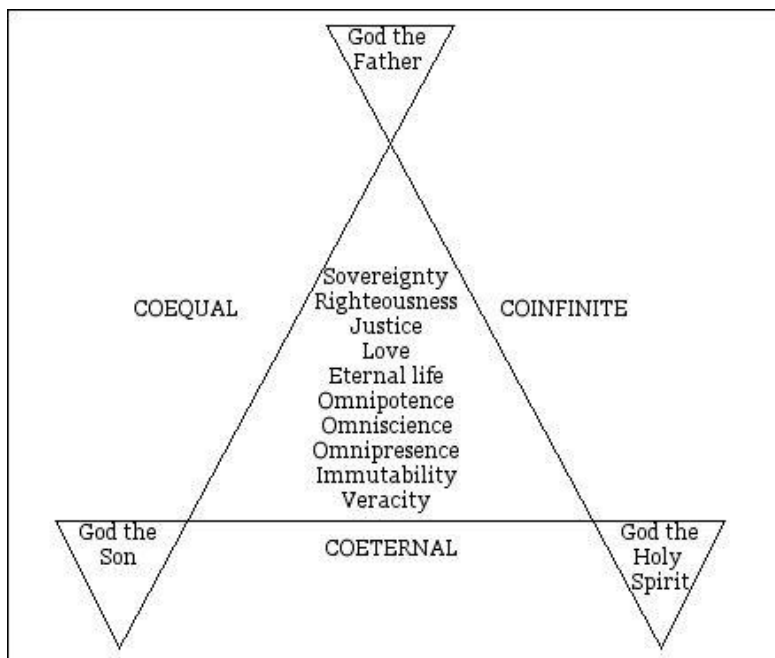
8.3 We begin with the Kal imperative of the Hebrew verb **Shema** followed by the proper noun singular of **Yisrael**. Clearly "listen, Israel" or Hear, Israel."

8.4 Next we have the proper noun singular **Yehovah**; it is what we call the Tetragrammaton's or revealed member of the Trinity. **Yehovah**, we know from the context, is the Lord Jesus. Literally, **Yehovah** is one member of the Trinity.

8.5 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 as “is, are, was, were, or became.”

8.6 Then we have the proper noun plural of **El**, usually written as **Elohim** except when accompanied with the 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**.

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



8.7 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.”

8.8 Now for the second phrase. The phrase begins with **Yehovah**, a singular proper noun usually translated Jehovah or Lord, Who we know as the Lord Jesus. However, literally, He is simply one of the members of the Trinity—**Elohim**.

8.9 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 be translated either as “one” or “unique.”

8.10 Translation: “Listen up, Israel, and pay attention. The Lord Jehovah is our plural God; the Lord Jehovah became One.”

9. Paul is stressing the need for Israelites to become, by faith, real Jews. He 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 real Jews.” The purpose then of the **Shema** is to put words in their mouths, which is as Paul declares, “the words which we preach.”

9.1 There is a difference between an ethnic Jew and a real Jew, as was written by Malachi in chapter one: “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.

10. 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;

11. The Shema was actually quoted twice daily in synagogues all over the Roman Empire. And even today it is recited each and every Saturday. Now let’s see how Deu 6:4 looks by way of an expanded translation.

**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 one and unique.”**

12. 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

13. This confession is well recognized by Moses and Paul as the entrance to salvation. 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.

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

14. 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.”

15. Again the verses:

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

**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 one and unique.”**

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;

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.

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