

Hear O Israel: Bear Witness to the LORD your God!

The Torah portion read this last Shabbat called Va'etchanan, contains the passage of scripture known as the Shema, Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 NKJV 4 "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! 5 "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. 6 "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. 7 "You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. 8 "You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 "You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

This is the very scripture that Yeshua (Jesus) quotes when a Pharisee asks Him what the greatest commandment is.

Matthew 22:34-38 NKJV 34 But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. 35 Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, 36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" 37 Jesus said to him, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' 38 "This is the first and great commandment.

This passage of scripture in Deuteronomy contains one of those jots and tittles that Yeshua said would not pass from His word. Jots and tittles are not translated or shown in our English translations of the Bible. Jots and tittles are anomalies in the text. They take the form of enlarged letters, shrunken letters, letters written backwards or missing or added letters as in deliberate misspellings of words, gaps in the text, etc. Take a look at the greatest commandment as it appears in Hebrew in a Torah scroll with the jots and tittles intact.

דָּאָחַ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה יִשְׂרָאֵל עֶשֶׂם

This is the first part of Deuteronomy 6:4 which translated to English is:

Hear O Israel the LORD our God, the LORD is one!

You will notice the two enlarged letters in this verse. They are the Ayin ע and the Dalet ד. (Hebrew is read right to left). These two letters taken together spell another Hebrew word, eyd עד. It is defined in the Strong's Dictionary as:

#5707. עד `ed, ayd contracted from 5749 ; concretely, a witness; abstractly, **testimony**; specifically, a recorder, i.e. **prince:--witness**.

In the ancient Hebrew, the letters were represented by pictographs and form a picture of the meaning of words.

Hebrew word picture: Witness: ayd: עד (Hebrew reads right to left)

Ayin: ע = eye, to see

Dalet: ד Door, pathway

Witness means to see the door or pathway.

This word, עד shares a common primitive root word with:

#5712 עדה `edah, ay-daw' feminine of 5707 in the original sense of fixture; a stated assemblage (specifically, a concourse, or generally, a family or crowd):--assembly, company, **congregation, multitude, people**, swarm. Compare 5713.

#5713. עדה `edah, ay-daw' feminine of 5707 in its technical sense; testimony:--**testimony, witness**. Compare 5712.

Hebrew word picture for Testimony: עדה ay-daw:

Ayin: ע = eye, to see

Dalet: ד = Door, pathway

Hey: ה = Behold, reveal, to see

Testimony is what comes from seeing the pathway.

The root of these words is from #5749:

#5749. עוּד `uwd, ood a primitive root; to duplicate or repeat; by implication, to protest, **testify (as by reiteration)**; intensively, to encompass, restore (as a sort of reduplication):--admonish, charge, earnestly, **lift up**, protest, call (take) to record, relieve, rob, solemnly, stand upright, **testify**, give warning, **(bear, call to, give, take to) witness**.

Eyd עַד, along with these other words, take on the meanings of the primitive root and gives added depth to the scriptures in which they appear. The jot and tittle of the enlarged letters here in Deuteronomy 6:4, means that one is to take special note of them in relation to this scripture. In continuing on in the Deuteronomy passage in chapter 6, it says:

Deuteronomy 6:6-9 NKJV 6 "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. 7 "You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. 8 "You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 "You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

These words of the Shema are the heart and soul of daily Jewish life. They comprise a prayer that is recited the very first thing when one awakes in the morning and is the last words when one retires for the night. This is the first prayer and words of scripture that Jewish children are taught from the moment they can speak. In verse 8 it says: "You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes." This is taken literally and a small box containing this very scripture is attached to one's left hand and on one's forehead, what is known as tefillin, when engaged in ritual prayers.

In verse 9 it says: "You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates." A mezuzah, which literally means doorpost, is placed on the doorpost of one's house and gates. The mezuzah contains a tiny scroll with the words of the Shema written on it. And when one is sitting in one's home and traveling from place to place, one is to speak of these words to others whom we meet along the way.

The greatest commandment is to “love the LORD our God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our strength.” And in doing so, we **bear witness** of the **prince** to the **congregation**, the **multitude of people** we meet along our way. Peter said we are to speak these words as a **testimony** of the death and resurrection of Messiah Yeshua, as a way to **lift up** the Prince of Life.

Acts 3:15 NKJV And killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses.

ברוך שלום

Shalom and be blessed

Dan & Brenda Cathcart

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