



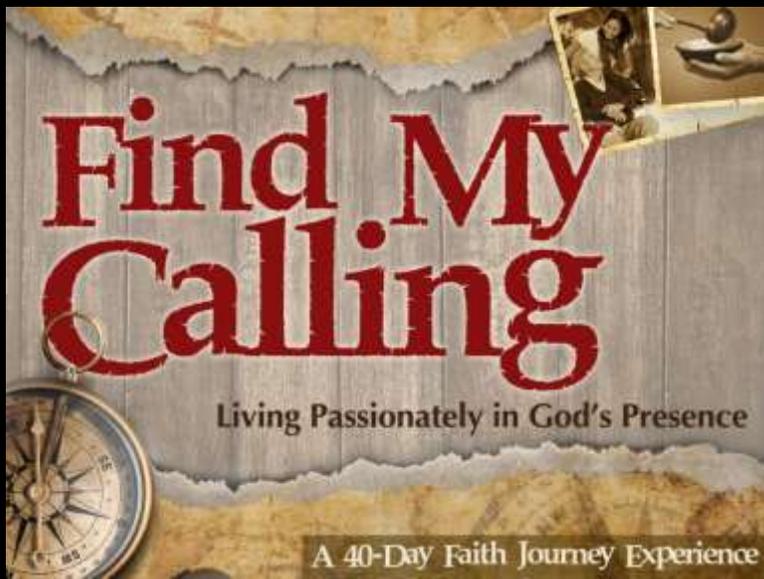
HEAR HIS VOICE

40 Days of Faith

**The passion of First Melissa is to
make disciples of Jesus who:**



**We are spending 40 Days learning to
be more devoted disciples of Jesus**



January 2014



January 2015

**40 Days
of FAITH**



January 2016



January 2017

HEAR HIS VOICE



HEAR HIS VOICE

40 Days of Faith

Why 40 Days?

**Forty is mentioned 146 times in
Scripture.**

**It symbolizes trial and testing,
probation, or the fulfillment of
promises.**

40 Days in the Bible

- **Israelite spies spent 40 days searching out the Promised Land. (Numbers 13:25)**
- **The Israelites spent 40 years in the wilderness, one year for each day they explored the Promised Land and didn't trust God. (Exodus 16:35 & Numbers 14:33-34)**

Source: http://www.40day.com/40_in_the_bible.html and <http://www.ecclesia.org/truth/40.html>

**"Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our
God, the Lord is one!"**

Deuteronomy 6:4

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, יְיָ אֶחָד.

Sh'ma Yisra-eil, Adonai Eloheinu Adonai Echad.

There is no biblical Hebrew word for "obey."

English word translated "obey" is the Hebrew word "shema."

Today, before we obey, we usually go through a 3 part process...

1) We hear what God says

2) We evaluate the command based on our understanding

3) We make a choice to obey based on our evaluation

What does God require from us?

He's looking for **shema levot...for hearing hearts**. A hearing heart is intent on or committed to doing whatever God commands... whatever He asks from us.

God's Calling of Samuel

Then the Lord **came** and **stood** and **called** as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for Your servant is listening." 1 Samuel 3:10

SHEMA LESSONS FROM SAMUEL'S LIFE

- Sometimes, when God speaks to me, I need to **wait** and **ponder** before I share
- After hearing the word of the Lord, I should continue to **serve** God and others
- Listening to God does not guarantee the **absence** of struggle or pain
- Messages from the Lord are **always right** and **sometimes troubling**
- Sometimes God speaks **to me** but the message is not **for me**
- When God gives me a word **for other people**, I am to deliver it humbly and completely and honestly

SHEMA AND THEN ACT

Acts 10

Joppa and Caesarea in the days of the New Testament



Caesarea Maritima



Caesarea Maritima

Caesarea was a Phoenician site in the Persian period (6th to 3rd Century BC). The Phoenicians, the maritime merchants of the ancient world, used the natural bays and the nearby rivers in order to establish a port, one of many ports that they set up along the shore stretching from Tyre down to Gaza.

In the Roman period, King Herod created it into one of the largest cities in the Roman World, and called it after his patron, Augustus Caesar. The site was an important Roman city, and played an important role in the history of Ancient Israel.

Caesarea Maritima



HEAR HIS VOICE

Caesarea Maritima



HEAR HIS VOICE

Who was Peter?

Peter was one of Jesus' twelve disciples. Originally named Simon, Peter was a Galilean fisherman (Mark 1:16; Luke 5:2; John 21:3), the son of John (Matt. 16:17; John 1:42; 21:15-17) and brother of Andrew. The brothers came from the village of Bethsaida (John 1:43; 12:21) and had been disciples of John the Baptist before they became disciples of Jesus. Peter was married (Mark 1:29-31; 1 Cor. 9:5). He owned a house in Capernaum (Mark 1:29).

The name 'Peter' is the Greek word for 'rock' (petra) and translates an Aramaic nickname (Cepha) that also means 'rock.' Peter's emergence as a leader among Jesus' disciples is reflected in the story found in Matt. 16:18-19 that Jesus bestowed the nickname 'rock' on Simon.

The Gospels place Peter among the first disciples to be called, along with his brother Andrew and the sons of Zebedee (cf. Mark 1:16-20; Matt. 4:18-22; John 1:40-42).

Peter was a leader among the disciples during Jesus' ministry. Frequently, he was their spokesman. His name always occurs first in lists of the disciples (Mark 3:16; Luke 16:14; Matt. 10:2). Along with James and John, he is singled out for special revelations of Jesus' divinity (Mark 5:37; Luke 8:51, the healing of Jairus' daughter; Mark 9:2; Matt. 17:1; Luke 9:28, the transfiguration).

-Harper's Bible Dictionary

Who was Cornelius?

A Roman centurion stationed in Caesarea. The story of his conversion to Christianity is told in Acts 10 and he is defended by Peter in Acts 11:1-18. Before his conversion, Cornelius was apparently associated with the synagogue as a 'god-fearer.' He gave alms and dedicated himself to prayer. While he and his friends listened to Peter present the gospel, the Holy Spirit came upon them. For the writer of Acts, this was divine attestation that Gentiles should be accepted into the Christian community on the same basis (i.e., faith) as Jewish converts to belief in Jesus as the Messiah. It is significant that, in Acts, it is Peter who opens the door of faith to the Gentiles, but he does so only after having received a vision from God. -Harper's Bible Dictionary

Now there was a man at Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian cohort [regiment of 600 soldiers], a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, and gave many alms to the Jewish people and prayed to God continually. About the ninth hour of the day [3 pm] he clearly saw in a vision an angel of God who had just come in and said to him, "Cornelius!" And fixing his gaze on him and being much alarmed, he said, "What is it, Lord?" And he said to him, "Your prayers and alms have ascended as a memorial before God." Acts 10:1-4

Cornelius the Roman Centurion

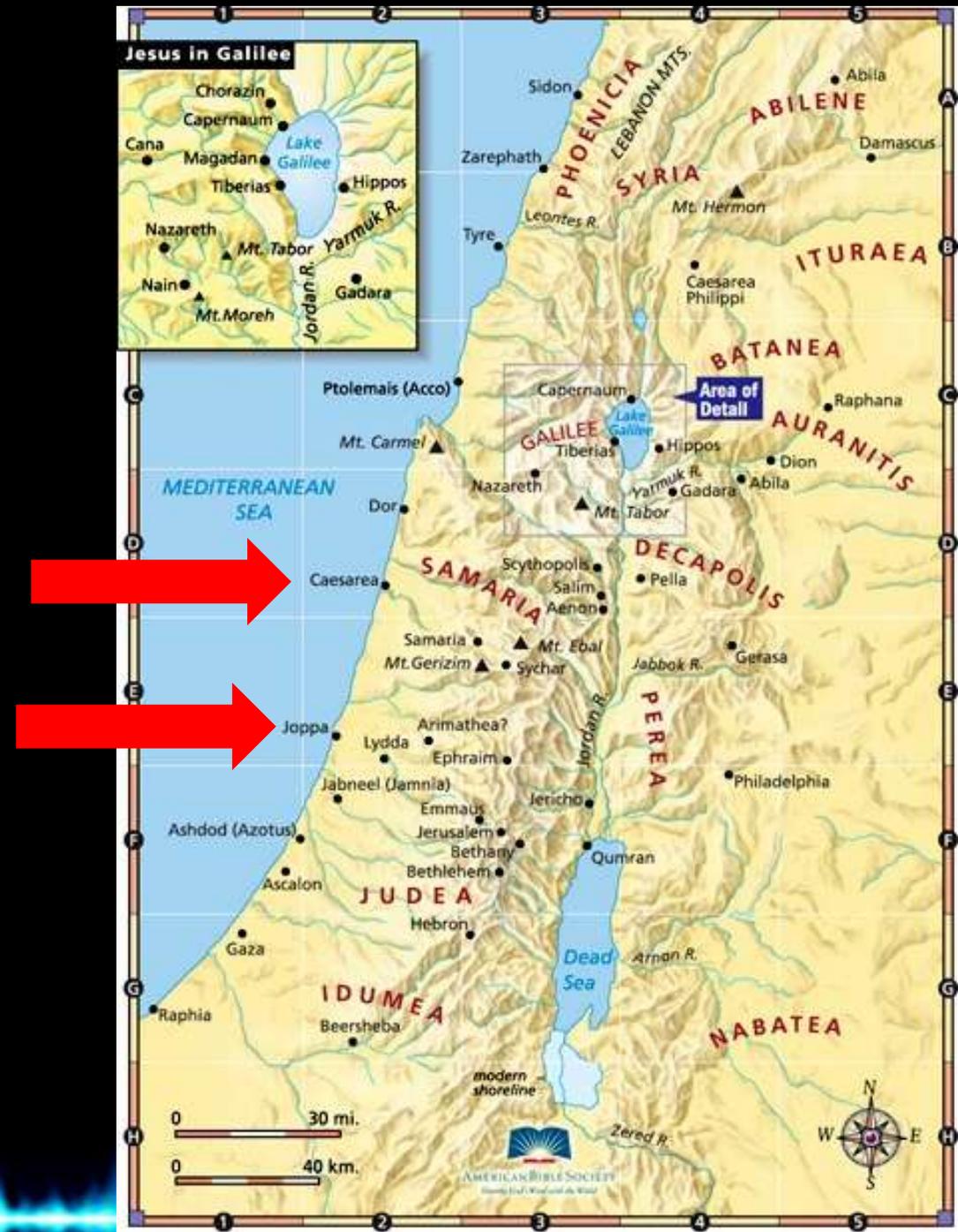


HEAR HIS VOICE

“Now dispatch some men to Joppa and send for a man named Simon, who is also called Peter; he is staying with a tanner named Simon, whose house is by the sea.” When the angel who was speaking to him had left, he summoned two of his servants and a devout soldier of those who were his personal attendants, and after he had explained everything to them, he sent them to Joppa. Acts 10:5-8

***The angel could have explained salvation to Cornelius, but God had a part for Peter to play**

A distance of 30-35 miles between Joppa and Caesarea



And Peter stayed many days in Joppa with a tanner named Simon. Acts 9:43



On the next day, as they were on their way and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour [12 pm] to pray. Acts 10:9

Evening and morning and at noon, I will complain and murmur, and He will hear **shema my voice. He will redeem my soul in peace from the battle which is against me, for they are many who strive with me. God will hear **shema** and answer them... Psalm 55:17-19a**

But he became hungry and was desiring to eat; but while they were making preparations, he fell into a trance; and he saw the sky opened up, and an object like a great sheet coming down, lowered by four corners to the ground, and there were in it all kinds of four-footed animals and crawling creatures [reptiles] of the earth and birds of the air. A voice came to him, "Get up, Peter, kill and eat!" But Peter said, "By no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything unholy and unclean." Acts 10:10-14

***This was the third time Peter directly refused God's will (Matthew 16:23; John 13:8). Sometimes we think we want to **shema** the Lord but we are tempted to tell Him a better plan.**

Again a voice came to him a **second time**, "What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy." This happened **three times**, and immediately the object was taken up into the sky. Acts 10:15-16

***If we will continue to faithfully **shema** the Lord, He will continue to faithfully speak to us, even when we have trouble believing or obeying.**



HEAR HIS VOICE

Now while Peter was greatly perplexed in mind as to what the vision which he had seen might be, behold, the men who had been sent by Cornelius, having asked directions for Simon's house, appeared at the gate; and calling out, they were asking whether Simon, who was also called Peter, was staying there. While Peter was reflecting on the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are looking for you. But get up, go downstairs and accompany them without misgivings, for I have sent them Myself." Acts 10:17-20

Peter went down to the men and said, "Behold, I am the one you are looking for; what is the reason for which you have come?" They said, "Cornelius, a centurion, a righteous and God-fearing man well spoken of by the entire nation of the Jews, was divinely directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and hear a message from you." So he invited them in and gave them lodging.

Acts 10:21-23a

And on the next day he got up and went away with them, and some of the brethren from Joppa accompanied him. On the following day he entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them and had called together his relatives and close friends. When Peter entered, Cornelius met him, and fell at his feet and worshiped him. But Peter raised him up, saying, "Stand up; I too am just a man."

Acts 10:23b-26

As he talked with him, he entered and found many people assembled. And he said to them, "You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a man who is a Jew to associate with a foreigner or to visit him; and yet **God has shown me that I should not call any man unholy or unclean.** That is why I came without even raising any objection when I was sent for. So I ask for what reason you have sent for me."

Acts 10:27-29

Jesus said, "For God so loved **the world**, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."

John 3:16

Cornelius said, "Four days ago to this hour, I was praying in my house during the ninth hour [3 pm]; and behold, a man stood before me in shining garments, and he said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God. Therefore send to Joppa and invite Simon, who is also called Peter, to come to you; he is staying at the house of Simon the tanner by the sea.' So I sent for you immediately, and you have been kind enough to come. Now then, we are all here present before God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord." Acts 10:30-33

Opening his mouth, Peter said: "I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, but in **every nation** the man who fears [worships] Him and does what is right is welcome to Him." Acts 10:34-35

Jesus said, "Go therefore and make disciples of **all the nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" Matthew 28:19

"The word which He sent to the sons of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all)— you yourselves know the thing which took place throughout all Judea, starting from Galilee, after the baptism which John proclaimed. You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. We are witnesses of all the things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They also put Him to death by hanging Him on a cross." Acts 10:36-39

"God raised Him up on the third day and granted that He become visible, not to all the people, but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God, that is, to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead. Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins." Acts 10:40-43

***Sharing the love of God with people involves **actions** AND **telling** them specifically who Jesus is and how they can receive salvation**

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered, "Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he?" And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay on for a few days. Acts 10:44-48

SALVATION FOR JEWS AND GENTILES - GOD KEEPS HIS PROMISES

- **Genesis 12:3**
- **Psalm 22:27**
- **Isaiah 42:4**
- **Isaiah 49:6**
- **Isaiah 56:3-7**
- **Isaiah 60:1-3**
- **Jeremiah 16:19-21**
- **Zechariah 2:11**
- **Malachi 1:11**
- **Matthew 28:19-20**
- **Romans 15:9-12**

SHEMA LESSONS FROM PETER AND CORNELIUS

- God speaks to us in multiple ways (Bible, dreams, visions, audibly, in our spirits, through music, through other people, through His creation)
- The more time I spend in prayer, the more I will hear God's voice
- When God speaks, I must choose to obey. **Shema = hear & do**
- What God says to me will usually affect and involve others
- Hearing from God breaks down walls between people
- We are called to love the people that God loves
- Prejudice based on race and ethnicity and background is NOT of God
- When I hear God's voice, I can be His spokesperson to unbelievers
- Like Cornelius, many people know about God and seek God but have not understood and received salvation
- With Cornelius, for the first time the door of faith was opened to Gentiles

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, יְיָ אֶחָד.

Sh'ma Yisra-eil, Adonai Eloheinu Adonai Echad.

Hear, O Israel, Adonai is our God, Adonai is One!

בָּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

Baruch sheim k'vod malchuto l'olam va-ed.

Blessed is God's glorious majesty forever and ever.



HEAR HIS VOICE

40 Days of Faith