



water from rock

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – June 26, 2021

The Lord be with you.

If the ability to speak more than one language is good, then might not the ability to listen... To listen in one language be even greater. Mark Twain said that If we were meant to talk more than listen, well, we'd have two mouths and one ear...

Well, I'm going to talk for a few moments, not too long, I hope, but to talk for a few moments about the importance of listening... Sounds almost like an oxymoron, doesn't it? To talk about the importance of listening, except that I want to talk about the importance of listening to God, about having a heart with ears. I'm looking today at 1 Kings chapter 3, at a young Solomon has been recently crowned king, probably no more than 20 years old. Solomon is remembered often for his legendary wisdom, but I'm not sure we often look at the circumstances in which God endowed Solomon with such great wisdom. Here in 1 Kings chapter 3, we see that it actually happens for Solomon in a dream.

As the Lord appears to young Solomon in a dream and says, ask what I should give to you. And Solomon did not ask God for great power, did not ask for great wealth, for great self-indulgence, but feeling the new weight of responsibility, Solomon asked God, in verse 9 the Hebrew reads, he asked God for *levshemeh*, a hearing heart. Solomon wants his ears connected to God's heart. So we ask for a hearing heart, a heart with ears, a heart to hear the Lord's direction and guidance. And so Solomon says, give to your servant a hearing heart, and asking God for a hearing heart it so pleases God that the God answer Solomon's prayer, making him the wisest man of his age. And God also gives Solomon many, many more things, because he asked God for this one thing. Literally, a hearing heart.

And as long as Solomon is humble and he listens for the Lord with a hearing heart, He is blessed with wisdom beyond that of any one of his age. No king, no ruler, no sovereign can match the wisdom of Solomon, and thus we often speak of the wisdom of Solomon, often when confronted with a difficult situation, I will say, Oh, for the wisdom of Solomon... But note here in the text, that the wisdom of Solomon is actually a hearing heart, a heart with ears on it, a heart ready to listen for. A heart to hear God *levshemeh*. That's the Hebrew, the word *Shemeh*. *Shemeh* means to listen. To pay attention. *Shemehah* is an effective listening, it is a listening, a hearing in order to obey. Now, you might recognize this word *Shama* as the first word of ancient Israel's statement of faith in Deuteronomy chapter 6. *Shemeh* Israel, here O Israel. *Shemeh* Yisrael Adonai Eloheinu Adonai



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Ehad. Hear O, Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one. And that means, shemeh, hear, listen and do. That you shall love the Lord, your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your might. Shemeh, listen up.

Because for the ancient Hebrews, the ear, the ear is the seat of intelligence. True intelligence is the ability to listen. So wisdom is not something we are born with, we must listen for it, wisdom comes from outside of us and must be listened for, listen for daily. So God does not download gigabytes of information into Solomon's brain, rather wisdom will come from hearing the voice of God. From hearing the word of God, taking it in and acting on it.

And so you look at the Book of Proverbs, Solomon's great book of wisdom, and there you see the link between being able to hear, to listen and wisdom throughout the book. Shemeh hear, my child. Listen. And we see in the Book of Proverbs is that a fool is one who cannot hear, who cannot listen. So wisdom for you and me, amidst the many voices that we hear today, wisdom is to listen for and to hear the voice of God. Wisdom is not abstract, but wisdom is the result of listening for... Of wanting to hear God speak. Because God is a God who speaks, He commands, he calls. And the supreme spiritual act is shemeh to her to listen... To obey the voice of God. It's what Adam and Eve had in the Garden of Eden. As it says there in Genesis 3, that they would hear shemeh. They would hear the voice of God in the garden, but then they heard... They listened to another voice, the serpents voice, rather than God's voice. And that's why Jesus commands in Luke 8, verse 18, pay attention to how you hear. And in Matthew 11, Verse 15, Jesus says, Let anyone with ears listen. I often like to pray the prayer of the little boy, Samuel. I say, Here is a voice of God calling to him. The night he says, Speak Lord, your servant is listening.

I like to pray that as I open up the Bible, Speak Lord, your servant is listening. I like to pray that as I'm facing a difficult situation, needing wisdom, Speak Lord, your servant is listening.

Speak Lord, and I still is. While I wait on thee hush my heart to listen in expectancy, fill me with the knowledge of the glorious will all thine good pleasure in the child fulfill.

I am Tim Smith, a fellow traveler. Thanks for listening until next time.