

7

HEBREW WORDS EVERY CHRISTIAN SHOULD KNOW

**With the use of the
Hebrew language God
revealed Himself to
mankind.**

This ancient tongue held the greatest spiritual truths that guided our lives through the ages. And in each generation, they are discovered anew.

We know the Bible can be confusing and you want to get more out of it. Which is why we want to teach you seven Hebrew words that will transform the way you read the Bible.

[Click here to learn more about FIRM.](#)

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Learning a few biblical Hebrew words can have a huge impact on your Bible study, that's why we created a Youtube series called 7 Hebrew Words Every Christian Should Know.

[Check it out here!](#)



SHEMA



שמע [sh'-mah]

People often say that ‘seeing is believing’, but did you know the Bible teaches the opposite—that listening is more important than seeing? We can see it presented perfectly in the words of the Shema prayer.

Shema Prayer is the most important prayer and declaration in the Jewish life, based on a verse from Deuteronomy 6:4:

***“Hear (shema), O Israel:
The Lord our God, the
Lord is one.”***

The prayer is named after the first word of this passage. *Shema*, in the simplest

terms, means ‘to hear’. The Hebrew word pronunciation sounds more like “sh'-mah”. But it also means to obey and take action. So, to hear God is to obey God—and to obey God is to hear God.

“The voice of the LORD twists mighty oaks and strips the forests bare.” (Psalm 29:9) As creation hears God’s voice, it is automatically obedient. God’s voice is able to “strip the forests bare”. Taking action in response to His powerful voice is essential in putting *shema* into practice. The hearing and responding are conjoined.

Do you want to hear from God today? Embrace the full meaning of shema — hear and obey.

HESED

חסד [kheh-sed]

One of the Hebrew words for 'love' is *hesed* (חסד, pronounced "kheh-sed"), which is actually a difficult word to translate into English. That is because it can have a range of meanings.

Theologian John Oswalt said *hesed* is "... a completely undeserved kindness and generosity." The prophet Isaiah wrote, in verse 54:10:

"Though the mountains be shaken, and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love (hesed) for you will not be shaken".

Hesed is not just a feeling, but an action. It "intervenes on behalf of loved ones and comes to their rescue", according to author Lois Tverberg.

Hesed is not a romantic, infatuation kind of love. It is a faithful, reliable love. It is a wife praying for years for her husband to know God. It is parents lovingly caring for their autistic child. *Hesed* is faithful. *Hesed* is loyal. *Hesed* is love put to action.

And most importantly, *hesed* is the unfailing love God has for YOU. It is one of the most fundamental characteristics of God, consistent with what we know about His covenantal nature.

Today, no matter what you face, rely on God's *hesed*.

EMUNAH



אמונה [eh-moo-nah]

The Hebrew word *Emunah* may not sound familiar to you at first, but how about the word AMEN?

The Hebrew word *emunah* (אמונה, pronounced "eh-moo-nah") is understood in English to mean "faith" or "belief". But it is often also translated as "faithfulness". And yet, it describes much more than just believing a statement about God. It reveals a life of full reliance upon Him. (Hebrews 11:1)

"Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."

Emunah is faith that results in faithfulness, implying action. It shouldn't be a total surprise then that the word amen shares the root with *Emunah*. Amen means "so be it" or "may it be so," and shares the root also with *eman*, meaning "to confirm".

Throughout the Bible, the idea of faith is like a staircase. You may intellectually know that the stairs go up to the next level. But you can't just believe in the stairs. Until you climb the stairs, you won't actually experience that next level.

You can't settle for knowing that there is a staircase. To believe is to climb the stairs!

RUACH



רוח [roo'-akh]

Hebrew language is based on word pictures and symbols. It creates images, like the one in Isaiah 59:19 where the prophet writes that God arrives...

“...like a rushing tide driven by the breath of the Lord”.

What an awesome image of God's power and beauty! The Hebrew word we translate as 'breath' in this verse is *ruach* (רוח, pronounced "roo-akh"), which also means 'Spirit'.

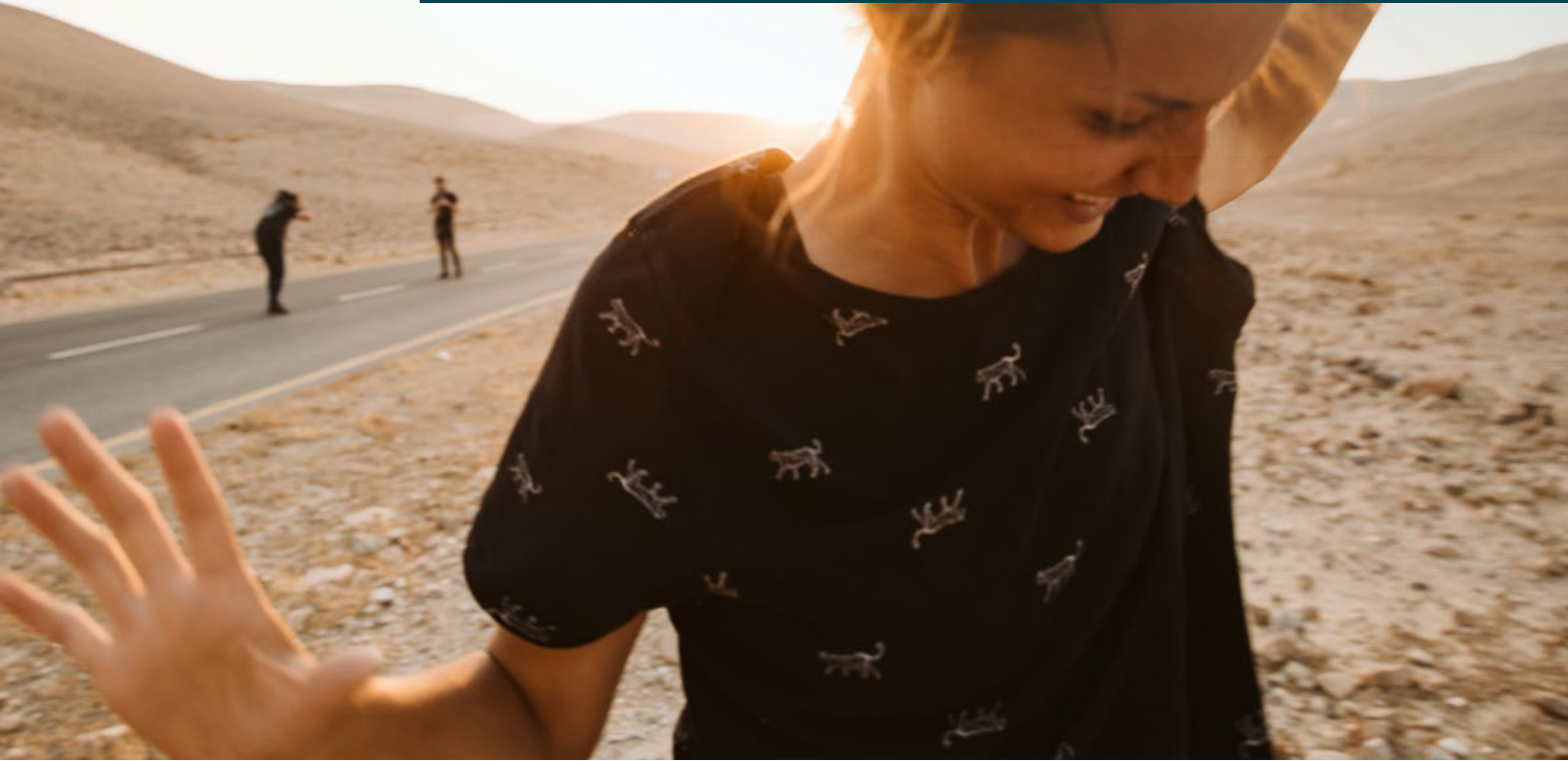
So, Isaiah is saying that when God shows up in a situation, it is with an unstoppable power of the Spirit with Him!

Paul, a follower of Jesus, shared an idea about the power of God's Spirit too, when he wrote: "The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you ..." Paul is saying that the Holy Spirit who arrives like the unstoppable power of a rushing tide, lives in YOU!

We can trust that the *Ruach* knows our whole story, the beginning, the middle and the end. He will always give us guidance and comfort when we lack.

If you are facing an obstacle today, God is able to send His Spirit to you with the power of a “rushing tide”!

NEPHESH



נפש [neh-fesh]

To fully grasp the weight of the Hebrew word *nephesh*, we need to return to the beginning.

God called the world into being with the power of His Word. But man came alive because God breathed into him and - made in the likeness of God - he is the recipient of God's covenant.

“And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul (nephesh).”

Nephesh highlights the weight and worth of a covenant. The Hebrew word *nephesh* or *nefesh* (נפש, pronounced "neh-fesh") is generally translated in the Hebrew Bible as "soul".

In Psalm 19, David wrote: "How clearly the sky reveals God's glory... no speech or words are used, no sound is heard; Yet their message goes out to all the world and is heard to the ends of the earth."

Have you ever considered that, just like the sky, your life is supposed to send this same message? Your life, words and actions are supposed to reveal God to the people around you!

You - your nephesh - reflect the One who created you. Are you revealing His glory?

YIRAH



יראה [yir-ah]

Do you have awe of God? The word we translated as 'awe' throughout the Bible is the Hebrew word *yirah* (יראה, pronounced "yir-ah"), which can also be translated as respect, reverence and worship. But *yirah* also means 'fear'.

Moses was filled with fear (*yirah*) when he begged God to see His glory and could not behold it lest he should die. The Israelites were filled with fear (*yirah*) when Moses came down Mount Sinai.

I grew up thinking that to "fear the Lord" meant being scared of Him. But as I was in real awe of a stunning sunset, I didn't feel

fear. I felt awe and wanted to worship the Creator. I felt *yirah*! Proverbs 9:10 says:

"The fear - yirah - of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom..."

The best way to regain our sense of awe is to follow God's instructions (1 John 5:3). Jesus boiled them down to two simple things: Love God, and love others. Do this... and we can regain our awe in God.

When was the last time you felt so moved by a sense of awe that all you could do was worship God?

TESHUVA

תשובה [tshoo-vah]

The instruction ‘to repent’ has a very heavy and dark connotation for most people. But somehow it is meant to lead to something good?

The Hebrew word we translate as ‘repentance’ is teshuva (תשובה, pronounced “tshoo-vah”) and it has a much deeper meaning. *Teshuva* is more than a feeling of guilt or regret – it comes from the verb ‘to return’.

Interpreting ‘repentance’ as being sorry makes it sound like more of a feeling than taking action. But *teshuva*, instead of being a state of mind, is a decision. It is deciding to turn away from where you are headed and moving back toward God.

It’s not adjusting the course, but completely turning back around – physically, emotionally, and spiritually. And the process of repentance only makes sense if there is a place we can return to. That was made possible thanks to Jesus, our Messiah. He opened the doors for us to return to the Father. (Joel 2:12)

“Even now,” declares the LORD, “return to me with all your heart ...”

Do you need a new beginning today? When you decide to turn around, you move toward God’s merciful heart.

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around the world from
Jerusalem, but did
you know that today
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