



# REFLECTIONS

January 24, 2021

**Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.  
Love the Lord your God with all your heart and  
with all your soul and with all your strength.**

*Deuteronomy 6:4-5*

## The Shema

Moses delivered it. Jesus affirmed it. An early church lived it—at least for a while.

The Shema summarized God's expectation for mankind. *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.* (Deuteronomy 6:6-9)

Jesus affirmed it. *"The most important [command,]" answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'" He added: "The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."* (Mark 12:29-31)

On Pentecost Peter warned and pleaded with the people, *"Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.*

*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ... All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.* (Acts 2:40-47)

The Shema, is there a better example? They placed God first; and loved their neighbor. But can anyone live their entire life that way? Jesus didn't remove the Shema. He affirmed it.

So, here we are: *"I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. Who will rescue me from this body of death?"* (Romans 7:18, 20, 24)

John explained, *"This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us".* (1 John 4:10-12)

*Thanks be to God — through Jesus Christ our Lord!* (Romans 7:25) We are forgiven!

*You are the light of the world,*

*Richard +*

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