

Careless Hearing is Unbelief; Destruction and Damnation

TO BIBLICALLY LISTEN IS TO OBEY

John 3:36 "He who BELIEVES in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not OBEY the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

I. The word “hear” embraces both physical hearing and the apprehension of something with the mind. Attentive listening produces obedience; Inattentive listening, not hearing, produces disobedience. Hearing, therefore, covers not only sense perception but also the apprehension and acceptance by the mind of the content of what is heard.

Proverbs 4:10-15 Hear, my son, and accept my sayings, And the years of your life will be many. 11 I have directed you in the way of wisdom; I have led you in upright paths. 12 When you walk, your steps will not be impeded; And if you run, you will not stumble. 13 Take hold of instruction; do not let go. Guard her, for she is your life. 14 Do not enter the path of the wicked, And do not proceed in the way of evil men. 15 Avoid it, do not pass by it; Turn away from it and pass on. (NASB)

John 17:8 for the words which Thou gavest Me I have given to them; and they received [them,] and truly understood that I came forth from Thee, and they believed that Thou didst send Me. (NASB)

Philippians 4:9 The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you. (NASB)

1 Thessalonians 1:6 You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit, (NASB)

1 Thessalonians 2:13-14 And for this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received from us the word of God's message, you accepted [it] not [as] the word of men, but [for] what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe. 14 For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, for you also endured the same sufferings at the hands of your own countrymen, even as they [did] from the Jews, (NASB)

1 Thessalonians 4:1-2 Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that, as you received from us [instruction] as to how you ought to walk and please God just as you actually do walk, that you may excel still more. 2 For you know what commandments we gave you by [the authority of] the Lord Jesus. (NASB)

II. God meets man in his word, and man therefore is charged with Biblically hearing God's word. This does not exclude God's revelation in the visible sphere; the mental process is not to be separated from the sense perception.

A. God revealed himself to Moses in the burning thorn bush (Exod. 3:1 ff.).

B. In the vision which constituted his call, Isaiah saw Yahweh in the temple surrounded by the seraphim singing their praises (Isa. 6:1 ff.).

C. Moses, "with whom the Lord used to speak face to face" (Exod. 33:1) lived in the memory of his people as the model bearer of the divine, verbal revelation.

D. Listen what the lawgiver says as he gives god's people "The Decalogue" or Ten commandments.

Deuteronomy 5:1 Then Moses summoned all Israel, and said to them, "Hear, O Israel, the statutes and the ordinances which I am speaking today in your hearing, that you may learn them and observe them carefully. (NASB)

E. "Hear O Israel" also stands as an urgent warning before the command to love God (Deut. 6:4 ff.).

III. Thus Israel became the people of the law who wished to render the obedience they owed to God by the painstaking fulfillment of his will down to the last detail

- A. For this reason the most important part of the tradition was the Torah, the Law, contained in the Five Books of Moses. Here the strongest emphasis is given to the relation between hearing and doing.
Exodus 19:5 'Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; (NASB)
Exodus 19:8 And all the people answered together and said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do!" And Moses brought back the words of the people to the LORD. (NASB)
- B. To hear "The law and the prophets" is the task of the pious Israelite.
Matthew 22:40 "On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."
Luke 16:29 "But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.' (NASB)

IV. Just as men hear God, God hears men. It is in this way that the living God differs from idols which have ears but do not hear.

- A. **Psalm 94:9** He who planted the ear, does He not hear? He who formed the eye, does He not see?
Psalm 115:1-8 Not to us, O LORD, not to us, But to Thy name give glory Because of Thy lovingkindness, because of Thy truth. 2 Why should the nations say, "Where, now, is their God?" 3 But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases. 4 Their idols are silver and gold, The work of man's hands. 5 They have mouths, but they cannot speak; They have eyes, but they cannot see; 6 They have ears, but they cannot hear; They have noses, but they cannot smell; 7 They have hands, but they cannot feel; They have feet, but they cannot walk; They cannot make a sound with their throat. 8 Those who make them will become like them, Everyone who trusts in them. (NASB)
- B. And in the figurative sense the OT often speaks of the ears of God who hears what men say.
Exodus 3:7 And the LORD said, "I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their cry because of their taskmasters, for I am aware of their sufferings.
Numbers 14:27 "How long [shall I bear] with this evil congregation who are grumbling against Me? I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel, which they are making against Me.
- C. Not only does God hear prayer, he also answers it.
Isaiah 49:8 Thus says the LORD, "In a favorable time I have answered You, And in a day of salvation I have helped You; And I will keep You and give You for a covenant of the people, To restore the land, to make [them] inherit the desolate heritages; (NASB)
- D. On the other hand, man's guilt can step between God and man and make God's ear deaf, so that he does not hear.
Isaiah 59:1-2 Behold, the LORD's hand is not so short That it cannot save; Neither is His ear so dull That it cannot hear. 2 But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden [His] face from you, so that He does not hear. (NASB)

V. The New Testament use of hearing is essentially the same as in the Old Testament

- A. **Matthew 7:24** "Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine, and acts upon them, may be compared to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock. (NASB)
John 8:40 "But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do. (NASB)
1 John 1:5 And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. (NASB)

Hebrews 4:2 For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard. (NASB)

Romans 10:16-17 However, they did not all heed the glad tidings; for Isaiah says, " Lord, who has believed our report ?" 17 So faith [comes] from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

Matthew 13:14 "And in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, 'You will keep on hearing, but will not understand; And you will keep on seeing, but will not perceive;

Romans 5:19 For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous. (NASB)

Romans 2:13 for not the hearers of the Law are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified. (NASB)

James 1:22-25 But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; 24 for [once] he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. 25 But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the [law] of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man shall be blessed in what he does. (NASB)

VI. This revelation which has been manifested in Him is perceived not just through hearing but with all the senses, at least to the Apostles.

- A. Essentially, it is a question of hearing and seeing.

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. (NASB)

1 John 1:1 What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the Word of Life-- (NASB)

- B. Jesus pronounced a blessing on the eyes and ears of those who had become witnesses of the salvation longed for by the pious *of* former generations.

Matthew 13:16-17 "But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. 17 "For truly I say to you, that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see [it]; and to hear what you hear, and did not hear [it]. (NASB)

- C. To the disciples sent to him by the imprisoned Baptist Jesus said: "Go and tell John what you hear

Luke 7:22 And He answered and said to them, "Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: [the] blind receive sight, [the] lame walk, [the] lepers are cleansed, and [the] deaf hear, [the] dead are raised up, [the] poor have the gospel preached to them. (NASB)

- D. On the mount *of* transfiguration Jesus' disciples saw his hidden glory and heard the voice saying to them: "Listen to him" (Matt. 17:5 par. Mk. 9:7, Lk. 9:35).

- E. The shepherds' song *of* praise in the Christmas story, as well as the confession of the apostles before the Sanhedrin, referred to what they had heard and seen.

Luke 2:20 And the shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them. (NASB)

Acts 4:20 for we cannot stop speaking what we have seen and heard. " (NASB)

- F. Not only Jesus' earthly appearance but also the events of the Resurrection and Pentecost are perceived by hearing and seeing.

Acts 2:33 "Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear.

- G. Paul's crucial vision of Christ was manifested through seeing and hearing.

Acts 22:14-15 "And he said, 'The God of our fathers has appointed you to know His will, and to see the Righteous One, and to hear an utterance from His mouth. 15 'For you will be a witness for Him to all men of what you have seen and heard. (NASB)

- H. Our seeing the risen Christ is bound up with hearing the apostolic commission which Jesus gave to his disciples (Matt. 28:18 ff.; Mk. 16:15; Lk. 24:46 ff.; Jn. 20:21; Acts 1: 8).
- I. The mystery of our salvation is unfathomable; what God has prepared for those who love him no eye has seen and no ear heard nor any human heart conceived. We simply cannot perceive it all. **1 Corinthians 2:9** but just as it is written, "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, And [which] have not entered the heart of man, All that God has prepared for those who love Him."
- J. But faith presupposes hearing, and this in turn rests on preaching (Rom. 10:14 ff. ; cf. Ps. 19:4; Deut. 32: 21; Isa. 65:1 f.).
- K. On the other hand, as Jn. 20:29 implies, seeing is not a necessary condition for faith for us now! **John 20:29** Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed [are] they who did not see, and [yet] believed." (NASB)

VII. The NT does not distinguish between Jesus' word and that of the apostles in the sense that "he who hears you hears me."

- A. The apostles are fully authorized witnesses of Jesus.
Luke 10:16 "The one who listens to you listens to Me, and the one who rejects you rejects Me; and he who rejects Me rejects the One who sent Me." (NASB)
John 13:20 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me." (NASB)
Galatians 4:14 and that which was a trial to you in my bodily condition you did not despise or loathe, but you received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus [Himself.] (NASB)
Mark 9:37 "Whoever receives one child like this in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me does not receive Me, but Him who sent Me." (NASB)
- B. The word which Jesus spoke has been reliably handed on by those who heard it.
Hebrews 2:3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, (NASB)
- C. To hear the message is to hear Christ and to hear the word of truth.
Ephesians 1:13 In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation-- having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, (NASB)
Ephesians 4:20-21 But you did not learn Christ in this way, 21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, (NASB)
- D. To hear the message is to hear the word of God.
Acts 13:7 who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence. This man summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. (NASB)
Acts 13:44 And the next Sabbath nearly the whole city assembled to hear the word of God. (NASB)
- E. Where this hearing leads to faith, baptism is the natural consequence .
Acts 16:32-33 And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house. 33 And he took them that [very] hour of the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he was baptized, he and all his [household.] (NASB)
Acts 18:8 And Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his household, and many of the Corinthians when they heard were believing and being baptized. (NASB)
Acts 19:5 And when they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. (NASB)

VIII. We also find in the NT the OT connection of hearing with doing.

- A. In the 'Sermon on the Mount' Jesus appears as the expounder of the will of God revealed in the law.
Matthew 5:21-22 "You have heard that the ancients were told, 'You shall not commit murder' and **Matthew 7:29** for He was teaching them as [one] having authority, and not as their scribes.
Matthew 7:24 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine, and acts upon them, may be compared to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock. (NASB)
- B. Jesus pronounces a blessing on those who hear and keep (Guard) his word.
Luke 11:28 But He said, "On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God, and observe it." (NASB)
John 10:16 "And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they shall hear My voice; and they shall become one flock [with] one shepherd. (NASB)
John 10:27 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; (NASB)
- C. Doers and hearers are contrasted in the NT. Doing the will of God, therefore, can only come about from this fundamental attitude of obedience.
Romans 2:13 for not the hearers of the Law are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified. (NASB)
James 1:21-25 Therefore putting aside all filthiness and [all] that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. 22 But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; 24 for [once] he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. 25 But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the [law] of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man shall be blessed in what he does. (NASB)
- D. In Mk. 12:29 f. Jesus cites the *Shema* or creed of Israel recited daily by the pious Jew which consisted of Deut. 6:4-9; 11:13-21; Num. 15:37-41. Jesus immediately added of his own accord a second commandment which was not in the Shema but drawn from Lev. 19:18. AUTHORITY!!
Mark 12:31 "The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." (NASB)
- E. Hearing the word does not always lead to faith, i.e. to the acceptance of - word of God.
Mark 4:16 "And in a similar way these are the ones on whom seed was sown on the rocky [places,] who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy; (NASB)
- F. Understanding must be added to hearing if sown seed of the word is to bear fruit.
Matthew 13:23 "And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit, and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty." (NASB)

IX. There are references to hardening of hearts when individuals close off their hearing as well as individuals who open their ears and hearts to the word.

- A. One who does not hear and accept the word will result eventually in hardening his heart.
Mark 4:12 in order that while seeing, they may see and not perceive; and while hearing, they may hear and not understand lest they return and be forgiven. " (NASB)
Luke 8:10 And He said, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest [it is] in parables, in order that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand. (NASB)
John 12:40 "He has blinded their eyes, and He hardened their heart; lest they see with their eyes, and perceive with their heart, and be converted, and I heal them." (NASB)

Acts 28:27 For the heart of this people has become dull, And with their ears they scarcely hear, And they have closed their eyes; Lest they should see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart and return, And I should heal them. " (NASB)

John 5:37 "And the Father who sent Me, He has borne witness of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form. (NASB)

John 8:43 "Why do you not understand what I am saying? [It is] because you cannot hear My word. (NASB)

- B. This is what Stephen meant when he described the judges at his trial as "uncircumcised in heart and ears", and their subsequent behavior bore out the accusation.

Acts 7:51 "You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did. (NASB)

Acts 7:57 But they cried out with a loud voice, and covered their ears, and they rushed upon him with one impulse. (NASB)

- C. Even Jesus' disciples were not protected against failure to understand and .

Mark 8:17-18 And Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why do you discuss [the fact] that you have no bread? Do you not yet see or understand? Do you have a hardened heart? 18 "Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember, (NASB)

- D. Similarly in Hebrews believers are urgently warned, with reference to Ps. 95:8, against becoming hardened (Heb. 3:7-11 ; 4:3-11).

- E. A contrast to this hardening is presented by the receptivity of those whose ears are opened.

Matthew 13:11 And He answered and said to them, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted. (NASB)

- F. Human activity is by no means excluded from hearing and receiving the word of God. See the following: "He who has ears to hear, let him hear" (Matt. 11 :15; 13:9 par. Mk. 4:9, Lk. 8:8); "Hear and understand" (Matt. 15:10); "Take heed what you hear" (Mk. 4:24); "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22).

- G. The dead in their graves will hear the voice of the Son of God, awakening some to the resurrection of life and others to judgment.

John 5:25 "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear shall live. (NASB)

John 5:28 "Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, (NASB)

- H. The raising of Lazarus, whom Jesus called out of his grave with a loud voice, is the anticipation of this final event.

John 11:43 And when He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." (NASB)

X. Less is said in the New Testament about God's hearing than in the OT.

- A. The ears of God are mentioned twice in references to OT passages:

James 5:4 Behold, the pay of the laborers who mowed your fields, [and] which has been withheld by you, cries out [against you]; and the outcry of those who did the harvesting has reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. (NASB)

Revelation 9:20 And the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk; (NASB)

- B. But God hears those who are pious and do his will.

John 9:31 "We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing, and does His will, He hears him. (NASB)

1 John 5:14 And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. (NASB)

2 Corinthians 6:1-2 And working together [with Him,] we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain-- 2 for He says, "At the acceptable time I listened to you, And on the day of salvation I helped you"; behold, now is "the acceptable time," behold, now is "the day of salvation"-- (NASB)

Acts 10:31 and he said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God. (NASB)

Matthew 6:6 "But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

Hebrews 5:7 In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety.

John 11:41-42 And so they removed the stone. And Jesus raised His eyes, and said, "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hearest Me. 42 "And I knew that Thou hearest Me always; but because of the people standing around I said it, that they may believe that Thou didst send Me." (NASB)

XI. Obedience to the word is found throughout the New Testament.

- A. The pattern of this obedience is Jesus Christ.

Philippians 2:5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, (NASB)

Philippians 2:8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. (NASB)

- B. Through his obedience, which stands in contrast to Adam's disobedience, "the many" have been made righteous.

Romans 5:19 For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous. (NASB)

Hebrews 5:8 Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered.

- C. His obedience to his Father does not exclude his being the Lord whom the demonic powers and the forces of nature obey.

Mark 1:27 And they were all amazed, so that they debated among themselves, saying, "What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him."

Mark 4:41 And they became very much afraid and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?" (NASB)

Matthew 8:27 ... "What kind of a man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?" (NASB)

Luke 8:25 ... that He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey Him?" (NASB)

- D. The apostle Paul sought to bring every thought captive in obedience to Christ.

2 Corinthians 10:5 [We are] destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and [we are] taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, (NASB)

- E. The obedience we render to Christ is the obedience of faith.

Romans 1:5 through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about [the] obedience of faith among all the Gentiles, for His name's sake, (NASB)

Romans 16:26 but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, [leading] to obedience of faith; (NASB)

Romans 15:18 For I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me, resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed, (NASB)

Romans 16:19 For the report of your obedience has reached to all; therefore I am rejoicing over you, but I want you to be wise in what is good, and innocent in what is evil. (NASB)

F. It includes submission to the apostle through whom Christ speaks.

2 Corinthians 7:15 And his affection abounds all the more toward you, as he remembers the obedience of you all, how you received him with fear and trembling. (NASB)

2 Corinthians 13:3 since you are seeking for proof of the Christ who speaks in me, and who is not weak toward you, but mighty in you. (NASB)

2 Corinthians 11:5-8 For I consider myself not in the least inferior to the most eminent apostles. 6 But even if I am unskilled in speech, yet I am not [so] in knowledge; in fact, in every way we have made [this] evident to you in all things. 7 Or did I commit a sin in humbling myself that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to you without charge? 8 I robbed other churches, taking wages [from them] to serve you; (NASB)

G. It is obedience to the preaching which brings righteousness and obedience to the truth.

Romans 6:16-17 Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone [as] slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? 17 But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, (NASB)

1 Peter 1:22 Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, (NASB)

1 Peter 1:2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, that you may obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in fullest measure. (NASB)

1 Peter 1:14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts [which were yours] in your ignorance, (NASB)

2 Corinthians 2:9 For to this end also I wrote that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things. (NASB)

Philippians 2:12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; (NASB)

H. Paul had to warn the Thessalonians to have nothing to do with those who would not obey the apostolic instructions.

2 Thessalonians 3:14 And if anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that man and do not associate with him, so that he may be put to shame. (NASB)

I. Besides those who obey the message of faith (**Acts 6:7** ...the priests were becoming obedient to the faith), there are those who refuse obey the gospel.

Romans 10:16 However, they did not all heed the glad tidings...

2 Thessalonians 1:8 dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those...