

# "HEAR YE HIM"

## A Devotional Series For Radio

This sermon script is furnished with  
the good wishes of the Reorganized Church  
of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints  
World Headquarters: The Auditorium, Independence, Missouri

Program Number 178  
Evan A. Fry, Radio Minister  
All Rights Reserved

The Sermon: GOD IS NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS

Scripture: Doctrine and Covenants, Section 38: portions of par. 5 and 4

Let every man esteem his brother as himself; for what man among you having twelve sons, and is no respecter to them, and they serve him obediently, and he saith to the one, Be thou clothed in robes and sit thou here; and to the other, Be thou clothed in rags and sit thou there, and looketh upon his sons and saith, I am just. .... I have heard your prayers, and the poor have complained before me, and the rich have I made, and all flesh is mine, and I am no respecter of persons.

\*\*\*\*

Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons;  
but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him. (Acts 10:34)

It is next to impossible for men not to play favorites -- not to be partial in their dealings with other men. We try to be impartial; we select judges because we believe they will be impartial in their justice. But no matter how sincere or how well-intentioned, we are all influenced by our emotions and prejudices, by our friendships, relationships, associations, and antagonisms, by our ignorance or inability to understand motives and background in those we judge.

We have certain obligations in life which often make it difficult or impossible to be absolutely impartial. I am primarily responsible for taking care of myself and my own family, so that we will not be a burden on others. But this very responsibility may tend to make me selfish for myself, and partial to my own family -- to be more mindful of their needs and their wants than I am of the needs and wants of others.

God is no respecter of persons -- or as the original Greek of the Bible renders this phrase, he is "no acceptor of faces." He does not look upon the outward aspects of character, such as race, color, dress, physical beauty, wealth, social station, strength, education, or nationality. He looks upon the inner man. He knows the desires and hopes and aspirations of that inner man. He loves each individual of his creation perfectly, without partiality.

God must be impartial if he is to be God. If a man is taller than average, we say that is a tall man. If a man is better than the majority of his fellows, we say that he is a good man. If a man is

wiser than most others, we say he is a wise man. We arrive at these conclusions by comparing him with other men. But God's attributes are absolute, not relative. He is not relatively good, but supremely, absolutely, perfectly, unswervingly good. His wisdom, his love, his holiness, his truthfulness, his mercy, his impartiality -- and all his other attributes -- are ABSOLUTE; they are the standard by which all man's attributes must finally be measured. He cannot be partly good, or wise, or holy, or loving, or truthful, and still be God.

God's impartiality is a part of his total nature. If he were partial and biased -- if he favored one man above another -- he could not be just. If he were not just, he could not be good, or holy, or true, in the absolute sense. He could not be loving, in the absolute sense, if he loved one man more than another. God could not continue to be God and shade his justice in favor of one man rather than another, if both men were serving him and obeying him in all sincerity and truth. He could not be God and show more mercy to one man than to another under exactly similar conditions of repentance. He could not be God and bless one man above another when both were serving him with the same sincerity and zeal.

Perhaps we need to sound a note of caution and explanation here. Blessing men equally does not necessarily mean blessing them identically. Sometimes God gives one man what he denies to another, not because he loves one more than another, but because he loves them both alike. Perhaps God's wisdom sees a blessing in the denial as well as in the giv-

ing. If we know that he loves us, and if we trust in that love, mercy, and wisdom absolutely, we are still sure of his impartiality even when he gives blessing to one and affliction to another.

We live in a moral universe --a universe of law. God's laws as they are manifested in that universe are universal, immutable, inexorable, impartial. All men must live in obedience to them or perish. Natural laws, whether it be in the scientific, physical, chemical, psychological, social, moral, or spiritual realm, works the same for everyone. In this, as in all other things, God is no respecter of persons. King and peasant, rich and poor, aristocrat and commoner, strong and weak, wise and foolish, educated or ignorant, all must abide by those laws. There are no exceptions. If there were, they would be indications of a partial God and a disorderly, irrational, purposeless universe. Men could not safely live in such a universe, uncertain as to whether any law or principle would work twice in the same way. God is impartial. He made his laws for all. They work for all who will apply them. They must be obeyed by all.

Christians believe that there can be no salvation save through the name and the merits of Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God. They also believe that God is impartial, that he is no respecter of persons. Yet there are some Christians who still believe that the heathen nations, and all little children who have died without baptism, cannot be saved. If these two propositions are true -- that only Christ can save and that God is impartial -- then all men must have opportunity to know of Christ, and to accept or reject him. If they do not hear of him in this life, they must have opportunity to hear in some other life-- or else God is a partial, unjust monster who punishes men for what they cannot help and rewards men because of the geographical accident of their birth.

The Book of Mormon and the modern revelations contained in the Doctrine and Covenants both teach that the atonement of Christ was efficacious for all who died without the law; that the heathen nations who died without knowledge of Christ and without baptism will be given opportunity to accept him in the spirit world; and that they will all be resurrected through the atonement of Christ, and brought back into God's presence to be judged according to the deeds done in the flesh. These books also teach that little children, whom many regard as lost if they do not receive infant baptism, are alive in

Christ, even from the foundation of the world, if not so, God is a partial God.

If God is impartial, it also follows that he will give the same gifts and blessings to one generation as to another. It is a popular and widespread belief among Christians that all revelation and all spiritual gifts and miracles ceased with the apostles. The ancients received the word of God direct; but many of today's religious teachers tell us that we, today, must be satisfied with only a written account of those ancient blessings. Joseph Luff, one of this church's great preachers of the past generation used to tell a parable about a man who made a great banquet for his sons. He sat down with them, and they enjoyed his presence, his conversation, and his fellowship. There were lights, music, and choice foods in abundance. Then later, when others of this man's sons grew to manhood, he invited them to another banquet. But he did not attend the second banquet. There were no lights, no music, no food. When the sons inquired about these things, they were handed a written account of their father's words and the foods served at the first banquet, and told that was sufficient. The lesson is obvious, Was that father impartial? Can an impartial, unchangeable God refuse to communicate with men in this generation, or to grant them the spiritual blessings enjoyed by their ancestors, simply because they have a written record of past blessings? God is no respecter of persons; he is impartial, unchangeable.

If we would be like God, we cannot be respecters of persons. We ought not to think more highly of ourselves than we ought; we should not think less highly of others than we ought. We should give respect, consideration, fairness, tolerance, warmth, love, sympathy, and understanding to all men, regardless of race, color, religion, social position, or wealth. We should share with others. We should do unto them as we should like to have them do unto us. We should share with them unselfishly and equitably not only the good things of life, but the sorrow, burdens, toil, care, and tribulation. We should be impartial as God is impartial.

We close with these words from the second chapter of James: "My brethren, ye cannot have the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, and yet have respect to persons. If ye have respect of persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors."