

"HEAR YE HIM"

A Devotional Series For Radio

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The Sermon: GOVERNED AND PRESERVED BY LAW

Scripture: Doctrine and Covenants 85:8, 9, 10a.

Verily I say unto you, That which is governed by law, is also preserved by law, and perfected and sanctified by the same. That which breaketh a law, and abideth not by law, but seeketh to become a law unto itself, and willeth to abide in sin, and altogether abideth in sin, can not be sanctified by law, neither by mercy, justice, or judgment; therefore, they must remain filthy still. All kingdoms have a law given; and there are many kingdoms; for there is no space in the which there is no kingdom; and there is no kingdom in which there is no space, either a greater or a lesser kingdom. And unto every kingdom is given a law; and unto every law there are certain bounds and conditions. All beings who abide not in these conditions, are not justified.

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We live in a universe of law, where all things, both animate and inanimate, abide by some sort of law on some level, or in some kingdom. The great Lawgiver and source of all law is God, who "comprehendeth all things, and all things are before him, and all things are round about him; and he is above all things, and in all things, and is through all things, and is round about all things, and all things are by him and of him; even God, for ever and ever." It is impossible to escape this rule of law. It is in the highest heaven and in the deepest hell. There is no space where there is no law.

Inanimate things are subject to law whether they will to be or not. They have no choice, no will, no agency. The earth obeys certain laws which keep it in place among the planets and in the universe. The natural laws in the field of chemistry determine the action and reaction of the various elements. The laws of physics determine the reaction in the field of force, energy, and mass. There are other natural laws too numerous to mention -- the law of gravity, laws of dynamics, of electricity, of hydraulics, of mathematics, of genetics, of logic, for example. When those laws are obeyed, either actively or passively, the laws protect and preserve that which obeys. When natural law is disobeyed, the same law that would have preserved is turned into a destroyer.

If a bridge or a building is to stand with the protection of natural law,

it must be built according to law. A bridge that ignores engineering principles, or one which has ignored elementary mathematics in computing the strains and stresses, will sooner or later fall and be destroyed by the very laws that would otherwise have preserved it. An adding machine works according to the laws of mechanics and mathematics. As long as it does, it is preserved and used. If it gets out of order, someone who knows the laws the machine is supposed to follow repairs it, and it is preserved. What if in spite of the best of care an adding machine always added two plus two and got eight? It would soon end up on the junk pile, unfit to be preserved. And the same principle would apply to a watch, a motor, a food grinder, or any other mechanism.

The cells of the human body are bound by the very nature of their existence to follow the law of the body of which they are a part. They contribute to the support of the body; they share in the body's work. As long as they do this, they share in the life of the body, and are preserved, protected, nourished, and increased by the other cells and members of the body. But suppose a cancer cell begins to grow in the body. Cancer cells do not abide by the laws of the body. They are wild-cat cells, outlaw cells, obeying a law of their own. Cancer cells must be destroyed or they destroy the body -- in which case the cancer dies with the body which it destroyed. This

is a startling illustration of what always happens to things or persons who will not obey the law of the kingdom or environment in which they live.

The things we have used as illustration thus far have been inanimate things, with no mind or will of their own, no power to choose. But man is free to choose for himself. He has agency. He alone decides whether he will obey the natural, moral, spiritual, and physical laws by which he is surrounded, or whether he will defy them. To defy them is worse than foolish; it is sooner or later fatal, not only to the physical life, but to the spiritual life as well. "That which is governed by law is also preserved by law, but seeketh to become a law unto itself, and willeth to abide in sin, and altogether abideth in sin, can not be sanctified by law, neither by mercy, justice, or judgment....."

In any sort of state or kingdom or other political organization, certain laws are enacted and enforced for the purpose of protecting the lives and property of its citizens. Some are based on natural law; some are man-made but practical laws; some are a combination of both. There are laws against murder, against theft, against reckless driving on street and highway, and many, many others. So long as you as a citizen obey these laws, they protect and preserve you, your life, your property, your rights. But if you choose to become a law unto yourself, and murder someone else, the law will either legally destroy your life, or at least place you behind bars where you are not free to live your own life as you wish. If you make your own laws and steal property which is not yours, the same law which was designed to protect your enjoyment of your own property will place you behind bars where you can enjoy none of it. If you drive your car as if you were the only one on the highway, becoming a law unto yourself, your driver's license may be revoked so that you are no longer free to drive at all. The same law which protects the one who obeys it and abides by it, destroys the one who breaks it. Or, as someone has said, no man can break a law; the law breaks him.

There are also laws of the spiritual kingdom. Man may live on any level he chooses, by obeying the laws and principles belonging to that condition. He can

live on the animal level, breaking every law in the spiritual realm; but if he does, his spiritual life will be destroyed. If he fails or refuses to abide by the law in any kingdom, on any level, he cannot continue to claim the benefits and protections and blessings of that law; he must revert to the level where he is willing to obey. Our first parents, Adam and Eve, either could not or would not live by the laws laid down for their conduct in the Garden of Eden; therefore the same law which had safeguarded them there so long as they obeyed was instrumental in driving them out. Israel might have lived by a higher spiritual law of love; but either could not or would not. Therefore the Mosaic law was given -- a law of carnal commandments -- a law on a lower level.

When men or inanimate things obey the laws of their being, they fulfill their proper mission in life to the full. When the bridge is built according to all the laws of engineering, it carries traffic. When the adding machine is built according to the laws of mechanics and mathematics, it adds figures and gets the correct answer. Man is that he might have joy. When he obeys all the laws of his own being and of his own environment, he fulfills his mission in life; he achieves maximum development and usefulness and service; he finds joy. But if he seeks to find this joy in unlawful ways, he is like an adding machine that adds two and two and gets eight. He is trying to live by the laws of error, rebellion, sin, and guilt. He is inevitably unhappy, and the longer he continues trying to flout and break God's laws, the more unhappy he becomes. Never, world without end, can he abide the kingdom of truth and love and joy, until he is willing to obey the laws of that kingdom.

"That which is governed by law is also preserved by law, and perfected and sanctified by the same." When a man is sanctified, he is freed from all sin, and is enabled to realize the will of God in his life. The sanctified life is one fully surrendered to fellowship with Christ -- a life perfectly in harmony with God, because it is perfectly in obedience to God, and governed by God's law on every level of existence, and in every field of endeavor and conduct. If you would be preserved by law, you must be governed by law, and perfected and sanctified by the same.