

"HEAR YE HIM"

A Devotional Series For Radio

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The Sermon: STUDY IT OUT IN YOUR MIND

Scripture: Doctrine and Covenants 9:3

You have not understood; you have supposed that I would give it unto you, when you took no thought, save it was to ask me; but, behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right, I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore you shall feel that it is right; but if it be not right, you shall have no such feelings, but you shall have a stupor of thought, that shall cause you to forget the thing which is wrong; therefore you can not write that which is sacred, save it be given you from me.

You must study it out in your mind.

God is a God of truth. His Spirit is the Spirit of truth. When truth flows from God to man, and man's intelligence responds to this flow of truth and intelligence in such a way as to make him see and know and understand that which he did not before, that is revelation.

Some revelation is pervasive. It is everywhere. All men may read it if they will. The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork, so that the devout man seeking knowledge and wisdom may read the intelligent purpose of the Creator in the things which he has created. That is pervasive revelation.

There are some types of knowledge which, by reason of their very nature, must come from God by revelation. They cannot be sought out, studied out, or discovered by a purely intellectual process. For example, "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." No one can prove that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, by a scientific demonstration, by a mathematical equation, or by any process of logic or reasoning. All these processes may be contributing helps to such knowledge, but that truth cannot be humanly demonstrated or proved. When Peter declared that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God, Jesus answered, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." This truth is known only by revelation. Paul said, (I Cor. 2:11) "...the things of God knoweth no man, except he has the Spirit of God." And John said in Revelation 19:10, "The testimony of Jesus

is the Spirit of prophecy." No other spirit, no other knowledge or wisdom or learning or intelligence can cause one to KNOW that Jesus is the Christ, save the Spirit of prophecy which reveals the things of God.

Some revelation involves very little effort on the part of men. When God wrote the law with his own finger on the tablets of stone at Sinai, all Moses had to do was to pick them up and carry them down to Israel. Of course, preparing himself for that revelation, and living up to it after it was given, was quite a different story; but the giving of that revelation was largely without effort on Moses' part. Sometimes revelation is dictated to the prophet, word for word, and all he has to do is to write.

Much more frequently, however, the prophet plays a large part in revelation, and revelation is colored by the prophet's personality, background, experience, language, education, vocabulary, intelligence, thought processes, etc. Does that mean that the word of the Lord may be garbled in transit? Not necessarily. There is room here for an endless discussion. God is never taken by surprise. If he knows that a need for prophetic ministry will arise at a certain time and place, he can prepare a man for that ministry who will have the personality, background, experience, education, language, vocabulary, intelligence, and thought processes to phrase the message correctly. On the other hand, it is also true that God never uses his omnipotence to deprive men of their agency -- to

force them to do anything they do not want to do. Conceivably the carefully prepared prophet could refuse to serve, and it might be necessary for God to turn to another. Sometimes God may not use the best man, but the best man available. Then revelation may be inadequately expressed; but it is still the word of the Lord. It is still revelation.

Another form of revelation has been called "concurative" revelation. In concurative revelation, man places himself in a position to give his entire spiritual attention to the problem in hand. He devotes the best efforts of mind and heart and intellect. He uses his education, training, and skill. As he strives, God steps in to supplement his best efforts. God aids, helps, assists, quickens, stimulates, guides. When a right conclusion is reached -- perhaps after years of patient search and study and prayer - God's Spirit of truth and light and intelligence bears witness to the truthfulness of that conclusion with a "burning of the bosom." There is no adequate language to describe that feeling, but by it men know, for it comes by the Spirit of revelation, intelligence, light, and truth.

In concurative revelation no human activity, capacity, ability, talent, or skill is superseded. The will, or the free agency of man is not ignored or destroyed. The Holy Spirit works with, in, and through all these contributing causes in such a way as to communicate a super-human quality to the final results. Such revelation makes full use of human powers, and such things as historical research, experimentation, logical reasoning, ethical thought, religious aspiration, education, training, and acquired skill. But these human powers are raised to the nth degree by God's Spirit, so that man acts not alone in his own power, but assisted, directed, guided, elevated, stimulated, energized, and controlled by the Holy Spirit, so that he does God's work and declares God's word.

Concurative revelation is reasonable. God made man's mind. He is the source of all intelligence. The glory of God is intelligence. Man's intelligence and God's intelligence are different in degree, but not in kind. Man's intelligence is only a part of God's intelligence. They can work harmoniously together if man is prepared, willing, devoted, sanctified, and free from sin.

Many people have been foolish enough to believe that God would give them revelation when they took no thought -- that he would give us information as one would pour water into a glass until it was full. God can do that when it is necessary, when man needs that kind of help in an emergency, and when the emergency is not his fault or of his own making. But God is not a celestial bell-hop to run our errands, or even a trained and skilled reference librarian to dig out the information we want and hand it to us with no effort on our part except the exercise of a little faith.

Jesus' promise was that the Holy Spirit should guide you into all truth, and teach you all things. No one can be guided if he is not in motion. There can be no teaching without learning, and learning is an active, not a passive process. The Holy Spirit cannot teach us all things unless we are eager and willing to learn, actively seeking the truth.

"You have supposed that I would give it unto you when you took no thought, save it was to ask me." You have thought that revelation was a simple, effortless, mechanical process in which God does it all. "I say unto you, you must study it out in your mind." Revelation demands the cooperation of the human intellect, the meeting of the human intelligence with the divine intelligence of which it is a part. When you have studied it out in your mind, "you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right, I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore you shall feel that it is right; But if it be not right, you shall have a stupor of thought that shall cause you to forget the thing which is wrong." The Spirit of truth always accepts truth and rejects error.

The more a man studies, learns, and comprehends on his own resources, supplemented by the Spirit of truth, the greater his capacity for the revelation of God through him. If we would know the revelation of God we must seek diligently to know truth by study, and also by faith. We should "study it out in our minds," thereby increasing our capacity to receive and to understand. Then God can reveal his truths to us, and bear witness to both discovered and revealed truth by that burning of the bosom which shall cause us to know as we can never know by purely intellectual processes.