

# "HEAR YE HIM"

## A Devotional Series For Radio

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The Sermon: THE LIGHT THAT LIGHTETH EVERY MAN

Scripture: Doctrine and Covenants, Portions of Sec. 90:1; Sec. 83:7

And (John) bore record, saying, I saw his glory that he was in the beginning before the world was; therefore in the beginning the Word was; for he was the Word, even the messenger of salvation, the light and the Redeemer of the world; the Spirit of truth, who came into the world because the world was made by him. Men were made by him. All things were made by him, and through him and of him. ... Whatsoever is truth is light, and whatsoever is light is truth, even the Spirit of Jesus Christ; and the Spirit giveth light to every man that cometh into the world .....

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I am the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

The mystery of the nature of light has challenged the best efforts and ingenuity of scientists for generations of time. Light is the most pervasive thing in the universe. If the term be extended to include all the wave lengths of light (of which the human eye can see only one part in 63) there is no space in which there is not some form of light. Furthermore, the modern theory of the structure of the atom is that matter itself is composed of positive, negative, and neutral charges of electricity, which is in last analysis only one of the vibrations on the wave length of light. Various scientists give different names to this intangible force out of which every atom and every bit of matter is made. It has been variously named force, energy, light, electricity, mind, thought, spirit, and power. With this concept in mind, Sir James Jeans has said that the universe begins to look more like a great thought than a great machine.

The message of Jesus, declared by John, was that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. He is the unflinching, eternal source from which come all the building blocks of creation -- the mind, force, energy, spirit, or electricity which is the raw material of every atom. Paul speaks of God as dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto. The fullness, the brightness, the intensity of the power contained in that glory would consume any man who tried to approach it in his human body.

Paul says again in the letter to the Hebrews that Jesus is the brightness (or as one translation puts it, the "efful-

gence") of his glory. Through him, as the agent or instrument of creation, God's light, Spirit, energy, force, or mind became matter, and the worlds were created. The life, light, spirit, and power of God were sent forth by the will of the Father, through Jesus Christ his Son, and Christ by reason of his creative role became the light of the world, as he himself said on so many occasions.

Light reveals. Jesus, the incarnation of Deity, revealed God to man in his birth, his life, his ministry, his death, his resurrection. He revealed God in his nature, in his character, his sinlessness, in the power by which he overcame death and rose from the grave. In this sense, too, Jesus was the light of the world. It should be noted at this point, however, that the incarnation was not the only way nor the only time in which Jesus revealed God. All true revelation, whether before or during or after the incarnation, was in and through Christ, was from him and his Spirit. Jesus is still the light of the world, the revealer of God, in that his Spirit still takes the things of God and reveals them unto man today.

Light which reveals is to be followed. It comes that men might see their way, might know how to choose good from evil. We therefore have a certain obligation to Jesus. If he is the light of the world, we are obligated to walk in that light. If we do not choose to walk in the light, we have of necessity chosen to walk in darkness where we stumble and fall.

Light is life. Without light, no

plant or animal organism could exist on earth. Therefore in a physical as well as in a spiritual sense, light is life. It sustains man. It sustains the universe, from the most gigantic star down to the tiniest atom, because it is the force of which every atom is composed, the force or energy or spirit which holds the atom together and holds like atoms together in masses of substance. Jesus was the life and the light of men. Only those who share his life can see his light, or can hold up or reflect that light to others and so become themselves the light of the world which shines before men.

In darkness it is difficult or impossible to judge between two objects -- to say which is more useful, more symmetrical, more beautiful, more valuable. Bring the same two objects into the light, and judgment becomes much simpler and more accurate. If no one had ever come into the world to show what man might be at his best when he lives without sin, then men would still be in darkness, trying to determine righteousness by comparison with each other, rather than with the absolute righteousness of Christ. In other words, there would have been no standard of excellence to which we might relate our lives. In this sense, too, Jesus is the light of the world. By comparison with him, with his life, his nature, his righteousness, his love, his sacrifice, every other life is judged. In the light of his absolute perfection we may judge every human act, thought, motive, and character. In the light of his choices we may judge every choice we make. A book of Mormon writer exhorts his people thus: "And now, my brethren, seeing that ye know the light by which ye may judge, which light is the light of Christ, see that ye do not judge wrongfully, for with that same judgment which ye judge, ye shall also be judged. Wherefore I beseech you, brethren, that ye should search diligently in the light of Christ, that ye may know good from evil . . . ." (Moroni 7:17,18)

Our scripture reading says that the light of Christ's Spirit enlightens every man that comes into the world. This is true in several ways. As we have already said, light is life; without the light and life of Christ there could have been no creation, and no life could be sustained from day to day. Every man who will take the trouble to reflect on the origins of his life knows that he did not create himself -- that he cannot create

life at all, but only pass on to another generation the life which must have come originally from God, and which is sustained by the power of God from hour to hour. Any man after a little sober reflection knows that the world and the universe reveal order and beauty which could not have happened by chance, but which are proof of intelligent purpose and creative personality. The Spirit giveth light to every man that cometh into the world; and the Spirit enlighteneth every man through the world -- that is, every man who is willing to heed the promptings of the Spirit can find light and order and wisdom and love and purposeful intelligence manifested in every part of the physical world by which he is surrounded, and be instructed and enlightened thereby.

The Spirit enlightens every man through an innate sense of right and wrong. Even the most savage societies have some laws or customs which forbid murder, theft, and the grosser crimes, at least when done to one of the same community. God's Spirit entices men to do good, to live righteously. That Spirit which is the light of Christ can move and does move upon the consciences of men who never heard the name of Jesus, or who never heard of his example. Yet by his example and the righteous quality of his life, he has raised the standard of all human conduct, and brought light even to those who die in ignorance of him.

And what of those who reject the light, refuse to heed the guidance its illumination gives, and turn their backs on it? If you turn your face towards a light and follow it, you walk in the light. "That which is of God is light, and he that receiveth light and continueth in God, receiveth more light, and that light groweth brighter and brighter, until the perfect day." But if you turn your back on light and walk from it -- fearful lest your deeds should be reprov'd if you come to the light -- you walk in your own shadow. You walk in darkness, and the darkness becomes deeper and deeper as you get farther and farther from the light, until all hope of ever seeing the light again is gone.

Follow the light that is in Jesus -- the Light of the world -- the light which has come to you and to every man, for if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and his blood cleanseth us from all sin.