

"HEAR YE HIM"

A Devotional Series For Radio

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Evan A. Fry, Radio Minister
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The Sermon: THE FULLNESS OF THE FATHER

Scripture: Doctrine and Covenants 90:1

Verily, thus saith the Lord, It shall come to pass that every soul who forsaketh their sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face, and know that I am, and that I am the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world; and that I am in the Father and the Father in me, and the Father and I are one; the Father because he gave me of his fullness; and the Son because I was in the world and made flesh my tabernacle, and dwelt among the sons of men. I was in the world and received of my Father, and the works of him were plainly manifest.

In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.
And ye are complete in him. Col. 2:9, 10.

There are few people in the world who would deny the historical Jesus. It is quite generally accepted that Jesus was born in the manger at Bethlehem, that he lived in Palestine, and that he died under the Roman ruler, Pontius Pilate. Millions who cannot bring themselves to accept him as the Son of God, or the Savior of the world, still join in the celebration of his birthday, and acknowledge him as one of the great characters of history. Those who believe that he came as a man are generally quite willing to honor him as a great humanitarian, a great teacher, a great prophet, a great leader of men, but tens of thousands of people who passively believe in the historical man, Jesus, do not believe in his deity. They do not believe that he was the Son of God, that he was the incarnation of Deity. They are sometimes willing to admit that Jesus possessed a sort of divinity -- the same kind of divinity which is in every man. They are even willing to admit that he possessed this divinity in a superlative degree, but they do not believe in his deity or in his uniqueness as Deity. They do not believe in him as God.

To believe in Jesus as a supremely good and wise and great man is good as far as it goes. He was the highest example of manhood the world has ever known. His incarnation in human flesh was necessary in order that he might meet death on the same battle ground where other men have to meet it. But no mere man, subject as he is to sin and death, has ever met death alone and unaided and defeated it in such a way as to rescue the whole

human race from bondage as Jesus did. Jesus was a superlatively good man, but he was vastly more than that. He could not have saved us if he had been simply a man; the power of Deity, the power of a sinless life that owes no debt to sin are needed to conquer death and release men from its bondage. A created being could not have risen from the grave as Jesus did. A created being could not have redeemed mankind. Jesus could both rise from the dead and deliver men from death because he was God as well as man -- true God and true Man fused together in some mysterious and miraculous way as one being. He was the infinite sacrifice which was necessary to make an infinite atonement which was efficacious for every son of Adam. To deny either his humanity or his Deity is to deny him as Savior, Redeemer, and Messiah. And to deny him as Savior is to remain forever lost to the power of sin and death.

How do we know that Jesus was Deity? His name was proclaimed long before his birth as "Immanuel, God with us." Isaiah also prophesied of him as "Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." When Jesus was presented to Simeon in the temple, he exclaimed: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people.

In Jesus' own life there were indications of Deity. Jesus never sinned, or acted like a sinner, He never feared sin, or temptation to sin, but met it and repulsed it. A man who wants to avoid sin sometimes finds it expedient to avoid the

company of sinners, to run away from temptation. And all too often such an attitude develops into an attitude of self-righteousness -- a feeling that we are good and noble and virtuous because we are not as other men. Jesus never shunned the company of sinners, but none of their sin ever rubbed off on him. On the other hand, he never acted self-righteously. In his presence sinners stood self-condemned before his sinlessness, even while they were attracted and drawn to him by his compassion, his sympathy, and his love.

Jesus indicated his Deity by teaching as one having authority -- an authority which was recognized, however unwillingly, even by his enemies. He worked miracles which were physical and symbolic acts of both physical and spiritual redemption by which he foreshadowed the more complete redemption to be made possible by the miracle of his own resurrection -- the greatest miracle of all. He proved his Deity by rising from the grave, making good his claim that he had power to lay down his life and to take it up again.

Jesus made other claims to Deity which would have been blasphemy coming from a mere man. "I proceeded forth and came from God." "Before Abraham was, I AM." "The Father is in me, and I in him." "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." "All things that the Father hath are mine." "All things are delivered unto me of my Father." "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Before the high priest at his trial Jesus was charged by the most sacred oath known to the Jews -- by the living God -- to say plainly "whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God." He replied, "Thou hast said," which is to say, "I am." He was tried, convicted, and turned over to the Romans for execution on the charge that he, being a man, had made himself to be God. He claimed power to forgive sins, which is an exclusive prerogative of Deity. He exercised miraculous power over devils, over disease, over the forces of Nature, and finally over death. He was able to see things distant from him, and in some

cases to foretell the future. Taken all together, this body of evidence points very strongly to Jesus as true God, as well as true man, as Deity incarnate in human flesh.

The writers of the New Testament understood these claims of Jesus, and believed and taught them. They regarded Jesus as Lord, and looked forward to the day when all men should so acknowledge him. He was regarded as worthy of worship by devout men reared in the strict monotheism of the Jews who worshipped only the One God. Paul applied to him the saying of the Psalmist, "Let all the angels of God worship him." Peter ascribed to him "glory, both now and for ever." Paul wrote to the Colossians that he is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature, "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell." "In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." To Timothy he wrote that God was manifest in the flesh, and that we trust in the living God who is the Savior of all men. To Titus he speaks of Christ, the great God. To the Philippians he wrote of Christ, "Who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God." It would take many volumes to examine in detail all the teachings of the New Testament about the Deity of Christ.

As the world turns again to the festivities and feasting and gift giving of the Christmas season, let us pause a moment to give thought to what we believe about Jesus. No other religious leader claims our personal allegiance as he does. No other religious leader makes such great claims, or supports them with such good reason and logic, or with such a life. No other religious leader has so fired the imagination of men, or changed so many lives, or brought so much hope to dying humanity. He can save you from your sins, from death, from despair, from loneliness, from fear. Believe in him and accept him as God, for in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, And ye are complete in him.