

"HEAR YE HIM"

A Devotional Series For Radio

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And he shall be called Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of heaven and earth, the Creator of all things, from the beginning ... And lo, he cometh unto his own, that salvation might come unto the children of men, even through faith on his name; And even after all this, they shall consider him a man, and say that he hath a devil, and shall scourge him, and shall crucify him. And he shall rise the third day from the dead; and behold, he standeth to judge the world. And behold, all these things are done, that a righteous judgment might come upon the children of men. For behold, and also his blood atoneth for the sins of those who have fallen by the transgression of Adam, who have died, not knowing the will of God concerning them, or who have ignorantly sinned. But wo, wo unto him who knoweth that he rebelleth against God, for salvation cometh to none such, except it be through repentance and faith on the Lord Jesus Christ And moreover I say unto you, that there shall be no other name given, nor any other way nor means whereby salvation can come unto the children of men, only in and through the name of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent.

This is the way; and there is none other way nor name given
under heaven whereby man can be saved in the kingdom of God.

As a Savior and as a man, Jesus Christ is unique. There never was another like him, and there never will be, never can be. Men have saved other men from many things -- from slavery and oppression, from peril and death, from ignorance, from hunger and poverty, from disease and fear and despair. Man needs salvation from all these things -- and many more. He also needs the kind of Savior that Jesus Christ is, one who will not only give him a more abundant life in this world, but the assurance of eternal life in the better world that is to be.

Especially does man need to be saved from two things which are closely related to each other. First, he needs to be released from the intolerable burden of sin, guilt, and remorse which make life a living hell for many whose rebellion will not even permit them to admit the reality of sin. And second, he needs to be saved and released from the bondage or thrall-dom of death, which is the result of sin. He needs to be saved from the separation of spirit and body, which is the physical death, and from separation of himself from God, which is spiritual death. As this kind of Savior, Jesus was and is unique among all who ever lived on this earth.

Who was Jesus? What was he? We need to understand some of the fundamentals of theology if we are to know the answer to that question. We cannot continue to regard Jesus as unique -- as the only one of his kind -- unless we know why and how he was unique, and why there is no other name given under heaven whereby men may be saved.

First let us examine some of the things which Jesus was NOT, by examining some of the theories which have been propounded about him. Some have theorized that he was merely a great prophet like Moses, Isaiah, Ezekiel, or Amos. Perhaps he was even the greatest prophet who ever lived -- but he was still only a man, endowed with extraordinary powers. A second theory asserts that Jesus was a lesser god -- one of a whole assortment or pantheon of gods. The Gnostics thought of him as one of the emanations or vibrations from God. The Goths added him to their national gallery of hero gods. Others have regarded him as a creation of God, supreme among the lesser gods, worthy of worship, but not of such worship as we give the Supreme God. But many cannot accept this theory of Jesus in the light of the ancient prohibition, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

A third theory is somewhat like the first one we have noted -- that Jesus was merely a supremely good man: that the LOGOS in him was the same as REASON in man. This theory says that all men are sons of God, and that in the same sense, Jesus was the Son of God, different in degree, or having more divinity than any other man, but having the same kind or quality of divinity which is in every one of us.

A fourth theory is that Jesus was simply a man, born naturally of Mary and Joseph, but temporarily possessed at the time of his baptism by a divine spirit, which made him a deified man. None of these theories is adequate to explain Jesus as Savior. If any one of them is the whole truth, then we are not saved; we are still dead in our sins, without hope in this life or in the life to come.

If God was to redeem man and overcome death and sin, it was necessary that he meet these enemies of man on man's level -- as a man. Adam, a man, brought death into the world through sinful disobedience, and death has been the universal consequence on every one of his descendants until now. To save man from sin it was necessary that another man should act for the human race. Therefore Jesus took man's nature; he was made incarnate in human flesh, a true man. But man who was man and nothing more was helpless under the curse of sin and death. He was utterly powerless to overcome in his own strength. Therefore Jesus had to be God as well as man. There have been endless futile arguments as to whether two natures, humanity and deity, were fused in one being in Jesus, or whether they existed simultaneously. If either theory is true, it is still too complicated, too far removed from human experience, for us to understand. But this we do need to accept -- that Jesus was Deity as well as humanity; Jesus was God as well as man. This is not to say that there is no differentiation of person, but merely that as God is God, so Christ is also God, and the Holy Spirit is God.

The incarnation of God in human flesh was necessary and essential to our salvation. It was this Deity which made Jesus unique among all men and among all Saviors. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. He was known as "Immanuel, God with us." If man was to be saved, an infinite and eternal sacrifice and atonement were necessary, and only the infinite and eternal person of Deity could make such a sacrifice. Jesus could not have saved us if he had not been both God and man. A redeemer

who was all Deity could not have saved the human race; a redeemer who was all human would have been just as helpless as you and me to save the race from death.

Jesus then was both God and man. He was true God and true man. His humanity is attested by his human birth, his human ignorance, his hunger, his thirst, his weariness, his joy, his sorrow, his suffering, his death, his temptation, his need of human faith and prayer. On the other hand, Jesus claimed the privileges, prerogatives, and powers of Deity. He pleaded guilty to the Pharisees' charge that "thou, being a man, makest thyself God." He claimed power to forgive sin, to lay down his life and take it up again, to bind and loose on earth and in heaven. He never sinned, or acted like a sinner. He never feared sin or temptation. He taught as one having authority. He made claims which only Deity could make without blasphemy.

Most important of all, however, is the fact that as Jesus proved his humanity by suffering a very human and ignominious and painful death, so he also proved his Deity by taking up his body again and rising from the grave. No other Savior has ever brought such proofs of his power to save. As Irenaeus, one of the early church fathers, said: "He was made what we are, that he might make us what he is himself."

Man doesn't have a choice of Saviors. There is only one; and man must choose whether to accept or reject that one. There is no other name given, and no other way given, whereby men can be saved, only in and through the name of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent. Of all the men and all the Saviors who ever lived, Jesus alone proved his uniqueness and his worthiness to be called Savior by his return from death. Forty days after his resurrection he took his redeemed and glorified manhood -- his resurrected body -- back into the presence of God as a demonstration that men who have faith in him and obey his commands may likewise overcome death, having body and spirit inseparably united, and knowing again the joy of reunion with the God and Father who made man in the beginning for fellowship with him.

There is no other name given whereby men may be saved. Therefore, come unto the Lord, the Holy One, remembering that his paths are righteousness, and that the keeper of the gate is the Holy One of Israel who employs no servant there and who cannot be deceived, for the Lord God is his name.