

# "HEAR YE HIM"

## A Devotional Series For Radio

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of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints

World Headquarters: The Auditorium, Independence, Missouri

Program Number 222

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### The Sermon: AN INFINITE ATONEMENT

Scripture: Book of Mormon, Alma 16:213-217, with omissions.

There can be nothing, which is short of an infinite atonement, which will suffice for the sins of the world; therefore it is expedient that there should be a great and last sacrifice; ..... and that great and last sacrifice will be the Son of God; yea, infinite and eternal; and thus shall he bring salvation to all those who shall believe on his name; This being the intent of this last sacrifice, to bring about the bowels of mercy, which overpowereth justice and bringeth about means unto men that they may have faith unto repentance. And thus mercy can satisfy the demands of justice, and encircles them in the arms of safety .....

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All are hardened, all are fallen and are lost, and must perish except it be through the atonement which shall be made, but it must be an infinite and eternal sacrifice.

You are under sentence of death. Sooner or later -- perhaps today, or tomorrow, or next year, or fifty or sixty years from now, the sentence will be carried out. You will die. There is no escape, no reprieve. All men must die. The mortality rate of the human race is still 100 per cent.

We say that death came about as a result of Adam's sin and fall. Man was not made in the beginning to die, but to live. Death is not normal, but abnormal. It is the result of abnormal conduct -- disobedience to God and to the laws of his kingdom as they operate in our bodies and in the world from which and in which we have our physical being.

Some theology teaches that death is the punishment which all mankind suffers for Adam's sin. It is not fair or right or just that we should be punished for Adam's sin. We had no responsibility for his fall; we could not have prevented it if we would. We gave no consent that he should act for us as the representative of the human race. Yet we all must endure the consequences of his sin, not because we are to blame, but because it is inevitable that we should inherit our physical nature and all that it includes or contains from every one of our ancestors, clear back to Adam. Therefore, we inherit the consequences of racial sin, which is death.

On the other hand, none of us is complete without individual sin. Each

one of us, no matter how upright or righteous or perfect, has at some time and in some way rebelled against God and his laws, and committed sin. Because we are individually, as well as collectively or racially guilty of sin, and therefore unworthy and unable to tolerate the presence of God, we are worthy of death, just as Adam was worthy of death. Because of our inheritance, none of us can live without sin.

God's justice demands punishment for sin -- not because God is a harsh, stern, and unyielding taskmaster, but because his laws carry within themselves the punishment for their violation, and because to excuse their violation for any cause would upset the order of the universe and make God, the lawgiver, into something decidedly imperfect and less than God. But we would not be fair to God if we did not recognize that his justice is tempered and balanced by his mercy. And when we reflect that much of our personal and individual sin is after all the result of our racial inheritance from Adam, we can see that both God's justice and mercy demand that we should be released from the bondage of Adam's sin and fall, for which we are in no way responsible. It was to satisfy the demands of both justice and mercy that God sent his Son into the world to redeem men from the fall, and to bring to pass the atonement, or the at-one-ment, by which man could once again stand in God's presence and be at one with him.

The atonement of Jesus Christ was therefore of necessity an infinite atonement. Infinite means without limits of any kind; indeterminate; without end; boundless; immeasurable, indefinitely large, extensive, or numerous. The infinite atonement of Jesus had to be infinite in two senses. First, it was an atonement made by an infinite Person. Jesus was both God and man. As God, he was infinite, without beginning or end, without limits, boundless. Only an infinite Being with the power of Deity could live in human flesh without sin. Only an infinite and sinless Being with the power of Deity could conquer death. Jesus Christ was the great and last sacrifice, infinite and eternal, which brought salvation to all who would believe on his name.

Second, the atonement of Jesus Christ was infinite in the sense that it was efficacious for ALL MEN. The Book of Mormon says that the atonement was prepared from the foundation of the world, "for all mankind which ever were, ever since the fall of Adam, or who are or ever shall be, even unto the end of the world; and this is the means whereby salvation cometh." Another Book of Mormon prophet says: "And he cometh into the world that he may save all men, if they will hearken unto his voice. For behold, he suffereth the pains of all men, yea, the pains of every living creature, both men, women, and children, who belong to the family of Adam." It follows logically that if the atonement of Jesus was efficacious for all men, then we need no other Savior; that there is no other name whereby men may be saved.

Just what are the results of the atonement? By the power of Jesus' resurrection, body and spirit will be brought together and made one again, in either the first or second resurrection. Then all men in the resurrected body will be brought back into the presence of God where they could not have come in their own merit or in their own power. "Because of the intercession for all, all men come unto God; Wherefore they stand in the presence of him, to be judged of him...." (II Nephi 1:78,9) Because of the redemption of man, which came by Jesus Christ, they are brought back into the presence of the Lord. All shall awake from death, come forth, and stand at his bar, redeemed and loosed from the bands of the temporal or physical death.

If the atonement is infinite -- and we have said that it is -- does this mean that all men are to be saved? No, not necessarily. All men will some day be resurrected and brought into God's presence, but how many will be found worthy to remain there? Those who have repented of their sins, taken upon them the name of Jesus, obeyed his gospel laws and ordinances, and claimed his mercy, will find the mercy which blots out and forgives their sins and makes them able and worthy to dwell in God's presence. The penalty for sin -- death -- has been paid, God's justice satisfied, the debt, cancelled, the enemy overcome forever.

Remember that the wicked, unrepentant, rebellious souls too, will come forth in a second resurrection -- sometimes called the resurrection of damnation. They, too, will be restored to God's presence for judgment, but they can claim no mercy because they did not repent; neither did they have faith in the Redeemer, or name his name, or live according to his gospel laws and ordinances. Therefore the wicked remain as though no redemption had been made, except that the bands of death are loosed. They cannot bear or tolerate the bright and glorious perfection of God; therefore in their immortal state they must depart from him to dwell forever in outer darkness, with a bright memory and consciousness of all their guilt, their filthiness, their rebellion, and their criminal negligence and foolishness in refusing the atonement which God's mercy extended to them.

There are two classes of people who receive special consideration because of Christ's redemption and atonement for all men. Those who have died in ignorance, without having had Christ declared unto them -- the heathen nations and they that died without the law -- will come forth in the first resurrection and it shall be tolerable for them. The second class is little children who died in infancy, before reaching an age of accountability in which they could repent. Little children are alive in Christ, for the curse of Adam is taken from them in him.

Let us give thanks, then, for Christ's infinite atonement, which satisfies God's justice, and makes God's mercy available to all on conditions of repentance, faith on the name of Jesus, and obedience to his gospel ordinances and laws.