

# "HEAR YE HIM"

## A Devotional Series For Radio

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The Sermon: ALL GOOD COMES FROM GOD

Scripture: Book of Mormon, Moroni 7:9-11, 14, 15.

Behold, a bitter fountain can not bring forth good water; neither can a good fountain bring forth bitter water; wherefore a man being a servant of the devil, can not follow Christ; and if he follow Christ, he can not be a servant of the devil. Wherefore, all things which are good, cometh of God; and that which is evil, cometh of the devil; for the devil is an enemy unto God, and fighteth against him continually, and inviteth and enticeth to sin, and to do that which is evil continually. But behold, that which is of God, inviteth and enticeth to do good continually; wherefore, everything which inviteth and enticeth to do good, and to love God, and to serve him, is inspired of God. .... Behold, the Spirit of Christ is given to every man, that they may know good from evil; wherefore I shew unto you the way to judge: for everything which inviteth to do good, and to persuade to believe in Christ, is sent forth by the power and gift of Christ: Wherefore, ye may know with a perfect knowledge, it is of God; but whatsoever thing persuadeth men to do evil, and believe not in Christ, and deny him, and serve not God, then ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of the devil .....

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Whatsoever thing persuadeth men to do good, is of  
me, for good cometh of none, save it be of me.

One of the oldest philosophical problems known to man is the problem of the origin of good and evil. The Zoroastrians of Persia attempted to explain the existence of evil in the world by saying that the universe is under the control of two self-existent, uncreated beings or gods, one good, and one evil. Because of these two mutually opposite deities, there is an unending battle being waged between good and evil. This dualism partially explains some things, but it is unacceptable to Christians. First, we believe that there is only one God, not two. Second, if there are two opposing deities, each self-existent and uncreated, we have no way of knowing which is the stronger of the two -- no guarantee that some day evil may not triumph over good -- and Christians are committed to the belief that evil in all its forms will some day be defeated, and good be triumphant.

The Bible teaches us that there is one self-existent, uncreated being who is the Creator of all other beings. He is depicted as the source of all good. The Bible also teaches that there is another being who is the instigator and fomentor of lawlessness, rebellion and evil -- a being who hates truth, light, and right. He is called Satan, the devil, Belial, Beelzebub, and various other names. He is

a created being. He was first created by God as an angel of light. God did not make him evil. He was simply given his own free moral will and agency, like all created beings -- angels or men. By using his agency to rebel against and defy God, he chose evil; and in choosing evil, he became evil. Through the exercise of his own will, he fell from heaven, as man later fell from Eden. And ever since his fall Satan has been enticing men to follow his example. Satan, a created being, is not equal in power to his Creator. His power is circumscribed by God. His time is limited. His kingdom had a beginning, and will have an ending, for God will triumph in the end.

The Book of Mormon makes the problem of good and evil quite simple. All good comes from God; all evil comes from Satan, who entices and persuades men to do evil and to become evil like himself. "All things which are good cometh of God, and that which is evil cometh of the devil, for the devil is an enemy to God, and fighteth against him continually, and inviteth and enticeth to sin..." (Moroni 7:10) God is the source of all good. He does not create evil; evil is the creation of those beings -- angels or men -- who use their wills to make wrong choices and wrong decisions. Every man may choose

for himself, and may become good or evil according to his choice.

How does Satan entice, tempt, or persuade men to do evil, and thus to become evil? Always by deceit. No man is foolish enough to choose evil for evil's sake. No man in his right mind would ever deliberately choose eternal sorrow, suffering, misery, poverty, and death, rather than eternal joy, peace, prosperity, and life. No -- the face of evil is too ugly, too repulsive, too hideous to be attractive; therefore evil always wears a mask of righteousness and pretends to be the means of achieving good. Temptation nearly always takes the form of "Let us do evil that good may come." Suppose that I want something I can't afford. I am too impatient and lazy to wait and work for it or to acquire it legitimately; therefore I choose to take a short cut, and rob somebody at gun point. Then supposedly I have the good thing I wanted. Can I enjoy it? Not while I am hiding or fleeing from the law, or serving time in the penitentiary.

Men are enticed to do evil by an offering of what seems to be good, as a mouse is enticed by the cheese in a mouse trap. The devil offers a short cut, a quick and easy, but wrong way of getting what seems to be good. He preaches the ancient doctrine that "the end justifies the means" -- that even crime is honest and justifiable if it brings good or desirable results. But sin never brings good results; the devil never delivers on his contract. When we follow his sinful and evil methods, we may be deceived for the moment into thinking that we have achieved good, but in the end we pay the price of remorse, sorrow, suffering for ourselves and many others, and finally, eternal death. When the mouse gets the cheese in the mouse trap, he finds it good for perhaps a brief instant, but always deadly in the end. When men give their allegiance to the devil, become his servants, and choose to follow his wicked ways in the hope of achieving good, they never become his beneficiaries, but always his victims; for the devil himself is a loser, with nothing good to offer to men.

Then why are men deceived? Because they are so eager for quick and easy results that they place themselves in a frame of mind to be deceived. Because they cease to love truth, and give themselves over to a spirit of lying and deceit. Because they cease to love and serve God. Because, as James says, they are drawn away by their own lusts, and enticed. Because they want results quickly, whether achieved by right or wrong methods. Once a man has decided that

God's ways to the achievement of good is too slow, too costly, or too much trouble, he has already deceived himself and become willing to see what the devil has to offer.

There is an excellent illustration of this principle in the temptation of Adam and Eve. God had commanded them not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, lest they die. Satan offered them the fruit of this tree as something which would bring them good -- which would make them as gods who know good from evil. That was true, but only part of the truth. There was no mention of the deadly penalty attached to using Satan's way of achieving that good, rather than God's way.

The temptation of Jesus followed the same pattern, but Jesus was not deceived. As the Son of God, he was fully entitled to depend on God for good, for protection against danger, and for all the power and wealth he needed. The temptation was to seek these things in wrong ways, and for wrong and devilish ends or purposes. It is not wrong to eat bread when one is hungry, but it is wrong to follow Satan's methods rather than God's in acquiring bread. It is not wrong to seek God's protection in danger, but it is wrong to place one's self deliberately in danger by obeying Satan, and then to ask God for miraculous deliverance. It is not wrong to acquire wealth and political power, if they are acquired righteously and used unselfishly to establish God's kingdom, but it is wrong to acquire them by falling down and worshipping Satan. Jesus never deceived himself into believing that he could achieve good by doing evil.

All good comes from God, but never evil. God cannot be tempted with evil, nor does he ever tempt man to do evil that good may come. God said through one of the Book of Mormon prophets: "Whatsoever thing persuadeth men to do good is of me, for good cometh of none, save it be of me." It is Satan who deceives by offering us good if we will do evil; but no good ever comes from Satan, or through his methods.

"Behold, the Spirit of Christ is given to every man, that they may know good from evil; wherefore I shew unto you the way to judge; for everything which inviteth to do good, and to persuade to believe in Christ, is sent forth by the power and gift of Christ .... but whatsoever thing persuadeth men to do evil, and believe not in Christ, and deny him, and serve not God, then ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of the devil."