

# "HEAR YE HIM"

## A Devotional Series For Radio

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Evan A. Fry, Radio Minister  
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The Sermon: IF JESUS HAD NOT COME

Scripture: Book of Mormon, Mosiah 8:79-84

And now if Christ had not come into the world ... there could have been no redemption. And if Christ had not risen from the dead, or have broken the bands of death, that the grave should have no victory, and that death should have no sting, there could have been no resurrection. But there is a resurrection, therefore the grave hath no victory, and the sting of death is swallowed up in Christ. He is the light and the life of the world; yea, a light that is endless, that can never be darkened; yea, and also a life which is endless, that there can be no more death. Even this mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruption shall put on incorruption, and shall be brought to stand before the bar of God, to be judged of him according to their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil, If they be good, to the resurrection of endless life and happiness, and if they be evil, to the resurrection of endless damnation.

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light that is endless, that can never be darkened.

What kind of person would you be, in what kind of world would you be living, if Jesus had not come? Perhaps that is a foolish or a futile question, for if the Scriptures are to be believed, without Jesus there would never have been any earth, or stars, or heavens, or man, or life of any kind, or creation of any kind. The scriptures teach quite plainly that all things are by him and of him and through him -- that he is God's agent or instrument of creation -- that he is the source, or the beginning of the creation of God -- that without him we would not have existed at all.

The study of a lifetime would scarcely suffice to uncover all the ways in which Jesus has influenced and changed the world in which we live. Much of that influence, many of the things he has done for us, we simply take for granted and accept as the normal way of life, because we have grown up with them. Jesus has touched and influenced the lives of men from Adam until now. Abel offered sacrifices as a symbol of the sacrifice of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Enoch, Methuselah, Abraham, Moses, and all the prophets of the Old Testament knew of the promise of a Messiah, and looked forward to his coming. The Old Testament is full of prophecies -- some concerning his coming as a babe, and some concerning his coming as a King to reign in glory when all evil has been destroyed. How much this hope and this concept have

influenced the course of the world's history no man will ever know.

If Jesus had not come, we may be quite sure of one thing: there would be no redemption for the human race. What is redemption? The dictionary says that to redeem is to reclaim by re-purchase; to rescue by paying a ransom. Somehow those definitions do not express the full implications of redemption. Suppose that a soldier is captured in war, and sold as a slave in a strange and foreign country, far from his lands, his king, his family, to a master who treats him cruelly. If a kinder master came along and purchased him, but kept him as a slave, that would not be redemption, even though his plight might be somewhat improved. There would be no redemption until he was restored to his rightful king, to his rights as a citizen, to his place as a husband and father, to his lands and property. To redeem is to restore to right uses, to right relationship which have somehow been lost.

By original sin and the fall, man became alienated from God. The rightful relationship between God and man was broken, even though man had been made a little lower than the angels and designed for fellowship with God. Sin also brought alienation and division between man and man, between brother and brother, and later between nation and nation. Redemption was faced with the task of re-

storing these right relationships.

But this was not all. Man was created to have dominion over the good earth, and particularly over that portion of the earth of which his body was formed. When sin came into the world, man lost in some degree at least his dominion over the earth, and it began to bring forth thorns and briars. He lost dominion over his own body, which little by little grew older and weaker, until he relinquished it altogether in death. Body and spirit, which were designed to be together, were separated. The body, separated from the spirit, had no life; and the spirit separated from the body had no implementation.

Jesus came to redeem the soul of man. The body and the spirit is the soul of man, and the redemption of the soul is the resurrection of the body, or the joining together of body and spirit, never again to be separated. Once this process of resurrection is complete, the redeemed soul will be brought again into the presence of God, and the right relationships between God and man re-established.

Without this sort of redemption, there could be no hope of life or immortality. Because Jesus came, we do have hope of immortality, and of restoration to God. Without hope of this reconciliation and restoration to God, our Father, there could be no true or lasting happiness, for we should be perpetually in the gloom and shadow of a hopeless bondage to death. In the words of the Easter hymn: "Sad were the life we must part with tomorrow, If tears were our birthright, and death were our end."

If Jesus had not come, there would be no hope. Men are sustained by the hope of better things to be -- by the hope that they can some day be better men, in a better society, in a better world. If that hope is to be achieved only by our children's children, a thousand millenniums from now, long after our personalities are blotted out in death, then it is indeed a small hope for us. If death were allowed to keep man in eternal captivity, then there would be no wasting time try-

ing to achieve a better life or a better world. Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die. Because Jesus came to give us redemption and eternal life, we may live in hope of sharing in a better world, a hope of wrongs redressed, of wickedness punished and righteousness rewarded.

If death ends all, then the end is the same for all men. If death ends all, then there is no justice in the universe, for every man -- good or bad -- receives the same thing at the end of life--death! If all receive the same end, if all are equally under the bondage of death, it makes no difference what we choose in this life. Choice has no significance or meaning unless choice is between two or more alternatives. Choice with only one thing from which to choose is not choice. If even a good man whose life is worth perpetuating must die the same as a wicked man who is no longer worthy to live and perpetuate his wickedness, then all men are in bondage to evil, to Satan, to death, and there is no freedom for anyone.

But if Jesus made life possible by redeeming man from death, then we have an alternative to death. We are free to choose life through Christ, instead of death. Out of this simple but tremendously meaningful fact grows every freedom you and I enjoy today! Because Jesus came, we are free to choose for ourselves.

Because Jesus came to bring us redemption, hope, freedom, restoration to God, and restoration of right relationships with each other in his kingdom we have peace within, and hope of eventual peace for the world when he, the Prince of Peace, shall have put down all evil, punished all wickedness, and made the kingdom of this world his kingdom.

In this Christmas season, let us give thanks to God for his unspeakable gift, the gift of his Son, for without that gift mankind would indeed be without hope. He is the light and the life of the world; yea, a light that is endless, that can never be darkened; yea, and also a life that is endless, that there can be no more death.