

"HEAR YE HIM"

A Devotional Series For Radio

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The Sermon: A CHOICE LAND

Scripture: Ether 1:31, 32, 35.

And now we can behold the decrees of God concerning this land, that it is a land of promise, and whatsoever nation shall possess it, shall serve God, or they shall be swept off when the fullness of his wrath shall come upon them. And the fullness of his wrath cometh upon them when they are ripened in iniquity; for behold this is a land which is choice above all other lands; wherefore he that doth possess it shall serve God, or shall be swept off; for it is the everlasting decree of God. Behold, this is a choice land, and whatsoever nation shall possess it shall be free of bondage, and from captivity, and from all other nations under heaven, if they will but serve the God of the land, who is Jesus Christ, who hath been manifested by the things which we have written.

This is a land which is choice above all other lands.

The reverent mind does not have to search very far to find abundant evidence of a special Providence which has controlled and directed the destinies of the two American continents, and especially of North America. For hundreds of years America remained unknown to the peoples of Europe, until Columbus (who believed himself to be an inspired instrument of Providence to fulfill the prophesies of Isaiah) discovered the new world in 1492. There is something providential in the fact that it was not the Spaniards or the French or the Dutch who put their permanent imprint upon the northern hemisphere of the new world, but the English, who had been traditioned since the days of the Magna Carta to believe in man's inherent, God-given rights and freedoms.

There is something providential in the way the North American colonies won their independence from the mother country, wrote a constitution which has been a model for the rest of the world, and established a unique form of democratic commonwealth, composed of sovereign states united in a federal government. In Latin America, too, there is evidence of an overruling Providence. The "George Washington" of South America was Simon Bolivar, who threw off the yoke of Spain and won national independence for Venezuela, Colombia, Panama, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia. In Mexico, Miguel Hidalgo began the struggle for national independence which was carried to completion by Benito Juarez. Evidently there is something significant in the Book of Mormon promise

that "..... this is a choice land, and whatsoever nation shall possess it shall be free of bondage, and from captivity, and from all other nations under heaven, if they will but serve the God of the land, who is Jesus Christ....." There is something significant in the historical fact that no king or emperor or dictator has ever endured for very long on either American continent, and every attempt by European nations to establish empires in this hemisphere has failed.

There is something especially significant and indicative of an overruling Providence in the rise of these United States of America, which can best be seen by contrasting our nation with the nations of Europe. The United States is a union of forty-eight sovereign states, with a population of close to 170 million people, spread over a territory of approximately three million square miles. Between these forty-eight states there are no tariff walls, no border patrols, no language barriers, no restrictions on free travel or trade, no territorial disputes, no fears of war. In Europe, by contrast, some 550 million people lived between World War I and II in a territory of about three and three quarters million square miles, under 36 national flags, divided not only by national boundaries, but by racial and language barriers, trade and travel restrictions, territorial disputes, and by almost innumerable ancient hatreds, antagonisms, and fears.

What makes a choice land choice, or

a great nation great? Not one factor alone, but a combination of many factors-- people, government, geographical location, climate, and natural resources, plus the grace and favor of Almighty God. Under the unified, democratic government of the United States, men are free to live, to think, to vote, to worship, to produce, to invent, to make a profit, to acquire an education, each according to his own free will and moral agency. In the matter of geographical location, the two American continents, and particularly North America, are unique. They are guarded on east and west by vast oceans. The great bulk of their land areas lies in the temperate zones, which produce the grass and cereal plants that furnish the world's major food supply, and which cannot be grown in the tropics. Our mountain ranges, running north and south, control the winds that bring moisture to our great plains areas, which with their deep soil and long growing season are able to grow so much food that we not only feed our own nation with the world's highest standard of nutrition, but have been contributing from our surpluses to feed that two-thirds of the world's population which never has enough to eat. Here in America we grow everything from tropical fruits to hard winter wheat, as well as fresh fruits and vegetables which are available practically all year 'round, thanks to modern methods of preservation and transportation.

The Providence of Almighty God to America is indicated in many other ways, growing out of the peculiar combination of blessings that are ours. The United States has less than seven per cent of the world's population, yet we own 45 per cent of the entire wealth of the world. We have more paved highways than all the rest of the world put together, and 70 per cent of the world's railroads. We have 85 per cent of the world's automobiles, 60 per cent of the world's telephones, 90 per cent of the world's television sets, and more radio sets than all of Europe, Asia, and Africa combined. One hour of labor by an American workman can purchase twice as much (in terms of goods) as the labor of an Englishman or Frenchman, four times as much as a German, six times as much as an Italian, twenty-five times more than a Hindu, and thirty-

five times as much as a Chinese.

Part of this is due to the fact that we have 65 per cent of the world's coal supply, plus abundant supplies of oil and water power to furnish energy for our mechanized farms and industries. Scientists tells us that one horsepower of energy is equivalent to the work of fifteen human slaves. On this basis, the average citizen of the United States enjoys and utilizes the daily work of 153 mechanical slaves, the Englishman 45, the Frenchman 35, the Italian 25, the Russian 11. In Asia the average annual income per capita is thirty dollars; in Europe, \$473.00; in the United States \$1,453.00. Our life expectancy has increased from 35 years in the year 1790 to 62 years in the year 1940. We have more doctors per capita than any other nation in the world. Our free hospital beds number more than all the hospital beds in Europe.

The Book of Mormon was written by descendants of Joseph of Egypt, through the line of Manassah. Those who accept it as history believe that the American continents are Joseph's land which was promised to Joseph and his seed first in Jacob's blessing, (recorded in Genesis 49:22-26) and in Moses' blessing of the twelve tribes in Deuteronomy 33:13-17. Truly, America has been blessed with the blessings of heaven above, and of the deep that lieth under, with the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, with the chief things of the ancient mountains, with the fullness thereof, and with the good will of Him that spoke to Moses from the flaming bush.

Because America is a choice land, providentially prepared, endowed, and guarded by the Lord through milleniums of time, God has decreed that those who occupy it must occupy it and use its choice blessings in righteousness, or be swept off when they shall have ripened in their iniquity. Unto the righteous, this land shall be blessed forever, and shall be free from bondage and captivity -- on one condition -- that they worship and serve Jesus Christ, and use the blessings he has provided so abundantly with reverence and holy fear and a deep sense of their unique spiritual stewardship.