

# "HEAR YE HIM"

## A Devotional Series For Radio

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The Sermon: GOD WORKETH NOT IN DARKNESS

Scripture: Book of Mormon, Ether 3:92, 93, 95, 99, 100.

And it came to pass that they formed a secret combination, even as they of old, which combination is most abominable and wicked above all, in the sight of God. For the Lord worketh not in secret combinations, neither doth he will that man should shed blood, but in all things hath forbidden it, from the beginning of man. . . . And whatsoever nation shall uphold such secret combinations, to get power and gain, until they shall spread over the nation, behold, they shall be destroyed, for the Lord will not suffer that the blood of his saints, which shall be shed by them, shall always cry unto him from the ground for vengeance upon them, and yet he avenge them not. . . . . For whoso buildeth it up, seeketh to overthrow the freedom of all lands, nations, and countries; And it bringeth to pass the destruction of all people, for it is built up by the devil, who is the father of all lies.

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The Lord God worketh not in darkness.

One almost universal aspect of human nature seems to be a desire to be exclusive -- to know a secret which no one else knows; to have some knowledge which no one else has. This urge found expression in the mystery religions of ancient times which capitalized on secrets revealed only to the initiate or to the very special intelligentsia. It finds expression today in the secret gang or club organized by small boys playing in the back yard, and in more stable and mature adult organizations which feature a secret ritual and an exclusive membership. In more sinister forms it may be manifested in criminal and politically subversive organizations whose members are bound together by secret oaths to support each other in robbery, murder, rapine, political intrigue and revolution, and anarchy which sets up the law of the secret society above the law of the state, and protects its members in crime.

The people of Book of Mormon times were frequently plagued by secret societies of the criminal type, which their traditions said had been handed down from the time of Cain, the first murderer. These secret societies were organized in much the same manner that some of our modern big city crime syndicates are organized. Membership was secret and exclusive. The members knew each other by secret signs, grips, oaths, and passwords, but members were unknown to the general public and often occupied places of seem-

ing respectability. The members supported and protected each other in their crimes. They corrupted the courts of justice to gain immunity from punishment for their members. They made frequent use of the device of political assassination, murdering those public officials who would not go along with them in their criminal procedures. Their purpose was to gain power, to rob, murder, plunder, destroy the rights and freedoms of the righteous, to bring people under the bondage of terror and fear, and to overthrow any government, officials, constitutions, or laws which would hinder their purposes.

In our day we have seen the growth and extension of this sort of secret society into political parties such as the Nazis in Germany, the Fascists in Italy, and the Communists in Russia. The greatest threat to world freedom which we have today is the Communist party -- a secret society organized as a political party for the purpose of murder, robbery, plunder, enslavement, revolution, and the building up of personal power and gain for the inner secret circle.

Because secrecy can so easily be subverted to evil ends, perhaps it is not unreasonable to examine the whole principle of secrecy in the light of the teachings of Christianity. First, let it be noted that there is a difference between secrecy and privacy. There are some aspects of every life that are private; but

they are not necessarily secret. Private lives are still subject to civil law, and in case of crime may properly be investigated and made public by the processes of law. Secrecy which is supported by secret oaths, covenants, grips, and passwords, by which men bind themselves to support each other even in defiance of law, is always suspect. Such secrecy breeds suspicion, distrust, narrowness, clannishness, class distinction, bigotry, and selfishness, and is a constant temptation to set one's self or one's group above the law, which is rebellion and anarchy.

God does have certain secrets or mysteries which either cannot be known to men at all, or can be known only to men who have developed the capacity which would enable them to understand. The mathematical equations formulated by Albert Einstein to prove his theory of relativity are "secrets" or "mysteries" to all but a handful of mathematicians. But they have been published to the world. Anyone may read them and study them. They are secrets or mysteries to you and me only because we have not the capacity to understand them. So many of the secrets of God are withheld from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes, who by faith, humility, and obedience have developed a capacity for receiving the revelation of God.

With this one exception, God never deals in secrets. The Lord God worketh not in darkness. We are told in scripture that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. The darkness and the light are both alike unto him: he sees all that goes on in darkness just as if it were in light. When men are banished from God's presence, we say that they are cast into "outer darkness." The "works of darkness" are works of sin and iniquity. When men love darkness rather than light, it is because their deeds are evil; but one whose works are righteous need not fear to have them brought to the light of God's throne for judgment.

Jesus said: "I ever taught openly in the temple, and in secret have I said nothing." That which he had taught to his disciples in privacy was not to be kept secret, but spoken in light and pro-

claimed from the housetops. He taught his disciples to let their light shine as a candle on a candlestick -- openly, before all the world. He taught them that their lives should be as a city set on a hill which cannot be hid. He instructed his disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He warned them not to believe the men who would try to deceive them about his second coming by saying that he was in the desert, or in some secret chamber.

If the Lord God worketh not in darkness, nor in secret combinations, then there is no need in the church for any secret ritual, ceremony, covenant, or oath. The invitation is free to all; the gospel is to be preached to all; the gospel covenant is one to be taken openly and before the world. Such ordinances as are prescribed for entrance into Christ's church and kingdom are in no sense secret; their nature and form are described in scripture, and freely preached and discussed; the meetings in which they are administered are open to all who will conduct themselves with reverence and proper decorum.

If the Lord God worketh not in darkness, then there is no need for anyone who has covenanted with Christ to make solemn or secret oaths or covenants with any other group. There is no need to bind the ties of friendship or fellowship with secret oaths or covenants, for the covenant of fellowship and brotherhood in Christ is all-inclusive, and one who would prove false to that covenant made openly and proclaimed from the housetops would prove equally false to any covenant formed in darkness and in secrecy.

In these perilous times we need to be alert to the dangers which threaten from some of the more sinister secret combinations, which now as always are a threat to the peace, the lives, the freedoms, the property, and the orderly and lawful governments of men. Let all things be done in light; and let the light of Christ shine into every dark place, revealing all the secret acts of men, and righteousness shall always prevail among men.