

# "HEAR YE HIM"

## A Devotional Series For Radio

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Evan A. Fry, Radio Minister  
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The Sermon: ONE ETERNAL ROUND

Scripture: Book of Mormon, I Nephi 3:26-32.

I, Nephi, was desirous that I might see, and hear, and know of these things, by the power of the Holy Ghost, which is the gift of God unto all those who diligently seek him, as well in times of old as in the time that he should manifest himself unto the children of men; For he is the same yesterday, today, and forever. And the way is prepared from the foundation of the world, if it so be that they repent and come unto him; For he that diligently seeketh shall find; And the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto them by the power of the Holy Ghost, as well in this time as in the times of old; And as well in times of old as in times to come; Wherefore the course of the Lord is one eternal round.

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His paths are straight, and his course is one eternal round.

God is a deep and unfathomable mystery. "O the depth of the riches both in the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" How can the finite human mind comprehend the infinite and eternal God? Yet although we cannot know him in whole, we can know him in part, for he has revealed and is revealing himself to men of scientific curiosity and spiritual faith and insight every day.

If God is infinite and eternal can he be progressive? Does he grow? Does he learn, or change his ways for the better? On the basis of the revealment of him already given we can easily answer that question "No," for if he is still learning and growing it would be logical to assume that there was a time when he was ignorant, imperfect, or perhaps even wicked in his mistakenness -- that he was once human as we are. If he is or ever was less than perfect, he is not God. If there ever was a time when he was not, he could not be God. The Psalmist says: "From everlasting to everlasting, thou art God."

God is, and must by his very nature be the Absolute, the last, final, all-inclusive Source and Cause of all other things. If he is absolute wisdom and knowledge, he is all wisdom and knowledge; he can never learn more than he knows now. If he is absolute and complete love, his love can never increase or diminish. If he is absolute power, he can never become more or less powerful than he is now. If he is absolute perfection, absolute

righteousness, he can never improve; there is no need that he should ever change. Because he never needs to grow or to progress, the reverse is also true; that it is impossible for him to backslide, or retrogress, or forget, or diminish, or grow old, or fail. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. A God who at some time in the past was fallible, mistaken, or capable of sinning, might make a mistake or sin again, and therefore would be unworthy of our trust.

To say that God is perfect and absolute and unchangeable is not to say, however, that he is finished, or static or idle. The scriptures, if we know how and where to read them, depict a God who is eternally busy, not a God who finished all his work several quadrillion years ago and has been resting ever since. God has said: "I am the same yesterday, today, and forever . . . . My work is not yet finished; neither shall it be, until the end of man; neither from that time henceforth and forever." "My works are without end, and also my words, for they never cease." "The heavens, they are many, and they can not be numbered unto man, but they are numbered unto me, for they are mine; and as one earth shall pass away, and the heavens thereof, even so shall another come; and there is no end to my works, neither to my words. . . ."

The same idea, somewhat differently expressed, is found in today's text: "His paths are straight, and his course is one eternal round." This seems at first to be a contradiction. How could a path be

both straight and round? Modern scientific thought gives us the answer. There is no such thing as a straight line in space. If a straight line is projected into the infinity of space it curves back upon itself in a circle or an ellipse. God is using good orthodox modern scientific language when he says, that "his paths are straight, and his course is one eternal round." Lincoln Barnett's book, "The Universe and Dr. Einstein," says on page 93 that "In the Einstein universe there are no straight lines; there are only great circles." This gives rise to a somewhat difficult concept of a universe that is both finite and unbounded; for if it is possible to project a straight line infinitely, without ever coming to the end, such projection is possible only because in infinite time and space the line tends to curve back upon itself. Dr. Einstein and other scientists have even likened the universe to an expanding soap bubble, which although so vast that we cannot ever pierce the extent of it, is still limited. They have even attempted to estimate the radius of the universe, and have arrived at a figure of 35 billion light years, or 210 sextillion (that's a billion billion) miles. Within this universe, they say that a sunbeam setting out to move at more than 186,000 miles per second, would describe a great cosmic circle and return to its source after a little more than 200 billion terrestrial years. "His paths are straight, and his course is one eternal round."

Now, where is God in this universe? Has he finished his work and is he eternally sitting back as a disinterested observer, oblivious to the machinery which he has set in motion? No; today's scientists are telling us that the universe is not static, that it is growing and expanding, that it is not rigid and immutable, but plastic and variable, and subject to constant change. They go even further, and say that the very nature of the universe demands a continuous creation; that as one galaxy dies, others are continuously being born or created out of the seeming nothingness of divine energy. We can therefore look forward with some degree of confidence to an infinite future for the universe in which we live. If the

sun burns out and all its planets fall into the dead cinder, the universe will still go on, for "as one earth shall pass away, and the heavens thereof, so shall another come; and there is no end to my works, neither to my words....."

When viewed against this unfathomable and infinite background of eternity, the year just closing seems very unimportant. Yet another remarkable thing about this great and eternal God is that he has taken just as great pains in creating and establishing the laws of the microcosm--the tiny, sub-microscopic universe of the atom -- as he has the macrocosm, the universe of stars and suns and planets and galaxies. Halfway between the microcosm and the macrocosm stands the most beloved of all God's creations -- man. Man must live his earthly life within the limits of time. It therefore stands to reason that the same God who is interested in sextillions of light years is equally interested in our days, months, and years--yes, even in our seconds.

So, although at first glance it would seem to us that the passing of an old year and the birth of a new were not very important to a God whose paths are straight and whose course is one eternal round, we believe that there is nothing insignificant or unimportant to him if it has to do with man's welfare and happiness. And for us, the beginning of a new year is another reminder of the shortness of our period of earthly probation. It is a time to check on past progress, and determine how far we have come. It is a time to check the direction of our growth, and if necessary, change direction and make a fresh start. It is a time for new resolutions. It is a time for us to take stock of our worthiness for eternity. It is a reminder that whatever we do should be done not only against a background of time, but against a background of eternity, with full awareness that we are under the watchful and loving care of a God whose paths are straight and whose course is one eternal round, a God in whom there is no variability, neither shadow of turning.