

# "HEAR YE HIM"

## A Devotional Series For Radio

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The Sermon: MAN WAS IN THE BEGINNING WITH GOD

Scripture: Doctrine and Covenants: Section 90, portions of paragraphs 4,5,6.

I was in the beginning with the Father, and am the Firstborn .... Ye were also in the beginning with the Father; that which is Spirit, even the Spirit of truth .... The Spirit of truth is of God ..... Man was also in the beginning with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be. All truth is independent in that sphere where God has placed it, to act for itself, as all intelligence also, otherwise there is no existence ..... The glory of God is intelligence, or in other words, light and truth; light and truth forsaketh that evil one. Every spirit of man was innocent in the beginning, and God having redeemed man from the fall, men became again in their infant state, innocent before God.

Man was also in the beginning with God.

God is a self-existent Being. He was never created or made. He is the Creator, not the created. All things were made by him, and of him, and through him. Our finite minds cannot comprehend a Being who always was, who never had a beginning, and who will never have an ending; but God is such a Being.

In contrast to God, man is a creature. He was created by the great Creator of all things. There was a time when man was not, when he first came into existence, when he had a beginning. The Bible does not tell us very much about man's beginnings, except to say that he was created in the beginning by God, the Father. Modern revelation in the Doctrine and covenants give us a few more hints, but the subject is still veiled in mystery.

The Doctrine and Covenants says that "man was in the beginning with God." It also says that "intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be." One of the attributes of man is intelligence. Wherever there is life, we can see a certain degree of intelligence manifested through that life. Intelligence is an attribute of God himself; like God it cannot be created or made. It is self-existent. It is the Spirit of God, the Spirit of truth, which always was, and always shall be. This intelligence, the Spirit of truth and of light, was with God as a part of him. It is eternal.

We have said in previous sermons of this series that man was first created spiritually, before he was created physically and placed upon this earth. This

is indicated by the fact that there are two distinct accounts of creation in Genesis, in which the events are in reverse order, and that in chapter 2, verse 5 -- after one creation had been finished, it is stated that "there was not a man to till the ground." It was at this point that God formed man of the dust of the earth, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.

Man's spirit was made first. We are not told, and we do not know what the form or substance of the spirit is; but it is reasonable to suppose that God took a portion of that intelligence which is eternally his, and somehow brought it together with this spiritual substance to form a personality like his own -- intelligent, and able to discern truth from error, right from wrong. Without such intelligence, the Doctrine and Covenants says, there is no existence.

These created spirits were in the beginning with God. They were made in God's image, and in the likeness of his personality. Numbers 16:22, calls God "the God of the spirits of all flesh." Hebrews 12:9 calls him "the Father of Spirits." Jeremiah is told (1:5) "Behold I formed thee in the womb, I knew thee?" Zechariah 12:1 speaks of the Lord "which stretchest forth the heavens, and layeth the foundations of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him." When a man blind from birth came to Jesus the Jews inquired, "Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" indicating a belief in some previous spiritual existence.

The Inspired Version of the Bible, corrected by Joseph Smith by means of the same inspiration which brought us the revelations of the book of Doctrine and Covenants, says plainly "I made the world, and men before they were in the flesh." (Gen. 6:52) It describes a vision of Enoch, in which he saw the spirits of men which God had created. (Gen. 6:38) It says, "I, the Lord God, created all things of which I have spoken spiritually, before they were naturally upon the face of the earth . . . ." (Gen. 2:5) The Doctrine and Covenants says (28:8) .. "by the power of my Spirit created I them; yea, all things both spiritual and temporal: firstly spiritual, secondly, temporal, which is the beginning of my work . . . ." It says: "Man is spirit." (90:5) It says that marriage is ordained of God ... "that the earth might answer the end of its creation; and that it might be filled with the measure of man, according to his creation before the world was made." (49:3)

Man was in the beginning with God. When he was only spirit, without a physical body, he was with God. Even then man was a knowable, recognizable entity, a personality. He had consciousness; he had intelligence; for God spoke to him and commanded him to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth, and gave him dominion over all other creatures. It was when these conscious personalities, these spirits, were placed in the bodies God had formed of the dust of the earth, that man became a living soul. We have seen in previous sermons that there is a type of energy of life in matter. But no matter has ever produced mind, intelligence, or organic life. That is God's creation. Man, with his intelligence, his life, his personality, was in the beginning with God.

In the beginning of his physical creation, man was also with God. There is all too little in the Genesis story, but it seems that in the beginning God was a frequent visitor to the Garden of Eden. He and the man and woman he had created could associate with each other, could talk and commune with each other, because they were in the beginning innocent, without sin, without even a knowledge of good and evil. Man in the beginning was innocent -- but not yet perfect. He had no knowledge of good and

evil. He had no experience in making choices, -- no knowledge on which to base a choice; and character is developed and perfected only through repeated choices freely made.

The first choice was a wrong choice, a rebellious choice. Man disobeyed God; and disobedience is sin. No sinful man may remain in God's presence and live; so man was driven from the Garden of Eden and from God's presence, and it could no longer be said that man was "with God." By the fall he lost his right to be with God. He lost dominion over the materials of his own body, so that he could no longer keep body and spirit together. Physical death came into the world. The spirit lost its implementation, and the body lost its life and intelligence.

Though man could no longer abide the full presence of God, God did not leave him altogether alone. He sent his Spirit into the world to teach, to guide, to reprove men. He sent his prophets into the world, who through the inspiration of that Spirit could lead men into righteousness, and who could point forward towards the coming of God veiled in human flesh to be with his people. In the meridian of time, Jesus came saying, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," showing man what God was like. Man was in the beginning with God. Throughout all the ages, God has not left himself without witness; he has not left man altogether alone, but has always supplied as much of his presence as man could understand, appreciate, and endure.

The death and resurrection of Christ were intended (among other purposes) to redeem man; that is, to bring him back into the presence of God as he was in the beginning; to bring not only man's spirit, but his soul, which is spirit and body, inseparably connected. Man was in the beginning with God. He was made to be with God. He was made in the image of God. He was made for communion and fellowship with God. In the end of the world, those who have followed the guidance of his Spirit, his prophets, his Only Begotten Son, will be found worthy to be restored completely and fully to God's presence, that there both body and spirit may receive a fullness of joy.