

5-7-1967

The God Who Hearts

John Allen Chalk

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.acu.edu/hot_docs

Recommended Citation

Chalk, John Allen, "The God Who Hearts" (1967). *Herald of Truth Documents*. Paper 28.
http://digitalcommons.acu.edu/hot_docs/28

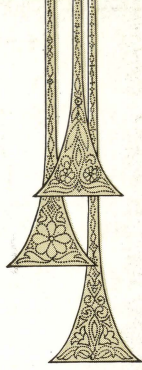
This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Herald of Truth Records at Digital Commons @ ACU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Herald of Truth Documents by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ ACU. For more information, please contact dc@acu.edu.

The God Who Hears



Number 797
TRANSCRIPT OF THE

Herald of Truth
..... *radio programs*



HIGHLAND CHURCH OF CHRIST

radio program

P. O. Box 2439

Arlene, Texas 79604



NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

The God Who Hears

A continual cry comes out of the Old Testament *Psalms*. Most of us have uttered this special kind of plea in one form or another on many occasions. Some of us may not have realized what we were saying or thinking, but the sentiment of heart and soul was nonetheless real. David gives expression of this constant plea at *Psalms* 39:12, "Hear my prayer, O Jehovah, and give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears." In *Psalms* 54:2 we read, "Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth." "Hide not thyself from my supplication," says another plea within the *Psalms* (55:1). "Attend unto my prayer," we also hear (*Psalms* 61:1). Or again, "Let my prayer enter into thy presence; incline thine ear unto my cry" (*Psalms* 88:2). Throughout the *Psalms* this repeated concern is found, a deep current steadily moving through some of the most heart-searching observations ever written about man and God (84:8; 102:1; 143:1). How modern and how personal for each of us is the expression, "Hear my prayer, O Jehovah, and give ear unto my cry."

The kind of prayer about which I speak must be seen in a context described by David in one of his many prayers recorded in the *Psalms*. He says to God, "For unto thee I pray" (*Psalms* 5:1, 2). Somehow many of our prayers aim either at others or ourselves. They do not searchingly present our own spiritual plight to God. Prayer, if it is Biblical prayer, is communion with God, the God of all creation, the God of the Bible. Someone wrote, "Prayer is not eloquence, but earnestness; not the definition of helplessness but the feeling of it; not figures of speech, but earnestness of soul." And Victor Hugo described the kind of prayer we talk about when he said, "There are moments when, whatever be the attitude of the body, the soul is on its knees."

Isaiah raises a haunting question about prayer when he warns Israel that her pagan neighbors "pray unto a god that cannot save" (*Isaiah* 45:20). Have you ever asked, "Do I pray to a God that cannot hear?" Because our prayers concern our most serious reflections and involve our greatest burdens we do have reason to inquire of our God — His willingness to hear and answer our prayers. President Abraham Lincoln spoke for every one of us, at sometime or another in our lives, when he said, "I have been driven many times to my knees, by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom, and that of all about me, seemed insufficient for that day." So, today, I'm asking you to consider with me, "The God Who Hears."

The God about which I speak, my God, is the God who promises to hear our prayers. When Jesus cleansed the temple of the merchandisers that cluttered and profaned it, He referred to a statement that His Father had made many years earlier through *Isaiah*, the Old Testament prophet (*Mark* 11:15-18). In that statement Jehovah invites "the foreigners," that is, those who had not previously been His people, "to minister unto him, and to love the name of Jehovah, to be his servants," obeying the Old Testament covenant He had made with His people. Of those who so respond God says, "even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar, for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples" (*Isaiah* 56:6, 7). Here is God's glorious and universal invitation to all men of every kind to pray to Him as their Father. But it must also be noted that God here makes clear how such men, and in fact all men, will be heard by Him. Those who "minister, love, serve, and obey" will know the joys of God's "house of prayer."

Later in *Isaiah* we read of the new “messianic” age to come at the time of Christ. Of that age, the one in which we now live, the prophet says this about the God who hears our prayers: “And it shall come to pass that, before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear” (*Isaiah* 65:24). How often, how wonderfully often, have God’s men and women known the fulfillment of this promise.

Jeremiah, another Old Testament prophet and writer, had an unusual experience with the God who hears our prayers. On three separate occasions God specifically instructed Jeremiah not to pray for his people. In chapter seven of *Jeremiah* God explains of this people, “But they harkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in their own counsels and in the stubbornness of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward” (*Jeremiah* 7:24). “Therefore,” God says to Jeremiah, “pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me; for I will not hear thee” (*Jeremiah* 7:16).

The second time God refused to hear Jeremiah’s prayer for the people comes in chapter eleven of *Jeremiah*. Listen to God’s reason this time, “For according to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah; and according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem have ye set up altars to the shameful thing, even altars to burn incense unto Baal” (*Jeremiah* 11:13). Idolatry, a very prevalent modern evil in many of our lives, also prevented God’s people in that day from being heard.

The third time God refused to hear the prophet pray for His people occurred in chapter fourteen of *Jeremiah*. God says, “Pray not for this people for their good” (*Jeremiah* 14:11). The reason appears in the preceding verse: “Even so have they loved to wander; they have not refrained their feet: therefore Jehovah doth not accept them; now will he remember their iniquity, and visit their sins” (*Jeremiah* 14:10). God does not become a harsh dictator in these passages, as He deals with His disobedient, idolatrous, rebellious people. Rather, His people make their conscious choice either to pray to the God who hears and answers their prayers or to follow their own selfish and materialistic pursuits receiving only the temporary power they provide.

The God who promises to hear us makes it very clear throughout the Bible how we can be sure our prayers are heard. One example of this kind of teaching from God comes at the conclusion of Solomon’s famous prayer of dedication of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. God says to King Solomon, “If I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or if I command the locust to de-

vor the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; if my people, who are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sins, and will heal their land. Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent, unto the prayer that is made in this place” (*II Chronicles* 7:13-15).

But the God who promises to hear is also the God who has kept and keeps His promises. At the temple dedication just mentioned, Solomon reminds assembled Israel of their blessings received from Jehovah. He “hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by Moses his servant,” Solomon tells his people. In short, their God has kept His promises to them. At Egypt, at the Red Sea, at the time of their initial entrance into Canaan, the promised land, and now in the completion of the temple, God has repeatedly shown that He keeps His promises. The history of Israel vindicates God’s promises. He has promised to hear the prayers of His servants.

God heard Abraham’s prayer for Sodom and rescued all who would leave that wicked city before her destruction (*Genesis* 18:22-33). Lot, Abraham’s nephew, and his daughters were the only ones to leave during God’s merciful escape period. And at *Genesis* 19:29, we read, “And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the Plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in which Lot dwelt.”

God listened to Moses’ prayer for Israel and Aaron at the time of their idolatrous worship of the golden calf. During this time Moses was at the top of Mount Sinai receiving God’s law for Israel. Such blatant unwillingness to wait on Jehovah received His greatest displeasure, to the point of His decision to destroy the whole nation. Only at Moses’ prayerful insistence was disaster averted. Moses later describes what happened. “And I fell down before Jehovah, as at the first, forty days and forty nights; I did neither eat bread nor drink water; because of all your sin which ye sinned, in doing that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, to provoke him to anger. For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure, wherewith Jehovah was wroth against you to destroy you. But Jehovah hearkened unto me that time also. And Jehovah was very angry with Aaron to destroy him: and I prayed for Aaron also at the same time” (*Deuteronomy* 9:18-20).

God healed the Shunammite woman’s son in answer to the prophet Elisha’s prayer (*II Kings* 4:32-37). Nehemiah’s prayer for Judah’s forgiveness and return from Babylon

to Jerusalem was heard and answered by God (*Nehemiah* 1:4-11). God answered a Jewish priest’s prayer for a child, and John the Baptist was born to Zacharias and Elizabeth (*Luke* 1:13). (I have often wondered why more men like John the Baptist were not born to help prepare the way for Jesus. Could it be that no other father in Israel prayed for a child like Zacharias did?) Jesus summarizes our discussion about the God who has kept and keeps His promise to hear our prayers, when He says at the time of His arrest and trial, “Thinkest thou that I cannot beseech my Father, and he shall even now send me more than twelve legions of angels” (*Matthew* 26:53). He knew His Father and our Father, the God who keeps His promises to hear our prayers!

Our physical bodies are covered with a million or more separate portions of epidermis. One can be busily engaged in some important work, yet if somebody pricks with a pin any one of these insignificant portions of skin, our brains immediately respond. If our brains can do that for any one of more than a million such sections of epidermis, why place a limitation on God’s ability to answer prayer?

With David, therefore, we say, “Praise waiteth for thee, O God . . . O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come” (*Psalms* 65:1, 2). Such willingness on God’s part to listen when we come in prayer speaks of His lovingkindness, His compassion, His profound interest in each one of us. “Blessed be God, who hath not turned away my prayer, nor his lovingkindness from me” (*Psalms* 66:20).

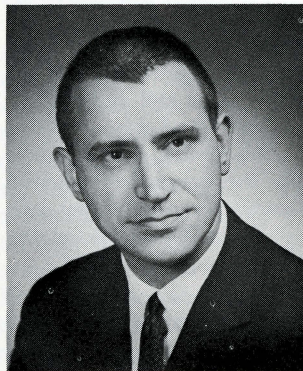
He is the God who listens to those in genuine need. “He hath regarded the prayer of the destitute, and hath not despised their prayer” (*Psalms* 102:17). And He also listens to those who are in a right relationship with Him. “The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to Jehovah; but the prayer of the upright is his delight. The way of the wicked is an abomination to Jehovah; but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness” (*Proverbs* 15:8, 9). Harsh? you ask. Not when you remember what God has done, what He has sacrificed, to provide you and me such a relationship with Himself. Christ died because God loved you and me enough that He wanted us to have full access to Him (*John* 3:16; *Ephesians* 2:18). There is, therefore, no assurance of answered prayer to those who willfully persist in rebellion. “He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination” (*Proverbs* 28:9). God is the “good Father” who hears and answers the prayers of all His children, Jesus teaches (*Matthew* 7:7-11). The question for you and me is, “Am I a child of God?” “Have I become obedient to His will?”

“Have I accepted the gift of salvation which my Father offers in Christ?”

Men today find many sources of power and strength. Education, personality improvement, money, personal skills, these and many other things give today's man power for daily living. But education can only give man knowledge. Personality improvement can only give man the best that is in himself. Money can only give man things that can be purchased. Personal skills can only accomplish that for which they have been developed. But prayer unlocks what God can do for each of us.

With boldness and confidence that arises out of the High Priesthood of Jesus Christ, we can approach God's throne of mercy and grace, finding “help” in “time of need” (Hebrews 4:14-16). “Wherefore also he is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25).

Make Christ your High Priest and Intercessor by complete belief in His deity (John 20:30, 31), by totally turning from sin in your life (Luke 13:3), in willing and public confession of Him as the Christ, and in baptism for remission of your sins and spiritual union with Him who is our “access” to “the God that hears.”



John Allen Chalk, dynamic evangelist and long-time radio speaker, is the first full-time speaker on the Herald of Truth radio program.

He began his work with the Herald of Truth on January 1, 1966. Previously, Chalk was the featured personality in a 13 week Herald of Truth television series.

A native of Lexington, Tennessee, he began preaching at 15. Chalk and his wife and two children now live in Abilene, Texas where he spends full time working with the Herald of Truth.

He is a graduate of Tennessee Tech and has written a book, “The Praying Christ and Other Sermons” and two tracts. Chalk was nominated for the Outstanding Young Man of Tennessee in 1964 and was named Cookeville's Young Man of the Year in 1963.