God Heareth Not Sinners

Intro: The disciples came to Jesus with a request; Luke 11:1 “And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.”

1. They had seen the importance Jesus placed on prayer within His life.
   a. At His baptism; Luke 3:21 “Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened,”
   b. Prior to choosing His apostles; Luke 6:12-13 “And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles;”
   c. Before the transfiguration He spent the whole night in prayer; Luke 9:29 “And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistering.”
   d. Before raising Lazarus from the dead; John 11:41 “Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.”
   e. In connection with His death; John 12:20-28 “And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.”
   f. In the shadow of the cross He prayed for Himself, His apostles, and all believers; John 17.
   g. He prayed in behalf of Peter; Luke 22:31-34 “And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.”
   h. When He instituted His Supper; Mat. 26:26-29 “And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.”
   i. His three fervent prayers in the Garden of Gethsemane; Luke 22:39-45 “And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him. And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation. And he was withdrawn from them about a stone’s cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.”
   j. Upon the cross:
      i. His first words; Luke 23:34 “Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.”
      ii. Still upon the cross; Mat. 27:46 “And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”
      iii. At the end of the ordeal; Luke 23:46 “And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.”

2. Christians have the same right of prayer that Jesus possessed.
   a. We might not take advantage of it like we should.
b. But it is still a wonderful gift God has given to us.

c. L. O. Sanderson correctly stated in the song, *Pray All The Time* when he wrote, “The world has lost the right of prayer, And saints have failed to pray; What loss sustained beyond repair! How blind of heart are they!”

I. **PRAYER’S POWER.**

A. James statement.
1. **Jam. 5:16** “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”
2. *Availeth* is that it has power, is able, or can do its intended purpose.
3. And it avails **much**, not just a little.

B. Examples:
1. Elijah.
   a. **Jam. 5:17-18** “Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. 18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.”
   b. There was no miracle involved.
   c. Everything which happened was purely natural.
   d. The prayers of a righteous man today has the same power as Elijah’s—through the providential working of God.
2. Abraham and Abimelech (the king of Gerar).
   a. Abraham had withheld vital information from Abimelech concerning Sarah saying only that she was his sister.
   b. This caused Abimelech to take Sarah as his wife.
   c. God intervened and has him return Sarah to Abraham.
   d. **Gen. 20:7** “Now therefore restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live: and if thou restore her not, know thou that thou shalt surely die, thou, and all that are thine.”
   e. The prayer of a righteous man prevented Abimelech’s death.
3. God’s deliverance of David from Saul’s hand because of his prayers; **2 Sam. 22:1-7** “And David spake unto the L ORD the words of this song in the day that the L ORD had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul: 2 And he said, The L ORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; The God of my rock; in him will I trust: he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my saviour; thou savest me from violence. 4 I will call on the L ORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies. 5 When the waves of death compassed me, the floods of ungodly men made me afraid; 6 The sorrows of hell compassed me about; the snares of death prevented me; 7 In my distress I called upon the L ORD, and cried to my God: and he did hear my voice out of his temple, and my cry did enter into his ears.”
4. Because of Moses’ prayers God spared rebellious Israel in the wilderness.
   a. **Exo. 32:**
   b. **Num. 14:**
5. Samson
   a. God provided water for Samson; **Jud. 15:18-19** “And he was sore athirst, and called on the L ORD, and said, Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant: and now shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised? 19 But God clave an hollow place that was in the jaw, and there came water thereout; and when he had drunk, his spirit came again, and he revived: wherefore he called the name thereof Enhakkore, which is in Lehi unto this day.”
   b. At the end of his life he prays for strength and receives it; **Jud. 16:28-30** “And Samson called unto the L ORD, and said, O L ORD GOD, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray
thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes. 29 And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up, of the one with his right hand, and of the other with his left. 30 And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life."

6. Hannah received a man-child because of prayer; 1 Sam. 1.
7. Because of prayer Daniel was cast into the Lion’s den but God shut the lion’s mouth; Dan. 6.
8. Jesus
  a. At the tomb of Lazarus; John 11:41-42 "Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. 42 And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me."
  b. Heb. 5:7 “Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared;”

C. The ways prayer is powerful.
   a. Atheist.
      (1) Even an atheist prays in times of trouble for the comfort that it will bring.
      (2) It was said that there are no atheists in foxholes and that everyone prayed in them because of the comfort it affords.
   b. 1 Pet. 5:7 “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.”
2. Brings peace.
   a. Phi. 4:6-7 “Be careful for nothing [In nothing be anxious—ASV]; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus”
   b. We all have difficulties, but in prayer we take those problems to God and let Him take care of them.
   c. The result is that we do not have to be anxious or troubled with cares.
3. Prayer will stop sin and sin will stop prayer.
   a. As the faithful pray they will be confessing sins.
   b. 1 John 1:9 “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”
   c. Mat. 6:9-13 “After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.”
   d. As our minds are centered upon living as God wills and asking forgiveness of sins, will help stop sin.
   e. When we decide to live in rebellion to God, we stop praying.
4. Prayer will bring us closer to God and spiritual things.
   a. Like the preceding, when we pray our minds are brought in harmony with God and spiritual things.
   b. This brings us closer to them.
5. Prayer will alter what would be.
   a. Prayer effects God so He, through providential means, will change what would be.
b. Consider Moses praying for the rebellious Israelites whom God had determined to destroy, but spared because of Moses’ prayer.
c. When Elijah prayed that it not rain, it did not rain, then prayed for rain and it rained.
d. Psa. 65:2 “O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.”

II. GOD HEARS THE RIGHTEOUS.

A. Jam. 5:16 “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”
1. The righteous man’s prayers are heard.
2. There is no mention of prayers by someone other than a righteous man.
B. Pro. 15:29 “The LORD is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous.”
1. The righteous man’s prayers are heard.
2. In relation to the wicked (one not righteous) God is far or cannot hear his prayer (especially if this is antithetic parallelism).
C. 1 Pet. 3:12 “For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.”
1. God’s ears are open to the prayers of the righteous.
2. Those who do evil, God is against, He disapproves them and will not hear their prayer.
D. Who is the righteous man?
1. 1 John 3:7 “Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.”
2. What is the doing of righteousness?
   a. Psa. 119:172 “My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness.”
   b. Rom. 1:16-17 “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. 17For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written,  The just shall live by faith.”
   c. Thus, when we do or obey the gospel of Christ, the commands of God, then we are righteous.
3. When we upon hearing God’s Word, believe, repent, confess our faith, are baptized in water for the forgiveness of his sins, and lives according to God’s Word, he is righteous.
4. This is the man who when he prays God hears.

III. GOD’S NATURE.

A. God is holy.
1. There are more passages speaking to God’s holiness than any other part of His character.
   a. Psa. 111:9 “He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name.”
   b. Psa. 145:17 “The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.”
   c. Isa. 6:3 “And one [seraphim] cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.”
   d. Rev. 4:8 “And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.”
   e. 1 Pet. 1:15-16 “But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; 16Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.”
2. What is holiness?
   a. Basic etymology is “apart from the earth” coming from altars built apart from the earth.
   b. God commanded altars built on stilts or legs so they would be separated from the earth: they were holy.
3. Holy is applies two ways
   a. Free of sin.
   b. Dedicated or consecrated.
   c. When used of God, it carries the idea of free of sin.

B. God is free of sin, expressed by His being light.
   1. 1 John 1:5 “This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.”
      a. The Greek uses a double negative to give emphasis to there being not even one speck of darkness in God.
      b. Darkness stands for sin; John 3:19 “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”
   2. Jam. 1:17 “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”

C. Being holy He cannot associate with sin.
   1. Hab. 1:13 “Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?”
   2. 1 Pet. 3:12 “For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.”
   3. Notice God’s response to Israel’s sin; Isa. 59:1-2 “Behold, the LORD’S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: 2But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.”
      a. God had the power to save, but they separated themselves from God.
      b. Thus, God could not associate with them.
   4. Sin brings spiritual death which is separation from God.
      a. Eze. 18:4, 20 “Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die...”The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.”
      b. Rom. 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”
      c. Eph. 2:1 “And you have been quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;”
      d. Jam. 1:15 “Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”

D. Being separated from God; He will not hear the sinner who prays.

IV. THE TABERNACLE AND TEMPLE.
   A. The tabernacle and later the temple was a type, shadow, or figure of the church.
      1. Heb. 8-10
      2. God gave explicit instructions for making it; Exo. 25:40 “And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount.”
      3. Let us consider some parallels.
B. The tabernacle was surrounded by an outer court.
   1. In the court there were 2 pieces of furniture.
      a. The brazen altar on the eastern-most end.
      b. The brazen laver between the altar and tabernacle proper.
   2. On the western part there was the tabernacle proper divided into 2 parts.
C. The Holy Place.
   1. The table of shewbread with 12 loaves of unleaven bread on it on the north side.
   2. The golden candlestick or lampstand.
      a. It was on the south side.
      b. It had a stem with 3 curved branches on each side.
   3. The Golden altar in front of the veil on the west side.
D. The Most Holy Place of Holy of Holies.
   1. The ark of the covenant and it contained:
      a. The testimony of the Lord.
      b. A pot of manna.
      c. Aaron’s rod that budded.
   2. On top of the ark was the mercy seat.
      a. At each end was a cherub facing each other.
      b. Their wings were stretched forth covering the mercy seat.
E. Notice the parallels.
   1. The court represents the world.
      a. The brazen altar represents the cross where the Lamb of God shed His blood for
         man’s sins.
      b. The brazen laver represents baptism where we are wash from our sins and then
         qualify to enter into the tabernacle.
   2. The holy place represents the church.
      a. The candlestick:
         (1) Represents the Word of God which gives light to the church.
         (2) Represents the light Christians are to have before a darkened world.
      b. The table of shewbread represents the Lord’s supper.
      c. The (golden) altar of incense represents the prayers of saints.
         (1) It was closest to the dwelling place of God; closest approach to the most holy
             place.
         (2) The high priest took it into the most holy place when he entered on the day of
             atonement.
         (3) Represents prayers of saints.
            (a) Rev. 5:8 “And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders
                fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of
                odours [incense—ASV, NKJV], which are the prayers of saints.”
            (b) Rev. 8:3-4 “And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and
                there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all
                saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense,
                which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel’s hand.”
         (4) God placed the golden altar in the holy place: not the court.
            (a) Prayers can only be by those in the church (represented by the holy place).
            (b) To take prayers and place them in the world (represented by the court) is to
                violate what God established.
3. The Most holy place represents the dwelling place of God or heaven.

V. THE APPROACH TO THE FATHER.
A. Jesus is the only access to the Father.
1. John 14:6 “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”
   a. Jesus is the way to the father.
   b. There is no way to the Father except through Christ.
2. Eph. 2:18 “For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.”
   a. The only ones who have access to the Father are those who are in Christ.
   b. Those who are not in Christ (Christians) have no access to the Father.
   c. Thus, God does not hear a sinner’s prayer.
B. Christ makes intercession for those saved by Him.
1. Heb. 7:25 “Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”
2. Christ does not make intercession for those in the world.
3. If the prayers of those in the world were heard, Christ would be making intercession for them.

VI. OTHER TEACHINGS.
A. Who has God as their Father?
1. There are 2 spiritual “fathers.”
   a. God the Father.
   b. Satan; John 8:44 “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.”
2. We are taught to pray to our Father; Mat. 6:9 “After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.”
3. Only a child of God has the Jehovah as his Father.
4. A person outside of Christ does not have the privilege of calling upon the Father in heaven for God is not his father.
B. Spiritual blessings.
1. All spiritual blessings are in Christ, in the church
   a. Eph. 1:3 “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:”
   b. Heavenly places refers to the church.
2. The same act that places one in Christ places one in the church.
   a. Rom. 6:3 “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?”
   b. Acts 2:41, 47 “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls....”Praising God, and having favour with all the people.
   And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”
3. Prayer is a spiritual blessing, thus it is for those in Christ and in the church.
4. If we can take prayer out of the church and Christ, then we have the right to take any spiritual blessing out of Christ and the church.
C. Hindered prayers.
   1. 1 Pet. 3:7 “Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.”
      a. How could prayers be hindered?
      b. When both (husband and wife) are not Christians, because the non-Christian’s prayers are not heard by God.

VII. EXCLUSION PRINCIPLE.
   A. God authorizes by what He says, not what He does not say.
      1. We only have the right to do that which God authorizes.
         a. Mat. 21:23-27 “And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority? 24And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things. 25The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? 26But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet. 27And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.”
         b. Col. 3:17 “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”
   2. The Scriptures authorize by:
      a. Direct statements
      b. Implications
      c. Examples

B. Doing something without authorization causes sin.
   1. Heb. 1:5, 13 “For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?...13But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?”
      a. God did not say this to any angel.
      b. Thus this statement does not apply to angels.
      c. Christ is superior over angels.
   2. Regarding prayer:
      a. Every statement, implication, and example regarding prayer is applied to the child of God.
      b. To take prayer and apply it to anyone other than whom God applies it to is sinful.
      c. We only have the right to apply it to the child of God.

VIII. OBJECTIONS.
   A. I know I have been heard.
      1. This relies solely on feelings.
      2. Feelings are not a safe guide (religiously, or otherwise).
         a. Joseph’s brother took his coat, dipped it in blood, and showed it to Jacob who thought Joseph was dead, when he was not.
         b. Saul (Paul).
            (1) Acts 26:9-11 “I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 10Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to
death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.”

(2) Yet notice what he would say; Acts 23:1 “And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.”

(3) His conscience (feelings) was not a safe guide.

3. God’s goodness.
   a. God is good to all, including non-Christians; Mat. 5:45 “That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.”
   b. If a person enjoys God’s physical blessings does not mean that God approves or accepts that person.
      (1) They might have been praying about a certain event.
      (2) Simply because God has been good to them and they have received God’s physical blessings does not mean that God heard their prayers.

B. Saul
   1. Prior to Ananias coming to him while in Damascus it says he prayed.
      a. Acts 9:11 “And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth,”
         (1) Saul was not a Christian at this time.
         (2) Yet, the Lord told Ananias that he was praying.
   2. It is a special situation.
      a. You cannot take a special case and make it applicable to all.
      b. The Lord appeared in a blinding light, should we expect that.
      c. Even if God heard his prayers, we cannot take this and apply it to others.
   3. God knowing that he was praying does not mean that He heard or accepted the prayer.
      a. Nothing in the context indicates that God accepted Saul’s prayer.
      b. God knew Saul was fasting, in need of salvation, praying.
         (1) God knows and sees all; Pro. 15:3 “The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.”
         (2) Because He knows does not mean that He accepts it.
   4. Saul was a Jew.
      a. It would have been natural for him to pray.
      b. As a faithful Jew, he would have been expected to pray, and have the right of prayer prior to the gospel coming into effect.
   5. It is an assumption to say that God accepted his prayers and it contradicts God’s Word.

C. Cornelius
   1. Acts 10:2 “A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.”
   2. The usual approach.
      a. Cornelius was not a child of God.
      b. Peter sent to him to him and after Peter’s teaching he obeyed and became a child of God.
      c. Thus, we have one who is not a child of God whose prayers are heard by God.
      d. The conclusion of most is that if one who is not a Christian is searching for the truth, God will hear him.
      e. This is contrary to all we know in the Scriptures.
f. God being faithful to His Word does not mean that God hears a non-Christian’s prayer.
   (1) Mat. 7:7-8 “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: ‘For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.’
   (2) God will be faithful to this but that does not mean that God will hear that person’s prayer.

3. Cornelius is a special case (like Saul).
   a. The gospel was for all men, but had not yet been taken to the Gentiles.
   b. The gospel was to begin at Jerusalem; Luke 24:47 “And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”
   c. There was a God-given progression of taking the gospel into the world; Acts 1:8 “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”
   d. God was showing it was time to take the gospel to the Gentile world.
      (1) God appears to Cornelius and Peter to show them the Gentiles are now to have the gospel preached to them.
      (2) No one else is in that situation, it is a special case.

4. I believe we do Cornelius an injustice in stating that he was lost and not a child of God.
   a. God says that he is devout which expresses one who has been approved by the Law of God.
   b. He also feared God which indicates that he is doing God’s will.
   c. This indicates he was in a right relationship with God.
   d. How?

5. Notice the 3 dispensations of time.
   a. Patriarchal Period.
      (1) Began with Adam.
      (2) The oldest father served as the prophet for God and priest for his family.
      (3) If they accepted the law revealed by the fathers then they were approved of God and have the right of prayer.
   b. Mosaic Period.
      (1) The law given to the children of Israel (never to all mankind).
      (2) It was added to Patriarchy; Gal. 3:19 “Wherefore then serteth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.”
      (3) When Jews were faithful to that law, they were in a right relation with God and have the right of prayer.
      (4) The Gentiles remained under the Patriarchal law.
   c. Christian Period.
      (1) When Christ died He abolished both laws.
      (2) Christ’s law was for all men.
   d. The application of what Jesus did was not seen till later.
      (1) Example of this principle:
         (a) Through Jesus’ death He destroyed Satan and death; Heb. 2:14 “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;”
(b) The effect of what Jesus did at the cross is not seen till the second coming; 1 Cor. 15:25-26 “For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. 26The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.”

(2) For the Jews at Pentecost.
(a) During the 50 days a Jew who remained faithful to the Law of Moses would remain in a right relation to God
(b) The Law of Christ had not taken effect till Pentecost.

(3) For the Gentiles at Cornelius (Acts 10).
(a) During the time between Christ’s death and Cornelius, if a Gentile was faithful to Patriarchal Law he would be in a right relation with God.
(b) That person would have the right to pray and God hearing his prayer.

(4) This is the condition of Cornelius.
(a) He had been faithful to Patriarchal law.
(b) He was in a right relation to God.
(c) He had the right to pray.
(d) However, now the Law of Christ was coming into effect for him and he needed to hear the words of salvation.

6. Cornelius’ prayers had come up as a memorial to God of the promise He made to Abraham.
   a. All families of the earth would be blessed through Abraham; Gen. 12:1-3 “Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee: 2And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 3And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”
   b. God was now going to fulfill this promise; the Gentile would also be blessed through Christ.
   c. Thus, Cornelius while not a Christian, was in a right relation to God by his faithfulness to Patriarchal Law and had the right to pray.
   d. When Peter came and declared Christ’s law, he then had to obey the gospel and become a Christian.

Conclusion: Christians have been given a wonderful gift—the right of having our prayers heard by God and knowing He will answer; 1 John 3:22 “And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.” However, it is a gift that only Christians possess: the person outside of Christ does not have the right to pray. Let us take advantage of the gift God has given us. If you are not a Christian, you cannot pray a sinner’s prayer to become such, you must obey the Truth (upon your faith, repent, confess your faith, be baptized in water for the remission of sins) then you will have this great privilege.