

11-12-1967

# Man's Most Vital Question

John Allen Chalk

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.acu.edu/hot\\_audio](https://digitalcommons.acu.edu/hot_audio)

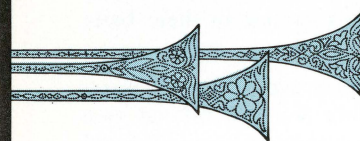
---

## Recommended Citation

Chalk, John Allen, "Man's Most Vital Question" (1967). *Herald of Truth Audio*. 165.  
[https://digitalcommons.acu.edu/hot\\_audio/165](https://digitalcommons.acu.edu/hot_audio/165)

This Audio 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 Audio by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ ACU.

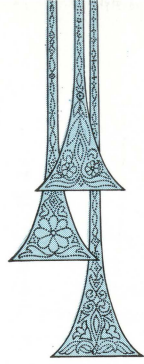
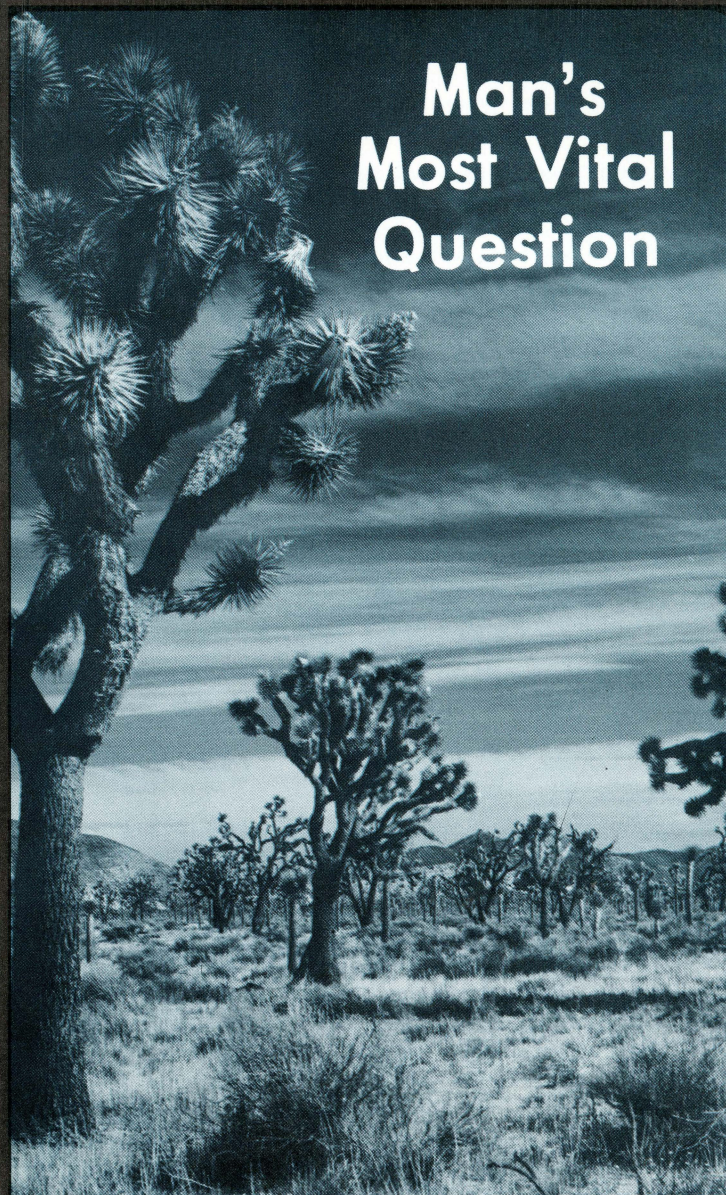
# Man's Most Vital Question



Number 824  
TRANSCRIPT OF THE

## Herald of Truth

..... *radio programs*



HIGHLAND CHURCH OF CHRIST  
*radio program*

P. O. Box 2439      Abilene, Texas 79604

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION



# Man's Most Vital Question

**T**he questions you and I ask say more about us than almost any other facet of our lives! In fact, we live in an inquisitive age! Science, with its empirical method, requires that questions be asked about our universe, and experiments be performed in man's quest for knowledge. But don't get the wrong impression! Men have been asking questions since the beginning of time. When Adam and Eve lost their intimate relationship with God in the Garden of Eden because of their rebellion and sin, questions began arising in men's hearts about life, death, reality, and meaning, that you and I are still asking.

Last week we noticed some ancient questions that are still being asked today. Questions for which, we stated then, God definitely has answers. This explains why God's Son, Jesus Christ, that final expression of God to man, caused a definite renewal of man's interest in these basic quests.

Questioned by all kinds of men everywhere He went, Jesus declared Himself to be God's Son and offered men of His day, and our day, the opportunity to know God and to live eternally with God! In the midst of questions about brotherhood (Genesis 4:9), immortality (Job 14:14), man's nature (Psalm 8:4), life and death (Psalm 89:48), life's purpose (Ecclesiastes 1:3; 6:12), and truth (John

18:38), the Master teacher narrowed mankind's "questions" to "the question."

The Jewish lawyer asked "the question" even if insincerely: "And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and made trial of him, saying, Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (Luke 10:25). A more honest truth-seeker, "a certain ruler," approached Jesus with the same question, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (Luke 18:18). This was no sideline question, reserved only for religious people of Jesus' day. This was the very thing He talked about when He said, "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly" (John 10:10). When His disciples wondered aloud, "Who then can be saved?" Jesus answered, "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God" (Matthew 19:25; Luke 18:27). In one way or another then, every vital question faced in our Lord's day and in ours as well, ultimately led to the question of salvation, eternal life, a permanent and personal relationship with God.

Christ's personal ministry on the earth accomplished many things. He ministered to needy men (Acts 10:38). He spoke God's Word to men (John 12:49, 50). He fulfilled God's redemptive plan by giving His life on the cross (John 17:4; Titus 2:14). By His death, burial, and resurrection, which three elements constitute the Gospel's basic message, salvation was offered to all men who would respond obediently to Him (Hebrews 5:8, 9; Revelation 3:20). At the conclusion of His earthly life He laid the groundwork for what His followers would do after His return to heaven (Luke 24:44-48; Acts 1:4-10). Their primary task is contained in some brief instructions which we often, and rightly, call the "great commission." Here is Matthew's account of the disciples' orders: "And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:18-20).

What the "Gospel" actually says is that God has an answer for man's central quest. The disciples of Christ went forth, under His instructions, preaching, teaching, and sharing the "good news" of God's answer for man's confusion and sin.

It is highly significant that man's confusion, and much of his questioning began only with Adam's transgression and expulsion from the Garden of Eden. Created in God's



image, man in sin, and therefore, man without God, nevertheless yearned to fill that vacuum left by his rejection of God. The real tragedy here is that men in every age have been so blinded by their own sick egos that they could not see, much less appreciate, the only lasting satisfaction of that thirst. The Psalmist did when he wrote: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?" (Psalm 42: 1, 2). Paul affirms of God, our Creator, that He has so made men "that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:27, 28).

This void created in our hearts by sin and unbelief can be filled! That is what the Gospel of Jesus Christ is all about. In Christ's Gospel the responsive soul finds God, God's power, and God's life. Even Jesus' closest followers had difficulty recognizing the magnitude of this truth. When He said, "If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also: from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him," Philip replied, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us" (John 14:7, 8). To which Jesus said, "Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou, Show us the Father?" (John 14:9).

He came into the world as God in the flesh, as the Word of God (John 1:1-14). When His life and earthly ministry ended, the Gospel was ready for proclamation to the entire world, that is, the announcement that Christ died and rose again to give men their desperately needed relationship with God was now to be preached (I Corinthians 15:1-4). All Christians join the author of the New Testament *Epistle to the Romans*, when he says, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16).

That this "Gospel" met the needs of men in the first century, answering their questions about life and death, can be seen as one reads the *Acts of the Apostles*. At the first public presentation of this "good news" of the availability of God's power to all men in Christ, of God's answers for men's basic questions, three thousand individuals responded. Listen to Luke's account of that memorable day as we pick up the inspired narrative at Acts 2:36, the concluding statement in the sermon Peter preached that day. Watch in this reading the Gospel's impact on lost and confused men. "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ,

this Jesus whom ye crucified. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do? And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. . . . They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:36-38, 41).

In *Acts*, chapter eight, an entire village turned to Christ upon hearing of Him and His Gospel through a disciple named Philip (Acts 8:4-14). Saul, the early church's greatest public enemy, was confronted by Jesus in Acts 9, and saw in Him the key to his life. Thus he gave himself in obedient service of Christ becoming the celebrated Apostle Paul (Acts 9:1-19).

One of the most brilliant examples in the New Testament of the Gospel's impact on lost men — the effect of God's offer of forgiveness and a new life of purpose — occurs in chapter sixteen of the *Acts*. Saul, now converted to Christ and called Paul, along with his fellow worker Silas, have been jailed in Philippi for giving a slave girl her freedom from an evil spirit (Acts 16:16-24). At midnight these two Christians are singing and praying in their cells when suddenly an earthquake shakes the jail, opening all the doors and freeing the prisoners from their bonds (Acts 16:25, 26). Instead of fleeing, Paul and Silas stay to help the jailor who almost commits suicide before Paul calls to him, "Do thyself no harm: for we are all here" (Acts 16: 28).

Immediately the jailor called for lights and came into the deepest, darkest part of the prison to lead these men out of their dungeon. And in doing so he asked "*the question*" — not just a question among many questions — but "*the question*:" "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30).

Remember that when the men at Pentecost asked, "Brethren what shall we do?" the answer came immediately. Peter and the other apostles, speaking at the direction of Christ replied, "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). When Saul cried out on the Damascus road, "What shall I do, Lord?" (Acts 22:10), the answer came immediately, "Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do" (Acts 22:10). Three days later God's messenger, Ananias, appeared and said to Saul, "And now why tarriest

thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name" (Acts 22:16).

Now to return to the Philippian jailor's story, we are not surprised that Paul and Silas also have *the answer*, God's answer, to "*the question*" asked by the jailor. "And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house" (Acts 16:31). It was the proper answer because the jailor had never heard of Christ. He could not accept someone in whom he had no trust, no confidence. The preachers proceeded to preach the Gospel of Christ to him so that he could honestly consider the testimony about Christ and make a decision regarding Him. In fact the next verse says, "And they spake the word of the Lord unto him, with all that were in his house" (Acts 16:32). That the jailor responded to the message of Christ in faith appears in the next verse of *Acts*, chapter sixteen: "And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his immediately" (Acts 16:33). Jesus' words, in giving the apostles their directions for preaching the gospel to all the world, now return to our minds: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned" (Mark 16:15, 16).

The question was and is, "What must I do to be saved?" The answer was and is, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." New Testament faith, however, means trust, obedience, complete surrender to Jesus' commands and Jesus' designs for one's life. The jailor so believed, upon hearing the "word of the Lord," and was baptized immediately. The next verse of *Acts* 16 relates that "he brought them (Paul and Silas) up into his house, and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, with all his house, having believed in God" (Acts 16:34).

"*The question*" is "What must I do to be saved?" This question summarizes all of man's previous concerns and undergirds all his future quests. All kinds of men have asked this question: the fearful, the anxious, the insincere, and the honest truth-seeker. But regardless of motive, all men who ask "the question," have one thing in common: all are sinners before God without the redemption found only in Christ (Colossians 1:13, 14).

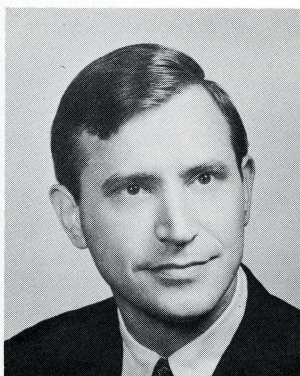
And all kinds of answers have been given to this question down through the years: intellectual, social, political, economic, and moral. But God has answered once, fully and finally. With the Apostles, today I affirm, "And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other



name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

I have often considered why men in Jesus' time, enslaved, confused, and trapped by demons, recognized Him as God's Son more readily than all others (Mark 1:23, 24). What significance do you attach to the fact that those whose lives were disintegrated and fragmented by evil cried out so readily to Him, "the Son of the Most High God" (Luke 8:28)? Could it be because their lives needed direction and healing so desperately?

Today, He offers you and me clarity of purpose and cleanliness of soul. He gives us God's forgiveness and life. Knowing what He offers, will you not heed His call now, answering it on His terms?



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.