

Psalms 65:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.

Analysis

O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come. This verse identifies God by His responsive character—He is the One who hears prayer—and makes a universal claim about humanity's ultimate accountability to Him. "Thou that hearest prayer" (shomea tefillah, שְׁמוֹעַ תְּפִלָּה) uses the active participle of shama (שָׁמַע), emphasizing God's ongoing, characteristic action. He is continually, habitually, essentially the prayer-hearing God. This isn't occasional graciousness but defining attribute—it's His nature to hear and respond to prayer.

Tefillah (תְּפִלָּה) is the general word for prayer, particularly intercessory prayer or petition. Unlike ritual liturgy or formal ceremony, tefillah represents personal communication, heartfelt appeal, and honest supplication. That God hears this kind of prayer reveals His relational character—He isn't distant deity requiring magical formulas but personal God inviting genuine communication. The phrase "hearest prayer" doesn't merely mean auditory reception but responsive attention that leads to action. Throughout Scripture, God hearing prayer results in divine intervention: deliverance, healing, guidance, and provision.

"Unto thee shall all flesh come" (adekha kol-basar yavo, אֵדֶכְחָ כָּל-בָּשָׂר יָבוֹא) makes an expansive, universal claim. Kol-basar (כָּל-בָּשָׂר) means "all flesh"—all humanity, every living person, all created beings. The verb bo (בָּא) means to come, to enter, to approach. The imperfect tense suggests future certainty: all flesh will come, shall come, must come. This can be understood in multiple senses:

1. All people should come to God in prayer, recognizing Him as the prayer-hearing God.

2. All people will ultimately come before God in judgment, giving account.
3. All nations will eventually worship the one true God, fulfilling messianic prophecies of universal worship.

The verse reveals both invitation and inevitability.

Because God hears prayer, all flesh should come to Him. Whether they come willingly in worship or unwillingly in judgment, all will come. This anticipates New Testament revelation that every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Philippians 2:10-11). The God who hears prayer invites all to come now in faith; those who refuse will come later in judgment.

Historical Context

Israel's uniqueness among ancient nations lay partly in their God's accessibility through prayer. Pagan deities required elaborate rituals, sacrifices, magical incantations, or priestly mediation with no assurance of divine response. The gods were capricious, requiring manipulation rather than inviting relationship. In contrast, Yahweh repeatedly invited Israel to call upon Him, promising to hear and answer. Moses emphasized this distinction: "For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon him for?" (Deuteronomy 4:7).

Throughout Israel's history, God demonstrated His prayer-hearing character. He heard Israel's cry in Egyptian bondage (Exodus 2:24, 3:7). He heard Hannah's prayer for a son (1 Samuel 1:19-20). He heard Hezekiah's prayer during Assyrian siege (2 Kings 19:20-35). He heard Jonah's prayer from the fish's belly (Jonah 2:2, 10). These testimonies established God's reputation as the prayer-hearing God, building faith for future generations facing their own crises.

The psalm's universal claim—"all flesh shall come"—reflects Israel's missionary consciousness, muted in some periods but always present. Abraham was blessed to be a blessing to all nations (Genesis 12:3). Solomon's temple dedication prayer asked God to hear foreigners who come to pray toward the temple (1 Kings 8:41-43). Isaiah prophesied that God's house would be called a house of prayer for all peoples (Isaiah 56:7). These passages envisioned ultimate inclusion of Gentiles

in worship of Israel's God.

Jesus quoted Isaiah 56:7 when cleansing the temple (Mark 11:17), emphasizing God's house as prayer house for all nations. The New Testament church fulfilled the universal vision when Peter preached: "whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21). Paul taught that through Christ, Gentiles have access by one Spirit to the Father (Ephesians 2:18). The prayer-hearing God now receives all who come through Christ, regardless of ethnicity or nationality.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. What difference does it make to address God as 'the One who hears prayer' rather than using more abstract theological titles?
2. How does knowing that God characteristically and continually hears prayer affect your prayer life's frequency and honesty?
3. In what sense will 'all flesh' come to God, and how does this relate to both evangelism and eschatology?
4. What obstacles prevent people from coming to the prayer-hearing God, and how does the gospel remove these obstacles?
5. How should the certainty that all will come to God (either in worship or judgment) affect our urgency in prayer and evangelism?

Interlinear Text

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| שִׁמְעַ | תְּפִלָּה | עַד יְיָ | כָּל | בָּשָׂר | יָבֹאוּ: |
| O thou that hearest | prayer | | | unto thee shall all flesh | come |
| H8085 | H8605 | H5704 | H3605 | H1320 | H935 |

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 65:24 (Parallel theme): And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

Isaiah 66:23 (Parallel theme): And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD.

Acts 10:31 (Prayer): And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.

Psalms 66:19 (Prayer): But verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer.

Psalms 86:9 (Parallel theme): All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name.

1 Kings 18:37 (Parallel theme): Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.

2 Chronicles 33:13 (Prayer): And prayed unto him: and he was intreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD he was God.

Psalms 66:4 (Parallel theme): All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee; they shall sing to thy name. Selah.

Psalms 102:17 (Prayer): He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.