

The Only Way To Salvation

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[0 : 00] a verse that appears in Acts chapter 4 and verse 12. And if you were to look it up in your Blue New Bible, you'd find it on page 115 of the New Testament section.

And it reads this way, There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

Now, last week I talked to you about the wonderful mosaic of religions among which we live our lives in this dominion of Canada, in this province of British Columbia.

And the wonderful mosaic of religions in our world with Israel, the Middle East, the Shiite Muslims, the Muslims in Iran, the Hindu state in North India, the secular state in India, the Muslim state in Pakistan, the attempt to create a Sikh state in the middle of them, the strange impact of religion in many parts of the world, how they all come together.

that in Russia, they say, the state is atheistic, and religion is allowed, but discouraged, by propaganda, and by restrictions of various kinds, in the expectation that religion will soon fade out.

[1 : 50] That's the logic of the system, that Christianity won't survive in that kind of country. In Albania, where they are a militant atheist state, where they shoot ministers and don't allow people to gather.

Shooting ministers might become quite popular in our world, but there's all that going on.

We're living in a world where every religion is allowed, but none is endorsed. There is no sort of endorsement of any, and there is no endorsement of even the possibility of their being religious truth.

There's no such thing that the state depends upon everybody being allowed to do what they want. Of course, as some wise men have said, when you're allowed to believe everything, you probably end up believing nothing, and that's probably what's happening sociologically in our society, when people are ending up believing nothing.

It's still got lots of lovely experiences that every lady wants to sing. There's a direct sweet love. She said, the song that she would like to sing, she said, it's a very pretty song, it's a love song, and you could take it in a religious way if you wanted to.

[3 : 30] Well, we tend to still take things in a religious way, even though we don't have any theological convictions about it very much. We still like taking things in religious ways.

Well, that's the kind of world we're in, and into that world comes this lovely statement from Acts chapter 4 verse 12. There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

That is, there isn't a name in the Mohammedan religion, or in the Jewish religion, or in the Hindu religion. There is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved.

Now, that kind of exclusivism exclusivism is very unpopular in our society. It's not reckoned to be fair. It's not reckoned to be intellectually honest.

That there could be salvation through the name of Jesus Christ and Him alone. If God is like that, we decide we will have nothing to do with God.

[4 : 34] And, uh, so I want to talk about that, leading for a moment to the matter of, of, uh, of the Jews and who they are in relationship to our faith.

But there's some questions I want to ask you about this. If there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved, I think you've got to ask these questions if you're a totally secular person.

First, you've got to ask the question, is there such a thing as salvation? Or is it entirely a religious concept so it doesn't matter? Because if you don't believe in that, it doesn't matter how you're going to get saved, does it?

If you don't believe there is such a thing as salvation. Uh, you could ask the question further, what is there that we need to be saved from? And if there's nothing to be saved from, then again, salvation is of no importance so you don't need to worry about it.

How exclusive it is. Again, you can ask the question, if we do need to be saved, is there any indication that we can be? In other words, if we do see a fundamental problem that we have to overcome either individually or as a race, uh, is there any indication that such salvation is possible? [5 : 56] And if a religion doesn't answer those questions, uh, I wonder what we think about it.

Another question you can ask is, is salvation something that a man can do for himself?

And, uh, you can compare all the selfless philosophies of the, of this contemporary society in which we live, and can you be saved through jogging?

Can you be saved through physical exercise? Can you be saved by hypnosis? Can you be saved by meditation? What can be done to save somebody? Uh, uh, can we do it or are we dependent on it being done for us?

Does something or someone have to, uh, act on our behalf in order for us to be saved? And then there's the question, what if a, a man doesn't want to be saved?

He finds existence a burden from which he should escape? So that if you look at all these questions, you'll see that many of the world's religions answer them very differently than Christianity does.

[7 : 05] Is there such a thing as salvation? Many religions would say no. What is it that we need to be saved from? Many religions would say nothing. Uh, if we do not, and I don't mean religions, but I mean many sections of humanity, uh, if we do not need to be saved, is there any indication, if we do need to be saved, is there any indication that we can be?

And a great deal of despair comes around that question from modern existentialism, and the answer is no, we can't be, even if we need to be. If you ask the question, is salvation something that a man can do for himself?

And, uh, a lot of religions say yes, this is the way to do it. And, uh, I think, uh, you can see that in a lot of religions. They think that they can teach people to save themselves, that they don't need anyone outside.

Well, what if a man doesn't want to be saved? Uh, how do you stir him up to being, to being saved? Well, maybe that's the freedom that he wants to claim for himself, that he doesn't want it.

And, uh, you have to know a man's heart to know what the answer to that question is. So, perhaps that question, perhaps that's not so hard as you might at first think.

[8 : 27] But if it is possible that there is something from which to be saved, that man cannot save himself, that there is a supernatural means by which a man is to be saved, and that there is a longing in man's heart that he wants to be saved, if all those things are true, then what's going to happen?

Well, there are other things that we want to be saved from. We, at one time in society, when I was a small child, and most of you would never even remember it, uh, polio was a dread disease that we wanted to be saved from.

In fact, I remember one happy year when the summer holidays were extended an extra six weeks so that children wouldn't be in contact with children during hot weather. Because of the danger of polio, we wanted to be saved from polio.

Then along came the vaccine. And smallpox has been wiped out by a vaccine so that it's no longer one of man's diseases. Diseases. Uh, the herpes virus and AIDS are diseases that seem to have a moral dimension attached to them.

And we are going about trying to find a way of saving men from that by some modern medical need. So that we're looking for ways of being saved.

[9 : 46] And the answers tend to be very specific. That is, the polio vaccine is a very specific vaccine. Or the smallpox vaccine is a very specific vaccine.

Uh, these kinds of things are, are very specific. And, uh, I want to read you a quotation from Bishop Stephen Neal where he says that the, the answer for Christian salvation is also specific.

And let me listen to this quotation. Are you all ready for it? Quotation's put me to sleep. I want this one to wake you up. So you listen very carefully. But he says, it's not crazy megalomania for the science of chemistry to affirm that the physical universe has been built up in one way and not in another.

The atomic weight of the various elements, remember having to memorize periodic table. Well, that's what I think this is about. The atomic weight of various elements have been worked out and are printed in a table.

That is the way things are. And no amount of wishing will make them any different from what they are. It is true that new discoveries are being made all the time.

[11 : 09] And that the physical universe proves to be far more softly constructed and flexible than we had at one time supposed. This does not invalidate the earlier results.

Your table, your chemical table. It doesn't invalidate these results, which still stand. And he says, the Christian claim is very close to the claim of the chemist.

It states quite simply that the universe under all its aspects has been made in one way and not in another, and that the way in which it has been made has been once for all declared in Jesus Christ. When Jesus stated that he was the truth, remember John 14, 6, I am the way, the truth, and the life. When Jesus stated that he was the truth, he did not mean that he was stating a number of good and true ideas.

He meant that in him the total structure of the universe was for the first time and forever disclosed.

[12 : 33] He meant that in him the total structure of the universe was for the first time forever disclosed. Now do you see, if you take this back, you see what Peter was doing when he was speaking that day and when he says, there is salvation in no one else for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

Peter was declaring that the intrinsic structure of the whole of the universe is such that man's salvation utterly depends upon Jesus Christ.

There could be salvation in no other name. But the answer to man's deepest need is a very specific answer that has to do with the precise way in which the whole of the universe is put together.

And that's what Peter was declaring. You notice in verse 13 when they saw the boldness of Peter and John and perceived that they were uneducated common men, they wondered and they recognized that they had been with Jesus.

They were talking from experience and not from a superior education. They were uneducated common men. Well, they may have been uneducated in common, but what they were declaring, I think, can challenge the most educated and the most uncommon of people with the proposition that they're putting before us and that they have in effect put before the whole of our world.

[14 : 34] Now, that's the position that we're stuck in. If this is not the way the whole of the universe has been put together, there is a very real sense in which as a Christian community we are wasting a whole lot of time being religious.

Because I think it just doesn't make any sense. If it's all nonsense, if it's all meaningless.

Now, I don't want to take more than just a few minutes, but I want just to show you what happens about this question. And I want to show it to you by looking at some of the world's religions and the way they treat this statement.

There is salvation in no one else, or there is no other name under heaven, given among men, by which we must be saved. And the person I want you to look at is the Jew.

And it's such a vast subject, and I'm going to take it from 10 and 7. But I once read in a book which I, and he was quoting somebody else, and if anybody knows where the quotation comes from, I'd be glad if you'd tell me about it.

[16 : 00] But some great eastern potentate said to some slave, prove to me in one word that God exists. And he said, yes, I will.

The one word is the Jews. Because they are a phenomenal race. And so come, that community of people has not been assimilated in history centuries years ago.

Why have they not disappeared? Why do they persist as an entity? I don't know if any of you are from Mennonite backgrounds, but the Mennonites won't last much longer.

As Mennonites, I don't think. Because the reason the world that brought them into being is now passing out of the things they believe will certainly continue. But as a structure, as a community, I think that they are being rapidly assimilated, at least on the west coast, and I don't mean by Anglican churches, I mean by Mennonite churches.

Mennonite churches are becoming big and huge and taking in everybody and becoming community type churches. They probably won't have an identifiable existence in modern, in Canada at the turn of the century.

[17:18] They won't last very much longer as a peculiar entity, but the Jews go on and on and on without a country of their own for hundreds and hundreds of years. The questions that, again, Stephen Neal says that the Jews have to answer is, do you have any universal mission?

The Jews have something to say to the rest of the world. And if they do, what is it? there's a lot of scripture in the Old Testament which talks about all the nations coming together in Jerusalem. That there is, in the Old Testament, a very real sense of the Jews having a universal mission. Does the modern Jew recognize that he has a universal mission?

And how is that universal mission expressed? I think that's a good question. It's one, obviously, that has to be put to the Christian church, too, but the Christian church is almost blip.

It has such a ready answer to that, you know, that it wants to preach the gospel to every preacher. So you have to ask that. The other thing you have to ask a Jew, and that is, will the Jews look at Jesus Christ?

[18:42] Because it's a religion which has been built on, the whole of Judaism, has been built on a very specific rejection of Jesus Christ. And, as Stephen Neal describes it, it's like a dark secret, a dark family secret that Jews don't tell their children about.

They keep a secret. They don't face the fact that Jesus Christ. Now, the reason, of course, is, or appears to be, that what's happened is that Christians have caused the Jew so much suffering that because of Christians, Jews won't look at Christ.

And that's a very heavy argument, one of which Christians need to be deeply penetrated. because of the way Christians have behaved, Jews won't look at Jesus Christ.

Whether there are Christians or whether there aren't Christians, the Jew needs to look at Jesus Christ. They can't go on maintaining the validity of their position as they look, as they refuse to look at Jesus Christ.

one writer has said, either the Jewish Messiah has come or he has not. Either God's last word to man has been spoken in Jesus Christ or it has not.

[20:22] We do no service either to truth or to one another if we refuse to look at the stark alternative between whether Jesus has come or whether he hasn't.

So you get that real problem about the Jews. Who are they? And if you look just even briefly at Romans chapter 2, 17, and I'm only referring you to this because you probably need to go home and read it over.

It's where Paul is building his argument against the Jews. He says, but if you call yourself a Jew and rely upon the law and boast of your relationship to God and know his will and approve what is excellent because you are instructed in the law, and if you are sure that you are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth, you then who teach others, will you not teach yourself?

While you preach against stealing, do you steal? You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?

You who boast in the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law? For as it is written, the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you. And that's a strong and hard picture, and it probably couldn't be written by anybody but a Jew.

[22:08] But it's there. And of course, it describes Jewishness as we see it in Anglican churches, or in many Christian churches.

There are many Christian churches that produce this kind of mentality. Exactly the same.

Jewishness is not confined to synagogue. Jewishness, as it's described here, is very apparent among us as Christians as well.

So the condemnation that we ask the Jew to face in Romans 2.17 is a condemnation which we have every right to face ourselves.

us. Because it's not hard to replace Jew with Christian. And say, if you call yourself a Christian, rely upon the law, boast of your relationship to God, know his will, approve what is excellent, because you are instructed in the law.

And if you're sure that you're a guide to the blind, the light to those who are in darkness, all those things could apply equally to us, because we have this super sense of knowing what the answers offer.

[23 : 20] And when we do that, what we're failing to do is to recognize that man has an essential problem. And that problem is that man needs to be saved.

There is something wrong with man at his heart. And man needs to be saved. And Romans 2.17 shows that.

And we and the Jews illustrate it, but so do the Christians, because they behave in exactly the same way, thinking of themselves as a superior and elect people, and not recognizing that they are a people who are saved utterly by the grace of the sovereign grace of God acting towards them in Jesus Christ.

Christians come to reject that reality, just as Jews do. Well, I'd like to talk to you more about this, but I want you to look at it and to see how absolutely revolutionary the claim of Acts chapter 4, verse 12 is.

There is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved but the name of Jesus Christ. I think what we have to recognize is this, what the Jew perhaps illustrates to us very well in a very profound way.

[24 : 52] I think what the Jew in this is, I suppose, I think what the Jew recognizes is that in the whole of history, he has been saved again.

In the whole of history, he has suffered, because apparently nobody else has suffered. In system, generation after generation, culture after culture, century after century, the Jew has suffered and suffered and suffered and suffered again.

And that his hope of salvation is that there is a just God who ultimately, in some way, will redeem all that suffering. And that is his hope.

And that, I think, is why he holds on to God, because sometimes he thinks God is going to have to pay him back. He wants to be there for the fall.

That's entirely understandable. But, uh, the Jew is in that position. Now, the Christian, I don't want to, I don't know how to express this attitude, because words don't make us.

[26 : 19] But, for the Christian, the difference is this, if the Christian recognizes that God has suffered, there's a big difference to it.

The Christian recognizes that God has suffered. On the basis of God's suffering, man is utterly unconditionally against him.

Man has no ground on which to, uh, claim as God has suffered.

God has suffered. He's Christ, Jesus Christ. Now, I think that's, that's bad news.

Because God has suffered, we deserve richly all we get. Because God has suffered our utter and categorical rejection.

[27 : 37] because God continues to suffer our insufferable rejection, we have no deserving before God.

And I think that that's where the difference is. The difference is between a people who see that they have suffered and feel that that suffering must someday be revealed and the people who are called by the same name in the risen Lord recognize that God has suffered and they are owed now.

And yet God in His mercy is chosen to be out of His sovereign grace. And so we see the amazing difference in the Lord.

And so this would be important that you know that we go on to know it. The cross of Jesus Christ is the place of God's humiliation, the place of God's suffering, is the place where our condemnation is complete.

And it's also the place of which God's love is pretty. It's the source of God's love.

[29 : 16] And now, it's a terrible moment, baby. You know, this is the■■■. So, I did■■d■■ spring and he has the Son of God's love. Because I think of him.

And he has the Son of God's leave mar■■■. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.