

Today we're tackling the most important question facing our world—not politics or the economy, but the question that determines where every person you work with, live with, and love will spend eternity.

Here's what God says through the Apostle Peter in Acts 4:12: *"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."*

That's what I call a bold statement. Peter didn't say, "Salvation is mostly found in Jesus." He didn't say, "Jesus is one of many good options." He said there is **NO OTHER NAME**.

Some might think, "That sounds narrow-minded." But when you're sick, do you want your doctor to be narrow-minded about the cure? When you're driving across Jordan Lake bridge, do you want that engineer to have been narrow-minded about building materials?

Some things are exclusive because they're the only things that work.

### **The Most Important Question Ever Asked**

Let me take you back 2,000 years to a prison in Philippi, to when the most important question any person ever asked was posed.

Midnight. Paul and Silas, beaten bloody, feet in stocks, but they're singing hymns to God. The other prisoners think they've lost their minds.

Then God shows up. Earthquake. Every door flies open, every chain breaks loose. The jailer wakes up, sees the open doors, and knows he's facing execution for letting the prisoners escape.

He draws his sword to kill himself, but Paul shouts: "Don't harm yourself! We're all here!"

Picture this hardened Roman guard—he's seen battle, beaten prisoners, doesn't scare easily. But something about prisoners who don't run, about the God who can shake jail foundations but keep every prisoner inside—it breaks him.

He falls trembling before Paul and Silas: *"What must I do to be saved?"* (Acts 16:30)

Not "How can I be happy?" Not "What's the meaning of life?"

He asked about salvation. The Holy Spirit told him this was the question that mattered for eternity.

### **Different Answers to the Same Question**

Here's what's challenging for us today—that same question gets different answers.

1.8 billion Muslims say: submit to Allah, follow the Five Pillars, hope your good deeds outweigh bad ones.

1.3 billion Catholics say: faith in Jesus, yes, but also sacraments, good works, purgatory, Mary's intercession.

They both can't be right. Either salvation comes through Christ alone or it needs additions. This is why we need to know what God says, and how to defend what we believe.

As a Christian, you're required to be ready to defend your faith (1 Peter 3:15): *"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have."*

Your Muslim coworker asks: "How can you be sure when the Quran says Jesus never died?"

Your Catholic neighbor says: "We believe in Jesus too—what's the big deal?"

These aren't small differences—they're eternal differences. When someone asks "What must I do to be saved?" you better have the biblical answer, not just your opinion.

### **The Foundation: Salvation in Christ Alone**

In John 14:6, Jesus drops a bombshell: *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will also know my Father..."*

That's exclusive language. Jesus is our only way to get to God. Only He has the power to save and restore us back to God.

But what good is this good news if you don't know what makes it good? Here's what you need to know:

### **We Have a Sin Problem**

Romans 3:23 tells us: *"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God..."*

Every person born has rebelled against God. We chose to go our own way over God's.

### **We Stand Before a Holy God**

Isaiah 6:3 declares: *"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Armies."*

God is perfect and pure in all his ways. When we sin, He's not a little disappointed in us—his perfect holiness cannot tolerate our sin. Justice must be satisfied.

Think about it: walk into a perfectly white room with muddy boots—you don't make it "a little dirty," you defile it completely. That's what our sin does before a holy God. One sin makes us completely unfit for His presence.

### **We Can't Fix It Ourselves**

Romans 3:20 states: *"no one is justified before him by the works of the law."* You can't earn your way back to God. You can't work your way back to God.

That's why we needed God Himself to provide the solution. And that's exactly what He did in Jesus Christ.

### **Why Jesus Is Unique as Our Savior**

Here's why no other religious leader can do what Jesus did. Only Jesus is:

**Fully God.** Colossians 2:9: *"the entire fullness of God's nature dwells bodily in Christ."* Jesus is God. Only God can pay the infinite sin debt we owe.

**Fully man.** 1 Timothy 2:5: *"one mediator between God and humanity, the man Christ Jesus."* Jesus became one of us to stand in our place as our representative.

**Lived sinlessly.** Hebrews 4:15: *"tempted in every way as we are, yet without sin."* The perfect sacrifice had to be perfect. Every other religious leader was a sinner who needed saving themselves.

**Substituted his life for ours.** Isaiah 53:5 and 2 Corinthians 5:21 tell us He took the punishment we deserved—eternal death in hell—and gave us what he deserved—eternal life with God.

**Conquered death.** 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 shows He didn't just die and stay dead like every natural man does. He walked out of the grave, proving He has power over sin and death.

Show me another religious leader who checks all those boxes. Buddha's still dead. Muhammad's still dead. Joseph Smith. Wallace Muhammad. Only Jesus walked out of His grave.

### **How Jesus Makes Salvation Possible**

Jesus makes salvation possible by grace alone through faith alone.

**It's by grace through faith.** Ephesians 2:8-9 couldn't be clearer: *"For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast."*

**It's complete forgiveness.** Colossians 2:13-14 says God *"forgave us all our trespasses. He erased the certificate of debt... and has taken it away by nailing it to the cross."*

Picture this: you owe a massive debt you can't pay. The creditor takes your bill, writes "PAID IN FULL" across it, and nails it to the cross. That's what Jesus did with your sin debt. All sins—past, present, future. Forgiven. Erased. Gone.

**It's eternal security.** Romans 8:38-39 promises: *"For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

Once saved, always saved. Nothing can take you out of God's hand—not even you.

**It's present assurance.** 1 John 5:13 tells us: *"I have written these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life."* You can KNOW you have eternal life, because Jesus is the one who gives it.

That's the foundation. That's why we can be confident. That's why we can defend our faith. Because salvation really is found in Christ alone, by grace alone, through faith alone.

### **Biblical Concerns with Other Paths to Salvation**

Having established what true salvation is, who alone makes it possible, and how Jesus makes it possible, we can now examine why other paths people are taking don't actually lead to salvation.

When your Muslim friend says, "We worship the same God," and your Catholic relative says, "We all get to heaven through Jesus," you need to know how to respond with truth and love.

I've met Muslims who are kind, moral, sincere people. But sincerity doesn't determine truth. You can be sincerely wrong. And when it comes to salvation, being wrong has eternal consequences.

### **Top 3 Biblical Concerns with Islam's Path to Salvation**

**Concern #1: Islam denies Christ's deity—no Divine savior.**

*Islamic Claim:* Jesus is not God, but powerless just like Mary his mother and everyone else. The Quran explicitly says in chapter 5, verse 17, "They have certainly disbelieved who say that Allah is Christ."

*Biblical Truth:* Jesus claimed to be God. In John 8:58, Jesus said "Truly I tell you, before Abraham was, I am." In John 10:30, He declared "I and the Father are one."

*This Matters for Eternity:* Only God can pay for infinite sin debt. Hebrews 9:14 asks "how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, cleanse our consciences from dead works so that we can serve the living God?"

If Jesus isn't God, His sacrifice can't save you. He's nothing more than a religious martyr.

### **Concern #2: Islam denies the crucifixion—no atonement.**

*Islamic Claim:* Jesus wasn't crucified. Quran 4:157 says, "They did not kill him, nor did they crucify him; but another was made to resemble him to them."

*Biblical Truth:* The crucifixion is the most historically documented event in ancient history. Every Gospel records it. Even secular historians confirm it. But more importantly, it was biblically essential.

Hebrews 9:22 tells us: "According to the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness."

No cross means no atonement. No atonement means no salvation.

### **Concern #3: Islam teaches works-based salvation—no eternal security.**

*Islamic Claim:* Good deeds must outweigh bad deeds. Even then, Allah may or may not grant paradise. It's ultimately up to his will.

*Biblical Truth:* Salvation is by grace through faith, not works. Titus 3:5 says "he saved us—not by works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy—through the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit."

Works-based salvation provides no assurance, no peace, no guarantee of heaven. You're always wondering, "Have I done enough?" The answer is always no—because you can never do enough to satisfy God who is infinitely holy.

**The bottom line:** Islam leads people away from the only savior who can actually save. Sincerity and commitment don't equal salvation. When it comes to eternity, being sincerely wrong doesn't make you safe—it makes you eternally lost.

## **Top 3 Biblical Concerns with Catholicism's Path to Salvation**

Let me say this upfront—I'm grateful for much of what the Catholic religion affirms. They believe in the Trinity. They believe Jesus is God. They believe in His death and resurrection. Those are foundational truths.

But there are enough differences that create real problems:

### **Concern #1: Adding works to grace—nullifies salvation.**

*Catholic Claim:* The Catechism teaches that salvation comes through faith, but it must be accompanied by sacraments, good works, and possibly time in purgatory.

*Biblical Truth:* Ephesians 2:9 says salvation is "not from works, so that no one can boast." Romans 11:6 adds "Now if by grace, then it is not by works; otherwise grace ceases to be grace."

Adding works makes grace no longer grace. It's like saying, "Jesus, your sacrifice was good, but it wasn't quite enough. I need to add and keep adding to what you did."

### **Concern #2: Adds Mary as co-savior—diminishes Christ.**

*Catholic Claim:* Catholic doctrine teaches that Mary cooperates in our salvation and serves as our intercessor. Pope John Paul II called her "Co-Redemptrix."

*Biblical Truth:* Christ alone is our mediator. 1 Timothy 2:5 couldn't be clearer: "For there is one God and one mediator between God and humanity, the man Christ Jesus."

*This Matters for Eternity:* Mary herself needed a Savior. In Luke 1:47, she said "my spirit rejoices in God my Savior." If Mary needed saving, she can't be your co-savior.

### **Concern #3: Repeating Christ's sacrifice—denies His "finished" work.**

*Catholic Claim:* The "Eucharist"—what we call communion—literally becomes the actual body and blood of Christ. This isn't symbolic like biblical communion. What's happening is called "Transubstantiation"—where the bread and wine physically transform into Jesus' flesh and blood, even though it still looks like bread and wine. In so doing, Jesus dies every Eucharist.

*Biblical Truth:* Christ's sacrifice was "once for all." Hebrews 10:10 says "By this will, we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

*This matters for eternity:* If Christ's work needs repeating, it wasn't sufficient the first time. But Jesus said on the cross, "It is finished." Either it was finished, or it wasn't.

**The bottom line:** Catholicism adds requirements that make salvation uncertain.

Here's the pattern you need to see: every religious system that falls short tries to add something to what Christ already did. Islam adds works. Catholicism adds sacraments and Mary's intercession.

But the gospel says Christ's work is complete, sufficient, and final.

We're separated from God by a canyon of sin. Islam's bridge stops 90% across. Catholicism gets 95%. Unless that bridge reaches ALL the way, you're going in the canyon. Only Christ's bridge—salvation by grace alone through faith alone—actually connects you to God.

## **Practical Application: Defending the Faith**

### **When someone says: "All religions lead to God"**

This is one of the most popular beliefs in America today. It sounds so nice, so tolerant, so inclusive. And honestly—who wouldn't want to believe everybody makes it in the end?

That's a comforting thought until you hold it up to the words of Jesus.

**Response:** "I get why that sounds appealing. But Jesus didn't leave that option on the table. In John 14:6, He makes an exclusive claim we have to wrestle with: 'No one comes to the Father except through me.'"

That means either Jesus was lying or He was telling the truth. And if He's telling the truth, the question is—do we trust what He said or do we go with human opinion?"

They'll probably say something like: "Well, that's just your interpretation. The Bible can be read a lot of different ways."

**Follow-up:** "Friend, Jesus' words here aren't fuzzy. He didn't say 'I am a way.' He didn't say 'I'm one of many ways.' He said, 'I am the way.' That's as straightforward as it gets. The question isn't about interpretation—it's about belief. Do we actually believe Jesus meant what He said?"

Don't let them turn a clear statement into a debate about interpretation. If Jesus really is the way—there's no back door, no side door, no alternate route. Every other "path to God" is a dead end without Jesus.

### **When someone says: "We all worship the same God"**

It sounds peaceful. It sounds unifying. And I get why people want it to be true—it would make things a whole lot easier if we were all just using different names for the same God.

**Response:** "I can see why it might seem that way on the surface. But when you actually look at what these religions teach about God, the differences are massive.

The God of the Bible reveals Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Islam explicitly denies this—the Quran calls it blasphemy.

The God I worship sent His Son to die for my sins. The Allah of Islam, according to the Quran, has no son. That's not just a different name—that's a completely different God."

They'll likely push back and say: "But aren't Allah and God just different names for the same being? Don't we all trace back to Abraham?"

**Follow-up:** "Names don't determine identity—character and nature do. The God revealed in Scripture has fundamentally different attributes, promises, and relationship with humanity than Allah described in the Quran. These aren't just different labels for the same deity; they're descriptions of entirely different beings with contradictory natures."

### **When someone says: "Catholics are Christians too"**

**Response:** "The official teaching of the Catholic Church adds requirements for salvation beyond what the Bible teaches—faith plus sacraments plus good works plus purgatory. That's not faith alone in Christ alone. And Galatians 1:8 says *'if anyone preaches a different gospel, let him be accursed.'*"

**Pushback:** "You're being divisive! Can't we just focus on what unites us?"

**Response:** "Unity has to be built on truth, not error. If one doctor says you need life-saving surgery and another says just take vitamins, you're not finding common ground—you're finding the truth, because your life depends on it.

Eternal life depends on getting the gospel right. Adding works to grace doesn't just change the gospel—it destroys it."

Remember—we're trying to win people, not arguments. Speak truth with love. It's okay to say 'Let me get back to you on that.' The Holy Spirit saves people through God's Word—you just plant the seeds.

### **The Call: Come to Christ Alone**

We've heard the truth. We've seen from God's Word why Christ alone saves. Now here's the question—what will you do with what you've heard?

### **For Those Who Haven't Trusted Christ**

Maybe you've been trying to work your way to God—stacking up good deeds, church attendance, religious activity.

But you've heard the truth today: salvation is Christ alone.

Stop trying to earn it. Stop trying to clean yourself up first. Trust what Jesus did—not what you can do.

Romans 10:9 says, *"If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."*

You say, "That sounds too easy." That's not faith talking—that's pride. The thief on the cross couldn't do one good work. He simply trusted Jesus—and that day, he was in paradise.

### **For Believers**

You have the truth that sets people free. So be confident. Be loving. Be bold. Be ready.

You say, "They'll think I'm condemning them."

Listen—you're not sending anyone to hell. Sin already did that. You're offering the only way out.

### **The Choice**

Every person will spend eternity somewhere.

If you've never trusted Christ, today is the day.

If you're a believer, go share this truth.

The jailer asked Paul, "What must I do to be saved?"

Paul answered, "Believe in the Lord Jesus."

That's still the answer. That's still the only answer that saves.

Christ alone. Always. Only. Forever.

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