

## One Way of Salvation (Acts 4:1-12)<sup>a</sup>

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### Context

1. **End of the third chapter of the book of Acts**
2. **Peter and John have just healed a man who was lame from birth.**
3. **The healing took place in the temple.**
4. **Peter is explaining the significance of the healing, that it points to Jesus Christ, the Jewish Messiah whom they had crucified.**

### Today's Passage<sup>1</sup>

- Acts 4:1, *Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them,*
- Acts 4:2, *being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.*
- Acts 4:3, *And they laid hands on them, and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening.*
- Acts 4:4, *However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.*
- Acts 4:5, *And it came to pass, on the next day, that their rulers, elders, and scribes,*
- Acts 4:6, *as well as Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the family of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.*
- Acts 4:7, *And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, "By what power or by what name have you done this?"*
- Acts 4:8, *Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders of Israel:*
- Acts 4:9, *"If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well,*
- Acts 4:10, *"let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole.*
- Acts 4:11, *"This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.*
- Acts 4:12, *"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."*

### The Chief Cornerstone

1. **Acts 4:11, "This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone."**
2. **Messianic Psalm: Ps. 118:22-23, The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD'S doing; It is marvelous in our eyes.**
3. **Jesus taught a parable about a landowner who owned a vineyard.**
  - A. **He sends servants to receive the fruit, but the vinedressers beat one and kill others (Mat. 21:35).**
  - B. **He finally sends his son, whom they also kill (Mat. 21:38-39)**

- C. Jesus asks, *"Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?" They said to Him, "He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons." Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD'S doing, And it is marvelous in our eyes'? Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. . . ." Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He was speaking of them (Mat. 21:40-45).*
4. The religious leaders were supposed to be **builders**, but they had rejected the Messiah, Jesus, the chief cornerstone in the foundation of salvation.
5. One again, we see the boldness of Peter: he accuses them of crucifying Jesus and reminds them of the highly-offensive parable Jesus had taught against them.

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## No Other Name Under Heaven

1. Acts 4:12, *"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."*
2. Many Paths to God?
- A. Hinduism - *"As men approach Me, so I receive them. All paths . . . lead to Me."*<sup>2</sup>
- B. Confucianism - *"Confucius said... "In the world there are many different roads but the destination is the same. There are a hundred deliberations but the result is one""*<sup>3</sup>
- C. Buddhism - *"Buddha explains that he has assumed various human forms in countless different worlds to guide every possible being to the right path. Similarly, the doctrines preached by the various enlightened sages, inasmuch as they are all manifestations of the same eternal Buddha, are all true teachings."*<sup>4</sup>
- I. Amazon.com book summary, "Living Buddha, Living Christ"
- If you have always assumed that Christianity and Buddhism are as far apart philosophically as their respective founders were geographically, you may be in for a bit of a surprise. In this national bestseller, Zen monk and social activist Thich Nhat Hanh draws parallels between these two traditions that have them walking, hand in hand, down the same path to salvation. . . . Nhat Hanh has no desire to downplay the venerable theological and ritual teachings that distinguish Buddhism and Christianity, but he does cause one to consider that beyond the letter of doctrine lies a unity of truth.<sup>5</sup>
- D. Baha'i - *"There can be no doubt that whatever the peoples of the world, of whatever race or religion, derive their inspiration from one heavenly Source, and are the subjects of one God. The difference between the ordinances under which they abide should be attributed to the varying requirements and exigencies of the age in which they were revealed. All of them, except for a few which are the outcome of human perversity, were ordained of God, and are a reflection of His Will and Purpose."*<sup>6</sup>
- E. Sikhism - *"Some call on the Lord, 'Rama,' some cry, 'Khuda,' Some bow to Him as Gosain, some as Allah; He is called the Ground of Grounds and also the Bountiful, The Compassionate One and Gracious. Hindus bathe in holy waters for His sake; Muslims make the pilgrimage to Mecca. The Hindus perform puja; others bow their heads in namaz. There are those who read the Vedas and others—Christians, Jews, Muslims—who read the Semitic scriptures. Some*

wear blue, some white robes, Some call themselves Muslims, others Hindus. Some aspire to bahishat (Muslim heaven), some to swarga (Hindu heaven). Says Nanak, Whoever realizes the will of the Lord, He will find out the Lord's secrets!"<sup>7</sup>

- F. "Oprahism" - "There couldn't possibly be just one way. . . . One of the mistakes that human beings make is believing that there is only one way to live, . . . there are many paths to what you call God."<sup>8</sup>
- G. New Age - "When undertaking spiritual practice it is important to bear in mind that each individual is different and so what works for one person may not work for another. When climbing a mountain each climber thinks his way is the only way. But when he reaches the top of the mountain, he realizes that there were an infinite number of ways that could have taken him to the top. Likewise there are as many paths to God as there are people."<sup>9</sup>
- H. Christian confusion: "A recent study of American evangelicals by the Pew Forum's U.S. Religious Landscape survey revealed that half of these professing people believe that people of other religions can go to heaven without Jesus."<sup>10</sup>

I. Christianity(!) - Bible quoted out of context

- a. "And Peter opened his mouth and said, 'Truly I perceive that God shows no partiality, but in every nation any one who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.'"<sup>11</sup>
  - b. "And I [Jesus] have other sheep, that are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will heed my voice. So there shall be one flock, one shepherd."<sup>12</sup>
- I. Paganism worships a "Least Common Denominator" god, and teaches, "As long as there is only one genuine God, all who worship him must, by definition, worship the same God. Different civilizations, different eras, different races and different cultures have all formulated their own individualistic perceptions of this singular God, but these cultural accretions have no real substance and are unimportant. In fact, they are a cause to celebrate rather than despair, because each religious tradition contributes its own special insights, adding unique threads to the one grand religious tapestry and enriching both human culture and life. Never mind that the different traditions are profoundly contradictory as soon as you get down to the detail. The devil is in the detail so it's best not to join him there. Stick to generalities — be good; God loves you; he's not totally in control but he's doing his best. It's OK to be optimistic, pessimistic, paternalistic, fatalistic or whatever else you fancy; there is, after all, a better life to come (isn't there?). That's about all the theology you need if you worship the [least common denominator] God. And since one size fits all, there's no need to get out the assorted tape measures of theology, historicity, rationality or self-consistency. We live in a post-modern world — just believe what you like and be happy."<sup>13</sup>

3. Why is there only one way? Because . . .

- A. God, being God, calls the shots (determines the way in which He may be approached by man)
- B. Man is unable to achieve redemption by his own means so God had to do it. There being only one God, He put into place only one solution.
- C. Man's pride must bow before God: a single path forces man to "eat spiritual crow."
- D. The means of salvation required the blood sacrifice of a perfect individual. There is only one

such individual in the universe: **God.**

**E. Why must there be multiple paths? Isn't one path good enough?**

**4. Upon careful consideration, there are only two ways that man and God may approach one another.**

**A. Christianity stands as one unique approach to God.**

**B. All other religious beliefs concerning God fall into another, single basket: non-Christianity or, paganism.**

#	Attribute	Paganism	Christianity	Passage
1	<b>Direction of Movement</b>	Man attempts to climb upward, to impress god	God descends to save helpless man	<p>He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things. (Eph. 4:9)</p> <p>In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (1Jn. 4:9-10)</p>
2	<b>Standard of Acceptance</b>	God grades on a curve	God is perfect and requires absolute sinlessness	<p>For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. (Jas. 2:10)</p> <p>Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. (Rom. 3:19-20)</p> <p>For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them." (Gal. 3:10)</p> <p>I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain (Gal. 2:21).}</p>
3	<b>Means of Acceptance</b>	Good deeds of individual impress god	Blood sacrifice of God incarnate, the perfect God-Man, Jesus Christ	<p>For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul. (Lev. 17:11)</p> <p>For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)</p> <p>But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. (Rom. 5:8-9)</p>
4	<b>Certainty of Acceptance</b>	Uncertain, stressful: how many good deeds are enough? How high is the curve god grades on?	Certain, peaceful: Christ's all-sufficient sacrifice on the cross secures individual salvation	<p>But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, (Rom. 3:21-24)</p> <p>Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. (John 5:24)</p>

5	<b>Emphasis for Living</b>	Religion: performance, keeping rules (the law )	Relationship: be found "in Christ"	<p>For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. (1Cor. 15:22)</p> <p>Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. (2Cor. 5:17)</p>
6	<b>Path</b>	Many: various religions teach various standards of ethical behavior	One: only One Individual atoned for the sins of mankind. That Individual had to be God incarnate.	<p>Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. (John 14:6)</p> <p>Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. (Acts 4:12)</p> <p>For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, (1Ti. 2:5)</p> <p>And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. (1Jn. 5:12-13)</p>
7	<b>Who Does the Work?</b>	Man	God	<p>Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. (Rom. 10:1-4)</p> <p>For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Rom. 5:6-8)</p>
8	<b>Acceptability</b>	Bloodless, attractive: places worth in man, man can impress God	Bloody, scandalous, offensive: man is lost and unable to redeem himself	<p>He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. (Isa. 53:3-4)</p> <p>For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, (1Cor. 1:22-23)</p>
9	<b>Repentance</b>	Sin denied: hidden, covered over with fig leaves	Sin admitted: confessed and exposed	<p>Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings. And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. (Gen. 3:7-8)</p> <p>Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them. (Gen. 3:21)</p> <p>He who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy. (Pr. 28:13)</p> <p>I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah (Ps. 32:5)</p> <p>Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, (Acts 3:19)</p>

## Summary

1. **As one Christian put it, “The religion of Jesus Christ aims at nothing less than the utter overthrow of all other systems of religion in the world; denouncing them as inadequate to the wants of man, false in their foundations, and dangerous in their tendency.”<sup>15</sup>**
2. **God will not tolerate “Christianity+” or “Jesus+.” It is Christ alone or nothing!**
3. **This is why the way of truth, the way of salvation is narrow: only Christianity is the correct path. All other paths represent the broad way.**
4. **Mat. 7:13-14, *Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.***

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### Endnotes:

1. [NKJV, Acts 4:1-12](#)
2. [WS, Bhagavad Gita 4.11](#)
3. [WS, I Ching, Appended Remarks 2.5](#)
4. [WS, 1](#)
5. [LBLC, 1](#)
6. [WS, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, 111](#)
7. [WS, Adi Granth, Rarnkali, M.5, 885](#)
8. [OG, 1](#)
9. [SRO, Basic Principles of Spirituality](#)
10. [Ref-1217, p 340](#)
11. [WS, Bible, Acts 10:34-35](#)
12. [WS, Bible, John 10:16](#)
13. [Ref-1341, par. 1385](#)
14. [Ref-1290, 118](#)
15. [Ref-0788, 10](#)

### Sources:

- LBLC** Review of <http://www.amazon.com/Living-Buddha-Christ-Thich-Nhat/dp/1573220183> Living Buddha, Living Christ, accessed 20140308
- NKJV** Unless indicated otherwise, all Scripture references are from the *New King James Version*, copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

- OG** Steve Rabey, *Oprah's 'gospel': Entertainment mogul preaches 'many paths' to God*, [http://www.christianexaminer.com/Articles/Articles%20May08/Art\\_May08\\_02.html](http://www.christianexaminer.com/Articles/Articles%20May%2008/Art_May08_02.html) accessed 20140308
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- Ref-1217** Christopher Cone, ed., *Practical Aspects of Pastoral Authority*, 1st ed. (Fort Worth, TX: Tyndale Seminary Press, 2009). ISBN:978-0-9814791-5-6<sup>d</sup>.
- Ref-1290** David Bentley Hart, *Atheist Delusions: The Christian Revolution and Its Fashionable Enemies* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009). ISBN:978-0-300-11190-3<sup>e</sup>.
- Ref-1341** Edgar Andrews, *Who Made God?* (Darlington, England: EP Books, 2009). ISBN:978-085234-7539<sup>f</sup>.
- SRO** [http://www.spiritualresearchfoundation.org/spiritualresearch/happiness/spirituality/spirituality\\_generalconcepts\\_e](http://www.spiritualresearchfoundation.org/spiritualresearch/happiness/spirituality/spirituality_generalconcepts_e) Spiritual Science Research Foundation, accessed 20140308
- WS** *World Scripture: The Truth in Many Paths*, <http://www.unification.net/ws/theme00a.htm>, accessed 20140308
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**Links Mentioned Above**

- a - See [http://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Acts\\_by\\_Tony\\_Garland/15\\_Acts\\_4\\_1-12/index.htm](http://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Acts_by_Tony_Garland/15_Acts_4_1-12/index.htm).
- b - See <http://www.spiritandtruth.org/id/tg.htm>.
- c - See <http://www.spiritandtruth.org>.
- d - See <http://www.spiritandtruth.org/id/isbn.htm?978-0-9814791-5-6>.
- e - See <http://www.spiritandtruth.org/id/isbn.htm?978-0-300-11190-3>.
- f - See <http://www.spiritandtruth.org/id/isbn.htm?978-085234-7539>.