

“No Other Name”—Acts 4:1-12

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[What follows is the transcript of a sermon. It was originally intended to be heard, not read, so the tone is more conversational than academic. It has only been loosely edited, so forgive any grammatical, syntactical, or spelling errors. If you have questions please contact Southern Oaks Baptist Church through their official website, www.welovethegospel.com.]

Take a Bible and meet me in Acts 4...

Most of us probably do not watch the Oscars, but every so often something happens at the Academy Awards that is hard to miss. That was certainly the case a few years ago, when Will Smith acted out his favorite scene from the life of Moses and, in anger, got on stage and struck a [Chris] Rock (cf. Exod 17:1-7).¹ His views on religion, as it turns out, are just as concerning. He once said in an interview:

“I love the nature of humanity’s search for meaning. For me I’m certain about my relationship with the model of perfection of human life that’s laid out in the life of Jesus Christ. I’m certain of that. So I’m at home and not fearful when I sit in a mosque or a synagogue or a Buddhist temple, the same way that I’m home in the Church of Scientology. I like anywhere people are searching for truth, and I respect their path and I’m intrigued by their path...My grandmother raised me to be a do-gooder in the church, that it was about doing what you can to help your community. So whatever religion does that—Jewish, Muslim, Scientology—it’s cool because the end result is the same.”²

Smith’s sentiments here are not unique. In fact, they are quite popular in the West, even among those who consider themselves Christian. One recent survey found that 60% of those who would describe themselves as “born-again Christians” between the ages of 18-55 believe that Jesus is not the only way to God. When these respondents were asked why they do not regularly share their faith with others, the top reason given was the belief that different religions can lead a person to heaven.³ I wish I could say that this poll was an anomaly, but it is not. This has been the alarming trend, and it suggest to me either that most professing Christians in the West do not read their Bibles or don’t view their Bible as all that authoritative. That’s a scary thought to me. And it should be to you too.

It reminds me of something R. C. Sproul once wrote,

“There is no tenet more basic to contemporary secular culture than that of religious tolerance. Our country was based on the principle that people of all religious creeds and backgrounds are welcome on our shores and are to be accorded the freedom of religious expression so that all religions are equally tolerated under the law. Today, however, the assumption of the secularist is that all religions are not only to be equally tolerated under the law but are equally valid (or invalid). The American truth today is that what you believe does not matter so long as you are sincere, and there are many roads that go to heaven. Some go directly and some by a more circuitous route, but in the final analysis, all that God is really concerned about is that we be people of faith. I cannot think of a principle more plainly and categorically opposed to the universal teaching of sacred Scripture—both Old and New Testaments—than that idea.”⁴

Our text this morning is one (among many) that flatly contradicts these trends by reminding us that the Bible is pretty clear on the matter of where salvation can be found. We are jumping to the same passage that we examined last week. It describes some of the aftermath of a particular miracle that occurred at the Beautiful Gate of the Jewish temple. A man born without the ability to walk had been healed after a conversation with Peter and John. The people were amazed and wanted to know how this had happened. Peter tells the people that

Jesus deserves the glory for healing the man, and then goes on to highlight the guilt the people had incurred for the death of Jesus. He calls them to repentance and faith. And chapter 4 begins with a description of how people respond. I'd like to read those verses to you once more as we begin. If you are able, let me invite you to stand to your feet in recognition of the authority of God's Word. Follow along as I read...

"And as they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, ² greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. ³ And they arrested them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. ⁴ But many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand.

⁵ On the next day their rulers and elders and scribes gathered together in Jerusalem, ⁶ with Annas the high priest and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. ⁷ And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, 'By what power or by what name did you do this?' ⁸ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, 'Rulers of the people and elders, ⁹ if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, ¹⁰ let it be known to all of you 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 is standing before you well. ¹¹ This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. ¹² And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.'" (Acts 4:1-12)

This is God's Word. You may be seated...

Last week, when we considered these verses, our focus was largely on...

The Outcome of Gospel Proclamation

I attempted to demonstrate that what we see in this text is pretty typical of what we see when we ourselves share the Gospel in this world. When we share the truth about Jesus, I argued, we should, first of all...

Expect Different Results

As we see in these verses some believed Peter, and some did not. Some received Jesus, and some rejected. It was a mixed bag. And we should expect the same with our Gospel witness. But, second, we should also...

Expect Difficult Resistance

Those who reject Jesus will reject us. Jesus warned us of this. "*A servant is not greater than his master,*" He said. "*If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you*" (John 15:20). Christians have always been resisted. And persecution is the norm, not the exception. We—the church in the West—is the exception in that we have largely been insulated from the extreme forms of persecution that our brothers and sisters face around the world, and have faced throughout Church history. But there's still a cost for us to follow Jesus faithfully. It may cost our relationship or reputation or worse. For Peter and John it cost them a night behind bars and a fierce interrogation before the same high court that sentenced Jesus to death. And it would cost them more in the pages ahead. But Jesus was worth it. And they knew this. So they were willing to suffer for Christ's sake. We should expect some measure of suffering as well, if we are resolved to follow Jesus in this world. As Paul said, "*all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted*" (2 Tim 3:12). But there is help for us in those moments. We don't go in them alone. And this leads us to the third thing we can expect when we share the truth about Jesus. We should...

Expect Divine Resources

Verse 8 tells us that Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit. We considered how the Spirit of God provides us with the needed courage, perspective, and even the very words we need for those desperate moments. The Spirit doesn't just provide that for men like Peter, but for all God's children. We will have what we need, when we need it. To the extent that we believe that, we will speak up for Jesus. These are some of the things we considered last week.

Today I want to shift our focus to the final three verses of our text—verses 10, 11, and 12—because I think it is in these verses that we can see a few reasons why the Gospel is so offensive to so many. So we are pivoting from the outcome of Gospel proclamation to...

The Offense of Gospel Claims

One might have thought that the healing for a man who had been crippled for forty years would have been cause for celebration among the Jewish leaders, “but as far as the Sanhedrin was concerned, it was the fact that the action had been done in the name of ‘Jesus Christ of Nazareth’ (Acts 3:6) that caused them offense.”⁵ They weren't taking issue with the healing, as much as with the Healer.⁶ The Healer, according to Peter, “*whom God raised from the dead*” and by whom “*this man is standing before you well*” (4:10). It's difficult to overestimate just how much the claim of Christ's resurrection and its implication would have offended the sensibilities of these religious leaders. And this reminds us that the claims of the Gospel can be offensive. Why? Because, first of all...

They Appear Foolish

The Bible says that “*the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing*” (1 Cor 1:18; NIV). One of the reasons it appears so foolish is the claim that the crucified Savior was raised from the dead. The resurrection is a “*stumbling block*” for many, including many of these Jewish leaders in our text (cf. 1:23).⁷ Why? Well, to begin with, the Sadducees were the “materialistic rationalists”⁸ among the Jews, the “theological liberals.”⁹ They denied the existence of angels, demons, and an afterlife. They believed that the soul died with the body.¹⁰ They denied all notions of God predestining human activities. They rejected the legal traditions of the Pharisees, accepting only the Torah—the first five books of your Old Testament—as authoritative.¹¹ They denied the supernatural. The healed man standing before them was thus a problem for their theology, as was the Apostles' claim of the resurrection, for they also denied the resurrection of the dead (Acts 23:8).

Furthermore, they were not looking for a Messiah (Christ) because they believed that the messianic age was launched during the Maccabean period, a couple centuries before.¹² So when Peter and John, along with the other Apostles, are found to be preaching not only the resurrection, but also the resurrection of the Christ, they would find it doubly offensive. Moreover, the reality of Christ's resurrection would give more credibility to the teaching of the Pharisees, who did in fact believe in the resurrection of the dead, a point of regular contention between these competing factions among the Jews.

Nevertheless, the Pharisees, on the whole, were not comfortable with what the Apostles were claiming either. While the Pharisees did believe in the future resurrection of the body, they did not think it was something that would happen anytime soon. Peter and John claiming that Jesus was raised from the dead recently (4:10) contradicted their expectations and teachings.¹³ They had just as much a vested interest in proving these claims wrong as the Sadducees did. It threatened their credibility among the Jews. It was foolish to their way of understanding.

And, brothers and sisters, belief in a crucified and raised Savior is no less foolish to many in our day. Paul's words still ring true—“*The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are*

being saved it is the power of God.” If we believe that it is the power of God unto salvation, then we should be ready to be counted among fools by a great many in the world around you. I’m reminded of the words of the late Supreme Court Justice, Antonin Scalia,

“God assumed from the beginning that the wise of the world would view Christians as fools...and He has not been disappointed. Devout Christians are destined to be regarded as fools in modern society. We are fools for Christ’s sake. We must pray for courage to endure the scorn of the sophisticated world. If I have brought any message today, it is this: Have the courage to have your wisdom regarded as stupidity. Be fools for Christ. And have the courage to suffer the contempt of the sophisticated world.”¹⁴

He was not wrong. Christians need to possess “the courage to suffer the contempt of the sophisticated world.” Andrew Walker, reflecting on Scalia’s words, once commented,

“Christians in America, by the simple fact of our history and geography, are going to have a hard time understanding this. I know I do. In all our pretense to be accepted; and in all our self-assurance that we’re just as much alike the educated elites from whom we secretly and hungrily crave acceptance and celebration, Scalia’s words remind us that Christians can never, by definition, find perfect welcome in any homeland. We can never cozy too comfortably with the powerful, the sophisticated, and the beautiful people lest we empty the cross of its power. We are fools. We are fools. Yes, we want the sophisticated and the powerful to bend their knee to Christ, but not at the expense of sacrificing what is essential to our faith: That Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures (1 Cor. 15:3-4).”¹⁵

But what you and I will learn, sooner or later, is that holding to what is essential to the faith will mean that we are regarded as fools in this world. Just like with Peter and John in our text, our claims are going to offend the intellects of a great many in this world. Are you ready and willing to be counted a fool for Christ’s sake?

But the claims of our Christian witness will not just offend some because they appear foolish, but also because...

They Announce Guilt

Look again at verse 11.

“This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone.” (Acts 4:11)

This is the third time we have seen Peter bearing witness concerning Jesus, and each time (you may have noticed) he claims that the people are guilty of Christ’s crucifixion (2:23-24; 3:15). Whether they were numbered among the mob that was screaming for His execution or numbered among fallen sinners for whom Christ died, they were guilty. In this case, however, he is addressing “the people more immediately responsible for [Christ’s] crucifixion: many of those listening would have sat in the same place at the rigged trial of Jesus, condemning Him for blasphemy and deeming Him worthy of death.”¹⁶ They had hoped that they had put an end to “the Nazarene,” but according to Peter, not only did God raise Him from the dead, but the risen Jesus had now raised the lame man to his feet, further proof that Jesus was alive and well. They were guilty.

But Peter assigns guilt to them by showing that the actions of these men was actually predicted in the Scriptures. The rejected-stone-turned-cornerstone imagery comes from Psalm 118:22, which was a Scripture that Jesus Himself quoted when He wanted to underscore the seriousness of rejecting Him to those who were questioning His authority (Luke 20:1-2, 17-18). This was a well-known psalm to these Jews, one that was regularly sung at Passover.¹⁷ It’s a song of salvation (Ps 118:21, 25). It was a song in which Israel’s “king

celebrates God's intervention in redeeming him from humiliation and giving him a place of honor."¹⁸ It was a messianic psalm, which is to say that it anticipated what God would do for the Christ figure He would send.¹⁹

The line Peter draws on reads, "*The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.*"²⁰ But Peter amends the wording by adding the word "you" so that these Jewish leaders would see themselves as the "*builders*" who were trying to work against God's design. I would argue that this design here (and in the psalm) concerns the building up of God's people, the Kingdom of God, which is seen as a new temple. These "*builders*" had cast aside the most important stone in the construction of the new temple.²¹ The stone is Jesus. And this temple language is used by Peter, not just here, but also in his first epistle, where he describes the Church as God's "*spiritual house*" or temple, in which Christ was the foundational cornerstone. He writes,

"As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him—⁵ you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ For in Scripture it says: 'See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.' ⁷ Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, 'The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,' ⁸ and, 'A stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall. They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for. ⁹ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." (1 Peter 2:4-9)

This is temple language. And the "*builders*"—the leaders of the Jewish people—had overlooked the significance of the One stone that was essential for establishing God's true temple. It wasn't the brick and mortar temple these leaders were so keen on protecting. As Jesus said, "*Something greater than the temple is here*" (Matt 12:6). He is here! And what did these leaders do when Jesus was before them? They misjudged Him. Here's how John Piper described it:

*"They examined the stone called Jesus of Nazareth to see if he could be a brick in the wall of truth. They said No and rejected him and threw him out as unusable. But God, the main architect, came along and saw the stone lying in the grave and picked him up and made him not only a brick in the wall, but the head of the corner—the chief stone in the building. Men rejected Jesus as a merely local menace with no significance beyond the killing hill of Golgotha. But God has made Jesus the universal head over all his house. As Acts 2:36 says: God has made him both Lord and Christ."*²²

And Peter is trying to get them to see that if they go on rejecting Christ, they are cutting themselves off from God's House, His temple, His people. They have to see their guilt, so that they can turn away from their rejection of Jesus and turn to Him for mercy.

But that's not what they're going to do, at least most of them. They are threatened by this. They don't want to acknowledge their guilt. They are offended at the insinuation of their guilt. And so, in the next paragraphs, they are going to try their best to silence Peter and John. And friends, the same will happen to us.²³

No one is going to receive the Gospel message from us without first acknowledging their guilt. The Gospel is good news—it announces that God has accomplished salvation for sinners through the death and resurrection of Jesus, God's Son. But that salvation is for *sinners*. If we don't see ourselves as sinners, then we will not see our need for the salvation that Jesus offers. So preaching the Gospel requires a preface of bad news. It requires us to be real about sin to help people to see their guilt and need. And that will not always be received well. People don't like being told they are guilty. People like to think of themselves as generally pretty good or at least better than average. They don't like being told that they are wrong, that they can't fix themselves, that they cannot earn God's favor or remove their guilt. That's offensive. And the offended will call us judgmental and label us as bigots. Are you willing to be called such things for the sake of Christ?

But, truth be told, our message is not simply “you are guilty,” it’s “we are too!” Christians are not those who look down upon other sinners, but those who believe themselves to be every bit as in need of the same grace from God because we were every bit as guilty as our neighbor. We’re not better than anyone. It’s been said that evangelism—that is, sharing the Gospel (the *evangel*) with someone—is an exercise of one beggar telling another where to find bread. We have the Bread of Life! Not because we are better than anyone, but because we have seen our sin and need for God’s grace. We have trust in Christ Jesus alone to save us. He has forgiven us of every sin, credited us with His perfect righteousness, brought us into God’s own family. Why? Not because of us. Because of Jesus! And having received such grace—such unmerited favor—we just want others to receive that same grace from the Lord. So we call people to repentance not because we see ourselves as better than or less guilty than they, but because we see Jesus as the *only* hope of the world.

And this leads us to another reason the Christian claims are so offensive, namely...

They Appear Exclusive

And, in a very real sense, they are.²⁴ Look at verse 12. Peter says,

“And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12)

This is such a countercultural statement in our day, as it was in Peter’s. “*There is salvation in no one else...*”²⁵ Only Jesus.²⁶ He is not one savior among many. He is the only Savior. There is salvation in no other. As Guy Waters put it, “We are saved by the man of God’s choosing, and we are saved only on God’s terms. But we are ‘saved’: Jesus is a complete Saviour, sufficient to meet all the sinner’s spiritual needs before God.”²⁷ But it’s found in Christ alone. And it’s hard to imagine something more intolerable in our culture than such an exclusive claim. Yet, like it or not, that is the truth of the matter. Did Jesus not say the way was narrow, not wide, that leads to life and that those who enter it are few (Matt 7:13-14)?

But we have to say even more, as Peter does here. You see, it’s common for people to say, “Yes, I believe that Jesus is the only *source* of salvation—meaning that anyone who in the end receives salvation receives it from Jesus—but that doesn’t mean that Jesus cannot save by some means outside of Christianity.” It is argued, the faithful Muslim or Jew or Hindu or whatever can be saved by Jesus. In other words, “you don’t have to believe on Him in order to be saved by Him.”²⁸

In fact, this is what many of my Roman Catholic friends and theologians believe and have taught. The Catechism of the Catholic Church cites the church father Cyprian, who said, “Outside of the church there is no salvation.” What does he mean? Well, “since the third century, the church has interpreted Cyprian as he intended: people must belong to the church to be saved.”²⁹ He didn’t mean that our membership saves us. He meant that to be saved is, by definition, to be part of the Church, the body of Christ. But the catechism puts a post-modern twist on Cyprian’s assertion. It explains, “Re-formulated positively, it means that all salvation comes from Christ the Head through the Church which is his Body.... This affirmation is not aimed at those who, through no fault of their own, do not know Christ and his Church.”³⁰ The catechism cites the Second Vatican Council for support: “Those who, through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ or his Church, but who nevertheless seek God with a sincere heart, and, moved by grace, try in their actions to do his will as they know it through the dictates of their conscience—those too may achieve eternal salvation.”³¹ It seems to me that this opens to the door to the claim that it doesn’t matter if you believe in Jesus, as long as you believe sincerely what is good. Sincerity is more necessary than explicit faith in Jesus.

Indeed, the Second Vatican Council’s Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, actually says the following: “The plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator, in the first place amongst

whom are the Muslims; these profess to hold the faith of Abraham, and together with us they adore the one, merciful God, mankind's judge on the last day.” The claim is *not* that the Muslim is saved apart from Christ. They would argue that Christ and His work is always the source of salvation. The claim instead is that non-Christians, including Muslims, can be saved through their own religions if they are sincerely seeking God through the so-called “good” in those religions. This is cited in the catechism as well.³² This is not an isolated statement. I’ve got receipts. But I’m not trying to dunk on Catholics, because, quite frankly, a lot of Protestants, unfortunately have adopted the same kind of thinking.

And friends, I would contend that is not consistent with what Peter is teaching here. Far from it. Peter, as John Piper points out, is focusing on the *name* of Jesus for a reason.³³ *“There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved”* (Acts 4:12).

“He is saying something more than that there is no other source of saving power that you can be saved by under some OTHER name. The point of saying, ‘There is no other NAME,’ is that we are saved by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus. His name is our entrance into fellowship with God. The way of salvation by faith is a way that brings glory to the name of Jesus. Peter says in Acts 10:43, ‘Every one who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.’ The name of Jesus is the focus of faith and repentance. In order to believe on Jesus for the forgiveness of sins, you must believe on his name. That is, you must have heard of him and know who he is as a particular man who did a particular saving work and rose from the dead.”³⁴

Here's how the Apostle Paul put it:

“For ‘everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’¹⁴ How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?¹⁵ And how are they to preach unless they are sent?” (Romans 10:13-15)

This is why missionaries are essential. If people were saved by just sincerely believing something other than the Gospel of Jesus Christ, then perhaps the worst thing we could do would be to send them a missionary to tell them about Jesus and thereby give them an opportunity to reject Him. If (as Vatican II claims) “[t]he plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator,” then why send out missionaries? Roman Catholicism is pro-missionaries. By why? Michael Wittmer gets at this when he writes,

“If someone is saved because they worship the God who made the sun and the moon, why go and tell them more difficult information they might reject? Which is easier, to respond rightly to general revelation or to believe the specific historical facts about Jesus of Nazareth? I can imagine an islander saying he knows there is a God, but he is not convinced that Jesus is his Son. Now this man is going to hell. If inclusivism is correct, we should have left him alone. Some say he is better off to learn about Jesus now so he might enjoy his salvation before he dies. Sure, but is that worth risking everlasting damnation? Better to die in ignorance and rise to everlasting glory than to learn about Jesus, reject his story, and go to hell.”³⁵

Do you see his point? It’s difficult to justify Christian missions if it’s not all that necessary and people can experience salvation apart from explicit faith in Jesus. But, of course, that is not the situation. And that’s why Paul dedicated his life to making Jesus known. He understood that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, and that apart from Him no one comes to the Father (John 14:6). And this is “the kind of truth that either makes converts or makes enemies,” but it is definitely “not a live-and-let-live truth.”³⁶ Is that politically correct? No. Does it conform to social etiquette? Absolutely not. It “grates against the prevalent pluralistic mood of our society.”³⁷ Some might even label it “hate speech.” But what’s the alternative? If we really love people, sometimes we have to risk offending them for the sake of their soul. People are really going to hell apart from

faith in Christ. That's a fate, if we truly understood it, we wouldn't wish on our worst enemies. So what are we doing? Charles Spurgeon got it right when he said,

“If sinners be damned, at least let them leap to Hell over our dead bodies. And if they perish, let them perish with our arms wrapped about their knees, imploring them to stay. If Hell must be filled, let it be filled in the teeth of our exertions, and let not one go unwarned and unprayed for.”

May that be our mentality. May that be our legacy. God help us.

Brothers and sister, our text this morning reminds us, yet again, that there is a cost for faithfulness to Jesus. If we are going to stand firmly upon the claims of Christ and share with the others the good news of salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, then we must be prepared to cause offense. That's not what we are aiming for. Not at all. But the teachings of Jesus and His apostles, as we have seen, are going to offend because they appear foolish to some, they apply guilt to all, and appear exclusive. You will therefore be called a fool, labeled bigot, and be denounced as arrogant for your insistence that Jesus is the only way.

But remember that the Gospel is not foolish, if it's true...and it is. It's not a message that makes us look better than anyone else, for we are just as guilty and needy before a holy God. And while it's exclusive in its claim, there is also a wonderful aspect in which the Gospel is actually quite inclusive, and that is that it invites people from every place, every background, every ethnicity, every variety of sinful past to the same Savior. And it includes them all—through faith in Jesus—in the family of God without distinction. You don't have to be on the outside. You can know full forgiveness of sins—whatever your sinful past entailed—because Jesus died in your place on the cross and rose from the grave on the third day. He substituted Himself in your place in judgment, that you might experience everlasting life with Him. Turn from your sin, see your need for a Savior, and call upon the name of Jesus alone and He will do it. All of it. That's why the Gospel is good news. And in the end there will be a multitude too great to count from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation (Rev 5:9-10; 7:9-10; 14:6-7). What can be more inclusive than that? It's an inclusive call, with an exclusive claim.³⁸ And you can be numbered among them, if you would believe the exclusive claim of the Gospel—that Jesus alone can save you, that “*there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved*” (Acts 4:12). Amen! What a Savior!

Let's pray...

¹ Michael Wittmer, *Urban Legends of Theology: 40 Common Misconceptions* (Brentwood, TN: B&H Academic, 2023), 175.

² Also quoted and cited by Witmer: Damian Romano, “The Gospel of Will Smith,” *Christians in Context* (blog), December 18, 2008, <http://www.christiansincontext.com/2008/12/gospel-of-will-smith.html>; “Will Smith on Hollywood, Religion and Tom Cruise,” interview with Allison Samuels, *Newsweek*, November 27, 2008, <http://www.newsweek.com/will-smith-hollywood-religion-and-tom-cruise-85237>.

³ See <https://probe.org/introducing-probes-new-survey-religious-views-and-practices-2020/>; also cited in Wittmer, 122-123.

⁴ R. C. Sproul, *Acts* (SAEC; Wheaton: Crossway, 2010), 92.

⁵ Derek W. H. Thomas, *Acts* (REC; Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2011), 92.

⁶ John D. Harvey and David Gentino, *Acts: A Commentary for Biblical Preaching and Teaching* (KC; Grand Rapids: Kregel Ministry, 2023), 137. “The rulers cannot even bring themselves to say the name Jesus. They asked about “what name” (4:7) and warn against speaking ‘this name’ (4:17), but Peter filled in the blank: ‘Jesus Christ of Nazareth.’” Ibid.

⁷ “Trials in Acts occur over resurrection theology (17:18, 32; 23:6-8; 24:21; 26:6; 28:20).” Patrick Schreiner, *Acts* (CSC; Holman Reference: 2021), 171.

⁸ R. Kent Hughes, *Acts: The Church Afire* (PW; Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1996), 61.

⁹ Tony Merida, *Exalting Jesus in Acts* (CCE; Nashville: Holman Reference, 2017), 58.

¹⁰ Bruce Milne, *The Acts of the Apostles: Witnesses to Him...to the Ends of the Earth* (FBC; Ross-shire, Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications, 2010), 106-107; Josephus, *Antiquities*, 18:1, 4.

¹¹ Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Acts* (ZECNT; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 233.

¹² John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Acts: The Spirit, the Church, and the World* (BST; Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 95-96.

¹³ Schnabel, 234.

¹⁴ Quoted by Andrew T. Walker, in his article, “Fools for Christ,” accessed online at: <https://www.henryinstitute.org/countermoves/2021/2/10/fools-for-christ>.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Brian J. Vickers, “Acts” in *John-Acts* (ESVEC; Wheaton: Crossway, 2019), 374-375.

¹⁷ Thomas, 98.

¹⁸ Schnabel, 240.

¹⁹ “This psalm came to have an important role in early Christian thinking about Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection. This was not surprising given the fact that the psalm had been interpreted in terms of the Messiah in the targumic tradition which identified the “stone” as David.” Ibid.

²⁰ “Scholars debate whether *kephalen* here refers to the corner-stone, the main oversized stone, which holds up two adjoining walls, or the capstone which crowns an archway. The former, reflected in the {ESV and} NIV text, appears, on balance, more likely.” Milne, 109.

²¹ “A temple reference both here and in Ps 118:22 is undeniable.” Schreiner, 175. Similarly, Beale writes, “‘Acts 4:11 is the most direct identification of Christ as the establishment of the new temple in the book of Acts’.” G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God* (NSBT; Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 216.

²² John Piper, “There Is Salvation in No One Else,” accessed online at <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/there-is-salvation-in-no-one-else>.

²³ “It helps to see in our passage that the opposition started by speaking honest words about Jesus. In that regard, the church shares the same fate around the world and throughout history. The opposition might look and feel different, and it might vary by degree, by pain, or by cost, but it will universally move to silence any speaking of ‘this name.’” Harvey and Gentino, 137.

²⁴ Though we should hasten to add that all religious truth claims are, as Timothy Keller has pointed out: “By now the fatal flaw in this approach to religion in general and to Christianity in particular should be obvious. Skeptics believe that *any* exclusive claims to a superior knowledge of religious reality cannot be true. But his objection is itself a religious belief. It assumes God is unknowable, or that God is loving but not wrathful, or that God is an impersonal force rather than a person who speaks in Scripture. All of these are unprovable faith assumptions. In addition, their proponents believe they have a superior way to view things. They believe the world would be a better place if everyone dropped the traditional religions’ view of God and truth and adopted theirs. Therefore, their view is also an ‘exclusive’ claim about the nature of spiritual reality. If all such views are to be discouraged, this one should be as well. If it is not narrow to hold this view, then there is nothing inherently narrow about holding to traditional religious belief....It is no more narrow to claim that one religion is right than to claim that one way to think about all religions (namely that all are equal) is right. We are all exclusive in our beliefs about religion, but in different ways.” Timothy Keller, *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism* (New York: Dutton, 2008), 12-13.

²⁵ “The negative formulation ‘in no one else’ (οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἄλλῳ), placed at the beginning of the sentence for emphasis, expresses the exclusive nature of salvation through Jesus, the Messiah who was crucified and whom God raised from the dead.” Schnabel, 242.

²⁶ “Peter’s statement is perhaps an echo of Ps 146:3 (LXX 145:3), where the people of God are asked to praise Yahweh and not to put their trust in ‘princes’ (ἄρχοντας) nor in any human beings (υἱοὺς ἀνθρώπων) who have no deliverance (οἷς οὐκ ἔστιν σωτηρία). Peter declares that Jesus, who is the Messiah, is the only source of salvation—Jesus who has been crucified by the Jewish leaders, who has been vindicated by God in his resurrection from the dead, who has been set as the foundation of the new ‘house’ which God is building (vv. 10–11). Luke does not relate whether Peter explained in what manner Jesus is the agent of salvation, an emphasis which we find in Paul who clarifies what Jesus has done in order to effect salvation. Here, the emphasis is on the appropriation of salvation, which is now connected with Jesus, the Messiah and Savior.” Ibid.

²⁷ Guy Prentis Waters, *A Study Commentary on The Acts of the Apostles* (Welwyn Garden City, UK: EP, 2015), 121-122.

²⁸ See Piper, “There Is Salvation in No One Else.”

²⁹ Wittmer, 178.

³⁰ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §846-847, 224.

³¹ Ibid., §847, 224

³² Ibid., §839-845, 222-224. Cf. Gavin Ortlund’s video on this matter: https://youtu.be/orp9uwwhnAY?si=LfsArE1RPL8_OoqK

³³ “Ten of the thirty-two occurrences of the ‘name’ of the Lord in Acts appear in Acts 2–4. In all those except 4:12, it is clear that conscious acknowledgment of the name is implied. This is equally true for most of the other occurrences in Acts. In his speech at the temple prior to his arrest, Peter said, ‘By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus’ name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see’ (3:16). Thus, we can

conclude with Geivett and Phillips that here Peter ‘is indicating what must be acknowledged about Jesus before one can be saved.’” Fernando, 165.

³⁴ Piper, “There Is Salvation in No One Else.” “The first half of verse 12, “‘Salvation is found in no one else’ could perhaps be confined to an ontological interpretation, if considered alone. But the second part seems to eliminate that interpretation: ‘for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.’ The word ‘must’ in the second part is related to the ‘name.’ Peter is saying that everyone in the world must be saved only by the name of Jesus. The word ‘must’ (*dei*) emphasizes necessity; a response to this name is needed.” Fernando, 165.

³⁵ Wittmer, 179.

³⁶ Piper, “There Is Salvation in No One Else.”

³⁷ Ajith Fernando, *Acts* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998), 163.

³⁸ See Trevin Wax, “The Gospel of Inclusion Is Far Too Narrow,” accessed online at: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/trevin-wax/gospel-inclusion-far-narrow/>.