

Salvation In Christ

by Casey Head

As we look at the many religions of the world today, and as we consider the questions that people often ask about salvation, it is necessary to show that Christ is the only means by which we can be saved. This means that we cannot be saved by Buddha or Muhammad or any other religious conviction. Confucianism and Hinduism will not provide us with eternal life, nor will witchcraft or Catholicism lead us away from the eternal consequences of sin. The point here is to show that if a person is not IN Christ, they are not saved.

Jesus tells us in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, *but by Me.*" The only way for a person to reach the heavenly Father, the great I AM, is through Jesus Christ. We cannot get around Christ as if He is some obstruction in the road. He is the bridge that connects the blessings of God to sinful man (Eph. 1:3; 1 Tim. 2:4-5). Furthermore, Peter preached to the counsel in Acts 4:12, "*Neither is there salvation in any other:* for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." In Romans 3:24, after saying that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, Paul says, "Being justified freely by His grace through the *redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*" Where can we find salvation and redemption? In Christ alone! According to Romans 6:23, eternal life is found in Christ. While MANY other verses could be considered to prove that salvation is in Christ alone, consider just one more- Ephesians 2:13, 16, "But now *in Christ Jesus* ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. And that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." Sinful men are reconciled unto God by the blood of Christ!

If salvation is in Christ alone, as stated above in so many different ways, then can a person be saved outside of Christ? The answer is simple- they cannot! Salvation is not found in Buddha, Muhammad or even the Pope, despite the goodness and morality of those adherents. Goodness and morality alone will not be of any benefit to a person unless they are first in Christ (Matt. 7:21-23; Acts 10:1-2; 11:14). Rather than tolerating other religious beliefs and preaching universal salvation, we need to be zealous in our efforts to convert these lost people to the Lord Jesus, not by violent means, like the Muslims, but by the incorruptible word of God (Jn. 17:17; 1 Pet. 1:22-23).

But then other questions arise such as, "What about those people who have never heard of Christ?" Again, if a person is not IN Christ, then they are not saved. As seen in Romans 1:20, the invisible things of God are clearly seen in creation and the human race is "without excuse." Whether a person is in the darkest forest of Africa or the cold mountains of Alaska and Russia, they are without excuse, for God has made Himself manifest unto them. As seen in Romans 1, people choose to reject God despite His efforts, and the powerful conclusion to this discussion is found in 2:1, "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man." As finite human beings, we do not know what is going on in the rest of the world, and while we may see lost, helpless people who CANNOT access Christ, we need to understand that they are not without hope. If they seek, they will find (Matt. 7:7).

And then another question arises, "What about those people who almost become Christians, but then die before they can actually put on Christ?" Again, if a person is not in Christ, then they do not possess salvation. That is what the Bible teaches. We cannot use extreme scenarios to deny the plain teachings of the New Testament.

As we conclude this lesson, it is important that we establish how a person can put on Christ. Is it by the sinner's prayer? No! For the sinner's prayer is not found in the scriptures? Is it by faith only, as most protestant denominations teach? No! For even the demons believe and tremble (Jm. 1:19, 24). Despite the stubborn hearts of modern "Christianity," we put on Christ in baptism, as seen in Galatians 3:27. The plan of salvation is as follows- hear the gospel (Rom. 1:16; 10:17), believe the gospel account (Acts 16:31; Heb 11:6), repent of your sins (Lk. 13:3; Acts 3:19), confess the Lord Jesus (Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Jn. 4:15), and be baptized for the remission of your sins (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38). Have you put on Christ? If not, then you are not saved!