

The Uniqueness of Christianity

by J.B. Nicholson

The sermon emphasizes the uniqueness of Christianity through its historical evidence, the necessity of salvation, and the fulfillment of prophecies about Jesus Christ.

Duration: 46:24

Scripture: Matthew 1:21, Romans 1:1-3, Romans 3:20, Romans 3:23-25, Revelation 22:17

Topics: "Christianity"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the message of the Bible, which is about having a personal relationship with God through Jesus. The speaker mentions that the Bible contains historical data and evidence for its truthfulness, unlike any other belief system. The sermon highlights the promise of a savior, the Messiah, who was foretold in the Holy Scriptures. The speaker also discusses the concept of salvation and the need to understand the bad news before receiving the good news of the gospel.

Transcript

If you're familiar with the Bible, you know that, uh, there's the Old and New Testament, there are four Gospels, four views of Christ and his life, and then one history book, the book of the Acts of the Apostles, and then the book of Romans. It's the first of what are referred to as epistles. They're intercepted letters, letters of communication from various leaders in the Church in the early days of its history, communicating truths about the Lord Jesus.

And, I'd like to read a few verses here in Romans, Chapter 1. The author's name is given, first of all, Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ called to be an apostle, a sent one, that is, one sent from God, separated unto the Gospel of God, which he had promised before by his prophets in the Holy Scriptures concerning his son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead. Now, please keep your finger there, and we're just going to turn over a couple of pages and read a few verses in the middle of Chapter 3. Romans, Chapter 3, and verse 20. Therefore, by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.

The phrase, no flesh, meaning none of the human race, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God, apart from the law, is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets, even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe. For there is no difference, for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by

his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God has set forth to be a propitiation.

This word means the place of meeting between God and man where God can rest in the finished work of Christ, through faith in his blood to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are passed through the forbearance of God. To declare, I say at this time, his righteousness, that he might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. And we trust the Lord will give us health and light in understanding his word today.

Now, if you haven't heard the argument before, you're sure to hear it at some point in life. People will say to you, I know why you're a Christian. Your parents were Christians, that's why.

You were raised in a Christian country, and if you'd been raised in another country or in another religious setting, then you'd be that. You'd be a Buddhist or a Muslim, whatever it might be. You're just a Christian because, well, that's what you people always have believed.

There are some who suggest that Christianity is a comparative religion. In other words, they're all pretty much the same. As they used to say, all roads lead to Rome.

There's a suggestion that all roads lead to heaven, and as long as you're sincere, you know, eventually you'll get there. Well, I'm one of those people, when I get on a plane, I like a dogmatic pilot. I don't like a pilot who says, even though the schedule says we're going to Pittsburgh, says, well, you know, it's a nice day in Palm Springs, I think maybe we'll just sort of head that way.

Or, he might say to us, well, it really doesn't matter what flight plan we take, as long as we're sincere, we're sure to get to Pittsburgh. I wouldn't like a doctor like that either, would you? I go in there, and I have a problem with my appendix, and he says, well, you know, I haven't done any brain surgery for a while, and I just thought maybe we'd try there instead. Well, sir, that's not my problem, and I really would like it if you'd kind of stick to the schedule, you know, because it's my body, after all.

Well, if I'm so particular about my body, what about my soul? It's a strange sort of thing, isn't it, that in every other area of life, people are quite serious about being dogmatic, and they think there's a right way and a wrong way. But, when it comes to the things of God, when it comes to eternity, people somehow have the idea that as long as you're sincere, it doesn't really matter. Well, of course, we all know that many a time we've gone somewhere, and we've been sincere, but we've been sincerely wrong, and we've ended up in the wrong place, not because we meant to, but just because we got on the wrong road in the first place.

When we read the Book of Romans, as we see right in the first verse, the theme of it is the Gospel. And what is the Gospel? Well, it simply is the good news from God. But, of course, before God gets to the good news, he has to start with the bad news.

You know the old line, I've got some good news and bad news? First, the bad news. Because, after all, if we're going to desire a savior, if we're going to desire salvation, we're going to have to know what we need to be saved from. If you're drowning, you need to be saved from the water, and if you're in a fire, you need to be saved from burning.

Well, the question is, what do you need to be saved from? There are many people, perhaps some in the audience today, and you feel no sense of being in danger. You don't have any consciousness that you have to be saved from anything. So, it's important that we understand our condition, and we read those

solemn words in chapter three, there is no difference for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

When the Lord Jesus came into the world, some people would like to read it this way, the angel said, Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall be a great example. But, it doesn't say that. Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall be a great philosopher, or a great teacher.

What it says is, Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins. That's what we need salvation from, from our sins. So, in the first few verses of Romans chapter one, we learn, first of all, that Christianity is not a comparative religion, because it is the only belief in the world that offers evidence in history for its truthfulness.

The only belief system in the world that offers evidence in history for its truthfulness. We read in verse two that God promised before by his prophets in the holy scriptures. What did he promise? Well, he promised good news.

He promised a savior, the Messiah, the promised one of God. He was promised before in the holy scriptures. I was walking through a shopping mall in Niagara Falls, Ontario, on one occasion, and instead of having down the center of the mall some crafts or some antiques, here they were, all of these fortune tellers.

There was an Indian Swami, complete with a headdress, and there was a gypsy reading tea leaves, and here was someone with biorhythms. It was really astounding. And, as I walked along, this woman called up to me and said, Tell me your fortune, sir.

And I said, How much? She said, Five dollars. I said, That's an awful lot of money for somebody who already knows the future. And she said, Oh, you know your future? I said, Yeah, right down to the details.

But I said, I'll tell you what, I'll pay you ten dollars if you can tell me what happened to me yesterday. And she said, Well, I don't have that gift. I said, I didn't think so.

You know, I can't authenticate what she prophesied promises in the future, but I do know what happened to me yesterday. You know, that's exactly the fact that God takes in his words. You know what? God wants to give you evidence to believe.

He wants you. He says, Come now, let us reason together, sayeth the Lord. Think it through with me, he says.

People have the strange idea that in every other area of life you ought to use your mind, but when it comes to the things of God, comes to the Bible, you have to kiss your brains goodbye. All sorts of things. God said, The first and great commandment is, Thou shalt love the Lord your God with all your heart and mind and soul and strength.

You can love God with all your mind. Did you know that? The book of Daniel is built like that. This is a great prophetic work in the Old Testament.

The book of Daniel is sort of the keystone of Old Testament prophecy, and you know how the story starts? Well, here's a king, a pagan king, and he's got a whole bunch of fortune tellers, a bunch of soothsayers and necromancers and workers of the black arts, and they're all on the king's payroll, and he's a bit tired of

this. He thinks they're a bunch of phonies. So, he sets up a little experiment, and he says, What I want is, you see, I had this dream the other night, and for the life of me, I can't remember what it was.

I'd like you to tell me what the dream was and what it means. In other words, he's asking them to prophesy the past, isn't he? And they said, Well, now, wait a minute, king. That breaks all the rules.

You can't do it that way. You tell us what the dream is, we'll tell you what it means. He said, No, no, no.

I make the rules, remember? I'm the king. And the rule is, you tell me what the dream is, and you tell me what it means. And if you don't tell me what it means, as a little incentive program, I'll take your heads off.

But it really didn't matter what the incentive program was. They couldn't tell the dream. They said, Aw, come on, that's no fair.

Only God can tell that. Ah, that's the point, isn't it? God doesn't know the end from the beginning. So, Daniel eventually heard about it, and he said, Now, to the king, don't be too hasty in your judgment.

Just give me the evening. I can't tell the past, either. I can't prophesy.

But only God can. And I'm going to ask God about it this evening. And so, he had a time alone with God, and he came in the next day, and he said, Here's your dream, and here's what it means.

Well, now, you see, if a man is in touch with God, and he can tell something that's hidden like that, then you'd take him seriously, wouldn't you, as you read the future prophecies. Now, when the Lord Jesus came into the world, you know, there were prophecies, and by the way, God's standard for prophets, Gene Dixon and people like that, would have been stoned to death. Did you know that? That a prophet who claimed to be in touch with God had to be 100% accurate, or they were taken out and stoned to death.

Prophets like Micaiah, he prophesied that the king would be defeated in the coming battle, and they have said, Oh, go back to your prison cell, he said. It's just a bunch of baloney. Yeah, I don't believe you.

And Micaiah could put his finger in the king's nose and say, King, listen to me, if I'm wrong, I give you the right, when you get home from battle, I give you the right to kill me, put me to death, if I've been wrong. Now, you see, if we're going to deal with issues like eternity, we can't guess about it. There's no reverse gear, you know.

Once you get out there, if you're wrong, you'll be wrong forever. So, you want to make sure that you've got it right. And these things are written, said John, these things are written that you may know that you have eternal life.

He writes in his gospel, he said there are many things that Jesus did which are not recorded here, but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that believing you might have life through his name. That's the purpose of it. Not just intellectual knowledge, but having a relationship with God through the Lord Jesus, being given the gift of a new kind of life that only God can give.

So, we read here that the God has before promised by his prophets in the scriptures concerning his Son, the Lord Jesus. You know, I had two ladies come and pick me up at the airport yesterday, me and my two daughters, and Pittsburgh's a big airport, and a lot of people come through there. And you know what they

did? They had a picture of me.

And they came and they looked and, well, I think they thought that the picture splattered me a bit, and they actually met me in person, but they had a picture, you see, and it showed that I wore glasses and I was about 6'1", and I had sort of reddish hair that's going blonde real fast, and they could look at it, see the details, and they could match me. Now, that's exactly what God did in the Bible, you see. Back in the Old Testament, he sent his prophets up to the canvas of the Word of God, and they all painted in a little bit here and a little bit there different ages, different countries, different men, different backgrounds, and yet when they painted this portrait, some of the pieces appeared to contradict each other.

For example, one prophet stepped up, his name was Micah, and he painted a little bit in there that said Jesus would be born in Bethlehem, Judah. Now, that's real specific, and quite frankly, it would be an unusual thing that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem, Judah, because his parents came from 75 miles away, and in those days that might have been 7,000 miles away. But, you see, that was the big cheese in Rome.

He thought he was the kubbah, you see, and he ran everything, and he decided he'd like to increase taxes. Well, the more things change, the more they stay the same, huh? He decided to increase the tax roll, and he needed a census taken, and so he threw the whole Roman Empire into upheaval. He thought he was sovereign, he thought he was in charge, but actually it was the hand of God in that, because at that particular time it forced the young couple, a young expectant mother from the town of Nazareth to travel almost 70 miles south on a very rough road on the back of a donkey, so she would be at that particular town on that particular night when a little baby boy was born with the name of Jesus.

So, that's one prophecy. Another prophet steps up and paints in a little bit that says, well, actually I don't know what this is about him being born in Bethlehem, Judah. I'm supposed to paint in over here a little bit that says that he's going to come out of Egypt, and three other prophets step up to the canvas, and they all paint in a little bit here that says he's going to be called a Nazarene from Nazareth.

Well, you know they all came true, didn't they? Three hundred prophecies, little bits and pieces painted in until the picture was complete, and that's why people like Andrew could look at the picture and look at Jesus and say, well, it matches. This is him. We've found the Messiah.

Well, how? Because all the evidence was there, you see. Three hundred prophecies. Not just sort of wild gene-mixing guesses, you know.

For example, there's one prophecy that says you could assume that when they crucified the Lord Jesus that the soldiers might take his clothes away for themselves, and you might guess that they'd either tear the clothes up into pieces and everybody get a bit of cloth, or else they'd gamble and winner would take all. Those are the scriptures. His outer garment, they'll gamble for it, and his inner garment they'll tear in pieces, and that's exactly what they did.

There was one prophecy that said that not a bone of him would be broken. Well, that's quite a thing, you know. When you crucify a man, not a bone broken.

In fact, they wanted to hurry things up a bit, because the preparation of the Passover was on the day of the next day, and so they came and they broke the legs, so he couldn't hold himself up anymore. He would suffocate, broke the legs of the first on the one side, and broke the legs of the man on the other

side. When they came to Jesus, he was dead already.

What would you have done? Well, just make sure, break his legs. No, no, we won't break his legs, but another soldier said, well, we better make sure, and so he took his spear and drove it up into the pericardial sack of the Lord Jesus, and blood and water came out, evidence that he was dead, and fulfilled another prophecy that said they shall look on him whom they pierce. Three hundred prophecies fulfilled.

Now, you see, if he fulfilled three hundred prophecies in his first coming, and he said he was coming back, I'd take him real seriously, wouldn't you? There is more than enough evidence to believe, recorded in Scripture. Now, you can search the religions of the world, you'll never find anything like this, that God has given us evidence to believe that what he says is really true. He was promised before by the prophet, and then we read, not only in history was he prophesied, but then we read in verse four, he was declared to be the son of God with power.

Look at the miracles he did, look at the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, the best-attested historical event ever. Hard evidence to believe. There are many individuals through history who have set out to disprove Christianity, and they knew that what they had to do was disprove the resurrection.

And you know what's happened to them? They've been converted. I mean, lots of them. Lord Littleton, Gilbert West, two of the leading jurists in Britain.

In fact, Lord Littleton's book on jurisprudence was used as a standard work in British law course for a hundred years, and these two men determined to disprove Christianity, and they knew there were two facts that they had to disprove, and one of them was the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, and the other one was the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And they set about to disprove that, and you know what happened? Well, you can read their book. Probably most decent libraries have copies of their book.

They both became Christians, because the evidence was overwhelming. Now, they were bringing to the scriptures their sharpest legal minds. Henry Morrison was another one.

Josh McDowell was another one. C.S. Lewis was another one. Many individuals who set about to disprove the Bible, and they were overwhelmed by the evidence.

Now, you've got to do something with that. You can turn your brain off, if you like. There are lots of people who do.

But, if you take a good hard look at the evidence that's given in the Word of God, you will discover that Christianity is the only belief system in the world that gives you evidence in history for its truthfulness. You can study Bible archaeology. You know, there are people who come around to your door, and they say, this isn't enough.

You need another book. You need another book. My Bible says, when I turn over Paul's letter to Timothy, he says that all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for teaching wrong doctrine, for instructing us in what is wrong doctrine, and for teaching us what is right doctrine, and for correcting bad morals, and for instructing in right morals, that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished through every good work.

Complete. In other words, this book gives me everything I need to live a life speaking to God. This is not a Pharmazelman Act that tells you a little bit about everything.

It tells you everything you need to know about one thing, and that is, how can sinful people have a right relationship with God through the Lord Jesus? That's the message of the Bible. You know, in their books, they have all kinds of historical data. They talk about all these cities, this ancient civilization here in North America, and that, you know, there was a special revelation to North America, and all these cities, these civilizations, it talks about them all.

And many of these people have gone, and they dig, and dig, and dig, and dig, and they get tired, and they stop digging, because they can't find any of these cities. You know, Sir Frederick Kenyon, who was the director of the British Museum, he said, we have never found one bit of evidence in the Middle East contrary to the Word of God. In fact, the opposite is true.

They laughed about the Hittite civilization. Ha, ha, ha. You know, that's real funny.

We've never read or seen anything about the Hittites anywhere except in the Bible. Well, keep digging, boys. And, sure enough, they discovered a huge civilization of Hittites.

They never knew it existed. There it is in the Word of God. Now, you see, you can depend on this book.

There are people who say, well, when the Bible was originally written, of course, it was probably a very wonderful book, but over time, as people copied it and re-copied it, little errors crept in, and you know, eventually, today, you really can't trust the Bible. Well, I hope you don't let people get away with that. People who say that are about 40 years behind in their research, because in 1947, they found the for the scholars to begin to unravel these things.

They got some brain surgeons from Hadassah Hospital to carefully unroll these scrolls. They were a thousand years older than anything we had up to this point. They predate the birth of the Lord Jesus, and when they took that scroll of Isaiah, 26 feet long, and laid it up against Isaiah as we have it today, there wasn't one significant change.

Not one thing, not one doctrine, not one truth in jeopardy. I want to tell you that for the last 2,000 years, at least, God supernaturally preserved His Word, and you can count on this book. The God who gave it was the God who preserved it, and He wants to show you His Word, and He promised before in His prophet concerning His Son so that you could have confidence, and the Lord Jesus spoke that He was really the true one of God.

Now, over in chapter 3, we discover another unique characteristic of Christianity that keeps it from being simply a comparative religion, and it's this. We read, these solemn words, "...all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Christianity is the only belief system in the world that allows man to get honest about his condition. I was speaking just outside of Ottawa in Canada at Easter last year, and there was an Oriental gentleman there, and his name translated into English meant Latitude Longitude, and so he presumed his father thought he ought to travel.

He had come to Canada as an engineer. He was on loan to the Canadian government, and he came out Sunday morning for a little cultural experience, Easter Sunday and all that sort of thing, and so he had come to hear me speak, and when I was finished, he came to me and said, I noticed a rather strong difference between your belief system and mine. He said, In our religion, we believe that men are basically good, and obviously you believe that men are basically evil.

And I said, Well, yes, that is one of the nice things about Christianity. You know, you don't have to pretend all the time. I mean, how do you read the morning paper? How do you watch the evening news? How do you look in the mirror in the morning and say that man is basically good? I have a little child at home, just three or four months old.

I don't have to teach her to be a rebel, you know. I don't have to teach her to be self-centered. You put a child in a room full of toys, and you put one thing there and say, Now, listen, you can play with anything you want, just don't touch that piece of china there on the table.

As far as they're concerned, there's only one thing in the room, you know, because he said they can't have it. And we don't change, you know, those signs that say wet paint? That's an invitation, isn't it? I mean, you just want a piece that's still wet. You just sort of check it out, right? And these signs that they have along the side of the road that say 55 or 65, sort of.

What does yours say? 55, sort of? It says maximum, doesn't it? That's the speed limit. And yet people think, Well, you know, if I go 59, it's not a matter of making up hundreds of hours. That doesn't happen.

You pull into town, and in behind you comes a little old man that's been driving 58 or 53 or whatever with his left linker on for the last 50 miles, and he pulls right up to the stoplight beside you, you know? You don't make up a lot of time that way. It's just that you can break the law and get away with it. That's why.

That's why you do it. That's why we do things like that. And when we see those signs, they're an invitation to us.

The Bible says that there's nothing wrong with the law, but the law doesn't fix the problem. The law irritates me to sin, because I'm a rebel. It makes me want to do it.

We say, Forbidden fruit is sweet. We do things because there's that element of daring to it. I can do it and get away with it.

And God says, That's got to be fixed if you're ever going to have a relationship with me. And it's a great thing, you know, to be able to come into the presence of God and to be honest with him. There was a woman at the well one day at Samaria.

The Lord Jesus was sitting by the well. He was weary, and she came out to get her water, and they began to talk. And at first she tried to hide herself from him.

She tried to pretend. And the Lord Jesus said to her, Go get your husband. And I have written beside that in the margin, Ouch! Go get your husband.

She said, Well, I don't have a husband. He said, Yeah, you're right, you don't. But you've had five, and you're living with number six.

You know, after that, he began to reveal to her, because she was willing to get honest with him, he began to reveal to her how the dissatisfaction of her heart could be met by the Lord Jesus himself. She'd been looking for love, unconditional love. He said, Well, I'd love you like that if you'd let me.

And he revealed to her the Father, that there was a God in heaven that was looking for people like her that would worship and love him, and he'd love them back. And when she went into the city, you know what she advertised? She said, Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did. And I think in fine print it

says, And you loved me anyway.

Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did. It couldn't be the Messiah, could it? That was a good question to ask, wasn't it? Here was someone who knew all about her, and he loved her anyway. You see, God doesn't love us because of what we are.

He loves us in spite of what we are. He loves us not because of what we are, but because of what he is. He is love, and he wants to love us, if we'll let him.

So Christianity allows us to get honest with God about sin. Now, there are, of course, a lot of people who don't think they're sinners, and the reason is they've redefined what sin is. Sin is what other people do, you see.

Sin are the bad things that others do. I'd never do that, we say. No, but what would you do? You know what the greatest sin in the world is? The sin of pride.

That's the sin that caused the collapse of the universe. I, Satan, Lucifer, this magnificent creature, said, I will rise up above the heavens, I will be a god, I'll set my throne here, and I'll be in charge. God said, oh no, you won't.

And, you see, that's the sin that Satan taught the human race. I don't have to do God's will, I'll do my own will. I don't have to go God's way, I'll come my own way.

Pride is the great sin of the human heart. Nobody else notices it much, I suppose, but God says that that's what keeps people out of heaven. I don't need God's help.

Well, the scripture makes it quite clear here in Romans, chapter three, that you can't be justified before God by doing good works. Did you know that? In fact, chapter four makes it very clear when it says in verse four, Now to him that works is a reward not reckoned of grace, but of death. Do you think you can get to heaven by doing good works? Do you think you can pay off God? Do you think he's some kind of an unjust judge that'll take a little collection, a little offering money under the table, and overlook your sins? I don't think so.

See, God doesn't pretend things, and the Bible tells us that every sin has to be dealt with, every sin has to be paid for. The Bible has a long list of sins. I tell you, if you read them, they wouldn't leave you much to be proud of.

The thought of foolishness is sin. To him that knows to do good and doesn't do it, to him it is sin. Sin is the transgression of the law.

There are many scriptures like that that just leave us prostrate before God. This message is continued on the other side. Nothing to be proud of.

Sin is anything that comes short not of my standard, but comes short of God's standard. And even when I do good things, I do them for bad reasons. You know, like the little boy who rescued his friend.

His friend had been skating on thin ice and gone through the ice, and he knocked out on his tummy and told his friend to save him. And everybody said he was a hero. He said, well, what else could I do? He was wearing my skates.

And you see, there are many times we do good things, but we do them so people think well of us, or so we feel good, or so we'll get points in heaven. Not because we love God. And so, we're condemned, Victorians.

All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. And, says the Lord, don't you realize that if you try to work your way to heaven, it's reckoned as death and not as grace? You know what that means? When I was a little guy, I'm not exactly prehistoric, but we used to have the milkman come to our door. And one day, my mother didn't have any change, and so she asked me for a loan.

And I went to my piggy bank, and I gave her some money, and she paid the milkman. Didn't have any change. And so she asked me for a loan, and I went to my piggy bank, and I gave her some money, and she paid the milkman.

Well, you never know when your mother's going to tip town, you know. So, I made up a little I.O.U. for my mother, the money she owed me. And my father saw it.

And so he made up a little I.O.U. on behalf of my mother, for all the dishes she'd ever washed, and all the meals she'd ever cooked for me, and all the beds she'd made for me, and all the clothes she'd washed for me, and all the times she sat by me when I was sick, and all the prayers she'd prayed for me. And he gave it to me. Would you like to work it that way? Are you going to come to God with your little list? I gave some frozen raspberries to my neighbor, and God pulls out his list and says, Well, now, let's see what you owe me.

Every breath you've ever breathed, every conscious thought you've ever had. You know, there are people your age, last week, jumped out of bed and went to work and never thought twice about it. But this week, they can't even wipe the sweat off their brow.

Just a little aneurysm went pop in their brain. And they'll never get out of bed till the day they die. God gives us everything we have.

And we turn around and give a little bit back to God and say, There, now we're even. Can you figure out how that works? I can't. Every good deed you do, God has to give you the strength to do it.

How can you turn around and say, Now, there, God, I'm one up on you. You owe me a place in heaven forever. Never worked that way.

If you don't get to heaven by grace, you'll never get there. If God doesn't take you there, you'll never get there. Well, then it's probably a good idea to ask God how he's going to get people to heaven.

Well, the Bible tells us that for those who have found the keeping of the law, verse 21, absolutely impossible, there is an alternative. It's called, in verse 22, the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ offered to everyone, but only upon all those who believe. God's found an answer.

Now, listen, I know there are people who may get a bit miffed at this, but Christianity is the only message in the world that offers a savior. I said to some fellows one day, they were arguing with me about their religion, and I said, Now, wait a minute, let's get one thing clear now. You agree with me that there's only one savior.

Did you know that? Every other religion in the world says, save yourself, do it yourself. You know, feed idols, donate stained glass windows, count beads, whatever it is, you do it, and it'll save you. You'll save yourself.

Now, you can imagine, you're drowning, and I walk by, and you shout, Hey, pal, throw me the rope. I take the rope and throw it to you. There you go.

Rope you have in mind? Not both ends of the rope. I mean, I didn't mean throw me the whole thing. I meant you hold on to one end, eh? See, if you need to be saved, you can't save yourself.

By its very nature, it's impossible to save yourself. If you can save yourself, you didn't need to be saved in the first place, did you? If you need to be saved, you need a savior. You need someone to hold on to the other end of the rope.

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, and you won't get saved until you're willing to say, Oh God, you're right, I'm the sinner that Jesus died to save. If you're willing to do that today, to get honest with God, stop pretending. Stop pretending.

Oh God, you're right. I need a savior, and there's only one. No other religion offers a savior.

I was speaking to two black Muslims, and the one had converted the other, and every time I said something, this fellow twisted it, and this fellow straightened it out for me. Well, that's not what Mr. Nicholson said. Thank you very much.

And I'd say something else, and he'd twist it, and he'd fix it. And after forty minutes of this, this fellow said, I don't think we're getting anywhere. I think we might as well stop this conversation.

And his friend said, No, I think we really did get somewhere. I think this fellow got the impression that he not only was not converting me, he was doing a pretty good job of unconvincing his friend. And so, he decided to cut it off.

His friend said, No, I've learned a fair bit today, but I think we could conclude by saying that while there are many things that are common between Christianity and Islam, the one big difference is that you have a savior, and we don't. I couldn't say it any better than that. I said to him, Listen, as long as you think you can save yourself, any religion will do, but when you find out you need a savior, the list is very short.

There's only one, but there is one. There is a savior, and you know, it doesn't matter where I go in the world, I find people who have put their trust in the only savior, and everyone who has put their trust in that savior are ready to tell me it really is true. He brings joy and peace in believing.

He changes our lives. I have a friend in Grand Rapids that I met one day by, you might say, just the circumstance. Sitting around the table at the Gospel Folio, they're having their afternoon tea, and I said, You'll have to excuse me, I've got an appointment with Delilah.

And one of the ladies said, You better be careful what you say. Anyway, I need my haircut. That's what I meant.

And I went up, and I went down to the barber shop, and when I got there, it was closed. But there was a sign that said, Try across the street. So I went across the street, opened the door, and the gal said, Do you have an appointment? And I said, No, I don't.

I just went across the street, and she said, Well, just a minute now. And she went outside, and there was a woman getting into a car. And you know, business is tough.

I was hoping this gal actually knew how to cut hair. I'm just a passerby. But anyway, she convinced her to come in to cut my hair.

She got me in the chair, and she said, What's your name? And I said, Jade. And she said, Well, that's an unusual name. I said, Yeah.

She said, I have an unusual name, too. She said, My name's Delilah. I said, Delilah, you know what the Bible says about you? And she said, Yeah, I guess I was tainted to cut hair.

And I said, Well, actually, you know, it wasn't Delilah that cut Samson's hair. She got a barber to do it. She said, Is that right? I said, Oh, yeah, there are lots of interesting things in the Bible.

She said, Like what? And I said, Well, like Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. She said, Are you a believer? I said, I sure am. What about you, Delilah? She said, Well, yeah, just about a month ago.

I said, Tell me about it. Well, she said, I lived in Hollywood, and I used to do the hair for the actors and actresses on the sets there. And she said, You know, they had parties, all night long parties.

You could break all ten commandments at one of those parties. She said, We lived just like animals. And she said, One morning I got up, and I looked in the mirror, and I said to myself, Delilah, you make me sick.

You had a conscience, didn't you? She said, I called the boss, and I said, Look, I've got some personal problems. I've got to take some time off. And he gave me three weeks off.

And she said, I began to read through the Bible. I'd never even read the Bible. I was religious.

You know, I went to church now and again. But she said, I never read the Bible, and I didn't even know where to start. She said, I began to read at the first page, and most of the time, I didn't know what I was reading.

And she said, I just kept reading. And she said, Three weeks went by. I hardly ate.

I hardly slept. I read all the way through the Bible. And she said, I got to the last page.

And I thought to myself, Here I am. I've read through the whole Bible, and nothing's happened. Maybe I'm so bad, God doesn't even want me.

And then she said, I read the last chapter, and Jesus said, Come. So I came. It's a good thing you said it one more time, isn't it? The whole book is full of come.

Full of come to the Savior. He's waiting for thee. Long, long has he called thee in vain.

Is today the day? Well, this is your golden opportunity. God doesn't promise you any more than today. And if you say no today, you may never get saved.

There is only one Savior. And you see, the chapter goes on to tell us that something that's unique about Christianity is that the message of the gospel allows God to be just and the justifier of those who believe in Jesus. It's the only arrangement that God could make.

Now, some people think that God's going to forgive their sins when they get to heaven. And I say, Well, on what basis? You know what they mean? You know what they think forgiveness is? They think that God will pretend they never sinned. You think God pretends? No.

You see, what God must do is he must have payment in full for every sin. The wages of sin is death. Somebody's got to pay.

If you borrow my car and take it around the block and drive it into a telephone pole, and I say, I forgive you, what does that mean? Does that mean that I'm just going to pretend that you didn't crack it up? Of course not. When I say, I forgive you, that means you ought to pay for it. You did the damage, but I'll pay for it.

Now, that's the story of the cross. When the Lord Jesus went to the cross and died for our sins, God said, You ought to pay for the damage, but I'll pay for it. And Christ died for our sins, and by simply receiving the gift of eternal life, by asking God to save a poor sinner like me, God accounts my sin to his son, and I go free.

The righteousness of God which is unto all is for you today, but it's only upon all them who believe. But God's going to count me as right before him, because I've accepted the substitute. I've accepted Christ who died for my sins.

Now, if you come back with my smashed-up car and you say to me, What do you mean? I don't know what happened. I didn't do that. I don't know.

It was like that. I said, Listen, man, you customized my car. It was not like that when I gave it to you.

No, not me. Couldn't have been me. I don't know.

I don't know who you're talking about. I didn't do it. You know, a person who talks like that will never enter into the good of forgiveness, will they? I'm ready to forgive you, but you've got to be honest with me.

You see, I walk into the room and you say to me, That's okay, I forgive you. I say, For what? Well, for looking at me. It's not a crime to look at you.

I don't have to be forgiven for that. Forgiveness means that I've got to be honest about sin and accept God's forgiveness by His death, the death of His Son of Calvary. That's what propitiation is.

Get the point now. God's already satisfied. You trying to satisfy Him with your own good work? Do a little here, give a little there, pray a little of it? Listen, good news, God's already satisfied.

He's already satisfied with the finished work of Christ. You don't have to justify yourself. You don't have to try self-justice.

Oh, but God, wait a minute, you don't understand. Wait a minute. God says, Listen, you don't have to argue with me.

Just accept my plan of salvation, that when Christ died, He was dying for your personal sins, and if you're willing to do that, then I justify you. You're justified by the death of the Lord Jesus and all the death and pain. I don't know, there's no message like that in the face of the earth.

It's the only message like it. Salvation, full and free. And so, He concludes by saying, Christ is His Savior of sinners.

He's offered to men and women. You don't have to have Him if you don't want Him. You can go on, you can select any religion you like, but I want you to know this, that there's only one Savior.

And because God's salvation is a gift, and because He offers you today justification before Him, you can leave the Zadokorim, a new creature in Christ Jesus. No other religion can offer you that. You've got to try, you've got to pay, you've got to do.

I talked to an old Arab one day in the city of Jerusalem on David Street, there's a little market there, and he was working his beads. The Muslims have their beads too, and he was going through his beads. 99 beads, every one of them a name of Allah.

And as he was going through the beads, I said, sir, what are you doing? He said, I'm doing this to get to heaven. I said, great. Is that how you get to heaven? I said, that looked pretty easy to me.

Here, show me how to do it. I said, before we get started, I'd like you to answer me a question. How many beads do you have to do to get to heaven? Oh, he said, I don't know.

I said, ooh, that is a problem, isn't it? You mean to tell me you can miss heaven by one bead? You see, if it's due, if it's something you have to do, you'll never know, will you? You never have confidence, never have assurance. The Bible says, these things are written that you might know that you have eternal life. How? Because it has nothing to do with you and what you do.

It has to do with something that's done. It was done 2,000 years ago when the Lord Jesus said, it's finished. He didn't mean it's almost finished, and you have to do a little bit to finish it.

He meant it was finished, and the proof that God was satisfied was he raised him from the dead. Jesus could not have entered heaven if it was one sin left unpaid for. He paid the debt in full.

He offered salvation as a gift to you this morning. Listen, there's nothing like the message of the gospel anywhere in the world. Absolute assurance and hope beyond the grave, and it's all based not on you, not on me, but on the finished work of Christ.

Will you rest where God rests today? The work of Christ is enough to satisfy his heart. Won't it be enough to satisfy yours? And everyone who puts their trust in Christ discovers that what he says is really true. He gives us joy and peace in believing.

Shall we pray? Father, we confess before thee we don't really understand the great plan of salvation. It's beyond us, but that was just the kind of plan we needed. If we could understand it, it wouldn't be big enough to meet our needs.

We thank that God understands it. God has made a provision, and yet in the measure in which we do understand it, the plan is wonderful that he who knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. We pray for anyone here, and their belief is still due.

We thank thee that we too can do things for thee, but now not out of obligation or fear or seeking to bring God into our depth, but out of gratitude and love for thee. We were created unto good work, that we might walk in them. And we thank thee for everyone in the audience here who has put their trust in the Savior

and found out that what God says is true, that there is peace to be had, peace for time and eternity, by resting in the finished work of Christ.

We pray for any in the audience today, and they're still trying to do it themselves. When it's all been done, the work is finished, and they can rest where God rests in the finished work of Christ. We commend thy word to thee, speak to every heart, we pray.

Equip thy people to take this message with them in the days that lie ahead, for we should have our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace to share it with those poor souls around us who are on their way to a lost eternity. Exercise our hearts, we pray, and speak to everyone by thy Spirit as we come to thee in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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