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ARE YOU IN ——— ————— THE WAY?

Assent is not enough, there must be
personal appropriation of Christ
by J. C. Ryle

The Apostle Peter says of Christ, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). He means that no one can be saved from sin — its guilt, power, and consequences — excepting by Jesus Christ. He means that no one can have peace with God the Father — obtain pardon in this world, and escape wrath to come in the next — excepting through the atonement and mediation of Jesus Christ.

In Christ alone God's rich provision of salvation for sinners is treasured up; by Christ alone God's

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abundant mercies come down from heaven to earth. Christ's blood alone can cleanse us; Christ's merit alone can give us a title to heaven. Jews and Gentiles, learned and unlearned, kings and poor men — all alike — must either be saved by Jesus or be lost.

There is no other person commissioned, sealed, and appointed by God the Father to be the Saviour of sinners, excepting Christ. The keys of life and death are committed to His hand; all who would be saved must go to Him.

ONLY ONE

There was but one place of safety in the day when the flood came upon the earth, and that was Noah's ark. All other places and devices — mountains, towers, trees, rafts, boats — all were alike useless. So, also, there is but one hiding place for the sinner who would escape the storm of God's anger — the Lord Jesus Christ.

There was but one man to whom

the Egyptians could go in the time of famine, when they wanted food — they must go to Joseph; it was a waste of time to go to anyone else. So, also Christ is the One to whom hungering souls must go, if they would not perish forever.

There was but one word that could save the lives of the Ephraimites in the day when the Gileadites contended with them, and took the fords of Jordan (Judg. 12) — they must say "Shibboleth," or die. Just so there is but one Name that will avail us when we stand at the gate of heaven — we must name the Name of Jesus as our only hope, or be cast away from His presence.

Such is the doctrine of the text. No salvation but by Jesus Christ; in Him, plenty of salvation — salvation to the uttermost, salvation for the very chief of sinners — out of Him, no salvation. It is in perfect harmony with our Lord's own words in the Gospel of John: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man

cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). It is the same thing that Paul tells the Corinthians: "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11); and the same that John tells us in his First Epistle: "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:11, 12). All these texts come to one and the same point — no salvation but by Jesus Christ.

Make sure that you understand this before you pass on. Perhaps you think this is all old news. Perhaps you feel, "These are ancient things; who knoweth not such truths as these? Of course, we believe there is no salvation but by Christ." But mark well what I say: make sure that you understand this doctrine, or else by and by you will stumble, and be offended at what I have yet to say.

TRUST ONLY IN CHRIST

Remember that you are to venture the whole salvation of your soul on Christ, and on Christ only. You are to cast loose completely and entirely from all other hopes and trusts. You are not to rest partly on Christ — partly on doing all you can — partly on keeping your church — partly on receiving the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. In the matter of your justification, Christ is to be all.

Remember that heaven is before you, and Christ the only door into it — hell beneath you, and Christ alone able to deliver you from it; the devil behind you, and Christ the only refuge from his wrath and accusations; the law against you, and Christ alone able to redeem you. This is the doctrine of the text.

Let me conclude with a few words by way of application. If there is no salvation excepting in Christ, make sure that you have an interest in that salvation yourself. Do not be

content with hearing and approving, and assenting to the truth, and going no further. Seek to have a personal interest in this salvation: lay hold by faith for your own soul; rest not till you know and feel that you have got actual possession of that peace with God which Jesus offers, and that Christ is yours, and you are Christ's. If there were two, or three, or more ways of getting to heaven, there would be no necessity for pressing this matter upon you. But as there is only one way, "Make sure that you are in it."

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