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**DR. M<sup>C</sup>DOWELL'S SERMON**

BEFORE THE

**AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

FOR

**FOREIGN MISSIONS,**

**1837.**

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**SERMON,**

PREACHED AT NEWARK, N. J. SEPT. 13, 1837,

BEFORE THE

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

FOR

*Foreign Missions,*

AT THEIR

TWENTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL MEETING.

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## SERMON.

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ACTS IV, 12.

*Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name, under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved.*

THIS is part of a short address made to the Jewish council, by the apostle Peter. He and John had, at the temple, healed a man, lame from his birth. This miracle brought a multitude of the people together, and Peter embraced the opportunity to preach Christ to them. This excited the opposition of the wicked priests and Sadducees; and they laid hands on the two apostles, and cast them into prison. The next day they were brought before the Jewish council, and were asked, by what power or name they had healed the lame man? Peter boldly answered, that it

was by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom they had crucified, and whom God had raised from the dead, that this man had been healed; and that though they had rejected Jesus, and so treated him, nevertheless the church was built on him; as had been predicted in their own Scriptures by the Psalmist—"This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner."

Peter then taught them that they had a deep personal concern in this subject. For they needed salvation; and there was salvation in no other, either for them, or any of mankind; and continuing to reject him, they must inevitably fail of salvation and be lost. This instruction he gave them in the text—"Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name, under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved."

This is a very important passage of Scripture, and it is adapted to direct our meditations, on this interesting occasion. It teaches that there is salvation for lost sinners of our race; and that this salvation is in and through Christ, and him alone; and that therefore it ought to be made known throughout the earth.

In speaking from the text in the ensuing discourse, the plan will be—

I. Briefly to explain what we are to understand by salvation—

II. To show that this salvation is in Christ, and in him alone ; And then—

III. To apply the subject especially in reference to the object of our present meeting.

I. I would briefly explain what we are to understand by salvation.

Salvation implies danger and misery, and sometimes ruin. When a person is threatened with any calamity, and escapes it, he may be said to be saved from it. When he is dangerously sick, and recovers ; or is involved in any affliction, and is delivered out of it, he experiences a temporal salvation. So also, when a man is condemned to die, and receives a pardon, he is saved. And when a person has become habituated to vice, and has lost his influence, reputation, and usefulness, and sunk into a state of moral degradation ; if he afterwards breaks off from his vicious courses, reforms his life, and pursues a contrary and virtuous course, so as to regain his reputation, influence, and usefulness in society, he is said to be saved from ruin. These remarks may assist us in understanding the salvation of the gospel.

The salvation of the gospel implies danger, misery, and ruin; and was provided for persons in such condition. Such is the condition of mankind. They have sinned against God, their creator, and rightful sovereign. They have transgressed his righteous law; and by reason of transgression have incurred its dreadful curse, which is death, or eternal misery; and are by the law condemned to suffer this curse; and are really now, in a greater or less degree, in a suffering state, which is the commencement of the execution of the curse. They have also lost the image of God, so that they are morally in ruins, destitute of any disposition to the holy service of God, unfit for the enjoyment of God, averse to holiness, in love with sin, and prone to evil in the sight of God continually.

To deliver our sinful race from this danger, and recover them out of this misery and ruin, the salvation revealed in the gospel was provided. This salvation is deliverance from the execution of the sentence of the divine law, dooming the sinner to the second death. It is the forgiveness of sin, and the restoration of the sinner to the forfeited favor of God. It is the renovation of the depraved heart, and the restoration of the lost image of God

to the soul. It is, in short, deliverance from the punishment, the power, and the love of sin; and restoration to the image, the favor, and the enjoyment of God; and after becoming prepared for it here, through sanctification of the Spirit, admission to the perfect and eternal joys of heaven. Such is a brief explanation of what we are to understand by the salvation spoken of in our text.

II. This salvation is in Christ, and in him alone. That there is salvation for sinners of our race, in and through Christ, is clearly implied in the text; and is explicitly asserted in numerous other passages of Scripture. This truth is the grand theme of the Scriptures, both of the Old Testament and the New. Salvation by Christ was the import of the first promise after the fall; viz. that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. The same was the substance of many other of the promises of the Old Testament. To predict this salvation the prophets were inspired; and to prefigure it numerous types were instituted. This salvation was the grand tidings which the angel was sent to announce to the shepherds, and which was the subject of the song of praise of the heavenly host which hovered over Bethlehem at the birth of the Savior, and

this was the grand theme of the instructions of Christ himself when he was upon earth; and of the preaching and writings of his inspired apostles after his ascension to glory.

To provide this salvation, the Son of God became incarnate, and obeyed the law, and suffered, and died. Though being in the form of God, and esteeming it not robbery to be equal with God, he thus humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, that he might remove the difficulties in the way of the sinner's salvation, and purchase eternal redemption for us. And he did succeed in this work. By the union of the divine nature with the human, the atonement he made for sin was of infinite value; and the Father accepted his work, for the purposes for which he performed it. In him there is salvation; and in, and through him, the sinner may obtain the pardon of his sins, deliverance from condemnation, the renovation and sanctification of his nature, the favor of God, and eternal life. And in and through him *alone*, can this salvation be obtained. This is explicitly asserted in the text. "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved." This is the point to which I would more



particularly call the attention of the audience, as adapted to the present occasion.

There is salvation in Christ *alone*. Several passages of Scripture, besides the text, explicitly affirm this. Such are the following. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life ; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life ; but the wrath of God abideth on him."—"I am the way—no man cometh unto the Father but by me." "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall be damned." "Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus ; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." "He that hath the Son hath life ; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." These passages are most explicit, that there is salvation for sinners of our race in none but Christ.

The same is taught by the fact, that no other way of salvation is suggested any where in the revealed word of God. The Bible, which God has graciously given to men to guide them into the way of truth and duty, and salvation while it

every where reveals this way of salvation, no where reveals any other. We would therefore have good ground to conclude, if there was in the Scriptures, no explicit declaration on the subject, that there is no other way.

The same is further proved by the song of the redeemed in heaven, which John in vision heard, and which he recorded in the Revelation. "Thou" (that is the Lamb)—"Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God, kings and priests." And in another part of this book John has recorded that he saw "a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, who stood before the throne, and before the Lamb—And cried with a loud voice, saying, salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb"—And he was informed by one of the elders respecting this multitude—"These are they which have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." In these passages, all the saints in heaven, of all nations, kindreds, people, and tongues, are represented as ascribing their salvation to Christ. Hence we may conclude that all

the saints in heaven have been saved by Christ ; and that none of our sinful race are admitted into that blessed place, but such as are saved by him.

Further, that salvation has been provided by Christ most conclusively proves that there is no other way of salvation than through him. It is derogatory to the infinite wisdom and benevolence of God to suppose, that he would give his co-equal and well-beloved Son to be infinitely humbled to a union with our nature ; to be despised and rejected of men ; to labor, to suffer, and endure the inconceivable agonies he did ; and to die, making his soul an offering for sin, to provide salvation for sinners, if after all this, they might be saved in some other way than by him, and through the salvation he purchased. It cannot be that there is any other way of salvation ; and to suppose it is an impeachment of the divine wisdom and benevolence.

Another argument may be drawn from the divine perfections of holiness, justice, and truth. Reason sanctions the idea, that for the maintenance of these perfections, in the forgiveness of sin, an atonement of infinite value was requisite. And this idea is unquestionably confirmed by the fact, that such an atonement was made by the infinite

Son of God incarnate. Hence we infer that it is not consistent with the divine perfections to save sinners in any other way than through Christ; and if so, there can be salvation in no other; for God will never deny himself, or do any thing in the least degree inconsistent with his perfections.

Again, that there is salvation only in Christ is further proved by what both the Bible and reason teach as to the universal and total depravity of mankind, and the necessity of holiness in order to admission to the happiness of heaven, or to be capable of enjoying it. It is an established principle both of reason and revelation, that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Now, universal experience, as far as we are acquainted with the world, proves that it is through the instrumentality of the gospel of Jesus Christ alone, that men are made holy. Where the gospel has not come, the uniform testimony of those capable of judging, and who have had an opportunity to form a correct judgment, has been, that men in such circumstances are universally destitute of holiness. No other remedy than the gospel has ever answered the purpose of truly reforming men, so as to make them holy. Besides the word of God clearly and abundantly teaches that holiness, in

fallen men, is, in every instance the fruit of the operations of the Holy Spirit—As we read, “Except a man be born of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit;” that is spiritual or holy. Holiness is, therefore, universally the fruit of the Spirit. But the Holy Spirit operates upon the hearts of sinners, making them holy, only in virtue of the salvation which Christ has purchased. And he uses the word, or the gospel of Christ, instrumentally in this work: as we read, “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God.” If, therefore, it be true that “without holiness no man shall see the Lord,”—it is equally true that there is salvation only in Christ; for no man will ever be made holy, but in the way of this salvation.

For the preceding reasons we confidently believe there is salvation for sinners of our race only in and through Christ. This is plainly and unequivocally asserted in our text, and in a number of other passages of Scripture which have been cited; and it is confirmed by several other considerations which have been mentioned; viz. that the Bible, which God has graciously given to

be the guide into the way of truth, and duty, and salvation, no where suggests any other way; that the saints in heaven universally ascribe their salvation to the Lamb that was slain; that it is inconsistent with the character of God, that he should at an infinite expense provide this salvation, if still sinners might be saved in some other way; that this way alone presents an adequate atonement for sin, glorifying the divine perfections in the salvation of the sinner; and that this salvation alone can restore man to holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. There is salvation for sinners of our race only in Christ. This is the truth of God.

And this is true, not merely in regard to Christendom, or portions of our world where the light of the gospel shines, in a greater or less degree; but also, in regard to the whole human family. The whole human race are sinners. The whole world lieth in wickedness; and the whole world of human beings, including every creature of our apostate race, need salvation. And there is only one salvation for any of them, and that is in Christ. This is, most explicitly, taught in the text. "There is none other name *under heaven*." Not merely in christian lands; but "*under heaven*;" which

expression doubtless embraces all lands. The same universality is again taught in the latter part of the text, in the clause, "*given among men.*" "There is none other name, under heaven, *given among men*, whereby we must be saved." This must be understood, not merely of some men, in some parts of the world; but of mankind generally, in all parts of the world, under the whole heaven. And the texts generally, which have been quoted, prove clearly the same thing; as also do all the other arguments which have been used in support of the position, that there is salvation only in Christ. There is salvation, brethren, for none of our guilty and depraved race, in any part of the world, but in the way revealed in the gospel; viz. through the incarnation, obedience, sufferings, and death, of Christ the Son of God.

To become interested in this salvation, the sinner must believe in Jesus Christ. This was taught in the commission, which our Lord gave to his apostles, authorizing and directing them to offer this salvation—"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." This is the doctrine of

the Scriptures repeated a great many times. To exercise the faith necessary to an interest in this salvation, there must be a knowledge of the gospel. Reason teaches this, and it is plainly taught by the apostle in the question—"How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" And having such knowledge, faith is the exercise of one who feels his depraved, ruined, and helpless condition, as taught in the word of God; and it is, renouncing every other dependence, and believing in the ability and willingness of Christ to save, cordially receiving him, and resting upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered in the gospel.

In the improvement and application of this subject, we may remark—

1. That it contains good news to those who feel themselves to be in a lost state, and are distressed in view of their condition, and are anxious to escape from threatened wrath, and to be restored to the image and favor of God. It informs such persons that there is salvation for sinners. This salvation is in Christ, and in him alone. And from the character of the Author, and what he did and suffered to provide it, as well as from the declarations of his word, we must conclude that



it is a complete salvation, every way suited to the necessities of the sinner. Let anxious sinners be exhorted to seek this salvation, giving up all hope from any other quarter, and looking to Christ alone. Believe on him, cordially receiving him as he is offered in the gospel, and you shall be pardoned and accepted; and the Holy Spirit will dwell in you, to sanctify you and make you meet for heaven.

2. Our subject teaches that all who are expecting salvation in any other way than through Christ, and by faith in him, are deceiving themselves; and that unless they discover their error and practically correct it, they will fail of salvation and be eternally lost. Many doubtless, even where the gospel is most plainly and faithfully preached, are in this dangerous and fatal error. Many believe that it will be well with them at last, though they should not be united to Christ, by a living, purifying, and transforming faith. Some expect to be saved in one way, and some in another, without submitting to the self-denying plan of salvation through Christ, and by faith in him. But our text—"Neither is there salvation in any other," pronounces every hope to be false that is not founded on Christ—It so pronounces with respect

to every individual of mankind, under heaven, whose hope is not built on Christ; and surely, emphatically, it so pronounces with respect to all, out of Christ, who live under the light of the gospel.

My hearers, if any of you are indulging a hope of salvation, without an interest in Christ, by a living, purifying, transforming, and obedient faith, you are in a fundamental error, which will prove eternally ruinous, if it is retained. Be convinced of your error, and renounce it; seek an interest in Christ by faith in him; and be satisfied with nothing short of Scriptural evidence that you have such interest; for if you die without it, you will surely be eternally miserable. And your guilt and punishment will be greatly aggravated by the circumstance that so great salvation was provided, and was revealed and offered to you, and you neglected and rejected it.

3. Finally, our subject presents a strong appeal to those who have the gospel of salvation, to send it to those who are destitute of it. This is the point of practical improvement, to which I would more especially invite your attention, at this time. If it be true that there is salvation for sinners of our race, only in Christ;—if it be true that there

is none other name *under heaven*, given *among men*, whereby we must be saved;—then what is the necessary conclusion in regard to the Heathen? Is it not that they must be strangers to salvation? For they know not Christ; and have never heard of him and his salvation. They therefore cannot believe in him. For as Paul asked—“How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?”—And if they do not believe in him, they cannot have an interest in his salvation; for the word of God abundantly teaches that such interest can be obtained only by faith. Unless therefore, there be some other way of salvation, than through Christ, and by faith in him, they cannot be saved. But our text unequivocally declares that there is no other way; and its declaration is supported and confirmed by many other passages of Scripture, explicitly affirming the same thing; and also, as we have seen, by several conclusive arguments drawn from the Scriptures. I know not but God sometimes may, in some way, communicate to a Pagan without the gospel, such a knowledge of the Savior, and of his atonement; and may make such an application of his atonement, and so renew the heart, by the Holy Spirit, that he may be saved. But if he ever does this,

salvation is still through Christ; and such instances, if they ever occur, which is at least very doubtful, are very rare. The Lord gives us no authority from his word to expect it; neither do the accounts which missionaries give us of the universal destitution of holiness, which they find in all pagan lands that they have visited, leave us much ground to hope that in any instance are the heathen saved through Christ without a knowledge of the gospel.

If, then, we would have the heathen saved, we must send them a knowledge of the salvation of Christ revealed in the gospel. Real benevolence of heart, if we possess it, will lead us to feel for them in their miserable condition, and to endeavor to send them a knowledge of the only remedy, and to bring them practically acquainted with it; and Christ has made it our duty so to do. After he had finished the work of providing salvation, and had risen from the dead, before he ascended to heaven, he gave in charge to his ministers and church, to have his salvation made known throughout the world. This command was—Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature—Go teach all nations. And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached

in his name, among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

The apostles and their fellow laborers in the gospel ministry, and the primitive church, felt that the field of their operations was the world, and endeavored accordingly to carry the instructions of their ascended Lord into effect. In this they in a good degree succeeded; and if their successors, in the several ages since had had the same correct views of duty, and had been actuated by their spirit, and followed their example in labors, all nations would long since have been enlightened and blessed with the gospel of salvation. But alas! Christ's ministers and church have, ever since the apostolic age, appeared, in a great measure, to lose sight of his command; and have slept amidst the groans and miseries of unnumbered millions, who have lived in darkness and sin and wretchedness; and died, and gone to the judgment bar, and to their eternal state, without a knowledge of the only salvation through Christ.

Some may consider it uncharitable thus to represent the condition of the heathen, without the knowledge of Christ; but the Bible, unquestionably, thus represents their condition. And the contrary sentiment, that the heathen may be saved

without a knowledge of Christ, and in some other way than through the salvation he purchased, is an infidel sentiment; and it is practically far more uncharitable. For it paralyzes exertion to send the gospel to them, and leaves them without help, in the condition where the Bible declares that sinning without law, or the revealed word, they shall perish without law, or without the aggravated condemnation of those who perish from under the light of the gospel; while the truth, that the heathen can be saved only through the salvation of Christ, leads those acquainted with this salvation, and who have benevolent hearts, to devise plans to send the gospel to them, and to lend their aid to execute such plans.

The truth declared in the text—"Neither is there salvation in any other," is the grand spring of missions to the heathen. About six hundred million of our fallen and sinful race are, at this time, in pagan, or Mohammedan darkness, destitute of a knowledge of the only name under heaven, given among men, whereby they must be saved, and of him whom the Bible declares to be the only Mediator between God and men; and ignorant of the salvation that is in him alone; and as depraved and wicked as they are ignorant—

universally destitute of the holiness, without which the unchangeable word of truth declares, "No man shall see the Lord." Of these, allowing thirty years for a generation, *twenty millions*, on an average, die annually, and about *fifty-five thousands* daily. What a solemn thought! that such a multitude of immortal beings, of the same sinful race with ourselves, are daily going into an unchanging eternity, without a knowledge of the only Savior, and the only salvation. And what a weight of responsibility rests on us, who are acquainted with the only remedy for them; and have access to them, and are commanded by the Savior who provided it, and has blessed us with it, to carry or send it to them.

Brethren, it was this view of the case that constrained the apostles and primitive Christians to labor and suffer as they did, that they might carry or send the gospel to all nations. It was this view of the case that brought the gospel to our pagan ancestors, in consequence of which, we have been born, and educated under its light and privileges. It is also this view of the case; that in the present day, has awaked, at least a few Christians from the slumbers of ages, and has led them to feel for the heathen, and to devise meas-

ures for their relief; and to give of their substance to send the gospel to them, and to follow their benefactions with their prayers. It was this view of the case that originated the society which is now holding its anniversary in this city; and kindred societies of the present day, formed for the purpose of sending the gospel to the heathen. And it is this view of the case that has, from time to time, constrained a few devoted men and women to relinquish the comforts of home and country, kindred and civilized life, and to go to the dark places of the earth, and the habitations of cruelty, and pestilential climes, to declare to immortal and accountable fellow beings, the only salvation of Christ.

Brethren, in view of the text, and of this discourse, look at the condition of the heathen world; and judge what you, who are blessed with the light of the gospel of salvation, ought to do to send the knowledge of this salvation to the millions who are perishing for lack of vision; and accordingly act. AMEN.