

Here We Stand: *Solus Christus* (Christ Alone)  
Acts 4:7-12; Romans 3:21-26

Intro:

**We are now on the fourth sola: *Solus Christus—Christ Alone*.** *Solus Christus* is as important today as it was when the reformation began. Church historian Michael Reeves says *Solus Christus* remains the bulwark against the danger of a theological system that disconnects itself from the exclusivity of the person of Christ for salvation and the sufficiency of the atonement of Christ on the cross.<sup>1</sup>

**But before we dive into this doctrine we need to do a quick review of what we have covered.** Remember the decisive issue of the Protestant Reformation was:

- **How can sinful man/woman be right before a holy God?** This was the issue in a nutshell. Here is another way to say it: How can a guilty sinner find acceptance with an infinitely holy God in heaven?
- **Here was the debate that raged when the fires of the Reformation were lit.**
  - **On one side was the Roman Catholic Church that said salvation is in "*Jesus Christ--AND*".** Roman Catholic theology denied (and still does today) that salvation was in Jesus Christ alone. They would add the Latin word "*et*" meaning "*and*." They proclaimed that salvation is in Jesus Christ "*and*":
    - ⇒ Good works
    - ⇒ Church membership
    - ⇒ Baptism
    - ⇒ Indulgences
    - ⇒ Treasury of merit
    - ⇒ The mass
    - ⇒ Confession
    - ⇒ Purgatory
    - ⇒ Marriage
    - ⇒ Prayers to the saints
    - ⇒ Last rites
    - ⇒ And, and, and, and
    - ⇒ No one in the Roman Catholic Church could ever know if they were saved.
  - **On the other side were the Reformers:** Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, John Knox and William Tyndale and many others and all said no to Roman Catholic doctrine. All of them said salvation is in Christ alone.
  - **The Reformation was about the recovery of the one true saving gospel of Jesus Christ** and the difference between the two positions could be boiled down to simply the difference between "*and*" and "*alone*" or "*et*" and "*sola*."<sup>2</sup>
- **TRANSITION:** My outline this morning is what we have covered in the last two sermons:
  1. Here They Stood
  2. Here We Stand

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<sup>1</sup>Stephen Wellum, *Christ Alone: The uniqueness of Jesus as Savior*, 13-14.

<sup>2</sup>Steven Lawson, Sermon: *Solus Christus (Christ Alone)*, 2014.

## I. Here They Stood: *Solus Christus* (Christ Alone)

- The first thing we need to understand about the *solas* is that they are mutually dependent on one another. You cannot have one *sola* without the others. The *solas* capture the heart of the gospel.
- **Think about the *solas* this way: Illst: Temple Illustration:** When you think of the Reformation theology in contrast to Roman Catholic theology here is a way to think of it. Think of a temple building:
  - **The Roman Catholic Temple** has for its foundation Scripture “and” . . . Church traditions, ecclesiastical councils and the pope. They add to God’s word on the foundation and so they do not have a temple they have shack.
  - **The Reformers Temple:**
    - **Foundation** is Scripture Alone
    - **Columns:** There are three pillars on the temple. The pillars of: *Grace Alone*, *Faith Alone* and *Christ Alone*
    - **Pinnacle:** Over the top of the temple is the pinnacle and on it says: *Soli Deo Gloria* (To the Glory of God Alone)
    - If there be any other foundation, any other pillars, any cracks in the foundation or pillars or any other pillars added to them then the glory of God falls to the ground because they will rob God of His glory because there is no salvation a part from these 5 *solas*. You cannot be a Christian and have any other foundation other than these.<sup>3</sup>
  - **This helps us see the interrelatedness of the *solas*.** I said in my previous two messages that the Reformers have said, and I agree with them, that:
    - ***Faith Alone*** is the *sola* on which everything hangs and
    - ***Grace Alone*** is the hinge which everything turns **BUT**
    - ***Christ Alone*** is the linchpin of the *solas*. It is the absolute center of the center point of the bulls eye of the *solas*. It is the heart of the *solas*.<sup>4</sup>
    - ***Scripture Alone*** is the word of *Christ Alone* and Faith comes from hearing according to **Romans 1:17** and hearing by the word of Christ.
    - ***Faith Alone* is in *Christ Alone*.** You cannot have faith alone in anything else except ***Christ Alone***.
    - God, through ***Grace Alone***, gives Christ to unworthy, undeserving, hell-bound, sinners. Also the faith to believe in Christ is by the grace of God alone. No one can believe in Christ on their own spiritual strength. God must grant saving faith to the spiritually dead before they can believe upon Christ. Remember what we learned last Sunday. What can a dead man do? Nothing! A spiritually dead person cannot morally exercise faith in Christ alone.
- **What is the doctrine of *Solus Christus* (Christ Alone)? Where did the Reformers stand on this doctrine?** *Solus Christus* expresses the biblical conviction that there is one mediator between God and men (**1 Timothy 2:5**), the man Christ Jesus and therefore “*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**). It expresses the truth that Christ’s identity is absolutely exclusive for salvation and that His work on the cross and resurrection from the dead is entirely sufficient to save sinners (**Romans 3:21-26**). We have no need for any other prophet to provide for us a new revelation. We have no need for a priest to mediate between man and God or any other kind to

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Stephen J. Wellum, Article: *Solus Christus: What the Reformers Taught and Why It Still Matters*, Southern Baptist Theological Journal, 19.4, (2015), 79-107.

rule Christ's church. Jesus Christ alone is the object for our saving faith and therefore Christ alone must stand at the center of our theology.<sup>5</sup>

## II. Here We Stand: *Solus Christus* (Christ Alone) [Acts 4:7-12, Romans 3:21-26]

- Having said that we are going to examine two passages of Scripture this morning **Acts 4:7-12** (primarily **v. 12**) and we will work **Romans 3:21-26** along with these texts to show us the person and work of Christ and help us understand that salvation is in Christ alone.
- **Set up Acts 4:7-12 and then read the passage with emphasis on v. 12 . . .**
- **Here is the outline of the text we will use to work through in v. 12:**
  1. The Priority of Salvation: "*And there is salvation . . .*"
  2. The Exclusivity of Salvation: "*in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men*"
  3. The Necessity of Salvation: "*we must be saved*"

### A. The Priority of Salvation: "*And there is salvation*"

- **Plain and simple: man's greatest need is for the salvation of his soul.** His greatest need is not financial, it is not political, it is not physical, it is not relational or social or cultural—it is spiritual. His greatest need is for the salvation of his soul. Peter declared in this verse that salvation is now accomplished and offered to men when he said, "*and there is salvation.*"
- **Peter did not say:**
  - **There will be salvation when you** jump through certain hoops and complete a list of religious acts. He did not say that because you cannot earn it.
  - **Neither did he say: there may be salvation** if you are good enough and do enough good works. He did not say it as if it was possible or conditional.
  - **What Peter did say in v. 12 is: "*there is salvation!*"** It has already been accomplished and provided. This is the greatest news ever—THERE IS SALVATION!
- **I want to ask 3 questions to help us understand the priority of salvation:**
  1. **What does the word *salvation* mean?**
    - **Here is what we need to know.** There is a *negative* and *positive* component to the word *salvation*. *Negatively* it means to be saved from something and *positively* it means to be saved for something or unto something.
    - **NEGATIVELY: the word *salvation* means delivered.** We have been studying the Exodus in our Foundations hour. Today we covered the salvation of Israel as they were delivered from slavery from Egypt.

Salvation means deliverance or to be rescued or to escape impending danger of perishing. Listen to me—every person on this earth needs to be delivered from impending doom.
    - **POSITIVELY: Salvation means to be saved to something—a right relationship with God.** In the Exodus, Israel was saved so they could worship God. They were saved unto a relationship with God.

So positively it is to find acceptance with a holy God in heaven. It is the restoration of man's broken relationship with God.
    - **This is the negative and positive understanding of the word *salvation*:** deliverance from doom and saved unto a favorable relationship with God.

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<sup>5</sup> Stephen Wellum, *Christ Alone: The uniqueness of Jesus as Savior*, 13.

2. **Second question: From what do we need to be saved?**

- **Illst: R. C. Sproul** wrote a book several years ago titled: *"Saved from What?"* The inspiration for the book was based on an experience he had as a young college student . . .

- **The answer to this question might surprise you because we must be saved from God Himself.** We must be saved from the doom of the wrath of Almighty God against sinners.

You may be like many folk who mistakenly believe that they need to be saved from themselves. It may be true that you have screwed up your life and done some bad things but your greatest need is not to be saved from your bad choices, loneliness, loss of a job or a down turn in your finances, as bad and painful as those things can be the truth is—God is the Ultimate Reality and your real need is to be saved from the wrath of a Holy God.

- **Let's bring our Romans passage to bear on this truth.** The larger context of **Romans 3:21-26** is **Romans 1:18-3:20** and it teaches us about our real need. Here it is—all humans are under divine wrath, are guilty of sin and stand condemned before a holy God. As a matter of fact, the Apostle Paul concludes his argument in **Romans 3:9-20** with a litany of Old Testament texts showing that apart from God's gracious initiative to redeem all people that everyone stands guilty and condemned before the Judge of all the earth.<sup>6</sup>

- **Listen to what the Psalms has to say about our condition:**

- **Psalm 5:5, 6:** *"The boastful shall not stand before your eyes; you hate all evildoers. <sup>6</sup>You destroy those who speak lies; the LORD abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man."*

⇒ God does not simply hate sin but He hates the sinner

- **Psalm 7:11, 12-13:** *"God is a righteous judge, and a God who feels indignation every day. <sup>12</sup>If a man does not repent, God will whet his sword; he has bent and readied his bow; <sup>13</sup>he has prepared for him his deadly weapons, making his arrows fiery shafts."*

⇒ **Verse 11:** God is a righteous Judge.

⇒ **Verses 12-13:** If a man does not repent then God will destroy him. Already the bow of judgment is bent and the arrow is pulled back and as Spurgeon says, *"God never misses His mark."*

- **Psalms 11: 4-6:** *"The Lord is in his holy temple; the Lord's throne is in heaven; his eyes see, his eyelids test the children of man. <sup>5</sup>The Lord tests the righteous, but his soul hates the wicked and the one who loves violence. <sup>6</sup>Let him rain coals on the wicked; fire and sulfur and a scorching wind shall be the portion of their cup."*

- **So here is our great need!** We stand condemned before a holy God and we need to be saved from this holy God. This is our great need and there is only one who can save us from God and that is God, Himself. Only God can save us the impending doom of judgment of God and the wrath of God in the bowels of His fiery Hell.

- **This is the priority of salvation.** This salvation is the chief priority of your life. It is more important where you stand with God than:

- **Where you stand with men:** your family, your co-worker, your girlfriend, your boyfriend or your neighbors
- **More important than:** where you live in this world is where you will live in the world to come
- **It is more important than:** your physical wellbeing; your financial wellbeing or your social state. The most important thing is your spiritual state.

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<sup>6</sup> Stephen Wellum, *Christ Alone: The uniqueness of Jesus as Savior*, pp. 222-23.

3. This brings me to my third and final question to help us understand the priority of salvation: are you saved? Have you received this salvation? Everything else is peripheral. This alone is at the epicenter of what is most important in your life and your spouse's life and your children's lives and in your grand children's lives.<sup>7</sup>

- **TRANSITION:** We have seen the *priority of salvation* now we examine the *exclusivity* of salvation.

**B. The Exclusivity of Salvation: "in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men"**

- **Now go back to Acts 4:12:** "And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men . . ."
  - **Now Peter drives to the heart of salvation.** Where is salvation found? We must know where it is found. We cannot be wrong here and be right anywhere else.
  - **This is the question of the ages.** This is the question that most of the world is asking except for secular western culture in which we live.
- **Go back to the text (v. 12), put your finger on the text and follow along with me:** "And there is salvation in no one else . . ."
  - **He did not say,** "There is salvation in nothing else." He used a personal pronoun indicating a person. This has everything to do with a person. There is salvation in no other person. So . . .
  - **Salvation is not in:**
    - ⇒ Church membership
    - ⇒ An institution
    - ⇒ Some social justice cause
    - ⇒ Not in baptism
    - ⇒ Not in giving an offering on Sundays
    - ⇒ Not in some code of conduct you have developed
  - **Neither is salvation in any other name, it is:**
    - ⇒ Not in the name of Abraham
    - ⇒ Not in the name of Moses
    - ⇒ Not in the name of the Apostle Paul
    - ⇒ Not in the name of Buddha
    - ⇒ Not in the name of Hari Chrisna
    - ⇒ Not in the name of Allah
    - ⇒ Not in the name of Mohammad
    - ⇒ Not is the name of Confucius
    - ⇒ Not in the name of the pope
    - ⇒ Not in the name of your ancestors
    - ⇒ Not in the name of your parents
    - ⇒ It IS ONLY in the NAME of the Lord Jesus Christ alone
  - **Salvation is found only in one place and that place is a person, the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.** Look back at **Acts 4** and look at **v. 10** because in **v. 10** Peter identifies specifically who Jesus is, "Let it be known to all of you and to all the people

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<sup>7</sup> Steven Lawson, Sermon: *Solus Christus (Christ Alone)*, 2014.

of Israel that by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead . . . [then in v. 12 he says it is by this name we are saved].

- **Look at v. 12** again: “. . . *for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.*”
- **Who gave this salvation?** God did. It came from heaven. It came from God Himself—Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ alone is His provision for the salvation of sinful man.
- **Look over at Romans 3:21-26**
  - ⇒ **Verse 21:**
    - ⇒ **“But now”:** With these two little words Paul is explaining why it was necessary for Jesus Christ to die on the cross for our justification before God because nothing prior to Christ saved. These two little words sum up the achievement of salvation in the whole Old Testament and the summary is that there was no salvation achieved in the Old Testament. Everything in the Old Testament pointed to Christ coming to save sinner. Their faith looked to a Redeemer to come. This is what we are going to see in the verses that follow [look at the *next phrase* in v. 21]
    - ⇒ **“the righteousness of God”:** In the cross of Christ the righteousness of God is revealed. This is what it means when it says *“the righteousness of God has been manifested.”*
    - ⇒ **“apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—”** Righteousness has never been achieved by the keeping of the Law. Paul is connecting redemptive history here but also contrasting it. He is saying the Law and the Prophets pointed to this righteousness that is apart from the Law. He does not mention Abraham here but what we are going to see in the next few verses is that this righteousness is received by faith, which was how Abraham was counted righteous before God. What we know is that Abraham’s faith looked toward the Redeemer to come and that Redeemer is Christ.
  - **Verse 22:**
    - ⇒ **“the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.”**
    - ⇒ Now we see the full manifestation of God’s righteousness that is received by faith and that manifestation is found in the person of Jesus Christ. Everything in the OT has been pointing to Christ coming and revealing the righteousness of God by keeping the Law perfectly and fulfilling the covenants of God. In the Old Testament it was not fully understood or revealed but now in the latter days it is revealed in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.
    - ⇒ **“For there is no distinction:”** This is an amazing and interesting phrase. It feels like it is tacked on the end of the verse but in reality it is pregnant with meaning, which we will see unveiled in the next few verses because he is saying this is no distinction between people no matter their ethnicity, social status, economic status or gender or whatever criteria you might want to use to make distinctions.
    - ⇒ **The question is:** Where are there no distinctions? **Look in v. 23.**
  - **Verse 23:**
    - ⇒ **“For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”**
    - ⇒ **No distinction here.** Everyone is a sinner. That was what Paul had been saying since **Romans 1:18**. It did not matter whether you were a Jew or a Gentile and a Gentile was anyone who was of the race that was not Jewish. Unless you are an ethnic Jew in this room we are all Gentiles but Paul’s point was to make sure both Jew and Gentile understood they were all in the same boat, all were sinners and all were under the sentence of the wrath of God because of their sin. No one was exempt.

⇒ The next verses give us the good news!

- Verses 23b, 24a, 25a: [We can squeeze the verses together in order to hear the flow of the argument.]

⇒ "For there is no distinction . . . for all . . . are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, <sup>25</sup> whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith."

⇒ Just like all are under the same sentence of condemnation and doom of the wrath of God no matter their ethnicity so also salvation comes to all no matter their ethnicity, social status or economic status. So also everyone is saved through faith in Jesus Christ.

⇒ Remember we need to be saved from God, from the wrath of God and only God can save us from God and what the Scripture teaches us is that God came in Christ and on the cross paid our debt of sin by receiving in Himself wrath that was stored up for us. Jesus never sinned once so on the cross Jesus was the sinless, divine Son of God, the very God in the flesh paying for our sin.

⇒ **So on the cross was the great exchange.**

- All of my sin and shame was laid upon Him and His perfect righteousness was laid upon me.
- The worst about me was laid upon Him and the best about Him was laid upon me.

⇒ **Verse 25** says that God put Jesus forth as "**propitiation by his blood to be received by faith**". The word *propitiation* means *to satisfy, to appease and to placate*. What happened on the cross was that Christ, by the shedding of His blood satisfied the anger of God against guilty sinners by becoming our sin for us and now that He has satisfied God's wrath there is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus because of their faith in Him they are no longer guilty sinners but now possess all of Christ's righteousness.

**If you remember the illustration of the scales a couple** of weeks ago what this means is that Jesus by his perfect life of obedience secured the riches of God's righteousness of us and on the cross he paid for our debt of sin. This means that when we step up to the scales and on one side is the righteousness and holiness of God and on the other now is placed the righteousness and holiness of Christ the scales balance. Only God can redeem us from His wrath and only God can give us the righteousness that we need in order to be right with Him. Jesus is our righteousness.

⇒ The last part of **vv. 25-26** simply tell us that Jesus sacrifice was so infinitely powerful that it paid for all of the sins that God has passed over in the Old Testament. God, because He is holy and righteousness, cannot allow for one single sin to go unpunished and therefore all of the sins of his people were put into forbearance so that at the proper time, when Jesus would come and die on the cross, He would pay for those sins he has passed over.

⇒ **God does not simply turn away from sin.** He does not simply say it is no big deal. He does not simply sweep it under the rug. No . . . every sin will be accounted for and either you will pay for it in Hell and experience the wrath of God or it will be laid on Jesus Christ. Those in the Old Testament who by faith in God as their Redeemer for had their sins fully and finally forgiven when Christ died on the cross and rose from the dead.

- Now go back to **Acts 4:12** because what Peter is saying is that it is in this name, the name of Jesus Christ, whom God put forward as a propitiation, it is in His name and in His name only that anyone can be saved.
  - No one else has been born of a virgin
  - No one else has kept the Law perfectly

- No one else has gone to the cross who could die in my place.
- No one else has propitiated the righteous anger of God towards me and towards my sin
- No one else can reconcile me and be equal with God and yet be equal with me
- No one else can pay the debt of the wages of sin for me
- No one else has been raised from the dead
- No one else is seated at the right hand of God the Father except Jesus Christ
- This is the exclusivity of salvation in Christ alone. The question is: have you by faith believed in the name of Jesus Christ alone for salvation?
- The exclusivity of Christ points clearly to the last part of **v. 12**, which is the necessity of salvation in Christ alone.

**C. [Finally we see] The Necessity of Salvation: “in which we must be saved”**

- **The “we” is as wide as the world is wide.** The “we” addresses those in the immediate hearing of Peter’s voice, which was the Sanhedrin, the religious experts of his day. These were the people who kept the law better than anyone and, with an argument from the greater to the lesser, if they could not be saved through their own superior religious deeds then no one in this room can.
- **They had taken religious efforts to the max.** No one put forth more effort than they did and Jesus said that unless your righteousness surpasses the Pharisees and the Scribes then you shall by no means enter the Kingdom of Heaven. And Peter says to them that they must be saved so how much more does that apply to each of us.
- **The word “must” in v. 12 “must be saved”** just leaps off the page.
  - **Illst: The great 18<sup>th</sup> century evangelist George Whitfield.** Whitfield tells the story of preaching one evening and a lady approached him after the service and said to him, “*Why do you keep saying that you must be born again?*” To which Whitfield replied, “*Because dear woman because you must be born again.*”
  - **And I say the same thing to you this morning:** you must be saved from the wrath of God come. You must be saved from the anger and fury that will be poured out on the last day and for all eternity on sinners—we must be saved.

**Conclusion:**

- I told you two weeks ago that I was going to close out each of my sermons with a biblical picture of what it looks like to possess the righteousness of Christ, a biblical analogy of what it looks like to be saved. The previous two analogies I used were the courtroom analogy and last Sunday I used the financial analogy. Another analogy the bible uses for those who have been saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone is a clothing analogy.
- **Clothing Analogy, Ephesians 4:24:** “. . . *put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.*” The phrase “*put on the new self*” in the original Greek is the imagery of putting on clothes. To put on the new self is to put on the righteousness and holiness of God given to us by being clothed in Christ.
- **Here is how it works. Apart from Christ we stand before God naked with no covering for our sin.** We are exposed to the white hot fury of the holy wrath of a Holy God. So here is our dilemma. We stand before a holy God not simply naked but our skin is covered with spiritual leprosy of our sin. We are hideous to look at. We are like walking death. Spiritually we are like rotting flesh and only worthy to be thrown in the eternal fires of Hell. We look hideous before our Holy God.
- **“But God being rich in mercy and grace”** or we might use the language of Romans 3:21, **“But now the righteousness of God is revealed”** because of His grace by our faith in Christ has clothed us in the healing, covering of Christ’s righteousness.



So from the top of our heads to the bottom of our feet we are clothes in Jesus' perfect righteousness. Now when God looks at us He no longer sees as spiritual lepers, He no longer sees our sin but instead sees the beauty of Christ's righteousness covering us.

**Illst: Seever's dishsasha covered him head to toe.** We don't need a dishdasha. We need the clothing of Christ.