Christ Alone – Acts 4:1-12

# Introduction

If you wanted to travel to Penrith, what are some ways you can get there?

By car, bus, train, bicycle, walking and if you can afford it by helicopter.

Since there is nothing separating us from Penrith except for 10km of land, you can be very creative in how you get there.

Whichever way you choose to go, you will get to Penrith in the end without much trouble.

But what if you have to travel to the moon.

How many ways can you get there by?

Now getting to the moon is a different prospect because we are separated not by land but by a vast distance of vacuum space.

Without specialised space ship, there is no way you can get there even if you try your hardest.

Historically there has only been one way that mankind have ever got to the moon.

And only a select few have ever made it there and back.

In a similar way, many religions in the world claim that they have a way to some form of enlightenment or eternal life.

That if you do something very well, then your hard work will be rewarded.

But given the vast number of religions in the world, it is hard to determine which one is the right one.

Which is why some have suggested that all religions are just many paths or ways to the same goal.

And it is just a matter of choosing which one suits you the best.

But Christianity is different, because it claims to have the exclusive way to salvation and eternal life.

That any other way, even the Jewish religion, cannot give you what Christianity can offer.

Yet even though the Catholics and Protestant churches may agree that the way revealed in the Bible is exclusive to all others.

There is a great difference between the Roman Catholic Church and Protestant churches in regard to how we can get to eternal life in the end.

For the Roman Catholic Church, the question is not how many ways we can get to heaven.

But how many ways we can receive grace that will take us to heaven.

And when we understand how the Catholic Church understands this question, then we will see why we are still protesting against the Roman Catholic Church doctrine.

# Many mediators?

As we have seen over the last three weeks.

What the Roman Catholic Church believes is more nuanced than perhaps how we understood them.

For at the core of their doctrine, they still affirm that it is by God’s grace alone that we are saved.

That we need to have faith in what God did on the cross of Christ.

But the difference we have with them is that the grace of God is not an energy we need to fill up in our soul to maintain salvation.

And faith in God is not a series of good works and religious practices that we perform to hold onto that energy of grace.

While we both may start from God for our salvation.

How we get there is ultimately different.

And this is clearly seen in how they understand who mediates God’s grace to us.

For sure they acknowledge that Jesus is the one mediator between God and us.

But for the Catholic Church, Jesus is not the only mediator between God and us.

So while Jesus is the one mediator who effectively mediates and reconciles us to God.

They also claim that there are other subordinate and lesser mediators who helps the mediation of Jesus.

**This is in line with their understanding of how we can cooperate or participate in God’s work of salvation.**

While it is true that God is the one who saves, the Catholic doctrine claims that we also have to contribute by cooperating and participating in God’s salvation by doing good works and participating in religious rituals set by the church.

So while they acknowledge that Jesus is the only necessary mediator who can do the work of mediation by himself.

They also claim that Jesus was pleased for others to contribute to the work of mediation through their willing response to grace.

This is seen in how the Catholics pray to the saints for intercession on their behalf.

It is also seen in their understanding of sacraments that conveys saving grace.

As well as praying for the dead so that our merit can be transferred to those who cannot earn any merit in purgatory.

So while there is only one necessary mediator in Jesus.

For the Catholic Church, there are many mediators who work in a lesser and cooperative way to support and add to the mediation of Jesus.

The implication of this is that you don’t have to go to Jesus alone.

You can pray to Mary.

You can pray to the saints.

You can go to church and attend mass.

Or you can pray for each other.

All of these are lesser means of mediation of God’s grace that is seemingly more tangible than just trusting in Jesus alone.

**It’s almost like carrying a portable battery charger.**

Nowadays you can get a large battery that you can carry around to charge your mobile phone.

Now in most cases, you will use the electricity in your home to charge your phone.

But when you are out and about, you cannot go back home to charge your phone.

So you can carry this portable battery pack to charge your phone.

Now the question is, if you use the electricity stored in the portable battery charger, where does that electricity originally come from?

Does the battery pack generate electricity by itself?

No.

The battery pack itself was charged at home.

So in effect what electricity is your phone charged with when it is charged by the portable battery pack?

It’s the electricity from home.

**This is how the Catholic Church views the role of subordinate mediators.**

While Jesus is like the power point at home.

The subordinate mediators are like the portable battery chargers who helps or initiates the recharging of grace as a secondary measure.

In effect it is not new grace that is being generated by the lesser mediators.

But it is what Jesus allows them to do.

# One and only mediator

But that is not how Protestant churches understand God’s salvation, or the mediation of Jesus.

We believe that Jesus is the only mediator between God and men.

That is, we don’t believe Jesus is just the one mediator with other lesser mediators helping him.

But rather we believe that he is the only and necessary mediator between God and men.

Apart from Jesus, there can be no other mediators.

Just as there is only one way to get to the moon.

There is only one way we can receive grace and that is through Jesus Christ.

In the passage we read today, the apostle Peter makes this pretty clear.

When Peter and John are arrested by the Sanhedrin for preaching the name of Jesus.

And when the Jewish leaders demand by what authority and power they healed the crippled man.

Peter replies in **verse 10**:

*“then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed.”*

Peter doesn’t say that Jesus gave him the power and authority to do so.

But rather he refers directly to the name of Jesus which healed this man.

And this is made even more clearer in **verse 12** where Peter says:

*“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”*

The mediator of God’s grace and salvation is not Peter, John or any other apostles.

But Jesus himself.

Apart from Jesus there can be no salvation.

Now we might think that the Catholics may have something to say here because their claim of lesser mediators also understand grace comes through Jesus.

But what they fail to see is that we don’t need any extra mediator to intercede or work on our behalf.

When they say that humanity participates in the saving work of Jesus, they are claiming more than what the Bible says.

Because the reason we need a mediator in the first place is because everyone is a sinner.

The Bible is explicit that as sinners, we can do nothing for our own salvation, let alone mediate for someone else.

Even if we are mediating as a participant to the work of Jesus, it still doesn’t change the fact that we are still sinful mediators.

In this regard, how could God accept any intercession of a mediator who is less than perfect?

That would nullify the need for Jesus to be the perfect sacrifice.

But Jesus is perfect.

And because he is without sin, not only is he our perfect sacrifice, but he is also our perfect priest and mediator.

For as it says in **Hebrews 10:14**

*“For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.”*

Jesus is our perfect mediator, because his ministry is perfect.

There is nothing lacking in his mediation.

Which means there really is no need for further mediators or intercessors on our behalf.

For Jesus did not stop being our intercessors when he sat down at the right hand of God.

Rather as it says in **Hebrews 7:25**

*“Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.”*

Jesus continues to intercedes perfectly for those who believe in him.

So to say that Jesus allows humanity to participate in his mediation as a lesser mediator cannot be true.

For not only is humanity imperfect for the role, but Jesus doesn’t need us to intercede when he has done so perfectly already.

So if we claim there are other ways to heaven.

Or if there are other ways to receive saving grace apart from Jesus.

Then Jesus has left things undone and others have completed his work for him.

But this goes against what Peter have said in Acts 4:12.

“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”

Jesus is the only way to salvation.

For he is our perfect sacrifice, our perfect high priest and our perfect mediator.

We don’t need anyone or anything else to help us into heaven, because in Jesus we already have a perfect guarantee of entry.

There is nothing lacking in him or his ministry.

If anything, if we claim we must participate and help in the ministry of Jesus.

Then we make ourselves more than what we are.

We are saved sinners who still sin in this life.

And without Jesus, we can’t even stand before God, let alone mediate for others.

# Conclusion

So if Jesus is the only mediator rather than the one mediator between God and us.

Then what does that mean for you?

Is he really all that you need?

Or do you seek to gain some merit in the good works that you do?

Do you seek to get on God’s good side by doing certain things or making a bargain with him?

If Jesus is truly the only way to salvation, then doing anything apart from putting our faith in him is denying that he is enough.

There is nothing we can do that Jesus hasn’t already done perfectly for our salvation.

So put your trust in Jesus in all matters of life.

If he has perfectly dealt with your eternity, then trust him to intercede for you in this life as well.

And if you haven’t yet put your trust in Jesus.

Then there are only two choices you can make.

Either trust Jesus to save you, or reject him and live life as you please.

But the Bible is clear, if you reject the only way to salvation and eternal life.

Then there is no other way.

No other religion and no other works or good deeds will be enough to take you there.

For salvation is found in Christ alone.