



## From Our Vicar

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### No Other Name—Acts 4.12

The claim of the Christian faith that Jesus is the only way to God is considered offensive and arrogant by many in our pluralist society.

So how do we understand this weekend's reading from Acts 4:12 - 'And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved'? Add to this Jesus' own words - 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.' John 14:6

A starting place is the first of the Ten Commandments - 'I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me.' This is followed by the prohibition of making idols. The Old Testament repeatedly describes the snare that false gods became to God's people, leading them to practices that were destructive of human flourishing. God's right to claim exclusive allegiance was based in his action on Israel's behalf. He had freed them from slavery in Egypt 'with a mighty hand and outstretched arm.' The Lord God had demonstrated in living history his reality, power, and gracious care.

Religions proliferate, evidence of the human longing for connection with the divine, and of a yearning for comfort to quell the anxiety triggered by life's uncertainties. Historically they have also been used by elites to control society. However, Jesus is unique. He critiqued such religion and diagnosed the core of human need as overcoming the problem of sin through a change of heart. This he made possible through the cross, resulting in forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit to give humans a new nature rather than more rules and rituals.

He fulfilled many prophecies, was conceived miraculously, worked miracles of healing, taught life-giving truth about relationship with God, and each other, and ultimately endured rejection and death as a sinless substitute and sacrifice for all people! The crowning vindication of his whole ministry was his resurrection from the dead! No other founder of a religion has achieved this.

Sadly, Christians can at times be arrogant and intolerant, but the conviction that Jesus is God's unique provision to reconcile people to God is not just the assertion of an opinion. It is life-giving truth revealed in living history and experience through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

This is what we graciously and unashamedly declare. People's destiny depends on us doing so.

God bless you,  
*Wayne*