

Chapter One

NO OTHER NAME

*“And when they had set them in the midst, they asked,
By what power or by what name, have ye done this?” —Acts 4:7*

*“Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel,
that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth,
whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead,
even by him doth this man stand here before you well.” —Acts 4:10*

*“Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is
no other name under heaven given among men,
whereby we must be saved.” —Acts 4:12*

What's in a name?

Of all the names on earth today, one name is more powerful than any other. Christians know it has the power to change lives, save lost souls, heal sick bodies, and secure eternity. It is the name of our beloved Savior, Jesus.

I was reared in a log cabin; Momma and I came up together. Papa passed on when I was eleven. Momma and I battled through. Then Momma passed on, and every so often when I am privileged to speak in one of the great venues of Christendom,

I ask the Lord, “Lord, let Momma see me here!” (I realize theologically it’s not quite possible—but I didn’t go to seminary, so I can take this liberty.)

WHEREVER YOU GO,
NO MATTER WHAT CLASS—
WHETHER IT’S POLITICIANS,
SEMINARIANS, PROFESSORS,
TEACHERS, OR EVEN WITH
PEOPLE WHOSE HOMES
ARE BREAKING UP—
THE HEART’S PLEA IS,
“I NEED A SAVIOR.”

One of the great thrills of my life was preaching in Moscow several years ago—just a couple of blocks from Lenin’s Tomb, in the heart of Moscow. I was speaking to about 6,000 preachers (I suspect old Lenin was turning over in his grave) about this wonderful Jesus. For now, even in Moscow, the name of Jesus can be publicly spoken. Who would have thought four or five or ten years ago that the name “Jesus” could be uttered freely on the streets of the former Soviet Union? Tragically, while in Russian public schools He can be read about and discussed freely, in our own public schools, it is forbidden to speak His name.

WHO NEEDS A SAVIOR?

Wherever you go, no matter what class—whether it's politicians, seminarians, professors, teachers, or even with people whose homes are breaking up—the heart's plea is, "I need a savior." Even the brightest minds need a savior.

One of the members of the Mount Zion church where I pastor, holds a double master's degree in Law and Finance. He left my church and went to another group that dealt with the mind, for he said he wanted to go to a place that fed his mind. He complained that the average preacher was too simple in his presentation, that he needed someone who would deal with his mind.

So I told him, "I'll be praying for you." Then I added, "Incidentally, you are not my attorney anymore."

He replied, "Why? Are you prejudiced because I'm leaving your church?"

Then I said, "No, I just don't want an attorney who doesn't know the difference between stepping up and falling down."

Then one Sunday I was preaching my National Children's Day sermon. And I was speaking on Billy (my rabbit). Billy was a wonderful rabbit, and I was telling the children about Billy. At invitation time, here comes this double-master fellow down the aisle.

He says, "Pastor, that's the greatest sermon I've ever heard you preach!" Even someone with a double master's degree needs a savior.

Some of the most obstinate and argumentative youth today are now saying, "I need a savior." The most critical minds are now agreeing that things are out of order, that things are topsy-turvey. Even the most brilliant minds, who seem to have so much confidence in their own ability, are now saying, "I need a savior." In fact, at one point or another everyone asks, "Who can save me?" They are beyond the point of handling life on their own, and they finally admit, "I need a savior."

A SAVIOR IS NOT . . .

While people who do not believe in God (or so they say) may be coming to the conclusion that they need a savior, they're still searching. They acknowledge that somebody needs to rescue them, but they do not recognize the true rescuer.

One of the things many are pointing out is that we know what a savior is not. We know that it's not silver and gold, houses and lands. We know that it's not because people with silver and gold, houses and lands, too, are saying, "We need a savior." In fact, they're saying, "I need a savior, someone to rescue me. I have silver and gold, houses and lands, but I'm

not secure. I'm trembling within. I fear the future. I now realize I cannot buy the future. I need somebody to walk with through the dark paths."

Now I want to discuss this matter of having the best savior. Since you have to have one, why not the best one? I'm not suggesting that there are plenty of *saviors*, I know that there is only one; that's Jesus. But being ignorant of God's righteousness, men have gone about to establish a smorgasbord of so-called saviors. And those have many followers.

But why not the best one? Why not test those who say they are the savior? Why not examine them, put them on trial, since it involves our happiness now, and our eternal life with God? Why not test him, her, or whomever you have put your faith in? It makes good sense; since you are going to pick one, why not the best?

The text in Acts 4 addresses this discussion. A great miracle has happened in the healing of a disabled man. Then the question comes up, "How did you do this? By what power did this happen? How is it that this man is healed and standing before us? In whose name was this miracle performed? Who did you call, what mayor, governor, or authority—whose name did you use?"

Then Peter rose up and said, "Now to be truthful with you, there is only one name that can perform a miracle such as this. That name is Jesus!" Someone

with the kind of power that can heal a disabled man, that's the kind of Savior we all need.

QUALIFICATIONS OF A SAVIOR

If we want to pick the best savior, first of all, he ought to be old enough. I'm over sixty, and I have to have somebody who was here before I got here. I can't trust anyone who is in his forties or fifties.

I have to have someone who was available to Momma, and to Momma's momma. I have to have someone who was in control—someone who was a part of the beginning, in fact, who was the beginning. I can't trust these youngsters who, just because they look strange and act peculiar, suggest they can save me, help me, and get me over. I need a Savior older than this generation. One who was before the beginning. One by whom everything that was made was made and without whom nothing was made. One who was not a graduate of seminary, not a graduate of philosophy, not a follower of some teacher, not someone who came out of nowhere and did something mystic and strange and now asks me to follow him as a savior.

I need somebody who is acquainted with all the generations and with all of time. I need somebody who can deal with all the aspects of living and learning. I need somebody who knows how to deal with

the brokenhearted. I need somebody who knows how to speak to me in the lonely hours. I need somebody to give me instruction when I need to be instructed. Someone who knows how to instruct, who's not guessing and who doesn't have to read a book himself, for He Himself *is* the book. That's who I need. I don't need somebody who takes my problems and rushes to the library for answers. I need somebody who *is* the library. I need somebody who can stand up and talk to my spirit as the author and finisher of my faith. That's what I need when I talk about a savior. I don't need anybody to go out and take a quick course in Greek and then come back and try to tell me how to get to heaven.

You're no different. You need somebody who already has prepared the road for you to take.

Next, I need a savior who will be everlasting. I don't want to get all tied up with someone, then the savior dies! It must be an awful thing to go to your savior's funeral. Elijah Mohammed boasted so much that he was the prophet sent from God. It must have been a sad day for his followers when thousands of young people in Chicago watched twelve young men pass his casket to the grave.

I don't want to get wrapped up in a man who beats me dying. I need somebody who can walk with me through the valley of the shadow of death myself. I need company in that time when I go through

some place I've never been. I don't want somebody who will run out on me before I die.

A SAVIOR THROUGH LIFE'S TUNNELS

I was in Detroit and a friend of mine said, "Let's go over to Canada for dinner." He picked me up at the hotel. All of a sudden, he began to drive through the tunnel that leads from Detroit to Windsor, Canada. I suffer from claustrophobia, and I never shall forget. I yelled, "Stop! Stop!"

But the car was in the flow of traffic so he said, "I can't stop. What's the matter?"

I said, "I can't go through this tunnel. You'll have a dead man on your hands by the time you reach the other side."

He looked at me, and touched my hand, and said, "Hill, you'll be alright. See those folks in the other cars? They're alright."

But I said, "Stop the car. I'll get out and walk to the other side."

But he said, "You can't do that; you'll get hurt with all that traffic." To which I replied, it would be better to get hurt than to die. But he just kept on going and said, "Hold my hand, just hold on."

Now there'll come a time when I'll face another tunnel that I've never been through before. I'll need a savior who can say, "Hold my hand, we're almost

through.” I know someday someone will carry my casket, but my soul will be led by a hand that’s everlasting and will walk me through the valley of the shadow of death. Someone whose hand will be steady and who will say, “Hill, you’ll be alright.”

Before you pick a savior, before you decide in whom you’ll put your faith, you need to check out his track record. Who else has he saved? Who else’s life has he changed? Who else’s tears has he wiped away? Has he picked up the heavyhearted or walked through the stormy seas with anyone else? Who else can testify that this Jesus of Nazareth, whom God raised from the dead, has the name by which a man has been made whole? Who else gave sight to the blind? Who else told Lazarus to come forth? Who else has turned around at His name, drug addicts, pimps, prostitutes, and alcoholics? Who has rescued men from crime? It’s not good enough that He is everlasting, but you need Him to have a track record of successfully saving others.

Jesus saves! Aha. He has a track record. He addresses the most difficult tasks head-on. He changes water into wine. He walks on water, and seas behave at His command. Who else can just speak a word, and at His word a child be made whole? Who else dies on a rugged cross and the sun ceases to shine? Who else is put in a grave and arrives in hell to preach to the spirits, then arrives back in the grave

only to walk out on Sunday morning with all power in His hands? That was two thousand years ago, but who else still lives, still saves, still mends wounded and broken hearts, still turns people's lives around?

There are tens of thousands of witnesses down through the ages who can testify to the healing, converting, life-changing power of this Savior. By Him these miracles have been wrought. By His name this man so long ago was healed. There is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved. I join Peter in telling you without a doubt, "There is no other name!"

COMPLETELY TRUSTWORTHY

I've had the privilege of meeting with six presidents of the United States. But these are just men; they come and they go. But this Jesus I offer to you is the Savior in whom you can put your complete trust.

I believe this little verse written by C. Austin Miles (1868– 1946) and sung as the sacred hymn "In the Garden" explains the relationship I have with my Savior:

*I come to the garden alone
while the dew is still on the roses.
And the voice I hear falling on my ear
The Son of God discloses.*

And He walks with me and He talks with me

And He tells me I am His own.

And the joy we share as we tarry there

None other has ever known.

I don't own the best house in Los Angeles. I don't have the finest car in Los Angeles. I don't have a mint of money. I don't even have the largest church in Los Angeles. But I do have the best Savior.

You who are reading this book, right now, if you haven't done so already, you need to pick the best, the one about whom others testify. Rich or poor, white or black, there's one thing we can all have . . . the same Savior. As I said before, now I repeat, there is no other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved. His name is Jesus.