

Salvation – *Yasa’ – Sozo* | Psalm 67 | 9.13 & 16.18

Fortunately, we live today in a cultural situation of freedom and safety unheard of in the ancient world and a distant dream for the majority of people living elsewhere. The fear of others and lack of basic human needs rarely touch our lives. We are blessed and satisfied through an abundance of goods and protected by a host of agencies and powers. In dealing with the subject of *salvation* we have a veil over a large swath of human experience. C. S. Lewis articulates this in his *Reflections on the Psalms*, referring to Psalm 67:4 “Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you [God] judge the peoples with equity.” Judgement is viewed as a positive! Lewis writes,

Behind this lies an age-old and almost world-wide experience which we have been spared. In most places and times, it has been very difficult for the “small man” to get his case heard. The judge (and, doubtless, one or two of his underlings) has to be bribed. If you can’t afford to “oil his palm” your case will never reach court. Our judges do not receive bribes. (We probably take this blessing too much for granted; it will not remain with us automatically). We need not therefore be surprised if the Psalms, and the Prophets, are full of the longing for judgement, and regard the announcement that “judgement” is coming as good news. Hundreds and thousands of people who have been stripped of all they possess and who have the right entirely on their side will at last be heard. Of course, they are not afraid of judgement. They know their case is unanswerable—if only it could be heard. When God comes to judge, at last it will. 11

The Divine Judge is the defender, the rescuer. Scholars tell me that in the Book of Judges the word we so translate might almost be rendered “champions.” 12

Christian Smith, *What Is a Person?* (University of Chicago Press, 2010).

A normal person is...—well capacitated, adjusted, adequately coherent, balanced, empowered, and sociable. We know, however, that the human reality is more complicated than that. Not all is quite that well. Things can be quite bad, in fact.

Sometimes in human life, both personally and socially, things are downright awful... If we want to understand human persons and social life adequately, we will have to account not only for powerful capacities and conditions of personal thriving but also what, for lack of a better word, we might call brokenness. Humans seem broken and the world seems broken. Empirical observations of other people, the

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daily news, and often our own phenomenological experiences or ourselves as selves tell us that we humans characteristically suffer some kind of brokenness of disorder or alienation that prevents the realization of our completeness, perfection, integration, and wholeness. Every culture, philosophy, and religion has developed some account or other of what I am calling *brokenness*, conceptualizing it as ignorance, faults, wrongness, error, darkness, injustice, deviance, misdirection, evil, alienation, or some other idea that recognizes and addresses the problem raised here. Not to do so, I suggest, would be, literally, to be out of touch with reality—because something like brokenness is part of our reality. 74-76

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Redemption, Loose, Ransom, Deliverance, Release, Salvation, Saviour

Whenever men by their own fault or through some superior power have come under the control of someone else, and have lost their freedom to implement their will and decisions, and when their own resources are inadequate to deal with that other power, they can regain their freedom only by the intervention of a third party. In the NT, depending on the aspect envisaged, the Greek word-groups associated with *lyo*, *sozo*, *rhyomai*, are used to express such intervention. *Lyo*, “to free” (42 times in the NT) is used to express liberation from bonds or by payment of a ransom (*lytron*), but it has other shades of meaning which are also discussed here, *sozo* (106 times in the NT) is the commonest term and has the widest range of meaning. Predominantly it means to save, preserve and rescue. The least used, *rhyomai* (16 times), has the narrowest range of meaning, i.e. to rescue, deliver, and thus save from a threatening or acute danger. *Soter*, derived from *sozo*, means deliverer, savior, and was in general use to denote someone who so acted. 177

Sozo – “save, keep from harm, preserve, rescue.” In the LXX **sozo** translates no less than 15 different Hebrew verbs, but the most important is *yasa’*, “to deliver and save.” 206

While Yahweh employs human agents, the pious Israelite was aware of the fact that deliverance comes ultimately from Yahweh himself. The verb *yasa’* is particularly prominent in the Psalms, where men look both backwards to past and forward to future deliverance from enemies and trouble... Psalm 67:1-2 is an example, “May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations.” 207

George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, (Eerdmans, 1974).

The most interesting saying is Matthew 11:11-13. Jesus answering John’s disciples’ question as to whether or not he was the Messiah by alluding to the messianic prophecy in Isaiah 35:5-6, saying in effect, “This prophecy is now being fulfilled; the age of the messianic salvation is here” (Mt 11:2-6). 70-71

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The Kingdom of God is the dynamic rule of God active in Jesus; it is also a present realm of blessing into which men enter who receive Jesus' word... When we ask about the content of this new realm of blessing, we discover that **basileia** [kingdom] means not only the dynamic reign of God and the realm of salvation; it is also used to designate the gift of life and salvation. Here is another original element in Jesus' teaching. The Kingdom of God stands as a comprehensive term for all that the messianic salvation included... The Kingdom is like a treasure or a costly pearl whose possession outranks all other goods (Mt 13:44-46). 72

Jesus' mission to save the lost has a present as well as a future dimension. He sought the sinner not only to save him from future doom but to bring him into a present salvation. To a repentant Zacchaeus Jesus said, "Today salvation has come to this house. . . . For the Son of man came to seek and to save the lost" (Lk 19:9-10)... The salvation Jesus brought to Zacchaeus was a present visitation, although its blessings reach into the future. 75

Jesus Christ = **Jesus Cristos** [*Jesus* is used 969 times in the NT; Christ 555 times]

Jesus means "save his people from their sins." 332

Christ means "Messiah." This includes the fact that, for the whole of the NT, messianism no longer stands under the sign of expectation but under that of fulfilment. Everywhere the Christ event is spoken of in the perfect or past tense. The writings do indeed look into the future as well.

Esther Lightcap Meek, *Loving to Know*, (Cascade Books, 2011).

To know God is to invite him. And he is real. So to know God is, therein, to invite the real. As a believer, I confess to humbled awe with every realization that I have, in fact, gotten it wrong about him, and yet receive his assurance that I may feel confident of his continual advent. This is part of what is going on in repentance and the grace of forgiveness. 437

Mike Williams regularly asks his students: "How many doctrines—and which ones—do we have to get right about God to be a Christian?" His own answer: "Not very many." This underscores that God is the initiator in covenant and redemption. God, the ultimate reality, self-discloses. He responds to my seeking, it seems; but then I will most likely learn afterward that he was seeking me first. 437-438

To return to knowing God as inviting the real: Jesus said, not, "I have the truth," but "I am the Truth..." To know Jesus the Truth is not to come away with information, except in a comparatively superficial sense. It is to be radically and forever changed. Not only does knowing God invite the real; knowing God changes radically what it was we thought we were inviting, and us the inviters in the process. Knowing is, fundamentally, transformation. 438