

SALVATION: A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

By

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Abstract

This paper titled, “Salvation: A Biblical Perspective”, sets to examine the notion of “salvation,” one of the fundamental theological concepts and thought that provides a conceptual basis and framework for either a narrative, poem, prophetic, or apocalyptic discourses in the Bible. Salvation is a linguistic expression as well as a theological expression. Therefore, the paper will explore how and what “salvation” is from a biblical in order to present a biblical theology of salvation.

Introduction

Wherever and whenever we look at man, we find that he is full of self-contradiction. He is divided against himself, and he is divided against his environment. He is not at peace in himself; and he is not at peace with the world, if we try to further, man is in need of salvation... that wholeness is salvation... Salvation is the fulfilling of God’s original purpose in creation (NewBigin 11-14).

Few would disagree that the subject of salvation holds a paramount position among the various themes explored in the Bible. Its significance is that numerous theologians accorded it the highest priority over other themes. Salvation is one of the key concepts of God’s revelation to humanity, and it is the process of being saved or the state of having been saved from danger, harm, or even death of an individual, group, or even nation. Salvation is a rescue from sin and death. The need for salvation goes back to man’s removal from the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3). After the fall, the man’s life was marked by strife and difficulty. Increasingly, corruption and violence have dominated the world (Gen. 6:11-13) (Pink 45-47). However, salvation finds the deepest meaning in the spiritual realm of life. Humans’ universal need for salvation is one of the clearest teachings of the Bible. Therefore, salvation is undeniably a major theological motif in the entire Bible. Nevertheless, there remains a substantial degree of confusion regarding the precise meaning of the terms "save" and "salvation" within the biblical context. Therefore, I shall consider the Old Testament understanding of Salvation, New Testament understanding of salvation, and the biblical understanding of salvation.

Salvation in the Old Testament

The word *יָשָׁע* “*yasa*” is translated as salvation in the Old Testament, but deriving ultimately from a root word meaning width, freedom from constraint, spaciousness, deliverance. It covers salvation from any danger, distress, enemies, bondage in Egypt (Ex 14:13; 15:2), exile in Babylon (Isa 46:13; 52:10), adversaries (Ps 103:19), defeat (Deut. 20:4), and oppression (Jud 3:31). Metaphorically, Salvation from social decay and injustice (Hos 1:7), and it occurs about 354 times in the Old Testament, the largest concentration of occurrences is in the psalms 136 times, and the prophetic books 100 times, it occurs only 8 times in the Pentateuch, 75 times in the historical books, the remaining occurrences are in the Job 8 times, Proverbs 5 times and 2 in Lamentations. The word *יָשָׁע* *yasa* is entirely absent from Ruth, Ezra, Esther, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Daniel, Joel and Haggai (Sawyer, “Salvation” 446). But there are other Old Testament words that have the sense or connotation of Salvation: *Nasal*” “*Palat*” “*Azar*” “*Malat*” “*Haya*” “*Ga’al*” and “*Pada*. “

נָשַׁל “*Nasal*” Basically means “*to pull out,*” *to deliver, or free someone,*” it is also used often to describe an act of individual Salvation by God. God delivered David “*out of the hand of Saul*” (2 Sam. 12:7; 22:18, 49; Ps. 18:17, 45; Ps. 18:18, 46). The Psalms speak of deliverance from fears (Ps. 34:4, 5), troubles (Ps. 34:17; 54:7, 9), death (Ps. 56:13, 14), from hell (Ps. 86:13; 40:13, 14; 70:1). Like *Yasa*, *nasal* is used to describe spiritual salvation; e.g “*from transgression*” (Ps. 39:8, 9), “*from blood guiltiness*” (Ps. 51:14, 16), “*deliver us, and forgive our sins*” (Ps. 79:9) (Harris, “Salvation” 762). *פָּלַת* “*Palat*” Carries the sense of deliverance, and this verb is used mainly in the Psalms, it carries the meaning of escaping, surviving, or being a fugitive (Josh. 8:22; Isa. 66:19; Jer.

42:17; 44:14, 28; Ps. 37:39). *מָלַת* “*Malat*” the idea here is of escape by slipping away, with God as the cause of the deliverance. Unlike “*palat*” the uses of “*malat*” are evenly distributed in the Old Testament books; these include the deliverance of the poor (Ps. 41:1), of the soul from the power *Sheol* (Ps. 89:48, 49) and of Israel (Isa. 46:4). *חַיָּה* “*Haya*” is another different aspect of salvation that is introduced by this verb, which means basically “*to live.*” This verb expresses the causative idea of keeping alive thus the element of salvation is clearly present in these passages as in regard to *חַיָּה* 1Sam. 10:24; 2Sam. 16:16; 1 King 1:25; Ezek. 3:18; 18:27.

גָּאָל “*Ga’al*” and *פָּדָה* “*pada*” these verbs carry the idea of redeeming someone through the payment of a ransom e.g “*redeemed*” from the hand of the enemy (Ps. 106:10), and trouble (Ps. 107:2) and iniquities (Ps. 130:8). The focus in these places is on the fact that divine action is required to obtain freedom for God’s people. The word redeemer is sometimes used for the next of kin whose duty it is to see that the deceased gets his full rights. Thus, the word emphasizes kinship between God and Israel (Harris, “Salvation” 762-770).

Old Testament Usage

Now, in the strictest use of the word *יָשָׁע* “*yasa*” in the Old Testament as Salvation, the usage of or when salvation happened is a simple fact in the Old Testament, that God was a savior,

defender, rescuer, deliverer, preserver to his people Israel. That is, deliverance from factors that constrain and confine: it can refer to deliverance from disease (Isa. 38:20), and troubles (Jer. 30:7), or enemies (2Sam. 3:8; Ps. 44:7). In the majority of references, God is the author of salvation (Milne 1046).

In the prose texts of historical books, salvation has eight occurrences in the prose section of the Pentateuch (Ex. 2:17;14:13,30; Num. 10:9; Deut. 20:4;22:27;28:29,31), in this prose narrative of the Old Testament, which the Jewish consider most sacred, the salvation has two distinct usages: one in the context of theological history or redemptive history of Israel, in which the terms are applied to acts of divine intervention in the history of Israel, and a more secular usage in a legal or political context, where the subject was human beings (Sawyer 446).

The victory at the Red Sea, where Israel's spectacular victory over the Egyptians was describe as יהוה ישיבה יתהוה בים הה את-ישראל מיד מצרים "yesu'at YHWH" (Ex. 14:13; 15:2). *Wayyosa YHWH bayyom hohu et-ysitrael miyyad misrayim*, "Yahweh saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians" (14:50). The subject is the God of Israel a fact emphasized throughout the chapter. e.g "Yahweh will fight for you, and you have only to be still (Ex. 14:14, 18, 25, 27, 31). Which Yahweh showed himself mighty by or in the form of "the angel of God" "the pillar of cloud," protecting them from pursuing Egyptians (Ex. 14:19ff) "pillar of fire and clouds (v. 24) and the unnatural behavior of the waters of the Red Sea (vv. 21-29) (Sawyer 450). All these are forms of salvation.

Finally, there are clear indications in the style of these passages that the events described has peculiar significance in the history of Israel: for it takes place ביום הה "bayyom hahu" "on that day" (Ex. 14:30); Israel "saw the great work אט-היד הגדלה (et-hayyad haggedola) which Yahweh did against the Egyptians (Ex. 14:31), and this incredible display of salvation led to the praise of the YHWH (Ex. 14:17ff) (Schaeffer 87)

Other divinely inspired victories (Salvation); this is in connection mostly with military successes of Gideon (Jud6:37,7:7), Samuel (1Sam.7:8) Saul and Jonathan (1Sam. 11:13;14:23;39), David's (2Sam. 23:10:12 I Chron. 11:14; 1Sam. 19:5; 19:5; 2Sam. 3:18; 18:6,14), Joash (2King 13:17), Jeroboam (2King 14:27), Jehoshaphat (2Chr. 20:17) and Hezekiah (2Chr. 32:22). In other historical writings, God is implied subject, since it is God who sends the "Saviour" (Judge 2:16, 18, 3:9, 15; 13:5; 1Sam. 9:16; 2King 13:5; Neh. 9:27) which has a political undertone.

One of the most distinctive Old Testament descriptions of God is "I am the LORD of your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery (Ex. 20:21, Deut. 5:6; cf Ex. 29:46; Lev. 26:13). Outside the Pentateuch, similar descriptions are found in the historical books (Judge 6:8; 2Chr 7:22) of the Psalms (Psa. 81:10) and in the prophets (Jer. 34:13; Dan. 9:15). This momentous act of salvation and display of God's power (Neh. 9:10-11), became a pattern for the future deliverance (salvation) of God's people. Accordingly, the return from exile in Babylon, which is like a second Egyptian captivity, was seen as another exodus

accomplished by God (Is. 43:14-21; 52:9; Jer. 16:14-14, Hos. 2:14-16) (Harris 763). While much of the Old Testament deals with the salvation of the nation of Israel, the Psalms focus more on the salvation of the individual, and the prophets extend God's plan of salvation to nations (Ps. 13; 18; 5; Isa. 2:2-4; Mic. 4:1-4; Zech. 8:20-23). The Old Testament lays the foundation for the New Testament and the Biblical Understanding of Salvation (Walker 1434).

Therefore, God is always the one who saves and redeems His people. Within the Old Testament, at least one of the basic identifications of God is as the one who saved Israel: "Yahweh your God who brought you up out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery" (Exodus 20:21). While the "God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob," Formula and the covenant formula; "I will be your God and you will be my people" tells us less straight forward about salvation than about election probably, the covenant at least should be seen in soteriological terms (Holmes 711). Therefore, for Israel to become God's people, God has saved and will save Israel. "Salvation comes from the Lord God" (Palmer 77).

God as a Saviour

This appellation is by no means confined to the book of Isaiah, as it is also a theme of many Psalms (Ps. 19:14; 18:2; 28:1; 59:9, 11; 71:3; 75:10; 144:2) and most of the Prophets (1Sam.2:2; 2Sam. 22:32-33). However, the name Saviour is frequent in Isaiah as to be a marked feature of his vocabulary; e.g. "*for I am the LORD your God, the Holy one of Israel. Your Saviour. I give Egypt as your ransom...*" (Isa. 43:3), "*I, I am the LORD, and beside me, there is no savior*" (Isa. 43: 11). (Isaiah 44:15, 21; 49:26). The prophet insists that there is no savior apart from YHWH (Isa. 43:11; 44:21; 46:7; 47:13). He speaks often of God's Salvation (Isa. 31:5, 6,8; 32: 7, 10; 49:6; 44:8; 46:13) and especially "*but Israel shall be saved of the Lord with an everlasting salvation...*" (Isa. 45:17) (Snaith 21-49 and 51-78).

In the Psalms God alone is the Savior, and he is steadfast in his love and the righteousness to save (Ps. 33:13-17; 44:1-7; 118), if the psalms are shaped by earthly concerns, then the Psalmist knows there is only one savior and only God of Israel (Ps. 62:1-2), because the Psalmist keep praising God for salvific acts of God; "God exalted above the heavens and therefore can act mightily to rescue his own"(Ps.57:5), "for God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation"(PS. 62;1), to the psalmist victory is salvation and deliverance (Ps. 98:1). Thus, because God is savior, the psalmist loves God and turns to him in praise and exaltation. Because God alone is savior, he appeals repeatedly to the faithfulness and obedience of God, who will save and deliver those who are faithful and obedient (Ps. 37:119). Therefore, the Psalmist cannot resist than to call God my savior.

By way of summary, the Old Testament testifies that salvation comes by the LORD. When the Israelites came by the sea, they proclaimed that Yahweh had become their Salvation (Ex. 15:2). Jonah too testified "salvation comes from the Lord" (Jon. 2:9), while the Psalmist sees the Lord as "Redeemer" (Ps. 19:14), Isaiah calls him my savior and a redeemer (Isa. 41:14;

43:14). God was Israel's savior, often from physical deliverances from enemies, sickness, and difficult times (Palmer 77-78).

Salvation in the Graco-Roman World

The term "savior" (σωτηρ) has a long history in the Greek thought. Some of the gods had an epithet attached to their name, for example, Zeus soter. However, the term was also applied to human beings in Greek history. Initially, it described significant actions such as military and political that brought benefits to others, but it can become a more general application, while it may appear to have been an honorific title, yet at all times, it denoted the performance of a function and not membership of a class in the hierarchy of beings. In the earlier Greek period, it was used by both private and public people. Philosopher Epicurus is called σωτηρ. The Hellenists were greatly influenced by Plato's concept of dualism (theory of ideas), which was advanced by Plutarch, who reckoned the mind to be the only immortal part of man, that after death, the mind will be purified from the pollution contracted from the body, thus leading to the concept of salvation as the cultivation of the mind ("Salvation" PC Study Bible v 5, Guthrie 120-122).¹

The emperors were thought of as saviors and benefactors. Augustine, who brought peace to the then-known world, was honored as σωτηρ, sometimes with the title the benefactor. Political leaders commonly assume these terms and titles. Jesus Christ warned His disciples not to seek the prerogatives of the Gentiles, who like to be called benefactors (Luke 22:25) ("Salvation" PC Study Bible v5,).

The uses of the noun σωτηρια and the verb σωζο in the Greek world are helpfully classified under the headings "*saving, keeping, benefiting and preserving the inner being*", in addition to the religious use. These categories are not mutually exclusive and the words used are striking. There are far more settings for these terms than for the Old Testament terms of salvation. Considering the scope of the Greek literature in contrast with the Old Testament, both the Old Testament and the Greek literature speak commonly of being saved from illness, disaster, and military loss. Whereas the OT often stresses the subject of saving, frequently God Himself, this is relatively unimportant in the Greek literature, here the circumstances and the act of saving may be quite commonplace rather than spectacular, especially when the meaning is "keeping." Thus, money or wine may be "saved," which is retrieved or preserved. The terminology may refer simply to the maintenance of a person's well-being. In no sense, these ideas of salvation implicitly refer to divine providence as in OT. Rather, these uses are completely secular, whereas in OT saving acts, even military leaders are ultimately considered

¹ That it is when a person escapes from a cycle of birth that he becomes secure. Those who succeeded in purifying the pollution of the body become daemons (i.e pure spirit), a very different idea from the demons (i.e agent of evil) of the non-Greek world. Naturally philosophers under this system have great advantage over others, to experience σωτηρ.

God's intervention. Therefore, for Israel, history existed only when Yahweh revealed Himself through acts and words ("Salvation" PC Study Bible v5,).

Salvation in the Intertestamental Literature

While the use of salvation in the Greco-Roman world differed significantly from its use in the OT, this is not the case in most of the intertestamental literature. This in the Apocrypha it is God who saves His people from enemies and physical threats. In the portions of the Apocrypha, as in the NT, *σοζο* and *σωτηρια* are the familiar terms. The verb *σοζο* usually has God rather than a human being as the subject, but some figures, notably Judas Maccabeus, do receive the appellation "*σωτηρ*" (1 Macc. 9:21) ("Salvation" PC Study Bible v5,).

The Septuagint (LXX) uses *σοζο* comprehensively for the various Hebrew words. This makes it difficult to discern how Jewish scholars in the intertestamental period distinguished between the various Hebrew terms. On occasion, however, a distinctive term is used such as *ο ρηομενος* "the deliverer" for *לַאֵל* "redeemer" ("Salvation" PC Study Bible v5,).

It has been suggested and speculated that the Christian idea of Jesus' death as a "saving event" derived from the idea in 4Maccabees of an "effective death" on the part of a martyr. Their sacrifice is described as a ransom for the sin of the nation and an expiation that will bring deliverance (4Macc. 17:21). In addition, Eleazar expressed the hope that his death would purify and ransom his people (4Macc.6:29). However, it would be difficult to maintain that the martyrs were saving figures in the strong biblical sense that Jesus Christ was ("Salvation" PC Study Bible v5,).

The Dead Sea scrolls teach people that they are trapped by carnality and sin, with many doomed to the destiny of the wicked. The teaching of Moses, Zadok, and the teacher of righteousness can lead one to salvation. As they thought, this salvation was largely in terms of rescue and redemption. God reveals His Salvation and direct individuals through righteousness. The Psalms of thanks giving provide many examples, although specific salvation terminology is minimal in contrast to the general emphasis on God's merely and blessings. God is righteous, and it is only His grace and will that save individuals. The Qumran community looked forward to God's Salvation in the end time, in which they thought they were living in ("Salvation" PC Study Bible v5,)

Salvation in New Testament

The Greek words for salvation are *σοζο* and *σωτηρια* basically, but there are other words that are connected or drive from these two words: Thus, *σοζο* appeared about 107 times, *διασοζο* 8 times, *σωτηρ* 24 times, *σωτηρια* 46 times, *σωτηριαν* 4 times, and *σωτηριος* once. *σοζο* and *σωτηρια* means first "to save" and "salvation". In a sense of either gods or men snatch others by force from impending peril that is simply in the Greek sense (Poerster 966). *σωτηρια* means "salvation, preservation, protection and wellbeing" (Fohrer 964-970), *σωτηρια* does not refer to earthly relationships, its content is not as in the Greek understanding: "wellbeing, health of body and soul", nor is it the earthly liberation of the people of God from the pagan yoke, as in

Judaism. It does not relate to any circumstances as such; it denotes neither healing in a religious sense nor life, nor liberation from satanic or demonic bondage. It has to do solely with man's relationship to God. Hence, salvation is accomplished neither by man's self-mastery through reason in Greek Philosophy nor by perfect contrition, as in Jewish pharisaism. No man can affect salvation for himself (Fohrer 1013). However, other Greek words convey the sense of "salvation":

σοζο this verb ranges from secular and religious meanings as in: Peter cry to Jesus when he began to sink in the sea (Matt. 14:30) and soldiers who said to Jesus to save himself from the Cross (Matt. 27:40, 42,49), and being saved by God's grace (Eph. 2:8; 2Tim. 1:9) and to health issues (Mk. 5:23,28;10:52; Lk. 8:36, 48; 17:19; 18:42; Acts 4:9; 14:9) (Fohrer 10131019). This is how this verb is used in the context of the New Testament. The adjective *σωτηρος* is also used to describes that which saves (Titus 2:11; Eph. 6:17; Lk. 2:30; 3:6; Acts 28:28), and *ρηνομαι* was used and it occurs about 17 times and shares with *σοζο* and *σωτηρια* common sense of rescue and preservation. The verb *λυτρω* is used three times, and it carries the idea of redemption, which is conveyed by this verb, similar to *σοζο* (Acts 7:35; 1Cor. 1:30; Matt. 20:28; Mk. 10:45), it is closely to *σοζο* as in Luke 24:21 and Titus 2:14 (White 161).

Salvation in the Gospels

Jesus Christ mentioned the word Salvation once (Lk. 19:9). Jesus Christ however used "save" to show what he came to do (Lk. 4:18; Mt. 18:11; Lk. 9:56; Mt. 20:28) and what is demanded by men (Mk. 8:35; Lk. 7:50; 8:12; 13:24; Mt. 10:22). In the gospels, there is an indirect testimony to the saving activities of Jesus Christ (Mk.15:31) and direct (Mt. 8:17). In addition, there is the witness to our Lord's name, which has to do with Salvation (Mt. 1:21, 23). Thus, these varied usages suggest that salvation was present in the person, the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Grogan 1047).

Salvation in Acts

In Acts the word "saved" is being used to affirm God's Salvation (*σοζο*), "were being saved" (Acts 2:47) and the word salvation which is *σωτηρια* is used both in spiritual and secular sense (Acts 4:72;7:25;13:26, 47;27:34). In Acts 16:17, it is on the lips of the demonpossessed slave girl who says that Paul and his associates are proclaiming the "way of salvation." Thus, there is strong emphasis in Luke, not limited to the spiritual but wholeness or peace; it has an encompassing meaning as did "*Shalom*."

Salvation in Pauline Writings

The frequency of the terms for salvation including pastoral letters: *σοζο* occurs 29 times; *σωτηρια* appears 18 times, *σωτηριον* once and the adjective *σωτηριος* once. The theme of salvation is paramount to Paul. Rom. 1:16 affirms the gospel as "the power of God for salvation." Paul saw his own failure to attain legal righteousness as reflected in all men and due to the overmastering power (rule) of sin, which brought with it death. Salvation is, therefore, acquittal, despite just condemnation, on the grounds of Christ's expiation of sin

(Rom 3:20-22); and second, deliverance by the power of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the risen Christ. The faith that accepts and assents to Christ's death on our behalf also unites us to him so closely that with him we die to sin and rise to new life (Rom 6:1-11). The results were freedom from sin's power (Rom 6:7, 18; 8:2), exaltation in the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit and assurance of the sonship (Rom 8), and increasing conformity to Christ. By the same process death is overcome, and believers are preparing for life everlasting (Rom 6:22-23; 8:11). 8 This is the gospel, which is salvation.

In 1Cor. 15:1, the gospel is the birth, ministry, death, burial, and resurrection of Christ to scripture are the basis for salvation and our ultimate redemption. The Thessalonians believers were called to be saved through the gospel (2 Thess. 2:13). In Romans, 5:9 salvations are for the individual the culmination of past, present, and future, not only in Romans but also a common theme that runs through almost the entire Pauline corpus.

- **Salvation in the past:** There is a sense in which salvation has already taken place in the life of the believer. Paul can say "hope we were saved" (Rom 8:24), where the past tense looks back to the beginning of the Christian life. *"By grace you have been saved through faith and this not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works lest anyone should boast, for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus"* (Eph. 2:8-10). To Paul salvation is brought about by God through Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, and there is nothing human endeavor can do to produce this result. (Eph. 5:53; Rom. 8:24; Eph. 2:5, 8; Titus 3:5 and Col. 1:13). There is no doubt in these passages about the reality of salvation as an accomplished fact.
- **Salvation now:** In this sense, Paul emphasizes that salvation is here and now, and acknowledges that salvation is the power of God to save (Rom. 1:16-17). Present salvation is meant when Paul speaks of the gospels as "the power of God to us who are being saved" (1Cor. 1:18). As a present happening: "Look, now is the acceptable time; look now is the day of salvation" (2Cor. 6:2). The double "now" conveys a sense of urgency; salvation is not to be deferred to sometime but now. Thus, the gospel must now be accepted.
- **A future:** Paul talks about salvation in three phases, with certainty that salvation is a past, present, and future reality; the future reality is eschatological, which can be actualized in parousia (Rom. 11:26; 1Cor. 5:5; Rom. 13:11). Paul does not see this future salvation as coming to all; there are passages in which he sets those that are saved over against "those who are perishing" (1Cor. 1:18; 2Cor. 2:15; 2Thess. 2:10). "The wrath" (Rom. 5:9). Again, this theme is repeated by John in a form that the complete realization of the benefit of salvation must still await the return of Christ and the establishment of a new heaven and new earth (Rev. 19-22).

In brief I saw that in the Pauline corpus, therefore, salvation is more of a comprehensive than a central theme, sometimes more than one of these aspects appearing together: Christ "has

delivered us” “from so great a death” and who “will deliver” and “adds that this is the one “on whom we have set our hope that he will still deliver” (2Cor. 1:10) (Morris 858-862).

In Hebrews, General Epistles, Johannine writing:

Hebrews deals with Christ’s sacrifice as a means of salvation that transcends the Old Testament concept of foreshadowing (Hebrews 9:26; 10:12), in which Christ atoned sins by shedding his blood. So that, henceforth man with a cleansed conscience can enter the presence of God (Heb. 9:15; 12:24) (Potts 1436). Hebrews warns that salvation must not be neglected (Heb. 2:3 6:9; 6:4-8; 10:26-39) contain hearings. σωτηρια is used in Hebrews 9:28, in connection with the second coming of Christ which is eschatological, and it belongs to the future (Heb. 1:14) and at the appearing of the Son of God (Heb. 9:28). And again the letters to the Hebrews there are many references to physical salvation from death (Heb.5:7; 11:7). Faith is an active ingredient of expectation of salvation, a hope that, unceasingly and against all odds, presses forward toward it (Heb. 11:1-40). Such faith is exercised in obedience to good news and promising salvation (Heb. 2:3; 4:1-6) (Barnett 1073).

James uses σωζο to mean salvation from judgment (James 1:21; 2:14; 5:20). God is able to both save and destroy (John 4:12); thus, salvation is eschatological. Again, James teaches that salvation is not by faith only but also by works (James 2:24), but the works as a byproduct of having a saving faith, empty or hypocritical faith will not save, but a lively faith that is authenticated by works (Jas. 2:14) (Barnett 1074).

Peter uses imagery to portray the cost of salvation through the blood of Christ (1 Peter 1:18-21), thus, we have become God’s special people (1Peter 2:9). The verb σωζο occurs three times in 1Peter (3:21;20; 4:18), while in 2Peter, the only salvation terminology occurs only in 3:15, which states that the delay in God’s judgment means that salvation is still available to all. Second Peter like the Pastorals, is marked by number of references to “savior.” Unlike the Pastorals, however, in which both God and the Lord Jesus are called the, or our, savior, second Peter confines the title to Jesus Christ (2Pet. 1:1, 11; 2:20; 3:2, 18). This usage may be a polemical rebuttal of the contemporary application of this title to the Roman Emperor, which is common in the Greco-Roman world (Barnett 1074).

Johannine writings often use “eternal life” rather than salvation as a category to express God’s gift of salvation. One major connection with the important Johannine theme of judgment and eternal life (Salvation implied) is John 3:16-21: God did not send His son to condemn but to save the world (3:17; 12:47), and Jesus’ encounter with the Samaritan woman; “Salvation is from the Jews” (John 4:22) is another use of the word Salvation in the Johannine gospel. And salvation in the fourth gospel is conceived in: being born of God, knowing God, possessing eternal life in Christ, living in the light and truth (3:9; 4:6, 13; 5:11). In the letters of John, there is only one example from the word group: “the Father has sent the son as the savior of the world” (1Jn 4:14; cf Jn 4:42). In a parallel passage, John’s meaning becomes clear: God sent his son to be the expiation (ηλασμος) of our sins’ (1Jn4:10;

cf 1Jn2:2). Access to this Salvation is through the apostolic proclamation of the message of the incarnation and death of the son of God (1Jn. 1:2-3; 2:1-2).

In Jude 3, is where salvation is used and is referring to the “Common salvation” to all who believe, Jude has in mind something kin to the “common faith” (cf Eph. 4:5), for which believers were to be contended. The book reiterates the themes of the first John of Salvation as liberation or cleansing from sin by virtue of Jesus Christ’s blood (Rev. 1:5; 7:10). In Revelation, salvation belongs to God, who ‘sits on the throne’ of history and whose “judgments are just and true’ (Rev. 7:10; 19:1) (Walters, “Salvation” 1049).

In the General Epistles and Revelation, for most part, salvation is eschatological in its realization, is a present reality in Jesus Christ, fulfills the expectation of the Old Testament, and is made available by the word of God.

Biblical Concept of Salvation

The term “salvation” is the broadest term used to refer to God’s actions to human plight brought about by human sinful rebellion and its consequences. It is one of the central themes of the entire Bible, running from Genesis to Revelation. Salvation history starts with the call of Abraham and God perfecting his plans and purpose for mankind after the fall and was climaxed in Jesus Christ, which is the embodiment of the salvation history. Salvation history has linked the two Testaments (Old and New) together; thus, there is continuity between the two Testaments, from the Old Testament as a starting point, and then to the New Testament as it reaches its fulfillment in Jesus Christ (Hasel 193).

In the Old Testament salvation refers to being rescued from physical rather than spiritual (Gen. 32:11; 45:5-7; 47:25; 50:20) and in the Psalms frequently you find individuals pray for salvation from enemies that threatens one’s safety and life (Ps.17:14; 18:3; 70:1-3; 71:1-4; 91:1-3). Related to this usage are places where the nation of Israel and its kings were saved from enemies (Longman III 1466-1467). The defining example is the exodus (Ex 14:1-23). The Old Testament recognizes the need for salvation from sin (ps. 30:8; 51:14; 120:2), but as the New Testament becomes evident, it does not provide a final solution (Heb. 9:1-10:8). To address this far greater reality, God announces the day when the Suffering Servant would once and for all take away the sins of his people. (Isa. 52:13-53:12).

As in the Old Testament, the New Testament has places where salvation refers to being rescued from physical trouble (Matt.8:25; Mk.5:25-34; Lk. 18:35-43; 8:26-39; 2Cor. 1:8-10; phil. 1:19; 2Tim. 4:17). However, the same verb is also used to refer to Jesus forgiving someone’s sins (Lk. 7:36-50) and his mission to save the lost from their sins (Lk. 19:10). Such an overlap is a foretaste of holistic salvation (physical and spiritual) that will be completed in the new heaven and earth (Rev. 21-22). The New Testament Epistles provides extensive descriptions of how the work of Jesus Christ saves his people from their sins; salvation is clearly a summary term for the totality of what God has done for his people in and through Christ Jesus. Therefore, the biblical theme can be summarized as follows:

- **Salvation is historical:** The Old Testament view of salvation as affected through history is divine intervention (Ex. 2:17; 14:13, 30; Num. 10:9; Deut. 20:14; 22:27; 28:29, 31), but these examples of national deliverance also had profound spiritual components. God did not save his people from physical danger as end in itself; it was the necessary means for his plan to save them from their sins, and it was fully honored and reached its climax in the New Testament (Hill and Walton 103, Porteous on 'Salvation' 311-345, Snaith 79-93). Humans are saved by God's history in the person of Jesus Christ (Rom. 4:25; 5:10; 2Cor. 4:10ff; Phil. 2:6; 1Tim. 1:15; 1John 4:9-10,14), we are saved by the blood of the cross (Acts 20:28; Rom. 3:35;5:9; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:20; Heb. 9:12;24; Rev. 1:3). As this message is preached, and men hear and come to respond in faith to God's salvation, salvation is brought to them (Rom. 10:8,14f; 1Cor. 1:18,25; 15:11; 1 Thess. 1:48).
- **Salvation is moral and spiritual:** Salvation relates to deliverance from sin and its consequences, and hence from guilt, which is made realizable only in Christ Jesus (Rom. 5:1; Heb. 10:22), from the law and its curse (Gals. 13; Col. 2:14), and death (1Peter 1:3-5; 1Cor. 15:51-56), judgment (Rom. 5:9; Heb. 9:28), and bondage (Tit. 2:11-3:6; Gal.5:1ff), fear (Heb. 2:15; 2Tim. 1:7,9f).
- **Salvation is eschatological:** The Climax of Salvation is futuristic. Salvation also has this form of a realized and not-yet realized concept. Thus, salvation leads to a life of blessedness in the future. This future perspective is crucial (Rom. 8:24; 13:11; 1Cor. 5:5; Phil. 3:20; Heb. 1:14; 9:28; 1Peter 1:5, 9). All that is known of salvation now is, but a preliminary and for taste of the fullness of salvation, which awaits the fullness of the kingdom at the parousia of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Salvation does not imply material prosperity or worldly success (Acts 3:6; 2Cor. 6:10), nor does it promise physical health and well-being; further, salvation does not include deliverance from physical hardship and danger (1Cor. 4:9-13, 2Cor. 11:23-28). In the New Testament, the doctrine of soteriology (salvation) is all about God's purposes and actions in saving humanity from the power and effect of sin.

Conclusion

Salvation is a comprehensive term that inevitably involves many aspects of God's gracious work. The associated terms reflect the fact that salvation often occurs from something else. The Old Testament deals with the salvation of the nation of Israel and even of individuals and the prophets extending God's plan to the nations (Ps. 13; 18; 51; Isa. 2:24. Mic. 4:1-4; Zech. 8:20-23). The Old Testament lays the foundation for a proper appreciation of salvation in the New Testament. In the New Testament, salvation is achieved by grace alone through faith in Jesus Christ. Therefore, salvation includes that which is given, freely, and finally by God (justification), which is continually imparted (sanctification), and that which is still to be attained (glorification). Since sin is humanity's greatest problem, salvation is humanity's greatest need. Given the breadth, width, and depth of what God has done to save his people

from their sins through Jesus Christ, it is no wonder that the author of Hebrews asks “How shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation?” (Heb. 2:3).

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