

Salvation II | Jeremiah 29:1-14 | 10 & 13 May 2018

I title this segment “Troubled Waters” due to the reality of brokenness with live with. Why salvation? Following is a part of the answer. We begin with the sociologist Christian Smith from his book *What is a Person?*

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

A normal person is a conscious, reflexive, embodied, self-transcending center of subjective experience, durable identity, moral commitment, and social communication who—as the efficient cause of his or her own responsible actions and interactions—exercises complex capacities for agency and intersubjectivity in order to develop and sustain his or her own incommunicable self in loving relationships with other personal selves and with the nonpersonal world. This is a mouthful. But I think it conveys some of the depth and complexity of the character of personhood. 74-75

The creature described above portrays an ideal representation of a person—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. I think this gives us a crucial clue for pursuing the task of this book. 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 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. 75-76

Our normal vocabulary affirms that human life—however rich with dignity, beauty, accomplishment, goodness, and love—is also fraught with a depressing diversity, extent, and intensity of troublesome vice and moral failure. Consider, for instance, the realities that the following words describe: selfishness, conceit, rapacity, hatred, violence, insensitivity, bigotry, lying, ruthlessness, contempt, disloyalty, murder, abuse, fraud, malevolence, deceit, oppression, terrorism, malice, egoism, rape, apathy, animosity, ridicule, estrangement, guile, betrayal, bitterness, persecution, revenge, entrapment, genocide, bullying, envy... this list of nouns and verbs can go on, we can also add a list of adjectives, also describing troublesome and sometimes repellent features of human persons... 77-78 Footnote

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Lyo – The LXX uses *lyo* to translate 7 different Hebrew verbs... It stands for the Hebrew, *rasah* which means *to be pleased with, accept favorably*, in Isa 40:2. 177

Lytra – renders the noun *g’ullah*, redemption in the case of the relative who was both entitled and under obligation who, as the avenger of blood, had to redeem the blood of the murdered victim (Num

35:19, 21, 24, 25, 27; Jos 20:3, 5) and also the family possession that had been sold (Jer 32:7 where the LXX does not use *lytra*), and even the person whose economic plight had caused him to sell himself to a non-Jew... it means redemption, and in Jer 32:8 it signifies the right of redemption. In Ezek 11:15 “your fellow exiles”, “men of your kindred” are literally, “men of your redemption. In Isa 45:13 *lytra* renders, purchase price. 190

The verb *lytrousthai* is found more frequently in the LXX than the noun *lytron*. In the majority of cases Yahweh is the subject. It renders *padah* [Hebrew], ransom, 42 times... Hos 7:13; Mic 6:4; Zech 10:8 Isa 51:11; Jer 15:21; 31:11 (in several of these passages it occurs more than once)... The basic idea of making free by a ransom can be seen in Ex 34:20; Lev 19:20; 25:25; but already in Deut 7:8; 9:26; 13:5, etc. *padah* [Hebrew] no longer refers to a material price paid, but means the redeeming activity of God, which freed Israel from Egypt, the house of bondage. It is the use of his power in the service of his love and faithfulness which redeems from bondage. In Isaiah the work of God as the Redeemer is stressed (deliverer; Is 41:14; 47:4). Here the deliverance is in the first place the freeing of Israel from Babylonian captivity and the return of the people. The foreign nations are to receive no ransom for them; in fact God gives them as ransom for Israel (Isa 43:3 f; 45:13). The thought of deliverance rather than the ransom paid is often uppermost. 192-193

D. Hill points out that while the deliverance from Egypt is often described in terms of redemption (2 Sam 7:23; Deut 7:8; 9:26)..., the “redeeming” from exile is not often described by *padah* (Isa 35:10; 51:11). Moreover, the specific idea of a ransom tends to fall into the background... We have no right to read it [ransom by payment] into every occurrence of the verb in order to make the word retain a presumed original and single unchanging sense. The meanings of words are seldom static and semantic development is often influenced by the events of history. It seems probable that the words *ga'al* and *padah* which had a close association with the idea of releasing slaves and of reclaiming persons and things, were taken up into the vocabulary of Israel’s writers as the most suitable terms to describe the liberation from slavery of those whom Egypt and Babylon had conquered, and the reclaiming by Yahweh into his rightful ownership of ‘the people of his possession’. This semantic development does no more than extend and emphasizes what was already the essential theme of *ga'al* and *padah* in their specialized use, namely that of bringing persons into freedom.” 193

Rhyomai – rescue, deliver, preserve, save... W. Kasch holds that there is a distinctive OT emphasis in those passages where a theocentric understanding replaces the anthropocentric understanding of secular Greek. Deliverance is no longer determined by the laws of being which obtain for both gods and men but by “the creating and sustaining word of Yahweh for whom the salvation of the people and the individual is part of His creative action in the salvation history commenced by Him.” He delivers according to his mercies (Neh 9:28; Ps 33:18 f, for his name’s sake (Ps 79:19)... Deliverance in the OT has nothing magical about it. Because it has to do with historical situations, it occurs in history... Kasch draws attention to the faith which corresponds to Yahweh’s deliverance and to which Yahweh responds: “In thee our fathers trusted; they trusted, and thou didst deliver them” (Ps 22:4, 8; 33:18 ff.; 34:7). Unbelief amounts to the denial that Yahweh can save (Isa 36:14-20). On the other hand, Yahweh delivers those who fear him and hope in his steadfast love (Ps 33:18f.; Ez 14:20). 200-202

Sozo – save, keep from harm, preserve, rescue... An expression with cultic overtones is “the cup of salvation” (Ps 116:13; cf. 16:5). In reply to his own question, “What shall I render to the Lord for all his bounty to me?” (vr 12), the psalmist can only receive with gratitude what Yahweh freely gives him and

rededicate himself: “I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord, I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of his people.” Anderson suggests four possible interpretations of the “cup” – (1) a drink offering of wine which was part of the thank offering (Num 28:7); (2) a metaphor of deliverance, and the opposite of the cup of Yahweh’s wrath (cf. Isa 51:17; Jer 25:15); (3) a cup connected with some particular ordeal (cf. Num 5:16-28); (4) a cup of wine used at the thanksgiving meal (Ps 23:5). Anderson prefers the first of these alternatives in view of its association with something rendered to Yahweh. However, the suggestion is attractive that such a cup necessarily stands in contrast with the cup of Yahweh’s wrath, and therefore this idea may also be present. 206-208

Here the salvation in question is an earthly and historical one. S. R. Driver suggests that salvation and deliverance “seldom, if ever, express a spiritual state exclusively: their common theological sense in Hebrew is that of a material deliverance attended by spiritual blessings.” However, certain passages in the prophets have an eschatological dimension. In the last days Yahweh will bring full salvation for his people (Isa 43:5 ff.; Jer 31:7; 46:27; Zech 8:7). Then Israel “will draw water from the wells of salvation” (Isa 12:3), and the whole world will share in this salvation (Isa 45:22; 49:6). 208

Finally, it may be noted that the Hebrew verb *yasa* and the divine name are combined in certain proper names which celebrate Yahweh as the deliverer: Isaiah (Hebrew *ysa yahu*, Salvation of Yah) which was the name given to the prophet (Isa 1:1; 2 Ki 19:2; 2 Chr 26:22; 32:20, 32 etc.) and various others (1 Chr 25:3, 15; 26:25); Joshua (Hebrew *yhosua*, and later *yesua*, Yah or Yahweh is salvation)... Hosea (Hebrew *hosea*, salvation... 208

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Sozo – As He saves and helps through men, God also does so Himself and directly as the One who has all might and right, so that He is best equipped to intervene, providing for and protecting the weak against their oppressors in the day of trouble... With no reference to specific afflictions or foes the OT also speaks of the general and comprehensive deliverance, help and salvation which God imparts. It is true that Israel resists the saving and helping God to whom it owes its existence (Dt 32:15) and who preserved it in the wilderness (Ps 78:22). It thus falls under His judgment, Is 17:10. Yet the individual can hope for God’s help on the basis of his membership of the people of Yahweh, Ps 106:4. As God turned everything to good for David and the king (2 Sam 23:5; Ps 18:50), so a later desire for the priests is that they will be clothed with salvation, Ps 132:16; 2 Ch 6:41. The point is that, as individuals are robed in the garment of salvation (Is 61:10), so the filthy raiment which symbolizes sin is replaced by raiment which symbolizes remission of sins and the blessing of salvation, cf. Zech 3:4 f. The one thus blessed can raise the cup of salvation as a symbol of God’s saving grace (cf. Ps 16:5 or of thanksgiving as in the rite of the drink offering), Ps 116:13. 976-977

Like a shepherd assisting his flock, God helps the weak of the population who are oppressed by the authorities even though the oppressed are no less laden with sin than the oppressors, Ez 34:22. He will free Israel from all its sins and as a mightier third party help it against the superior foe, Ez 36:29. He will create it anew and redeem it, Ez 36:24-28. 977