

THE PRINCIPAL CONVEYORS of the concept of salvation in the New Testament are members of the *sozo* (save, keep safe, preserve, rescue, make well) word group, the noun *soteria*, the adjective *soterios*, the noun *soter*, as well as the compound *diasozo*. The stem of these words, *sao* or *so*, means “whole, fresh, healthy,” and the verb means “to keep whole, healthy, to save from danger, illness, death.”

Soter means “Savior, redeemer, deliverer, preserver.” It carries the same broad meaning in classical Greek as *sozo*, and the noun *soteria*. The term ordinarily occurs in connection with men or gods and rarely in connection with objects. Of the gods, Zeus was especially honored as *soter*. At times a physician or a philosopher was called a *soter*, but normally the title was reserved for politicians and rulers. Philip of Macedon was honored as *soter* and the Grecian kings of the Orient often adopted the title *theos soter*, or “divine savior,” for themselves. Later this custom was taken over by the Roman emperors. The famous Roman orator and senator Cicero says: “*Soter*...how much this word contains! So much that it cannot be expressed by just one Latin word.”

In the Septuagint the word forms a part of many personal names (Hosea, Joshua, etc). Judges were called “saviors” because they were sent from God as His instruments to bring relief and salvation to His people. As channels of God’s saving intervention, kings were often called saviors. During the final reestablishment of the kingdom of Israel, saviors would appear among the people and, like the ancient judges, would defend them, conquering their oppressors (Obadiah 21). Of course, the only one who could use the word in the ultimate sense was the Lord Himself.

**WHAT
IN THE**



**IS
SOTERIC
COUNSELING?**

by Nathaniel Wilson

In the New Testament, especially in the writings of Paul, every time *soter* is used—in contrast to the deluded teaching and the misguided understanding of the false teachers—Paul held up knowledge of the living God, “who is Savior of all men.”

In the Septuagint, *soteria* preserves many of the same senses as in classical usage. In Exodus 14:13 Moses cries out, “Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today” (NIV). To be saved/delivered means deliverance from anything that threatens to destroy. It also stands for the resultant safety and security. Positively, salvation connotes everything promoting happiness, prosperity, progress, and well-being. Thus, salvation is not only salvation “from” something, it is also positive. We are saved “for” happiness, prosperity, and blessing by God in every way (Psalm 21:1-7; 85:10-13). Salvation puts joy in one’s heart (51:12). It gives one a sense of security. It evokes praise to God who allows His people to share in the fullness of His divine life.

Those who are delivered experience His miraculous power and keeping grace (118:14). They have a long life under the care and blessing of God (91:14-16).

Salvation originates with God in heaven. False gods and idols stand powerless before Him, as do astrologers and practitioners of the occult (Isaiah 47:13f). Human power is also inadequate to effect salvation (deliverance). Only the name of God, that is, His personal revelation, brings salvation. (Psalm 54:1-3)

In the New Testament *soteria* can indicate either the “state of having been saved,” or “the process of being saved.” *Soteria* has other meanings, including “deliverance, rescue,” as in Acts 7:25 where Stephen says that Moses thought God would use him for the deliverance of Israel. In Zechariah’s song (Luke 1:69-71) the emphasis is on deliverance and freedom from the oppression of enemies.

Soteria can also denote the final deliverance at the second coming of Christ. In addition, it denotes “what is beneficial.” In Philippians 1:19 Paul notes that his imprisonment will “turn out for his deliverance” (NIV). In Acts 27:34, Paul exhorted the crew of the ship to eat, “for this is for your ‘health.’” Here *soteria* means “what is beneficial.”

Therefore, when we say “soteric counseling,” we are referring to that beneficial approach to helping people which leads to their spiritual security, their full deliverance, and their ultimate salvation. The Word alone guides one to those safe havens.

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To learn more about the principles of Soteric counseling, call the Institute of Soteric Counseling toll-free:
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