

The question on my mind for these readings is what it means to be saved. From what, for what? From anything less than God, for God. From hell for heaven, fundamentally means from something less than God, for God. For truth, from error. Jesus said, "I am the truth ..." from not recognizing who Jesus is. Saved from lack of integrity, for the fullness of truth. Lack of integrity is racism and sexism, fullness of integrity is the recognition that we are all brothers and sisters in Christ, Jesus. Saved from lack of acceptance of who we are in our multi-colored skins for recognition of who we are at the very core of our souls, different from one another, yet one in Christ Jesus, if we will have it that way. This is not to deny the sins of the One, Holy, Roman, Catholic, and Apostolic Church against the victims of sexual abuse any more than against the victims of cultural abuse via sexism and racism. Most of all, to be saved means to be kept from hatred and infused with love.

## Isaiah 56:1, 6-7

Verse 1      Thus says the Lord: Observe what is right, do what is just; for my **salvation** is about to come, my justice, about to be revealed.<sup>1</sup>

The King James Version (KJV)<sup>2</sup> has, "Thus saith the Lord, Keep ye judgment, and do justice: for my **salvation** is near to come, and my righteousness to be

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<sup>1</sup> National Conference of Catholic Bishops, The Roman Missal Restored by Decree of the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican and Promulgated by Authority of Pope Paul VI: Lectionary for Mass: For Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America: Second Typical Edition: Volume I: Sundays, Solemnities, Feasts of the Lord and Saints (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1998) I refer to this book as the Lectionary. This is the case with of all sixteen point, bold verses and in the first quotation in the line beginning with the word "verse." Anyone not having the Lectionary may use the Saint Joseph Edition of The New American Bible: Translated from the Original Languages with Critical Use of All the Ancient Sources: Including The Revised New Testament and the Revised Psalms Authorized by the Board of Trustees of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine and Approved by the Administrative Committee/Board of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and the United States Catholic Conference: with many helps for Bible reading: Vatican II Constitution on Divine Revelation, How to Read the Bible, Historical Survey of the Lands of the Bible, Bible Dictionary, Liturgical Index of Sunday Readings, Doctrinal Bible Index, and over 50 Photographs and Maps of the Holy Land (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1992), which is almost always the source for the Lectionary.

<sup>2</sup> General Editor, The Reverend Cain Hope Felder, Ph.D., The Original African Heritage Study Bible: King James Version (Nashville: The James C. Winston Publishing Company, 1993).

revealed;" the Jerusalem Bible (JB)<sup>3</sup> has, "Thus says Yahweh: Have a care for justice, act with integrity, for soon my **salvation** will come and my integrity be manifest." The New Jerusalem Bible (NJB)<sup>4</sup> has, "Thus says Yahweh: Make fair judgment your concern, act with justice, for soon my **salvation** will come and my saving justice be manifest." Isaiah may well have had in mind the Babylonians or Assyrians who were holding the Chosen People in captivity. Christians see **salvation** in a new and different sense. **Salvation** here is from human injustice for Divine justice.

One scholar points out: "... There is no room for royal messianism here. The priesthood will no longer be able to exclude foreigners and others, for the nations too will become part of God's covenantal people (cf. **Isa 56:1-8**)."<sup>5</sup>

Another scholar puts it yet differently:<sup>6</sup>

This conception of what Jesus was hoping to find when he "looked around at everything" in the temple is further elucidated by the allusions to **Isa 56:7** and Jer 7:11 within his prophetic judgment of the temple in Mark 11:17. The larger context of **Isa 56:1-8** suggests that Jesus was anticipating the fulfillment of Isaiah's eschatological vision of the temple as a place where anyone who keeps Yahweh's covenant may freely worship (i.e., not only pure Israelites but also foreign proselytes, "eunuchs," and "the outcasts of Israel"). What he found, instead, was that the place of God's presence had become, in effect, a brigand's cave—a source of security for people who commit nefarious deeds. By alluding to Jeremiah's warning that Solomon's temple was no more immune to destruction than was the former sanctuary in Shiloh, Jesus warned the astonished multitude that a great and vibrant temple is no assurance of

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<sup>3</sup> Alexander Jones, General Editor, The Jerusalem Bible: Reader's Edition (Garden City, New York: Double Day \* Company, Inc., 1968).

<sup>4</sup> Henry Wansbrough, General Editor, The New Jerusalem Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1985).

<sup>5</sup> The source for the Fourteenth Sunday comments is *Adrian M. Leske*, "Context and Meaning of Zechariah 9:9," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 62, No. 4 (October 2000), 677.

<sup>6</sup> Scott G. Brown, "Mark 11:1—12:12: A Triple Intercalation?" the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 64, No. 1 (January 2002), 83-84.

God's protection should their unrighteous deeds cause God to remove his presence from that place.

## **Psalm 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8**

Verse 2 May he let his face shine upon us.

A scholar hints at how the Jews apparently used "savage/pagan" motifs to connect with **salvation** from the Lord. The scholar writes:

... The frightening and miraculous transformation of Moses' face and its subsequent concealment by a veil constitute a kind of theophany. Just as the face of God is usually off-limits to Moses (with the exceptions of Exod 33:11 and Deut 34:10), so the face of Moses is sometimes off-limits to the people. Like the Mesopotamian stories of heavenly ascent, the episode presents a person transformed by contact with the divine. A number of texts (e.g., Num 6:25; Eccl 8:1; **Pss** 31:17; **67:2**) describe divine favor idiomatically as causing the face to shine [Hebrew letters] ....

Verse 3 So may your way be known upon earth; among all nations, your **salvation**.

## **Romans 11:13-15, 29-32**

A general observation by a scholar:<sup>7</sup>

... In any event, regardless of Matthew's social setting, modern anti-Semitism must be countered with stronger ammunition. The most effective deterrent to Christian anti-Semitism remains sound teaching about the faithfulness of God revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures and in **Romans 9—11**.

Another observation:<sup>8</sup>

With respect to Judaism and specifically the Mosaic Law, one finds in Romans the discontinuity apparent in Galatians, though with the rougher

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<sup>7</sup> Douglas R. A. Hare, "How Jewish Is the Gospel of Matthew?" the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 62, No. 2 (April 2000), 276.

<sup>8</sup> Brendan Byrne, S.J., "The problem of Νόμος and the Relationship with Judaism in Romans," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 62, No. 2 (April 2000), 309.

edges of expression knocked off, and with a positive vision, wholly lacking in Galatians, of Israel's ultimate inclusion in the **saved** people of God (**Rom 11:25-32**). ...

Verse 13 I am speaking to you Gentiles.

One scholar writes, "Romans gives every indication that the implied audience consists exclusively of Christian Gentiles (1:5-6, 13-15; **11:13-14**; 15:15-18; cf. 6:19 with 1:24; 13:11-14.),"<sup>9</sup>

Verse 15 For if their [the Chosen People's] rejection [of Jesus the Christ] is the **reconciliation** of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?

Saint Paul is describing what it means to be **saved**.

A scholar writes, "Into this world came sin "and death through sin" (Rom 5:12); but into it also has come Christ "**reconciling** the world to himself" (2 Cor 5:19; **Rom 11:15**)."<sup>10</sup>

## cf. Matthew 4:23

## Matthew 15:21-28

Verses 21-22 At that time, Jesus withdrew into the region of **Tyre** and **Sidon**. And behold, a **Canaanite woman** of that district came and called out, "Have pity on me, Lord, **Son of David!**..."

First a scholarly overview:<sup>11</sup>

Moving on in our survey we come to G. D. Kilpatrick's 1946 study, *The Origins of the Gospel According to St. Matthew*. He concludes

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<sup>9</sup> Robert A. J. Gagnon, "Why the 'Weak' at Rome Cannot Be Non-Christian Jews," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 62, No. 1 (January 2000), 67

<sup>10</sup> Stanley B. Marrow, "*Κοσμος* in John," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 64, No. 1 (January 2002), 95.

<sup>11</sup> B. T. Viviano, O.P., "Where Was the Gospel According to St. Matthew Written?" the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 41, No. 4 (October, 1979), 535.

that “Matthew was written in a Greek-speaking community with little or no contact with any Semitic tongue, probably in a Syrian port.” After carefully considering the arguments for and against Antioch as the port in question, he inclines toward Phoenicia, particularly **Tyre** or **Sidon**, as the place of authorship, that is, a location closer to Palestine than Antioch. He does so because, among other reasons, Matthew has changed Mark’s “Greek Woman, a Syro-phoenician by birth: (7:26) to a “**Canaanite woman**” (15:22) presumably to avoid irritating his congregants. While this consideration is far from decisive, we cannot but agree with Kilpatrick’s observations that Ignatius of Antioch, almost contemporaneous with the writing of the gospel, “shows no trace of the Jewish influence which is so strong in the Gospel,” and that Antioch seems to have been the center of the Gentile mission (Acts 11:19-26), whereas Peter (with whom Matthew has special affinities) was called to the ministry of the circumcision (Gal 23:8). Both points tend to disqualify Antioch and to favor a more southerly origin.

Another scholarly consideration:<sup>12</sup>

Recent discussions about the title “**Son of David**” have sought to answer the question why Matthew seems to have associated the title particularly with Jesus as healer, adding it to his tradition (in 12:23; 15:22; 21:15) and duplicating the Marcan **Son of David** passage (Mark 10:46-52) in 9:27-31 and 20:29-34. B. Nolan appeals to a first-century “St. David” piety as forming the basis of Matthew’s Christology. He explains Matthew’s usage as the result of combining the motif of the royal Davidic Son of God with the figure of Solomon, **son of David**, as healer. In contrast, for C. Burger Matthew’s usage reflects a failure to understand the meaning of the traditional Jewish messiahship and is an independent development of “**Son of David**” as a predicate for Jesus as healer. This is mainly because Mark before him had added it to the healing episode immediately preceding the entry, even though Mark had done so primarily to prepare for the acclamation of Jesus as Davidic messiah by the crowds, and not because of an inherent link between the title and acts of healing.

Others have sought to explain Matthew’s peculiar use of the term more directly from within the Gospel itself. J. M. Gibbs has argued that Matthew intends us to notice a development in the crowd’s acceptance of Jesus as the royal messianic **Son of David**. Beginning in chap. 9, it reaches a high point in chap. 21 and would have gone on to a full and

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<sup>12</sup> W. R. G. Loader, “Son of David, Blindness, Possession, and Duality in Matthew,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 44, No. 4 (October, 1982), 570-572, 578.

adequate confession of Jesus as Son of God, had it not been for the perverse and blind opposition of the Pharisees and Jewish leaders.

A. Suhl has sought to demonstrate that Matthew understands the title to be an inadequate response to Jesus, characteristic of the crowd which later calls for his crucifixion. In contrast, G. Strecker, R. Hummel, C. Burgher, and J. D. Kingsbury see Matthew employing it theologically and apologetically. ... to underline the guilt that devolves upon Israel for not receiving its Messiah." When Jesus is hailed in faith by the "no accounts," the blind, possessed, children, and a **Canaanite**, as "**Son of David**," Matthew is contrasting this with Israel's blindness to the one sent to it as the Messiah.

I believe that the position stated by Kingsbury proves the most enlightening for understanding "**Son of David**" in the gospel. It can find confirmation and be supplemented through a consideration of the nexus of ideas linking "**Son of David**" to the motifs of blindness, possession, and duality, which Matthew has developed in order to interpret Israel's rejection of Jesus.

...

(a) Matthew has turned the account of Jesus' meeting with the **Canaanite woman** (15:21-18; cf. Mark 7:24-20) into a symbolic narrative which highlights the faith of a Gentile woman, who recognizes the **Son of David**, Israel's Messiah, and thus foreshadows the faith of Gentiles to come. That "**Son of David**" appears here as the distinctive designation of Israel's Messiah is confirmed by Matthew's addition of Jesus' word that he is sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (15:24), thus recalling the initial statements of his messianic commission (2:5, 1:21). In other words, here too "**Son of David**" functions within a context in which the kind of response Israel ought to have had is illustrated. Matthew possibly also intends us to note that here a daughter of the Gentiles is set free from demon-possession in contrast to Israel's continuing bondage.

Verse 23 ... send her away ...

The Jerusalem and New Jerusalem Bible translate this far differently, "Give her what she wants"

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The reason for the difference in the translations has something to do with the aorist imperfect tense of the Greek.<sup>13</sup>

Verse 25            But the woman came and did Jesus **homage**.

The Nova Vulgata<sup>14</sup> of Saint Jerome, again, uses **adoravit** for *adore*. The King James and Douay-Rheims Versions use **worshipped**; the Jerusalem Bible uses **kneeling at his feet**; The New Jerusalem Bible uses **bowing low**.

Finally, my comment on the “Day-by-Day” readings in the Magnificat. Saint Thomas is a good author, badly used. Thomas is so correct to write, “...Now it is clear that the rational creature is more excellent than all transient and corporeal creatures, so that he becomes impure through subjecting himself to transient things by loving them.” The false implication is that the rational creature errs to be active, rather than passive. The Magnificat quotation goes on, “Hence the first beginning of the heart’s purification is faith, by which the impurity of error is purified and if this be perfected through being quickened by charity the heart will be perfectly purified thereby.”<sup>15</sup> *Charity* is something active, something a human does actively. The Magnificat miscasts charity into something a human receives, passively.

The idea that draws me through these readings is that Amazing Grace **saves** a sinner like me from hating and for loving in the best sense of that term.

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<sup>13</sup> Max Zerwick, S.J. and Mary Grosvenor, Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament unabridged, 5th, revised edition (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico 1996), 50.

<sup>14</sup> Nova Vulgata: Bibliorum Sacrorum Editio: Sacrosancti Oecumenici Concilii Vaticani II ratione habita iussu Pauli PP. VI Recognita Auctoritate Joannis Pauli PP. II Promulgata Editio Typica Altera (00120 Citta Del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1979, 1986, 1998) ISBN 88-2209-2163-4.

<sup>15</sup> Saint Thomas Aquinas, *From Saint Thomas Aquinas Meditations*, Father E. C. McEniry, O.P.; Tr © 1945, *Long’s College Book Company, Columbus, OH.* as quoted in *Magnificat* ® Vol. 4, No. 6 (August 2002), 148.