

Definition of Sōzō; Paul: Worst of Sinners: His Testimony in 2 Tim 1:12, Self-Critique in Phil 3:4-6; & Confession in Acts 26:9-11

7. The definition of *sōzō* answers these questions and amplifies the principle that the result of salvation is deliverance from the lake of fire through the imputation of eternal life. We consult:

Bauer, Walter. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*. Translated by William F. Arndt and F. Wilber Gingrich. 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 798:

σῶζω. 1. To preserve or rescue. **a.** to save from death. **b.** to bring to safety. **d.** to keep, to preserve. 2. To save or preserve from eternal death, judgment, and from all that might lead to such death, e.g., sin. To endow with everlasting life. Passing over into a state of salvation and a higher life. **a.** active voice to save someone or something: Christ, 1 Timothy 1:15.

aorist:	Culminative: signifies effort or process denoting the attainment of the end of such effort or process: the finished work of Christ on the cross.
active:	Christ produces the action on the cross, its culmination occurring with His statement in John 19:30, "It is finished!"
infinitive:	Intended result: it was the Lord's intent to make it possible for sinners to be saved. His sacrifice was also for the purpose of granting eternal life to those who would believe.

8. Those for whom Christ performed this completed sacrifice are identified by the direct object of *sōzō*, the accusative masculine plural of:

ἁμαρτωλός, *hamartōlos* - The sinful ones, i.e., the entire human race.

9. The human race is in the impossible position of being born into this world—the *kosmos*—separated from God, spiritually dead, and in the hostile environment of the devil's world.
10. Trapped in enemy territory we are powerless to escape through our own efforts and abilities. No good deeds to help others who are also hopelessly incarcerated in the same prison will contribute anything to either's escape. No capitulation to the allurements of Lucifer's global domain will provide any lasting comfort once physical death overtakes us. We are resigned to the conclusion that we stand condemned in our sins for which there is no human recourse available to make reconciliation. Thus we all find ourselves in a hopeless situation, helpless to do anything about it.
11. In the last clause of 1 Timothy 1:15, Paul then sets himself up as the supreme example of grace in action: "... among whom I am foremost of all."
12. The word "foremost" is the masculine singular adjective **πρῶτος, *prōtos***: "first in rank." Paul asserts that of all the sinners among the human race he is chief. The verb "I am" is the present active indicative of:

εἰμί, <i>eimi</i> -	"I am"
present:	Static: a condition assumed as perpetually existing, to be ever taken for granted as a fact.
active:	Paul produces the action of being history's worst sinner.
indicative:	Declarative: an unqualified fact.

13. In this verse Paul calls upon a popular song to set up a doctrine that he will present in verse 16. In verse 15, the first line of the hymn states that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom he is the worst.
14. The Gospel of salvation is clearly identified in the context of 1 Timothy 1 as referring to a rescue from a place of danger.
15. The passage refers to deliverance into a place of safety away from eternal death and future judgment. This place of safety is characterized by the believer's possession of eternal life by which he is preserved forever.
16. Paul thus presents himself as a trophy of grace in the sense that if he can be saved, anyone can be saved for he is the worst sinner in human history.
17. In 2 Timothy 1:12 Paul writes with absolute confidence about his salvation and places emphasis on eternal security. Paul didn't put it to music but his words are the chorus to this well-known hymn:

"I Know Whom I Have Believed"
(El Nathan and James McGranahan)

1. I know not why God's wondrous grace \ To me He has made known,
 Nor why unworthy—Christ in love \ Redeemed me for His own.

But "I know whom I have believed,
 And am persuaded that He is able
 To keep that which I've committed
 Unto Him against that day."
2. I know not how this saving faith \ To me He did impart,
 Nor how believing in His Word \ Wrought peace within my heart.
3. I know not how the Spirit moves \ Convincing men of sin,
 Revealing Jesus through the Word, \ Creating faith in Him.
4. I know not what of good or ill \ May be reserved for me,
 Of weary ways or golden days, \ Before His face I see.
5. I know not when my Lord may come, \ At night or noonday fair,
 Nor if I walk the vale with Him, \ Or "meet Him in the air."

But "I know whom I have believed,
 And am persuaded that He is able
 To keep that which I've committed
 Unto Him against that day."
18. The writer of the hymn does appear to have attended journalism school since on the first day of Journalism 101 students are taught that a reporter must discover from his investigation the five *w*'s and the *h*: who, what, when, where, why, and how. Each line begins sequentially, "I know not **why**," "I know not **how**," "I know not **what**," "I know not **when**," and he implies he "knows not **where**" in the last line of verse 5. He obviously knows **Who**.
19. Paul wrote this verse in prison. He was placed there by Nero but neither history nor Scripture indicates why. It is deduced that since Nero had burned Rome and blamed it on the Christians that Paul was rounded up as a "usual suspect."

20. His was incarcerated most likely in the *Carcer* in Rome, also known as the Mamertine prison which is a name given to it by the Catholic Church in Medieval times. Paul was abandoned by all his friends with the noted exceptions of Luke and Onesiphorus \on-ē-sif'-ō-rus\ and possibly Timothy. In this final epistle, Paul makes it clear that regardless of being forsaken by most of his fellow Christians he stands fast with the Lord and encourages Timothy to not be ashamed of him or the Gospel:

2 Timothy 1:8 - Do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join me in suffering with reference to the Gospel according to the power of God.

2 Timothy 1:9 - The One having saved us [σῴζω, sōzō: **constative aorist: completed action**] and having called us into a holy station of life, not according to our works, but according to His own predetermined plan and grace which has been given us in Christ Jesus even before human history began.

v. 10 - But at the present time, grace has been revealed through the appearance of our Savior Christ Jesus, Who, on the one hand, released us from spiritual death and, Who, on the other hand, has made known eternal life and immortality through the Gospel.

21. Paul was the ultimate apostle and asserts that he has received maximum grace since he regards himself as the ultimate sinner and this self-critique has been recorded forever in the immutable Word of God by the Holy Spirit.
22. Why did Paul conclude he was the worst sinner of all time? Here are a few reasons he mentions in:

Philippians 3:4 - If anyone else presumes to have confidence in the flesh [i.e., **arrogance**], I more:

v. 5 - circumcised the eighth day [**religious**], of the nation of Israel [**nationalistic**], of the tribe of Benjamin [**genetic**], a Hebrew of the Hebrews [**elitist**]; as to the Law, a Pharisee [**legalistic arrogance**];

v. 6 - with reference to zeal: a constant persecutor of the church [**power lust plus crusader, criminal, & religious arrogance, Acts 26:9-11**]; with reference to righteousness in the Law: found blameless [**self-righteous arrogance**].

23. Paul admitted to doing many things hostile to the name of Jesus in his testimony before King Agrippa in:

Acts 26:9 - "I was convinced that it was necessary I should do many things hostile to the name of Jesus the Nazarene [Ναζωραῖος, Nazōraios: a derogatory term used by Saul and fellow Jews in contempt of His claims to be Son of David and Son of God].

v. 10 - "This is the thing I did in Jerusalem: Many of the saints did I incarcerate in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests of the Sanhedrin, and when they were put to death, I voted against them.

Acts 26:11 - "And I avenged myself upon them often in every synagogue, I forced them to blaspheme; and being excessively maniacal ["furiously enraged" (NASB): περισσῶς ἐμμαινόμεναι, perissōs emmainomai: an extreme state of psychosis, i.e., murder lust driven by the hatred of religious arrogance—Saul was a terrorist who declared a personal jihad against any and all Christians] against them, I kept on persecuting them even into other cities."

24. Paul documents that religion drove him to an extreme state of psychosis. Those who develop intense hatred, anger, bitterness, and rage from religion are the most inflexible, dangerous, and evil people in the devil's world.
25. The reason Paul could accurately say he was history's number one sinner was because he was history's number one religious fanatic.
26. Paul's testimony is that God took history's worst sinner and religious fanatic and made him history's greatest example of God's unconditional love.
27. Saul, the worst man who ever lived, was made through grace the greatest believer who ever lived, a magnificent testimony to the magnitude of grace and the power of Bible doctrine in transforming the souls of men.
28. Principle: If God can save and transform the greatest sinner and greatest terrorist that ever lived then He can save and transform anyone.

1 Timothy 1:15 - "Faithful Is the Word" and worthy of unqualified acceptance, that "Christ Jesus has come into [ἐρχομαι, *erchomai*: **purpose**] the world to save [σῶζω, *sōzō*: **to deliver**] sinful mankind," among whom I am the worst of all.