

Is Yahweh the Only Savior?

In Isaiah 43:11 we read the following (KJV):

Isaiah 43:11 I, *even* I, *am* Yahweh; and beside me *there is* no savior.

Some people read this verse by itself, and believe that it means that there is no other savior besides Yahweh. But then, in reading our Hebrew Scriptures, we come to another verse that says this:

Judges 3:9 And when the children of Israel cried unto Yahweh, Yahweh raised up a deliverer to the children of Israel, who delivered them, *even* Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother.

Here Othniel is called a deliverer to the children of Israel. The word "savior" in Isaiah 43:11 and "deliverer" in Judges 3:9 are the same Hebrew word: *yasha*, #3467 in Strong's Hebrew Dictionary.

The harmony should be easy to see. Yahweh can be termed as "the only savior," but can still *raise up* and *send* others to accomplish His saving.

In the example of Judges 3:9 we might ask, "Who saved the children of Israel?" One person might answer "Yahweh," while another person might answer "Othniel." Neither answer is incorrect. Yahweh is the one who raised Othniel up, so Yahweh can still be called the savior here. However, the text specifically says that Othniel was the savior to the children of Israel.

The key is that Yahweh saved the children of Israel, THROUGH the man Othniel. Othniel was the vessel or agent that Yahweh used in the saving process. The same goes for this scripture:

Judges 2:16 Nevertheless Yahweh raised up judges, which delivered (*yasha*) them out of the hand of those that spoiled them.

Judges 2:18a And when Yahweh raised them up judges, **then Yahweh was with the judge**, and delivered (*yasha*) them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge...

Here again, Yahweh is the source of the deliverance or salvation, but the text still says that the judges delivered them out of the hand of their enemies. The key is what verse 18 says, "Yahweh was WITH the judge."

Look at this next verse:

Judges 3:31 And after him was Shamgar the son of Anath, which slew of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox goad: and he also delivered (*yasha*) Israel.

There is a "string" of saviors mentioned in Judges chapter 3. The first is Othniel (Judges 3:7-11), then Ehud (Judges 3:15-30), and finally Shamgar (Judges 3:31). In verse 31

Yahweh is not even mentioned. It just says that "Shamgar... also delivered (yasha) Israel." Did Yahweh send Shamgar? Of course. Shamgar was one of the saviors sent by Yahweh, but verse 31 does not say anything about Yahweh.

We have to harmonize Isaiah 43:11 with Judges 3. How can Yahweh say, "besides me there is no savior (yasha)" yet we have other men called "saviors (yasha)"?

I'm sure no one will argue that these other men - Othniel, Ehud, and Shamgar - are really Yahweh in disguise. At least I don't think anyone would argue like that.

The harmony is that Isaiah 43:11 must not be understood in such a limited fashion as some people quote it. Isaiah 43:11 does not negate beings - *other than Yahweh* - being called savior. They are called saviors, in Judges 3, but Yahweh was the source of the salvation. He saved the Israelites through these men.

The Context of Isaiah 43:11

It is okay to quote verses by their self at times, but it is not okay to quote verses without understanding their original context. There are verses before and after Isaiah 43:11, and it does not do justice to the Biblical text to ignore these verses.

If you read Isaiah 43, you will see that Yahweh is speaking of restoring the children of Israel. In verse 2-3a He says, "When thou passest through the waters, I *will be* with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I *am* Yahweh thy Mighty One, the Holy One of Israel, thy Savior (yasha)."

This thought continues down through the chapter, but the pertinent verses to understanding Isaiah 43:11 are verses 10 and 12.

Isaiah 43:10-12 Ye *are* my witnesses, saith Yahweh, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I *am* he: before me there was no Mighty One formed, neither shall there be after me. I, *even* I, *am* Yahweh; and beside me *there is* no savior (yasha). I have declared, and have saved (yasha), and I have shewed, when there was no strange mighty one among you: therefore ye *are* my witnesses, saith Yahweh, that I *am* the Mighty One.

The context of Yahweh calling Himself the only savior here is that He is proclaiming to the children of Israel that He saved them - all alone - and not some *strange* or *foreign* mighty one.

Yahweh is saying this: "I saved you all by Myself. It was not some other mighty one that saved you. It was not some foreign mighty one that saved you. Only Me. I am Yahweh, your Mighty One, that saved you."

That is the key.

Understanding How Yeshua is our Savior

I have heard many people quote Isaiah 43:11 by itself, and then say something to me like this: "Yahweh is the only savior. That means that the Messiah must be God (Yahweh), because He is called our savior in other passages."

A bible student can immediately see the faulty reasoning here. First off, we've already seen from the book of Judges how men like Othniel, Ehud, and Shamgar are called saviors. They are saviors that Yahweh SENT to the children of Israel. Secondly, we've seen that the context of Isaiah 43:11 isn't even about Yahweh being the only one that can properly be called savior. It's about Him being Israel's savior *in contrast to* some strange mighty one (a foreign *god*).

We should be able to understand how Yeshua - Yahweh's only begotten Son - can be called our savior, and He not have to be Yahweh. Calling Yeshua "savior" does not prove He is Yahweh (God).

When the angel announced the birth of Yeshua to the shepherds, he did proclaim that Yeshua was a savior.

Luke 2:11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

We should have no problem calling Yeshua our savior. The following verses show that Yahweh raised Him up and sent Him to be our savior.

Acts 5:30-31 The God of our fathers raised up Yeshua, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God (Yahweh) exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

Acts 13:23 Of this man's seed hath God (Yahweh) according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Yeshua:

1 John 4:14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

Let me end this study by pointing out that I am not saying that men like Othniel, Ehud, or Shamgar are equal with Yeshua the Messiah. That's not my point and that's certainly not the Scriptural point. The Messiah is the head of every man (1 Corinthians 11:3). He is the only begotten Son (John 3:16-18; 1 John 4:9-10); there is none other like Him.

The point is only to show that Yeshua the Son can be called savior without Him having to be Yahweh the Father.

Yeshua is the savior Yahweh sent us in this sense: to save us from our sins. Yeshua doesn't *just* save us from our enemies, or *just* save us naturally (like in a physical, earthly battle). Yeshua saves us from our transgressions of Yahweh's law. Yahweh exalted Yeshua to be a savior. Yahweh raised up Yeshua to be a savior to Israel. The Father SENT the Son to be the savior of the world.

Is Yahweh our savior? Yes. Is Yeshua our savior? Yes. The key is to understand that the source of our salvation is Father Yahweh, but Father Yahweh has chosen to save us from our sins THROUGH the vessel of His beloved Son, Yeshua.

Shalom,
Matthew Janzen
678-347-6240