

# Psalms 53:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! When God bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.

## Analysis

**Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! When God bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.** This concluding verse shifts from lament over human corruption to longing for divine deliverance. The prayer expresses Israel's hope for restoration and celebration when God intervenes to save His covenant people.

"Oh that" (mi yitten, מִי יִתֵּן) is a Hebrew idiom expressing intense longing—literally "who will give?" or "who would grant?" This is yearning prayer: "If only!" "Would that!" The phrase appears throughout Old Testament expressing deep desire for something not yet possessed. The psalmist aches for Israel's salvation with passionate intensity.

"The salvation of Israel" (yeshu'ot Yisrael, יְשׁוּעוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל) uses yeshu'ah (יְשׁוּעָה), meaning salvation, deliverance, rescue, victory. The plural form suggests comprehensive salvation—complete deliverance from all aspects of bondage and judgment. "Israel" (Yisrael, יִשְׂרָאֵל) is God's covenant people, descendants of Jacob/Israel. Though the psalm describes universal human corruption, God has particular covenant relationship with Israel through whom salvation will come to all nations.

"Were come out of Zion" (mitziyon, מִצִּיּוֹן) identifies salvation's source. Zion is Jerusalem, the temple mount, the place God chose to dwell among His people. Isaiah 2:3: "out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from

Jerusalem." Salvation originates not from human effort but from God's presence dwelling in Zion. Romans 11:26 applies this messianically: "There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob."

"When God bringeth back the captivity of his people" (beshuv Elohim shevut ammo, בְּשׁוּב אֱלֹהִים שְׁבוּת עַמּוֹ) uses shuv shevut (שׁוּב שְׁבוּת), meaning to restore fortunes, bring back captivity, reverse exile. This phrase appears throughout prophets promising restoration after judgment. God will reverse His people's exile and oppression, restoring them to blessing and prosperity. "His people" (ammo, עַמּוֹ) emphasizes covenant relationship—despite sin, Israel remains God's people.

"Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad" (yagel Ya'aqov yismach Yisrael, יַגֵּל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂמַח יַעֲקֹב) concludes with celebration. Gil (גִּיל, to rejoice, exult) and samach (שָׂמַח, to be glad, joyful) express exuberant joy. Jacob and Israel are parallel names for God's covenant people. When God brings salvation, His people will celebrate with overwhelming gladness.

## Historical Context

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The plea for salvation "out of Zion" reflects Israel's covenant hope. God established Zion as His dwelling place when David brought the ark to Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6) and Solomon built the temple (1 Kings 8). Psalm 132:13-14: "For the LORD hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it." Salvation comes from where God dwells among His people.

The phrase "bring back the captivity" looked forward to restoration from exile. After Solomon, Israel split into northern (Israel) and southern (Judah) kingdoms. Assyria conquered northern Israel in 722 BC, exiling ten tribes. Babylon conquered Judah in 586 BC, destroying Jerusalem and temple, exiling survivors. Prophets promised restoration: Jeremiah 29:14: "I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations." Partial fulfillment came when Persia allowed Jews to return under Ezra and Nehemiah, rebuilding Jerusalem and temple.

Yet complete fulfillment awaited Messiah. Romans 11:26-27 quotes Isaiah: "There

shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins." Jesus came from Zion (born in Bethlehem, ministered in Jerusalem) to bring ultimate salvation from sin itself, not merely political oppression. The New Testament presents Jesus as Israel's long-awaited deliverer.

The contrast between the psalm's beginning and ending is striking: it starts with the fool saying "there is no God" and universal corruption; it ends with confident hope in God's salvation. This movement from diagnosis to hope, from problem to solution, from judgment to mercy characterizes redemptive history. Humanity's corruption makes salvation necessary; God's covenant faithfulness makes salvation certain.

## Related Passages

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**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

## Study Questions

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1. What does it mean for salvation to come 'out of Zion,' and how does this point to Jesus as the Deliverer from Jerusalem?
2. How does the psalm's movement from universal corruption (v.1-3) to hope for salvation (v.6) reflect the gospel message?
3. What is 'the captivity' that God promises to reverse, and how does this apply both historically and spiritually?
4. Why is rejoicing and gladness the appropriate response when God brings salvation, and how do you cultivate this celebratory spirit?
5. How does Paul's use of this verse in Romans 11:26 connect Israel's restoration with the gospel and God's covenant faithfulness?

## Interlinear Text

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יְהוָה	יְהוָה	מִצִּיּוֹן	יִשְׁעֹת	יִשְׂרָאֵל:	בָּשׁ וּב
H4310	Oh that	were come out of Zion	the salvation	and Israel	bringeth back
	H5414	H6726	H3444	H3478	H7725
אֲלֵהִים	שָׁב וְ	עַמּוֹ	יִגְלֹל	יַעֲקֹב	יִשְׂמַח
When God	the captivity	of his people	shall rejoice	Jacob	shall be glad
H430	H7622	H5971	H1523	H3290	H8055

יִשְׂרָאֵל:

and Israel

H3478

## Additional Cross-References

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**Psalms 14:7** (Salvation): Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! when the LORD bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.

**Jeremiah 30:18** (Parallel theme): Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents, and have mercy on his dwellingplaces; and the city shall be builded upon her own heap, and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof.

**Isaiah 12:6** (References Israel): Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.

**Isaiah 14:32** (Parallel theme): What shall one then answer the messengers of the nation? That the LORD hath founded Zion, and the poor of his people shall trust in it.

**Psalms 85:1** (Parallel theme): LORD, thou hast been favourable unto thy land: thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob.