

# LIBERATION, LIBERTY, FREEDOM, SALVATION: A Grid for Distinguishing within this Word-Set

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No synonymy can tell you how you personally should use these words, nor can I. But I can tell you how I use them & why I make the distinctions I do in this Thinksheet. Which chiefly aims to provide a thought-&-discussion grid, but also allows me a bit of space for illustrative commentary.

OCCASION? Remember PacMan in the early computer games? He was only a big dot with a mouth, a mouth rapidly eating up everything in sight. Well, each of the words in our set tends to operate as a semantic PacMan, **gobbling up the others**. An "ARE YOU SAVED?" bumper sticker suggests everything will be all right if you only submit to Jesus in the particular way the guy who stuck the sticker on thinks you should. And what about "FREEDOM NOW!" posters? If you got what the poster designer wants you to get, would you be "saved"? Then there's "liberation theology": what is that supposed to do for people--give them liberty, freedom, salvation, any two or all three? And how much of what we all need would we have if the American political phrase "liberty for all" were to be realized?...And a humorous illustration of the same semantic tendency, this one on the analogy not of eating but of **inflating**. Yesterday we launched our yacht for the first time, & our houseguests enjoyed the ocean from aboard. Actually it's only a largish rubber boat, but we call it our yacht because that's what the time-sharing camp organization sort of promised Loree & me if we'd show up & let them pitch at us. Yes, the add pictured a real yacht! We'd never bit on any such patently false come-on before, so we decided to give it a go once. Once was too often, but anyway we got this freebee "yacht" for our guests to enjoy. Well, each of the four words in our set is a semantic "yacht," promising more than it in itself can deliver. To let yourself be taken in by a time-sharing ad once is only a fun thing for when you need to get away & for a few hours do something different. But to let yourself be taken in by the inflated use of "liberation," "liberty," "freedom," or "salvation" is an idolatry thing, & by divine design all idols disappoint & destroy....So this Thinksheet is concerned to increase critical consciousness vis-a-vis this set of high-promising, hope-giving words.

Salvation	↓	1	2	3	is a gift	to be received & lived
					divine	
					human	
Freedom	↑	↓	↓	↓	is an achieved condition	to be developed
Liberty			↓	↓	is a won status	to be guarded
Liberation				↓	is the liberty struggle	to be maintained

Unlikeme though it be, I'm not concerned here with the biblical roots nor with precise definitions. Do your own research, draft your own definitions. Deliver yourself from the idols!....The dotted line divides the action--God in grace acting from beyond us yet within and around us, we able to act but not salvifically: the human arrow does not cross the dotted line. The three numbered arrows are your opportunities to describe how, in your view, God works together with us in freedom, liberty, & liberation....All except one word in this set is Latin-based, as are scads of other words we could add to the set--e.g., de-liver[ance], manumission, redeem, reclaim, recover, retrieve, release, & (through French) rescue. Our Anglo-Saxon word here is "freedom" (& "en-franchise" is Teutonic-based, too)....Note, too, the "Emanicipation" Proclamation, 1 Jan 1862, though American blacks were not "enfranchised" till 1870 (the 15th Amendment), & the last encumbrances to their voting were not removed till a century after the end of the Civil War.