

Christ is able to save completely and forever

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“Therefore, he is able to save completely those who come to God through him because he always lives to intercede for them.” (Hebrews 7:25)

Introduction

There is a debate over the translation of the word which the NIV translates “completely” in this verse. It can be translated “completely” as in the main text of the NIV or it can be translated as “forever”, as in the NIV footnote. How should we take this word? I think we should read it as both “completely” and “forever”, because both are true. Jesus is such a great saviour that he is able to provide a complete salvation, a full salvation, which lasts forever for all those to come to God through him.

As we think about this verse I want to do so under four headings:

1. Jesus is able to save completely
2. Jesus is able to save forever
3. How Jesus is able to save
4. Whom Jesus is able to save.

1. Jesus is able to save completely

Jesus is able to save completely, totally, those who come to him. In every aspect in which we need to be saved Jesus is the answer. Let me mention some aspects

of what he does in people's lives.

1) Salvation from the guilt of sin

He saves us from the guilt of our sin. Every single one of us is a sinner. We have all offended against God's holy law. Each one is guilty before him. But Jesus is able to save you and me from the guilt of our sin. Even if you have committed the most terrible sins, Jesus is able to save you. It is possible someone who reads this may be responsible for taking the life of another person. Perhaps you have had an abortion, or you have helped somebody else to have an abortion, so you have blood on your hands. Jesus is able to save you from the guilt of that sin. Maybe you have committed other sins which God hates such as spiritism, consulting the dead and witchcraft. Even serious sins such as those you can be forgiven. Perhaps you have been guilty of sexual sin and that is weighing heavily upon your conscience. Jesus can deliver you from the guilt of that sin. Perhaps you have been guilty of despising the word of God. You have been brought up in a Christian home and you have despised and scorned the word of God. Terrible though that sin is Jesus is able to save you from the guilt of it. Whatever the sin is with which you are burdened, Jesus is able to totally forgive you for that sin.

2) Salvation from the power of sin

Not only is Jesus able to save you from the guilt of sin he is able to save you from its power. Perhaps you have experienced in your own life the power of an addiction, or perhaps you have seen it in the life of a friend or a loved one. The addiction has its tentacles around you and you are trapped. You try sometimes vainly to get free but it just seems to grip you all the more tightly. Addictions to substances like alcohol or drugs illustrate the power of sin, because all sin is essentially addictive. Whether it be watching pornography, or having a filthy temper, or being greedy, or being sexually immoral, whatever it is, sin has an addictive power to it. You hate what it is doing to you and yet you cannot give it up. You see the havoc that it is wreaking in your life but you just simply can't get free of it. But Jesus is able to save completely those who come to him and that means he is able to save from the power of sin.

3) Salvation from the dominion of Satan

Jesus is also able to save you from the dominion of Satan. All of us in our natural state are under the power of Satan yet such is the cleverness of Satan that we

don not realise in most cases that this is the case. But we realise it or not, this is the reality. But Jesus is able to save you from the dominion of Satan, and his tyrannical rule over your life.

4) Salvation from fear

Not only so, but Jesus is also able to save you from fear. Fear is a crippling thing in so many peoples' lives. Fear of what is going to happen to them, fear of poverty, fear of illness and most of all fear of death. But Jesus is able to deliver you from fear.

5) Salvation from despair

Some have a constitutional disposition towards depression and towards seeing the dark side of things. Some are naturally optimistic. Even if you are somebody who naturally is easily plunged into the very depths of despair and gloom you can know through Jesus Christ the joy and the hope that he brings. The Psalmist says in Psalm 40 verse 3 that he was in the pit and he was unable to save himself. Then he says that God drew him out, and adds, "He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God." God promises through Isaiah the prophet that through Christ he will give his people "The oil of gladness instead of mourning, a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair" (Isaiah 61.3).

6) Salvation from alienation from God and man

In our natural state we are alienated from God and alienated from each other. Men are splintered into all sorts of groups which are hostile to each other, on account of sin. Jesus is able to save us from that alienation from God alienation from each other. We are brought into fellowship with God and we are able to call God "Abba Father". And having been brought to friendship with God, we are also brought into friendship with other believers. The "dividing wall of hostility" between different groups is broken down by Christ (Ephesians 2.14).

7) Salvation from the physical consequences of sin

Where do sickness and death come from? They come from sin having entered into this world through Adam. The time is going to come when all sickness, physical weakness and poverty will be completely done away with. There will be no more mourning, or crying, or death because of the new order that Jesus will

bring in for those who trust in him. And when he comes on that great day all true believers will perfectly and fully experience all of the spiritual blessings that are in Christ.

8) Salvation from Hell

We are all sinners. We all deserve Hell. There is nothing we can do to make ourselves worthy of heaven. Once you are in Hell there is no way out. You are there for eternity. In your natural state that is where you are heading. Yet Jesus is able to save you from Hell.

So we see that Jesus is able to save completely. This is not just a “patch-up job”. This is not a religion that deals with one problem but leaves many others not dealt with. Here is a complete answer that affects the entire human condition.

2. Jesus is able to save for ever

Not only is Jesus able to save completely, he is able to save forever those who come to God through him. You know how frustrating it can be when you go to a doctor and the doctor says “The problem you’ve got is this” and he prescribes medicine for you. For a little while you feel much better. But a few weeks later the problem has come back with a vengeance. The treatment you received was something of an answer to your problem, but it was a temporary answer. It did not deal with the fundamental underlying problem.

Jesus does not just provide a temporary solution to our problems. Jesus saves forever those who come to God through him. The pardon for sin which he gives is not just a pardon which lasts a few days or even a few years. It is a permanent pardon. Those who are forgiven by Jesus Christ are justified before God forever. God will never take back his promise of forgiveness. “There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8.1). Nothing is going to change that situation because it is God himself who has declared the verdict of “Not Guilty,” once and for all.

Equally, the work of sanctification, of becoming more like Jesus Christ, is not something which, once started, God is going to abandon. Paul says to the believers in Philippi, “He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus” (Philippians 1.6).

Neither is deliverance from Satan's dominion just a temporary thing. Once you have been saved from the dominion of Satan that is a once and for all transfer. There is no going back.

Jesus is able to save forever those who come to God through him. The fellowship with God that true believers have is for ever. Those who belong to Christ will be raised up at the last day, and will forever enjoy the new heavens and the new earth that God will make. There will never be a time when the grace of God is withdrawn for the person who belongs to him.

3. How Jesus is able to save

Our text tells us that Jesus is able to save completely those who come to God through him because "he always lives to intercede for them." The reason why Jesus is able to save so completely and so thoroughly and forever is because he is a permanent High Priest in heaven.

This is the point that the writer to the Hebrews is making in chapter 7 of the letter, the chapter in which our text is found. Why does he speak about Jesus being a priest "in the order of Melchizedek"? The reason is that Jesus is a priest who is quite unlike the Old Testament priests. The priests in the Old Testament were in the order of Levi. They were descendants of Levi and they were human beings. The high priest could only go in the most holy place once a year. When he went he would have to offer a sacrifice for his own sins as well as for the sins of the people. When he went into the tabernacle the blood he brought was the blood of animals, which could not cleanse from sin. After a few years the priest would die and he would have to be replaced by a new high priest, and so the whole process would continue year after year.

What the writer of Hebrews is saying is that Jesus is a High Priest, but he is of a completely different order. He is not of the order of Levi. He is not a descendent of Aaron. Jesus is of the order of Melchizedek. We do not know much about Melchizedek. He is a very puzzling figure. He suddenly appears in the book of Genesis and then he disappears again. We know little about him and people debate as to who he was, whether he was a man or angel or Jesus appearing before he became man. I do not know what the answer is, but the point that the writer of Hebrews is saying is that Jesus is of the order Melchizedek, not the order of Aaron. He has a permanent priesthood. Whereas the priests of Levi went in once a year to the tabernacle Jesus has gone in forever into the heavenly

tabernacle. Whereas the priests of the Old Testament used to offer blood of animals, Jesus has gone in to the heavenly tabernacle offering his own, eternal, blood. Whereas the high priests had to offer sacrifices for their own sins as well as for the sins of the people, Jesus went in without needing to offer a sacrifice for his sins because he had lived a perfect life. Whereas the priests of the Old Testament would die and have to be replaced by somebody else, Jesus having died once upon the cross, has been raised from the dead, is now in heaven and he is there forever. He is permanently there, right in the holy of holies, and he is permanently interceding for the people of God. He is permanently saying, in effect, to the Father, "Look at my blood. Remember what I did for those people. Don't look at their sins. Grievous though they are just look at me and remember what I did upon that cross to pay for their sins".

So how is Jesus able to save so perfectly? Because he is a High Priest who made this one perfect sacrifice of himself and now is always interceding for the people of God.

4. Whom Jesus is able to save

Who is it then that Jesus is able to save so completely and so perfectly? Our text tells us: "He is able to save completely those who come to God through him." These are the ones Jesus is able to save: those who come to God through him. If you will come to God through Jesus Christ you will be saved completely and for ever.

If you are going to come to God you are going to need to leave everything else behind. You cannot bring your baggage with you. You have to shed everything else to come to God.

You have to shed first of all your unbelief. You cannot come to God if you do not believe in him. You must believe in his existence. You must believe his word. You cannot know him if you do not believe. Do you know what unbelief is? Unbelief is basically "blinking" God. That is one of the worst insults you can give somebody. Somebody says "hello" to you, and you walk straight past him, and you treat him as if he were not there. That is exactly what unbelief is. It is treating the great almighty God, the creator of heaven and earth, the sustainer of all things, as if he is just simply not there.

You need to also leave behind your love of sin. You cannot have Jesus and sin at

the same time. It is either Jesus or it is sin but you cannot have both. You cannot determinedly live a life of sin and yet have salvation. The two are incompatible. You will not inherit the kingdom of God if you do not leave your life of sin. You have to turn away from it. You say "I don't have the power." Do not worry about that. Jesus will give you the power to live a new life but you have got to come to that point where you abandon your sin and you say to Jesus, "I don't want to be in sin anymore. I don't want to live that old way of life any longer." Until you do that you cannot come to God.

You also need to leave behind the approval of this world. You cannot truly come to God if you want to be friends with this world. The two are incompatible with one another. If you love this world you will not love God. You have to forsake this world and you have to forsake approval of your family members who are not believers as well. You will never be friends with God if you want to keep in with your unbelieving family members.

You also have to abandon your pride. God will not accept proud people in his kingdom. What is it that God is looking for? He is looking for those who have a "broken and contrite spirit" before him.

And you have to leave your self-righteousness. You cannot come to God if you are still pretending to be somebody who is worthy of eternal life.

So leave all of those things behind. You say "So what do I bring to God then?" You bring your empty and broken heart and you say to God, "I am a sinner. I have got nothing I can offer you. I am absolute wretch. I am morally bankrupt."

Notice also that our text says, "He is able to save completely those who come to God *through him*." We must come to God through Jesus Christ. You cannot know the power of Christ to save if you do not come to God through Jesus Christ. This is where many go wrong. They try to have God without Jesus. They try to have religion without Christ. You cannot do that. You cannot know God without Christ because he is the only way to God. Jesus said in John 14:6, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Why? Because he is the only High Priest. He is the only one who has provided a valid sacrifice for sins. He *is* the sacrifice. Without that sacrifice there is no payment for sin. There is no way that the holy and almighty God will have anything to do with you or with anyone else without a sacrifice having been

made for your sin. It is only through Christ that any one of us can come to God.

So as you come to God your plea must be not what you have done, or your goodness, but that Jesus died for sinners. That is the only thing you can look to. So come to God through Jesus Christ.

And when you come, what do you do? You pray. It is by prayer that a person receives salvation. You say "What do I pray?" Well first of all start off by telling God how bad you are. Confess all your sins to God. Go through your whole life and bring to God everything you have done that can remember which has broken his laws. Tell him all about it. You may say "But he knows about my whole life." No matter. Confess all your sins to him, then ask to be forgiven, on account of what Jesus has done. Then receive forgiveness from God, through faith in Jesus. Make him your own God and Saviour through Jesus.

I realise that this booklet may be read by a number different people in varying different spiritual states. There may someone who reads this who says, "This is a good message. I'll do something about it one day." If that is your attitude then I would say to you that you are in a very dangerous state, because, if you think you can do something about it one day, there is a danger you will never act. You need to act today. Do not put it off. The great danger if you do not act today is that gradually your heart will harden and the word will lose its urgency with you. Other things will "crowd out" your life, and you will lose the opportunity to believe in Christ. And anyway what have you got to gain by putting it off? Every day lived outside of a right relationship with God is a lost day. And is it not a terrible insult to God to delay? Is it not a terrible sin? God is offering you this wonderful salvation and you say, "I might take you up on that one day." Is that how to treat God? If you have this attitude I urge you to turn from it and to come to Christ today.

Maybe there is someone who will read this who is very deeply aware of his sin. You know you are a sinner. You know that sin is very powerful in your life. You wish you could be free of it, but you just cannot break free. You know you deserve Hell, and the one thing you cannot understand is why God has not sent you there already. You wish you could be saved, but you feel as though you are too far gone to be saved. If this is your condition, then take heart! Christ is able to save completely and forever those who come to God through him. No matter what sin you have committed it can and will be forgiven if you come to God through Christ. No matter how powerful particular sins may be in your life,

their power will be broken if you come to Christ. Leave you old life, come to Christ, trust him, and be saved.

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