

Able to Save to the Uttermost 01 Because of His Character

by James R. Cochrane

The Lord Jesus is able to save to the uttermost because of his holy, harmless, and undefiled character, which makes him the perfect high priest to save humanity.

Duration: 41:55

Scripture: Isaiah 42:1-3, Hebrews 2:17, Hebrews 7:1-3

Topics: "Jesus Character", "Moral Righteousness"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of the moral character of Jesus in his ability to save people. He starts by sharing a story from the book of Genesis about a mysterious person called Melchizedek. The speaker emphasizes that Jesus is able to face and overcome the enemy because of his moral character. He also mentions that in our current age, moral standards are being lowered, highlighting the significance of Jesus' righteousness. The sermon concludes by mentioning that the next topics to be discussed are the greatness of Jesus and his unique priesthood.

Transcript

We turn this evening to Hebrews chapter 7, and we will begin our reading with verse 1. Hebrews chapter 7 and verse 1, For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him, Hebrews chapter 7, and now verse 2, to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being by interpretation king of righteousness, and after that also king of Salem, which is king of peace, without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest continually. Now consider how great this man was, and to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils. Verse 24, But this man, because he continueth ever hath an unchangeable priesthood, wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens. May God speak to us this evening through his word, and add his blessing to our meditation in this portion of the scriptures. I would like to suggest to you tonight that we live in an age in which the voice of Christianity is being heard in the midst of many other voices.

I can remember over 30 years ago that in the Dominican Republic, missionaries as we know them represented about the only foreigners who came with a religious message. That is not now true in our country and in many other parts of the world. There is a very dynamic Islamic missionary movement spreading around the world today, backed up by a great deal of wealth.

There is a continuing fascination on the part of those of us who belong to the Western world with the religions from the Eastern world. It is very strange to understand that for their bankruptcy can be seen in the conditions that exist in many of the nations from where these religions come. Yet today there is great fascination, even in the Dominican Republic, for religions that come from the Orient.

Today in my room in the Lodge, I heard on one of your radio stations a program on astrology broadcast every day to Orient people about their lives in connection with the stars. They must have a great number of listeners, I judge, from the program that I heard today. Interest in supernatural things is greater than ever before.

Films and books, many stories, many people believe that they have actually seen things from outer space. There is a great deal of interest in things beyond this world. Now, in all of this confusion and superstition and deception, we who are Christians really believe that the Lord Jesus is the only Savior of mankind.

Many people look at us and they call us arrogant. Many religions in the world are quite happy to accept the Lord Jesus as one of many religions and many religious leaders and many forms of salvation. But when you say that he is the only Savior, then we are accused of being arrogant.

But in all of this confusion and superstition and deception, you read in the portion that we have read this evening, down in verse 26, "...for such a high priest became us." One of the translations reads, "...he is the high priest that we need indeed." Only the Lord Jesus is the Savior, and this is seen in verse 25, where you read, "...wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost to come unto God by him." This is the very essence of the Christian message. First, that the Lord Jesus is able to save. That is not a superficial statement.

Of all sources of possible help, there is only one who is able to save. I was at a camp in British Columbia many years ago, a camp called Camp Anvil Island. We were at a camp with boys, and I remember the last night there was a meeting around the bonfire and some of the boys gave their testimonies.

When an hour had gone by, the camp director said to the young fellows, he said, "'Well now, if no one else has anything to say, we'll have a parting word of prayer and we'll go to our camp.' The little boy put up his hand and said, "'Sir, I would like to say something.' So the camp director said, "'Well, what would you like to tell us?' He said, "'Sir, I was saved twice today.'" That made most of the boys sit up and take notice. So the camp director asked him how he had been saved twice. He said, "'This afternoon we went up the mountain behind the camp, up a very steep incline full of rocks.

We went up very carefully, and following our leader, we tried every stone first, and then we put our weight on it, and thus we went up the mountainside. I tried a stone, and then when I put my weight on it, it slipped and I fell and began to go down the mountainside. And my counselor was right there and he stretched out his hand and he grabbed me by the arm and he saved me." That was the first time.

Some of the boys listening began to smile a little, and the camp director said, "'Well, tell us, son, when was the second time?' He said, "'We came down from the mountain and we were all tired and perspiring and

we went swimming. I don't know how to swim,' he said, "but we were so anxious to get into the water that I threw myself in farther than I thought, and I wasn't able to touch bottom, and I gave one yell. And the counselor was right there and he grabbed me by the hair and he pulled me out.

He said, "That was the second time I was saved." Well, by this time a number of the boys were giggling, and one little boy said to another, "He doesn't know what it means to be saved, but I want to assure you tonight that the little boy knew exactly what it means to be saved." He didn't know anything about the dimensions of spiritual danger and salvation, but he knew what it meant to be saved. Twice he had been in danger and twice he had been saved. Those of us who are older know by the experiences of life and by the word of God just how real are the spiritual dangers that surround us.

The power of sin and death. The Bible says there is only one, in spite of all the messages we hear, who is able to save. And he not only is able to save, but he can save to the uttermost.

That is a beautiful word, and all you have to do is to compare some of the translations to see how rich is its meaning. I share with you some of the translations tonight. He is able to save completely, absolutely, for all time, fully and completely.

And one has written in a paraphrase, he can guarantee their total and final salvation. So he not only can save, but he saves in the most wonderful way. It is a full and final salvation, when finally he will bring us into the presence of God, totally glorified to share in the glory of the Lord Jesus forever.

This is not a vain boast, and I speak tonight to mature Christians, but we must go back and remember we are not arrogant. This is not a vain boast. In the Bible, God very carefully lays the foundation on which the Lord Jesus stands as the only Savior and one who can save to the uttermost.

In Hebrews chapter 7, there are three reasons given why the Lord Jesus is able to save and why he can save to the uttermost. We will take one tonight, one tomorrow night, and the last one, Lord willing, on Friday night. First of all, and we will go over the subject carefully tonight, in our age all moral standards are below.

One reason why the Lord Jesus is able to save and save to the uttermost is because of his moral character, because of who the Lord Jesus is. We start with the story of a very mysterious person called Melchizedek. The story itself is found in the book of Genesis chapter 14.

You need not turn to it this evening, but in Genesis you find there are four invading kings from the east. They come sweeping into the Transjordan area and they carry all before them. A great number of kings, five in number, are put under their domination, and for twelve years they serve the four invading kings from the east.

In the thirteenth year they rebel, and in the fourteenth year the four invading kings return from the east, sweeping even a wider circle through the Transjordan area, carrying everything before them. Then they finally surround the five rebellious kings, and they go to battle, and the kings from the east win. The kings from the Transjordan territory flee in despair before the power and might of these invading kings.

One of the kings who was defeated was the king of Sodom, and as he was defeated, the invading kings from the east took all that he had, including Lot, the nephew of Abraham, and his family and his goods, and they were all carried away as part of the spoils of their time in the Transjordan area. Jesus brought to Abraham, and Abraham gathered together 318 of his choice men beyond them, and under cover of night

he finds the four kings from the east, and he destroys them. Then he takes all of their spoils, which must have represented a tremendous wealth, and he made his way back home.

On the way home he was met by Melchizedek, a very strange and mysterious person that appears in Genesis chapter 14. We don't know very much about Melchizedek, but what we know about him is of vital importance, and our subject tonight is his character as the background for the character of the Lord Jesus. All we know about his character, which as far as this writing to the Hebrews is concerned, is sufficient.

Any more would be superfluous. All we know is that his name was Melchizedek, which means King of Righteousness, and that he was the king of Salem, which later became known as Jerusalem. Salem means peace, and Jerusalem means foundation of peace, or city of peace.

Or some have recently thought it means vision of peace, but the basic thought is peace. These are almost political slogans in our contemporary world today. In the Dominican Republic we have recently gone through a political campaign.

The president in office lost the election, but his slogan was, Balaguer es la paz. His name is Balaguer, Balaguer is the peace. The man who won the election, President Guzman, now in office, spoke a great deal about the need for righteousness and justice in government.

Justice, righteousness, peace. Right now, with slogans in the Dominican Republic, and you hear them mentioned all around the nations of the world today. Now, in ancient history there was a man who in his person was good and righteous.

The result was that his kingdom was a kingdom of peace. In the Dominican Republic we have unrighteousness in high places, and we have people who are confused and frustrated and who send a great deal of indignation. In other words, there's a lack of peace, for there's a lack of justice and righteousness in the ruling powers.

It was not like that in the kingdom of Melchizedek. In his person he was a good and righteous man, and his kingdom was characterized by peace. Isaiah chapter 32 deals with the subject in detail.

Verse 1, "...a king shall reign in righteousness." Verse 17, "...and the work of righteousness is peace, and the effect of righteousness is quietness and assurance forever." What is lacking in the world today is precisely peace and quietness and assurance forever. It's missing because there is no righteousness in the high places of government around the world. But Melchizedek was a good man.

He was a righteous man in his character and person, and thus he was the king of Salem of peace. His kingdom was characterized by peace. As we leave Melchizedek and we come to the person of the Lord Jesus, I would like to share with you this evening the message of verse 26 of chapter 7 of Hebrews, where you read, "...for such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled." Now, those three words deal with the person and the character of the Lord Jesus, and we must not rush over them this evening.

For again, I repeat, everything round about us today minimizes the importance of holiness, of morality. The Lord Jesus, in order to be able to save and to save to the uttermost, must be without blemish in his person and his character. So this high priest that becomes us is precisely holy, harmless, and undefiled.

It has often been mentioned holy Godward, undefiled selfward, and the middle word is the word in the King James Version, harmless, which is better translated in other translations as guileless. That is

manward. Godward holy, manward guileless, selfward undefiled.

Now, in connection with the word holy, it is used of God. A number of times in the Bible I've jotted down only one reference to share with you this evening. "...who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name, for thou only art holy." That is a synonym in that verse for God himself.

He is the Holy One. It is used of the Lord Jesus in Psalm 16, and then mentioned in the Acts twice, "...because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption." The Lord Jesus is the Holy One of God. But in the Old Testament, the word is used technically of that which is separated to God, and I suggest that it is in that sense that this word is used in Hebrews.

He is holy in his person, and it is fully and wholly separated and dedicated to God. Remember, this deals with the Lord Jesus here in the world. In Hebrews, in connection with his coming and his ministry, it is stated that through the eternal Spirit he offered himself without spot to God.

Peter quotes from Isaiah, and he says concerning the Lord Jesus that he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Then the Lord Jesus himself said, "...my meat, my sustenance, is to do the will of him that sent me." All through his life, in every moment, we witness one who is fully and completely separated joyfully and spontaneously to the will of God. Remember the temptation, as we usually say, although it has been pointed out that the more accurate word is the testing of the Lord Jesus.

For six weeks in the desert, he underwent great and severe testing, and the Lord Jesus never yielded. The testing never became a temptation, and temptation never led to sin. But he was tested as no one else has ever been tested.

It has been suggested that all the testings that the Lord Jesus received are precisely those which Israel received, and as a nation did not stand the test and yielded and fell in sin. In the generation of the Lord Jesus, the Herodians, their policy, their political policy was to give food to the people, keep them quiet and submissive by giving them food from time to time. I've seen that in the Dominican Republic.

The President, who is now out of office, many times passing his home, I've seen long lines of people, numbering sometimes into the thousands, waning all through the hours of the night. And then in the early morning they go by the gate one by one, and by a representative of the President they were given a little bag of food. That never met their basic needs, never dealt with their real problems in life.

It was simply a way to try and keep the people quiet and submissive, and of course it didn't work. He lost the election on May 16. The Herodians wanted just simply to give the people food from time to time and keep them quiet so that they would have their way and power in the nation of Israel.

The devil comes to the Lord Jesus and suggests he turns the stones into bread to satisfy his appetite. To do that would have been to move out of the will of God and to do that which was contrary to his will. And the Lord Jesus, whose meat was to do the will of him that sent him, would not do that, and he stood fast in the testing.

The Sadducees in their generation with the Lord Jesus wanted to cooperate with the Roman authority and that will maintain their power and influence in the nation of Israel. Satan comes to the Lord Jesus and he suggests, shows him all the nations of the world their power and their glory, and offers them to the Lord Jesus. And the Lord Jesus said no.

Again he was tested, and he did not yield to the temptation from the evil one. The Pharisees believed that through direct intervention of God the problem of Israel would be solved, but they had their own concepts about that miraculous intervention. Satan says to the Lord Jesus, throw yourself off the pinnacle of the temple and they'll believe and follow you, for God will protect you through divine intervention and they'll see how great and marvelous you are.

And he resisted the testing and the temptation of the evil one. The Lord Jesus in all of this was tested. Notice that when we are tested, often we yield, and in yielding we fall into sin.

And because we yield, we never exhaust the full force of the testing. We never feel its last final thrust, for we yield and we fall in sin. The Lord Jesus never yielded.

Thus in all testing or temptation, the Lord Jesus felt the full thrust, the intensity of the testing, right to the last strain, and he never yielded. For God-ward, the Lord Jesus was fully, completely and fully dedicated to God in active obedience to the will of God. Now, the second word that is mentioned is the word harmless, and I've already suggested to you that the word perhaps should be guileless.

You remember that the Lord Jesus said about Nathaniel when he saw him under the tree, he said, Behold an Israelite in whom there is no guile. The Lord Jesus then, in his dealings with the people of Israel and all mankind, there was no guile. That is, there were no selfish interests.

I'm a visitor at Park of the Palms, and I have a little radio, and I listen to the news from time to time, and I judge that in this general area there is a political campaign, and I've heard some of the politicians and I've heard some of their promises. It is characteristic of most politicians to make great promises. Not many of them, thank God for some who do, but not many of them fulfill their promises.

The giving of a promise is just the way to power, and they make the promise for they want the power. There is a selfish interest in giving the promise. In all that the Lord Jesus did with those that surrounded him, there were no selfish interests.

He did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many. I emphasize once more, no selfish interest in the Lord Jesus. In Philippians chapter 2 it is stated that he existed in the form of God and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation.

He came down into our world as a servant, and the word really is slave. The basic thought in Philippians 2 suggests that the Lord Jesus did not cling to his prerogatives and rights, but was willing to come down into our world to serve, even as a slave, in order to help us. There were no selfish interests.

He was guileless, manworthy in his relationship with men and women. And Peter, like concerning the Lord Jesus, who when he was reviled, reviled not again when he suffered. He threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.

The climax I suggest to you is Calvary, and we go back so often to Calvary. And you remember again that the Lord Jesus misunderstood from the cross, cried from the innermost part of his being, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. There was no guile in the Lord Jesus.

It was not the way they thought it was. He had come to his own. By his own he was rejected, but he only came to serve and to help and to save those that were in need.

No wonder God said from heaven, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, giving his witness as to the character and person of the Lord Jesus, holy and guileless. But the last word, we must dwell on it for a moment, he was undefined, so unlike all of us here this evening. I'd like to note with you some of those portions in Hebrews which are just a little difficult to understand.

I've jotted down some of the verses, and I share them with you. In chapter 2 you read, In all things it behoves him to be made like unto his brethren. Thus we establish right away that the Lord Jesus went through the experiences of life that are common to us.

I've lived in the Dominican Republic over 30 years. I am not a Dominican. I was not born there.

I am not a Dominican citizen. I love the Dominican people, but because I'm not part of the race, there are things I understand that I have not yet grasped about the Dominican people. Sometimes I have sat with them, even in recent times, talking about certain problems, and they'll smile and say, Mr. Cochran, you don't understand, for you aren't really one of us.

That can never be said of the Lord Jesus. It doesn't matter what problem you have. It became him to be made like unto his brethren in all points, and the Lord Jesus went through all the experiences of our lives, and he knows all about it.

In that experience, you go on and read in Hebrews that he was made perfect through suffering. That is, as the captain of our salvation, he was made perfect through suffering. In chapter 1, even though he is the brightness of the glory of God and the very image of the substance of God, yet to be fully qualified as our salvation, he had to be made perfect through suffering.

The word perfect means fully qualified. How? By the experience of suffering and death. To become one of us down in our world with our same nature but without sins, to understand all that we are and all that we experience.

God opens his heart, and he will not work by proxy. It became God that in bringing many sons to glory, the captain of their salvation, to be made perfect through suffering. He came down and was born into our world, went through all the experiences of life, including suffering and then death, and became fully qualified to be the captain of our salvation.

That is, the road from this world of sorrow right up to the presence of God where there is the eternal glory is a road that must be opened by the captain, the pathfinder of our salvation. He goes through first and we follow in the grace of God. Thus he became fully qualified through the suffering and through the experience of death.

Then again, in Hebrews, you read that son, though he was, he learned obedience by the things which he suffered. Now, this is not an ordinary son of God. I speak most respectfully.

This is the unique, own son of God. And yet, son, though he was, he learned obedience by the things which he suffered. Now, we learn obedience by the unpleasant things that happen when we are disobedient.

It was not that way with the Lord Jesus, for he was never disobedient. In connection with the Lord Jesus, I share this verse with you from Isaiah, "The Lord God hath opened my ears, and I was not rebellious, neither turned the way back. I gave my back to the smiter, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the

hair.

I hid not my face from shame and sinning." How then did the Lord Jesus learn obedience? He learned that in this world, to obey the will of God brought into his life, as it does into our lives in a lesser measure, ridicule and ill-treatment. And this verse that comes from the prophecy speaks of the shame that the Lord Jesus suffered. He was the object of open ridicule and ill-treatment.

Why? Because he did the will of God. But by doing the will of God in perfection, he learned the cost of obedience. And son, though he was, he learned obedience by the things which he suffered.

Then again, another verse from Hebrews reads as follows, "He himself hath suffered being tempted.' And again, he was at all points tempted, like as we are, yet without sin." While we very briefly referred to the temptation and testing of the Lord Jesus, I simply repeat that because he never yielded, he experienced in a degree that we never experience the full intensity of testing right to the last strain. But he held firm, and he never yielded in the testing or temptation. Thus the Lord Jesus, who went through all the experiences that are common to all mankind, he emerged undefiled, selfless.

In our case, the contaminations of the world have stained us and lingered with us. The Lord Jesus went through them all, and he emerged undefiled. Godward he was hoped.

Manward he was guiled. Selfless he was absolutely undefiled. That is why the Lord Jesus, who unlike the priests of the Old Testament down in verse 27, first of all offered sacrifices for their own sins and then for the sins of the people, the Lord Jesus had no personal sin or guilt.

Again in Hebrews, he was without spot. In that way he offered himself to God, but his blood is precious blood. And then again, he knew no sin.

So Paul writes in 2 Corinthians, he becomes sin for us, and the Lord Jesus, taking our place and carrying our sin, then places on us his righteousness, which is the righteousness of God. Now, as I close this evening, I want to read to you once more from the Old Testament a very important and beautiful phrase in Isaiah 42. Listen carefully as I read these verses.

God said, Behold my servant, whom I have sold my intellect, in whom my soul delighted, I have put my spirit upon him. He shall bring forth righteousness to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.

A bruised reed shall he not break, and a smoking flack shall he not quench. He shall bring forth righteousness unto the truth. Now, notice these following words.

He shall not fail, nor be discouraged, till he hath set righteousness in the earth. Now, righteousness is conspicuous by its absence in the world today. But God says, Behold my servant, and then he adds, He shall not fail, nor be discouraged, till he hath set righteousness in the earth.

What is the answer, then, to the promise and the fact that we do not see righteousness in the world today? The Lord Jesus said, Before I went to the cross, I have glorified thee on earth. I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. There is one work, then, which is finished, and I suggest that is the groundwork on which the Lord Jesus, in his second coming, will introduce righteousness on a cosmic scale.

The work was done at Calvary where he became the sin bearer, where because of his moral character and person he was the only one who could die for. You remember the old hymns? There was no other good enough to pay the price of sin. He only could unlock the gate of heaven and let us in.

That's why the Lord Jesus was able to save and save to the end. There was no one else who in his person was holy who could pay the price of our sins and open the door into the presence of God. Thus the foundation was done, the work was finished.

But the Lord Jesus returns and Peter speaks of that coming day, and he says, We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. Righteousness, constituted by its absence today, will be the very atmosphere we breathe in that new creation when the Lord Jesus returns in his power and his glory. In the meantime, when you are justified, you have peace with God.

Melchizedek was a righteous man. His kingdom was the kingdom of peace. The Lord Jesus in his person is righteous.

Those who know him are made righteous and they live in peace. That peace is not tranquility of spirit. That peace is the peace that refers to the state of peace with God.

We were at war with God in evil and wicked works. The Lord Jesus went to the cross and took our place. There is now a state of peace, and those who come to the Lord Jesus and receive him, they are made righteous and they are brought into a state of peace with God, and from that state of peace flows quietness of spirit.

Peace, as we often use the word, commonly. Now, in closing tonight, remember, the servant of Jehovah did not take. He is not discouraged.

He has done the work. He waits for the Lord to return, and then what the world longs for today, righteousness and peace. There is a king who will reign in righteousness, and the work of righteousness shall be peace and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever.

Thus I conclude by saying once more, it is because of the moral character of the Lord Jesus, without fault, without blame, that he is able to save and praise to the enemy. Tomorrow night our subject is the greatness of the Lord Jesus and Friday night his unique priesthood. So turn to hymn number 51, and we will sing a verse or two of this hymn, especially the second verse, which reads, There in righteousness his transcendent, lo, he doth in heaven appear, shows the blood of his atonement as thy title to be there.

Let us stand and sing verses 2, 4, and 6 of hymn number 51. Shall we stand and we'll sing verse 2. There in righteousness his transcendent, lo, he doth in heaven appear, shows the blood of his atonement as thy title to be there. May the Savior Jesus Christ be glory both now and forever.

Amen. You may be seated.

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