

“FOR THE LAW APPOINTS MEN IN THEIR WEAKNESS AS HIGH PRIESTS, BUT THE WORD OF THE OATH, WHICH CAME LATER THAN THE LAW, APPOINTS A SON WHO HAS BEEN MADE PERFECT FOREVER.”

HEBREWS 7:23-28

HE ALWAYS LIVES TO MAKE INTERCESSION

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

He *is* risen, not just raised once upon a time, far from here. “He’s risen, He’s risen, Christ Jesus, the Lord; / He opened death’s prison, the incarnate, true Word” (LSB 480). He is risen, so the prison will stay burst open. He is risen, so His priesthood never fails. He always lives to make intercession. The forgiveness He has won is once for all, perfect forever. It *is* finished.

The old covenant was a band-aid. Where things were broken and life was flowing out of us, it came and curbed the disaster. It set up priests—themselves dying sinners—to give a partial picture of what was to come. It required regular refreshing.

The new covenant is a ring attached to a promise. Where a law huffs and puffs and tries to scare you away from doing ill, a promise hopes for the future. A real promise not only wishes for a possible future but secures it. A true promise is a mind made up, a certain ability to bring all to pass.

We don’t think twice about ripping open a band-aid. We stay up nights dreaming and wondering about giving or receiving a ring.

The old sacrifices and priests and law kept replacing the band-aids of sin, a wound that was not healing. The oath of God in Christ Jesus swears eternal fidelity and makes us new. We are His bride, His body raised with Him to the right hand of the Father. We are beloved, holy and pure.

Alleluia! He is risen.

He is risen, and we are His. Not just promised for a future salvation in a heaven far away, we are today declared clean, perfect forever.

By Rev. Daniel Guagenti

WE PRAY

O where is your sting, death? We fear you no more; / Christ rose, and now open is fair Eden’s door. / For all our transgressions His blood does atone; / Redeemed and forgiven, we now are His own. Amen

IT IS FINISHED

THE FULFILLMENT OF THE PRIESTHOOD



LENTEN DEVOTIONS ON

URIAH THE PRIEST
THE BETHEL ALTAR
MIRIAM
HE ALWAYS LIVES TO MAKE INTERCESSION

PASSOVER
“IT IS FINISHED”
A PRIESTLY GUARD

“URIAH THE PRIEST DID ALL THIS, AS KING AHAZ COMMANDED.”

2 KINGS 16:1-20

REPLACING THE COPY WITH THE ORIGINAL

Sometimes earthly priests fail. Sometimes they too get overwhelmed by fears in this life, and sometimes they find it easier to just go with the flow. Uriah was an example of this. He was priest in the days of Ahaz, one of the most wicked kings of Judah. Ahaz got help from Assyria (the most wicked nation), and then he decided to reform worship in their manner. Ahaz removed Solomon's altar, turned it into his private divination tool, and replaced it with an altar to foreign gods. The temple was a copy of the heavenly places; Ahaz would rather copy Assyrian places. Uriah, the priest, did all this at the king's whim, failing to obey his true Lord's commands.

All Christians, but especially leaders and clergy, are to pay attention not to the trends of the day or what is popular or what seems expedient, but rather to the Word of God. All sin and all temptations strive to drive us away from God's Word. The devil desperately desires to distract us, especially from the Word that brings us into the heavenly places, showing God's grace.

The Son of Man comes down from the heavenly places and is made flesh. He is the true High Priest, never following the whims of tyrants or the shouts of the mob. He even prays, “Not my will be done,” accomplishing the will of the Father in winning your salvation. The old, defiled temple is necessarily replaced with the pure temple of Christ's own Body. This glorious temple was restored in full on the third day to give us salvation.

By Rev. Eric Brown

WE PRAY

Grant courage to Your people, O Lord, that we might remain steadfast in and attentive to Your Word. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

“WE REMEMBERED HOW THAT IMPOSTOR SAID...”

MATTHEW 27:62-66

BREAKING THE SABBATH SLEEPING ON THE JOB

The chief priests knew. They knew Jesus claimed that He would die and rise. While over and over the disciples ignored or refused to understand when Jesus told them about His impending death and resurrection, the bigwigs in Jerusalem knew. And they remembered. Instead of even waiting to see, they were determined to make sure that no resurrection happened. They posted guards to make the tomb secure.

They knew, but they didn't want that ultimate sacrifice accepted. They knew the Scriptures. They knew the prophecies of the Messiah, but they wanted something else. They wanted to continue in their own positions of power and prestige. They wanted their dominance to continue. They fought tooth and nail to prevent Jesus from being the Messiah that He proclaimed He was.

Of course, all their scheming could never stop Jesus from rising. The guards proved no obstacle when Sunday dawned. The lies they spread afterward were hardly more effective than the guards. All the vain protests of men still today, all the strange plans and persecutions, cannot stop Jesus from being your crucified and risen Lord.

We see many opponents in the world around us today. What is sometimes most shocking is that these are not ignorant opponents of the faith who don't know any better. No, often it is people who should know better who try to undercut the Gospel. But even as they try to discourage us, we remember that none of this stops Jesus from being for us, for our good and salvation.

By Rev. Eric Brown

WE PRAY

Make us not only to know Your Word, O God, but to believe it and be directed by it, so that we would enjoy Your blessings of both body and soul. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

“WHEN JESUS HAD RECEIVED THE SOUR WINE, HE SAID, ‘IT IS FINISHED,’ AND HE BOWED HIS HEAD AND GAVE UP HIS SPIRIT.”

JOHN 19:16-30

“IT IS FINISHED”

With these words our Savior announced that all the requirements of Law have been fulfilled, the enemy has been defeated, your redemption has been accomplished, all the work necessary for your salvation has been completed, and the debt of your sin has been paid in full. In Greek, it’s not even three words—it’s one! It’s pronounced, “*Tetelestai*.” Here’s a word you’ll want to remember.

On Sunday mornings, as you and I confess our sins, we hear the familiar announcement from John, “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:8-9). God purifies us from every one of them. Nevertheless, the devil works hard to make you doubt that these wonderful words could include a sinner like you. The adversary wants you to continue in sorrow, grief, and indelible shame. However, Jesus, the perfect priest and sacrifice, assures you that there is no mistake about it—your salvation is complete. *Tetelestai!*

This announcement from the cross, this word, is in the perfect tense. That means it describes a completed action whose consequences are ongoing and continue into the future. That means when the devil accuses you of sins which you have confessed and for which you have God’s absolution, he is hounding you with a debt that has already been paid. That’s when you want to remember our Savior’s announcement from the cross. Christ’s word silences the accuser. *Tetelestai!*

Everything that Jesus had come to accomplish in love for you, all that the Father had given Him to do, is complete. In faith, you have forgiveness of sins. You have been reconciled to God. With His body and blood as the sacrifice, Jesus accomplished this. With His body and blood in the Lord’s Supper, He assures you of it. *Tetelestai!* It is finished!

By Rev. David Tannahill

WE PRAY

Precious Jesus, priest and sacrifice, thank You for bringing peace to my heart as I prepare to celebrate the resurrection.

“AND HE SHALL SACRIFICE ON YOU THE PRIESTS OF THE HIGH PLACES WHO MAKE OFFERINGS ON YOU.”

1 KINGS 13:1-10

JOSIAH’S SACRIFICE ON BETHEL’S ALTAR

As foretold in I Kings 13, Josiah destroyed the altar set up at Bethel. He desecrated it by digging up the priests who had served there and burning their bones on the altar. By this, Josiah ensured that no one could ever use Bethel as a place of worship again.

What Josiah does is an extreme act. You may assume that some perverse religion provoked this reaction.

But Bethel was not used for the worship of some terrible god. The altar at Bethel was used to worship the real God, the Lord. So why did Josiah, a man of God, do this?

For a complete answer, you will need to read Israel’s history. But Josiah’s act makes one point clear: God wants to be worshiped in the way He chooses.

For Israel, the altar at Bethel was more convenient than the altar in Jerusalem. It was easier to worship God closer to home. Like Israel, we also tend to seek the paths of least resistance. We prefer things that are convenient for us.

But the easier way is not always God-pleasing. God still wants to be worshiped as He chooses. The temple in Jerusalem is long gone, and God has not given us any particular place, or time, or style of music. Yet God has still given us a way to worship. God has given us Baptism, and Holy Communion, and the Scriptures. Especially, God gave us Jesus. Jesus is the temple, the sacrifice, and the priest whom God has given for our worship.

We might think of “better” ways to worship God—ways that make more sense to us or seem easier. But God has given us Christ. In Him, and Him only, do we worship God correctly.

By Rev. Jonathan Mueller

WE PRAY

Holy Father, lead us to the altar of Jesus, that our worship may always be acceptable to you. Amen.

“SING TO THE LORD, FOR HE HAS TRIUMPHED GLORIOUSLY; THE HORSE AND HIS RIDER HE HAS THROWN INTO THE SEA.”

EXODUS 15:1-21

MIRIAM

Parents often brag about their children. Not many parents can compete with Amram and Jochebed. All three of their children—Aaron, Miriam, and Moses—served as priest, prophet, and more. Moses is a prophet like no other. He performed priestly functions as God called him. He also led the people. Aaron was the first High Priest and served for almost forty years. Miriam was a prophet, the first woman with this title.

Miriam’s song is her only recorded prophecy in Scripture (Ex. 15:20-21). She led the women in a song of praise and dancing. She acknowledged and celebrated the victory God won for His people.

We don’t know exactly what other prophecies or leadership role Miriam had. We simply know she had them. Micah 6:4 implies she was an important figure in Israel’s journey from Egypt to the Promised Land. Numbers 12 implies she had other prophecies. It is possible she watched over much of the song in and around the tabernacle. It is possible she received prophecies in visions, a Word praising God, or even predicting something that would happen in the future. Miriam reminds us that even though only men were called to be priests, women also served in the tabernacle and later Temple.

After the Lord’s victory Miriam sings, “Sing to the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider He has thrown into the sea.” This is what we do in God’s house. We sing to the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously. Our hymns proclaim His victory. We often connect the drowning of Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea to the waters of Baptism drowning all sin in us. The victory God brought at the Red Sea is a picture of the victory Jesus wins on the cross. He will bring this victory to completion when He returns.

By Rev. Matthew Brackman

WE PRAY

Let us sing songs of praise. Let us lift Your name on high. For You have triumphed over our enemies. You have set us free, and You will lead us home. Amen.

“IT WAS A NIGHT OF WATCHING BY THE LORD, TO BRING THEM OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT.”

EXODUS 12:1-51

PASSOVER

It cannot be overstated how important eating is in the Scriptures. The choice to reject God’s will comes through the eating of fruit from a tree. The priest of God Melchizedek meets Abraham with bread and wine. Abraham and Sarah greet the Lord at their tent by cooking a fattened calf and making cakes. The list goes on.

At the top of the list of Bible meals is the Passover. It is one of the most rushed; the Lord asks that everyone who eats it be “ready to go” as soon as it is over. It is also unusual in that the centerpiece of the meal is a lamb cooked to exacting specifications. Not boiled or fried but roasted. Not in parts, but whole. No leftovers. And it is not really a meal for the people by the people; it is, in God’s words, “the Lord’s Passover” (Ex. 12:11). While the angel of death passes through Egypt, God’s people will be eating a meal marking the Lord’s deliverance.

It is this Passover that Jesus and the disciples are eating together on the night in which He was betrayed. But the roasted lamb will no longer be the centerpiece. The new main course will be the body and blood of the Lamb of God Himself. Where the old Passover presaged the Old Covenant, this new meal would be a New Covenant in the blood of God’s own Son.

According to John’s Gospel, the disciples also eat in haste and then “hit the road” (John 14:31). Like the old Passover, this new Lord’s Supper prepares us for life in this world as God’s people. We gather to eat, then go out into a world where the angel of death seems to hover over everything. But we no longer have to flee from Pharaoh and his forces. We take our stand as those redeemed by the blood of the Lamb whose blood is in us and for us. This is our Passover.

By Rev. Charles St-Onge

WE PRAY

Father, may the angel of death Passover us as we journey through the shadows of the valleys of this world. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.