

Old Testament Reading: Deuteronomy 32:36–39

- ³⁶ The Lord will vindicate his people
and have compassion on his servants,
when he sees that their power is gone
and there is none remaining, bond or free.
- ³⁷ Then he will say, "Where are their gods,
the rock in which they took refuge,
who ate the fat of their sacrifices
and drank the wine of their drink offering?
Let them rise up and help you;
let them be your protection!
- ³⁹ "See now that I, even I, am he,
and there is no god beside me;
I kill and I make alive;
I wound and I heal;
and there is none that can deliver out of my hand."

Epistle: Philippians 2:5–11

⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Holy Gospel: Luke 23:1–56

¹ Then the whole company of them arose and brought him before Pilate. ² And they began to accuse him, saying, "We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ, a king." ³ And Pilate asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" And he answered him, "You have said so." ⁴ Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, "I find no guilt in this man." ⁵ But they were urgent, saying, "He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee even to this place."

⁶ When Pilate heard this, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. ⁷ And when he learned that he belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him over to Herod, who was himself in Jerusalem at that time. ⁸ When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he had long desired to see him, because he had heard about him, and he was hoping to see some sign done by him. ⁹ So he questioned him at some length, but he made no answer. ¹⁰ The chief priests and the scribes stood by, vehemently accusing him. ¹¹ And Herod with his soldiers treated him with contempt and mocked him. Then, arraying him in splendid clothing, he sent him back to Pilate. ¹² And Herod and Pilate became friends with each other that very day, for before this they had been at enmity with each other.

¹³ Pilate then called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, ¹⁴ and said to them, "You brought me this man as one who was misleading the people. And after examining him before you, behold, I did not find this man guilty of any of your charges against him. ¹⁵ Neither did Herod, for he sent him back to us. Look, nothing deserving death has been done by him. ¹⁶ I will therefore punish and release him."

¹⁸ But they all cried out together, "Away with this man, and release to us Barabbas"—¹⁹ a man who had been thrown into prison for an insurrection started in the city and for murder. ²⁰ Pilate addressed them once more, desiring to release Jesus,

²¹ but they kept shouting, "Crucify, crucify him!" ²² A third time he said to them, "Why, what evil has he done? I have found in him no guilt deserving death. I will therefore punish and release him." ²³ But they were urgent, demanding with loud cries that he should be crucified. And their voices prevailed. ²⁴ So Pilate decided that their demand should be granted. ²⁵ He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, for whom they asked, but he delivered Jesus over to their will.

²⁶ And as they led him away, they seized one Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the cross, to carry it behind Jesus. ²⁷ And there followed him a great multitude of the people and of women who were mourning and lamenting for him. ²⁸ But turning to them Jesus said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. ²⁹ For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!' ³⁰ Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us,' and to the hills, 'Cover us.' ³¹ For if they do these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?"

³² Two others, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. ³³ And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁴ And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And they cast lots to divide his garments. ³⁵ And the people stood by, watching, but the rulers scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!" ³⁶ The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine ³⁷ and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" ³⁸ There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews."

³⁹ One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!" ⁴⁰ But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? ⁴¹ And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." ⁴² And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." ⁴³ And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

⁴⁴ It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, ⁴⁵ while the sun's light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. ⁴⁶ Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last. ⁴⁷ Now when the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God, saying, "Certainly this man was innocent!" ⁴⁸ And all the crowds that had assembled for this spectacle, when they saw what had taken place, returned home beating their breasts. ⁴⁹ And all his acquaintances and the women who had followed him from Galilee stood at a distance watching these things.

⁵⁰ Now there was a man named Joseph, from the Jewish town of Arimathea. He was a member of the council, a good and righteous man, ⁵¹ who had not consented to their decision and action; and he was looking for the kingdom of God. ⁵² This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. ⁵³ Then he took it down and wrapped it in a linen shroud and laid him in a tomb cut in stone, where no one had ever yet been laid. ⁵⁴ It was the Day of Preparation, and the Sabbath was beginning. ⁵⁵ The women who had come with him from Galilee followed and saw the tomb and how his body was laid. ⁵⁶ Then they returned and prepared spices and ointments.

On the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment.



About the Cover: On Passion Sunday, we are soon reminded that the image of palm branches in hand will be replaced with hammer and nails. We see here what our sin has done to our Lord. But even greater still, we see how our King has come to save us by being lifted up on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins. So, on this day that combines celebration and crucifixion, we see in our Lord the King and Savior with blessing in His hands.



They crucified Him

St. John's Lutheran Church (LCMS)

8948 N 1900 Ave Geneseo, IL 61254

309-949-2516

April 10, 2022

Palm Sunday/ Sunday of the Passion

The congregation gathers in the narthex for the Procession of Palms. (If you do not desire to process in you may be seated in the nave immediately before the service.) During the hymn, the procession is lead by the cross followed by the pastor, then the children with their palms, and finally the congregation as a whole. The children walk to the front and place their palms before the chancel and then return to their families. Members of the congregation, upon entering the nave, may go directly to their pews.

Procession of Palms

Stand

Greeting

The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

P In the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

P Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.

C Hosanna to the Son of David.

Collect

P Let us pray.

Most merciful God, as the people of Jerusalem, with palms in their hands, gathered to greet Your dearly beloved Son when He came into His Holy City, grant that we may ever hail Him as our King and, when He comes again, may go forth to meet Him with trusting and steadfast hearts, and follow Him in the way that leads to eternal life; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Holy Gospel

John 12:12-19

¹²The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. ¹³So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" ¹⁴And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written,

¹⁵"Fear not, daughter of Zion;

behold, your king is coming,
sitting on a donkey's colt!"

¹⁶His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him. ¹⁷The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness. ¹⁸The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign. ¹⁹So the Pharisees said to one another, "You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after him."

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

P Let us go forth in peace,

C in the name of the Lord.

Processional Hymn 442 All Glory, Laud, and Honor

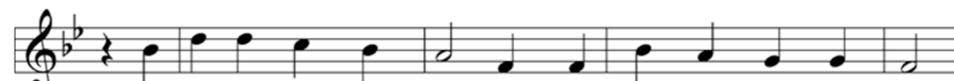
Refrain



All glo - ry, laud, and hon - or To You, Re-deem-er, King,

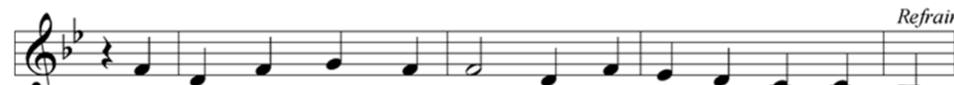


To whom the lips of chil - dren Made sweet ho - san - nas ring.



1 You are the King of Is - rael And Da - vid's roy - al Son,
2 The com - pa - ny of an - gels Is prais - ing You on high,
3 The mul - ti - tude of pil - grims With palms be - fore You went;
4 To You be - fore Your pas - sion They sang their hymns of praise;
5 As You re - ceived their prais - es, Ac - cept the prayers we bring,

Refrain



Now in the Lord's name com - ing, Our King and Bless - ed One.
And we with all cre - a - tion In cho - rus make re - ply.
Our praise and prayer and an - thems Be - fore You we pre - sent.
To You, now high ex - alt - ed, Our mel - o - dy we raise.
O Source of ev - 'ry bless - ing, Our good and gra - cious King.

When all have arrived at their places, the procession concludes with the following:

- P** Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.
- C** **Hosanna in the highest.**

Service of the Word

Introit

Psalm 24:7-10; antiphon: Psalm 118:26

Blessèd is he who comes in the name of the LORD!

We bless you from the house of the LORD.

Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.

Who is this King of glory?

The LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD, mighty in battle!

Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.

Who is this King of glory?

The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory!

**Blessèd is he who comes in the name of the LORD!
We bless you from the house of the LORD.**

Salutation and Collect of the Day

- P** The Lord be with you.
- C** **And also with you.**

P Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, You sent Your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, to take upon Himself our flesh and to suffer death upon the cross. Mercifully grant that we may follow the example of His great humility and patience and be made partakers of His resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

Sit

Old Testament Reading

Deuteronomy 32:36-39, on back of bulletin

- P** This is the Word of the Lord.
- C** **Thanks be to God.**

Gradual

Hebrews 9:12a, c, 15a; Psalm 111:9a

[Christ] entered once for all into the holy places, by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.

**Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant,
so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance.**

**He sent redemption to his people;
he has commanded his covenant forever.**

Epistle

Philippians 2:5-11, on back of bulletin

- P** This is the Word of the Lord.
- C** **Thanks be to God.**

Special Music

Jesus the Lord

Refrain:

Jesus. Jesus.

Let all creation bend the knee to the Lord.

Stand

Holy Gospel

Luke 23:1-56, on back of bulletin

- P** The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 23rd chapter.
- C** **Glory be to You, O Lord.**

After the reading

- P** This is the Gospel of the Lord.
- C** **Praise to You, O Christ.**

Apostles' Creed

C **I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life ✠ everlasting. Amen.**

Sit

Hymn of the Day 437 Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed

Sermon

Presentation of the Offering

Prayer of the Church

After each petition:

P Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

The prayers conclude:

P ...one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Lord's Prayer

C Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done on earth
as it is in heaven;
give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom
and the power and the glory
forever and ever. Amen.

Collect

P Let us pray.

O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Almighty, who for our sakes did humble Yourself and take upon Yourself the form of a servant, we implore You, rule us by Your Holy Spirit, that we may not be offended at Your lowliness, but heartily believe that by Your obedience even unto death upon the cross You have redeemed us from the wrath of God and from eternal death, and keep us steadfast in such faith and in Christian humility, that we also may finally be exalted with You and made partakers of Your glory, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Benediction

P The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

C Amen.

Hymn to Depart 422 On My Heart Imprint Your Image

Acknowledgements

Hymn 442 : Text and tune: Public domain

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Jesus the Lord

Text: Based on the Jesus Prayer; Philippians 2:5–11; Acts 17:28; Roc O'Connor, SJ, b. 1949. Music: Roc O'Connor, SJ; keyboard acc. by John Foley, S.J., b. 1939. Text and music © 1981, 1983, OCP.

ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH-LCMS

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**HEARING ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE
HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBLE**

Rev. Timothy Nerud **Pastor**
309-949-2516 (Office), 612-940-8138 (Cell), 309-949-2517 (Home)

Elder: Mike Dahl
Organist: Corinne Luckinbill
Greeter: Janet Bertso
Ushers: Dan Maeltzer Rollin Miller
Videographers: Joel Werling or Heidi Nerud

Today's Readings: Old Testament Reading: Deuteronomy 32:36-39
Epistle: Philippians 2:5-11
Gospel: Luke 23:1-56

WE PRAY: Holy God, who loved rebellious mankind so deeply as to give Your Son for us, we are so overwhelmed by the burden of His descent from glory to awesome isolation and so equally overwhelmed by the splendor of His return to exaltation that we, so loved, are without words to thank and praise You; in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, who with You and the Holy Spirit are one God with dominion over us forever. Amen

WELCOME TO ALL!

We are anxious to share with you the Christ-centered ministry at St. John's. Our Liturgy follows closely the pattern of Word and Lord's Supper handed down from the ancient Church. It is our hope that you will make the Church's life of prayer your own. If you have difficulty following our order of service, please ask someone sitting near you for assistance. We pray that you will receive rich spiritual blessings from your presence here. May the peace and power of our risen Christ be yours always.

IF YOU DESIRE, a visit or call from Pastor Nerud, please contact the church office (309-949-2516).

OFFICE HOURS

Terri's hours (Monday—Friday) 8 am—12 pm
Pastor's hours (Monday, Pastor's day off)
(Tuesday) 9 am—12 pm
(Thursday) 9 am—12 pm & 1 pm—4 pm
(Wednesday & Friday) please call ahead.

STREAM SERVICES <https://www.facebook.com/St.Johns.Geneseo/> and on the website: www.stjohnsgeneseo.org.

ATTENDANCE LAST SUNDAY

Sunday school—16 Adult Bible Class—15 Worship—76

OFFERING

Offering last Sunday \$3,667.00
Weekly 2022 Budget income needed \$4,084.71

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES AT ST JOHN'S

Today	8:45 am	SS/Adult & Youth Bible Study
	10:00 am	Divine Worship
Tuesday	1:30 pm	LWML
	6:30 pm	Council meeting
Wednesday	5:00 pm	Confirmation
Thursday	7:00 pm	Holy Thursday/Communion
Friday	12:00 pm	Tre Ore @ St. Matthews, Milan
	7:00 pm	Service of Darkness
Next Sunday	7:00 am	Easter Worship/Communion
	8:30 am	Easter Breakfast

*I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD."
Psalms 122:1*

LUKE 22:11 – "Tell the master of the house, 'The Teacher says to you, Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?'" Did Jesus really need this man's Upper Room? If the man had refused to let Jesus use it, would the work of salvation have been derailed? Of course not. But what an honor for the man who owned this room! It is the same with us. The Lord needs none of us, but what an honor it is for God to choose to use our generosity in the work of His Church.

PLEASE CHECK the attendance sheet for you and your family members, marking each present in worship and attending communion as applicable. **There is a place for visitors to sign their names at the end of the list.** Thank you for your help.

IMPORTANT REMINDER– Since the kitchen is being used more often by many in the congregation, please remember to keep the area under the steel curtain free from all objects when no one is present. This is part of the fire wall. The steel curtain closes automatically in the event of a fire in the building. There are also other guidelines found on a cabinet left of the microwaves.

EASTER BREAKFAST will be served immediately after Easter Sunday worship. Please sign the sheet on the table next to the coat room, **TODAY**, indicating how many will attend from your family. Please include the number of extended family or guests that may be attending with you. This will give the committee a good idea how much food will be needed.

THANK YOU to the many who volunteered their time and food to serve the Lenten suppers. It was greatly appreciated by all who enjoyed these meals.

THANK YOU to those who came yesterday and helped with the yard work and cleaning around the church property. We appreciate the hands that served. Please watch for the next work day.

DOING SPRING CLEANING? Please save any gently used shoes—baby-sized up to grandma/grandpa shoes. Concordia, Geneseo is planning a shoe drive to raise funds for our newly created Concordia Lutheran Academy, beginning this fall with kindergarten. These shoes are sent to 26 developing countries around the world. The footwear then gets sold to micro-entrepreneurs (small business owners, mostly women) who buy the shoes at a fraction of the cost. This helps to ensure commerce and not destroy their commercial economy by not dumping “free” items. They then take the shoes and sell them in their communities. A collection box will be available after Easter.

LOOKING FOR SEVERAL VOLUNTEERS—The church is going to a new software program to manage the cemetery records. We are looking for one or two people who would be willing to learn about this software along with Terri Hock and several willing to work with Terri in cleaning headstones and retrieving information from these stones. Please contact Terri Hock if you are interested in helping out with in either of these areas.

ALTAR FLOWERS—The **2022 Flower Chart is now on the bulletin board next to the restrooms.** Cost for weekly flowers are \$30 for two arrangements. We greatly appreciate those who help with providing flowers for Sunday worship services. **Please sign up for a Sunday.**

PRAYER MINISTRY

Remember how God works to strengthen the faith of His people as you pray:
MISSION—Pray that church members would eagerly volunteer their time and talents to support the congregation’s educational programs, such as vacation Bible school, Sunday school and groups for young families.

ST JOHN’S—Mr. Andrew Hock—We offer before You our common request for the well-being of Your church throughout the world that it may be so guided and governed by Your good Spirit that all who profess themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth and hold the faith in unity of spirit in the bond of peace, and the righteousness of life. Specifically, we pray for Andrew and ask Your blessings upon him.

ST. JOHN’S FAMILY—O Lord, You are the great Physician of soul and body. We pray that You would show mercy to Your servants:

Linda Aper	Lois Esterlein	Jim Rahn
Elizabeth Bjork	Betty Firch	Drew Schillinger
Jim Dahl	Arlyn Helke	Carolyn Werner
	Lynne Johnson	Marilyn Woods

Don Eggers (son of friend of Marilyn Woods)

Jodi Martin (daughter of Gary & Darla Johns)

Jon/Anita Clausing (missionaries in Kenya)

Marilyn Potts (wife of Cal Potts, former St. John Laborer for Christ)

Virginia Miller (mother of Jamie Werling)

Susan Goetz (wife of Joel Goetz)

Rev. Justin Kane (son of Sandra Kane)

Bill Erdman (brother of Bob Erdman)

MILITARY—We pray for those serving in our military and their families:

Mandy/Richard Davila (daughter/son-in-law of Linda Aper)

Luke/Nicole Thompson (son/daughter-in-law of John/Kindra Thompson)

Ken Willeford (husband of Alicia Willeford)

Karl Flynn (son of Mr/Mrs Paul Flynn)

Zachary/Tiffany Gardner (nephew/wife of Lois Esterlein)

Casey Powers Jr. (step son of Lisa Powers)

Brittany Loenser (daughter of Gabe Loenser)

LUTHERANS FOR LIFE

“The temptation among Christians is to take the temperature of the chaotic and dysfunctional culture and to imbue ourselves with a sense of despair and discouragement. But despair and discouragement, we know from Scripture, is a sin because it negates the hope of Jesus Christ. We are not seeking an earthly victory; as Christians, we know that the most important victory of all of history has already been won by our Lord and Savior.” *Timothy S. Goeglein, vice president of government and external relations at Focus on the Family in Washington, D.C. – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

Be part of the excitement of Call Day!

Join us on campus or online at cs.edu/callday

Anticipation is building for Call Day 2022! Join us for two special services Tuesday, April 26, when second-year students receive their vicarage or deaconess internship assignments at 3 p.m. (CDT) and concluding students receive their pastoral and diaconal calls at 7 p.m. (CDT) in the Chapel of St. Timothy and St. Titus.

Palm/Passion Sunday

April 10, 2022

Text: Deuteronomy 32:36-39 (Old Testament)

Other Texts: Philippians 2:5-11 (Epistle); Luke 23:1-56 (Gospel Reading)

“There Is No God Beside Me”

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father be yours through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

In 1446 BC the LORD brought His people Israel out of Egypt with a mighty hand, unleashing the ten plagues and drowning Egypt’s pursuing army in the Red Sea. After spending close to a year at Mt. Sinai receiving the covenant and laws and building the tabernacle, the Israelites set out to the land of Canaan. However, what should have been a short trek turned into a rather long one, when the generation that came out of Egypt refused to enter Canaan, not trusting in the Lord to give them victory. So for almost forty years God forced to them to wander in the wilderness, until that rebellious generation died off and their children had grown.ⁱ

And that time had finally come. So Moses, at 120 years, gives a final sermon to the people he had been leading since the Exodus. His people, as the book of Hebrews reminds us, “By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.”ⁱⁱ And mistreated he had been. By Pharaoh and the Egyptians, but also by his own people, who regularly blamed him for the struggles and hardships they faced. Yes, he was even opposed by his own brother and sister, Aaron and Miriam, who coveted his leadership position.

Yet, despite the people’s fickleness and unfaithfulness, despite their attacks upon him personally, which at times appeared that they might actually physically assault him, Moses would keep interceding to the LORD for them, being both a foreshadowing of Christ Jesus who intercedes for us, as well as an example to all of us, and especially to those who are called to be ministers of God’s people.

Yet, while a great example of patience, humility, and love for others, Moses was not sinless. As with all believers, righteous anger can all too easily become sinful. So while rightly angered at the doubt and faithlessness of the people while still in the wilderness when they once again were in need of water and, once again, refused to trust in the Lord to provide for them despite all that He had already done, Moses’ frustration finally got the best of him. God had commanded him to speak to the rock to bring forth water, but Moses struck the rock, not once, but twice, crying out, “Hear now, you rebels: shall we bring water for you out of this rock?”ⁱⁱⁱ

With these words he both disobeyed God’s command and gave to Aaron and himself at least some credit for the miracle. For God still provided water from the rock for His people, but because they had not upheld His holiness, God would allow neither of them to enter Canaan. Perhaps to us this seems a pretty minor mistake to lose his entrance into the Promised Land, but two things must be remembered. First, while there are differences in sin, still none are minor in the judgment of the perfectly holy God, but all deserve His wrath and punishment.

Second, to the one who has been given much, much will also be demanded from him.^{iv} Moses had received so much. Consider all the miracles he had witnessed and was blessed to be a part of, his speaking with the Lord face-to-face which no other person in the Old Testament ever enjoyed to the same level, and his being vindicated before the all who opposed him, whether the enemies of the Israelites or the people themselves, even his own siblings. Yes, Moses received much, and so more was demanded. And Moses, like all the children of Adam, fall short, and so received the consequences of his sin. Truly a reminder to us to neither think too highly of ourselves nor to ever stop our struggle to keep sin in check.

So now Moses is giving his farewell address to the people right before they will enter Canaan under Moses' successor, Joshua. He speaks again the Law of the Lord to this new generation, not just repeating, but giving further clarifications and explanations. But he says more. He speaks incredible blessings that the people will enjoy for faithfulness to the LORD and His Law, as well as horrible curses upon them if they turn from Him. And then, near the end of his great final speech, Moses sings his song to Israel that the Lord commanded him, a song of prophecy concerning their future. But the song is not a happy one.

Through His prophet Moses, the LORD reveals the people's future which, sadly, we know to be all too true, for it is far in the past for us, recorded in later books of the sacred Scriptures. It declares that despite the LORD's grace and favor and His many blessings upon them, they would turn from Him, turning to other gods, and that, finally, they would receive the covenant curses.

This began already in the days of the Judges, when God would send foreign oppressors to conquer parts of the land to punish them for their unbelief, idolatry, and immorality. And yet, despite both the chastisement as well as His rescue, they would fall again and again, until He finally enacted the fullness of the curses. And so the Northern Kingdom of Israel was destroyed by Assyrian in 723 BC and the Southern Kingdom of Judah was exiled into Babylon in 587 BC. Both kingdoms done, the land made desolate, the people taken away. With this, it would seem that all was done, God was finished with His people since they deserted Him. And such would be right and just. But God revealed still more through Moses' song of prophecy.

For the LORD will vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants,
when he sees that their power is gone and there is none remaining, bond or free.^v

While the people still believed that they had some strength they foolishly trusted in it. And so God let them keep trusting in themselves and their idols, which were nothing more than a reflection of themselves, let them so that they would finally realize that they and their false gods did not actually have any true power. Thus He rightly said, "Where are their gods, the rock in which they took refuge, who ate the fat of their sacrifices and drank the wine of their drink offering? Let them rise up and help you; let them be your protection!"^{vi}

Harsh words indeed. But true. God let them see the failure of the things in which they had put their trust. He let them fall that they would recognize that their false gods could not lift them up again. In fact, the true God shows the people that their idols were not only helpless, but were con-artists! For they kept sucking the best from the people in the sacrifices they offered. So God lets them see how foolish they were by the terrible fall they experienced, suffering the curses of

the covenant that they had broken. Yet, it was at their lowest point, when all of their helpers were seen to be failures and frauds, when they have no power left at all, that the LORD acts, not to destroy them for their wicked rebellion, but in compassion to defend them!

Dear Christians, we would be missing the fullness of Moses' prophecy if we were to look at this and think of only the Israelites, their sins, their loss of the land, their return from the exile, and other such events. Not that these do not play a part. They certainly do! But they do such by being prefigurations of both God's well-deserved judgment and His undeserved salvation.

For we too place our trust in dead idols. For don't we trust in our own plans, for our family, our finances, our future, etc., at least until they fail and only then cry out to the Lord? Don't we trust in our own strength, at least until injury and illness takes our health away and the reality of our weakness and mortality is made obvious and only then cry out to the Lord? Don't we trust in our own general righteousness, our own goodness and works at least when compared to others, at least until we fall into a more obvious sin and only then cry out to the Lord?

Our idols are less obvious than those of our Israelite spiritual forefathers, but they are of no more value. And like the idols of old, ours take us for a ride, as we sacrifice our time, energy, wealth, even family to them, as we make idols out of work, money, retirement, health, fun, etc., as all of these are lesser gods that serve the greater idol, yes, the greatest idol of all, *myself*. Yet, the more we serve ourselves, the more we are enslaved, as our quest for happiness leaves us drained and, ultimately, *unhappy*. God warns us against serving ourselves and these various idols. If we listen we are blessed. If we don't, He lets us continue to bleed out by serving them so that we fall down and see our ignorance and weakness, and so see again our need for Him.

“Then he will say, ‘See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand.’”^{vii}

There is no god beside Christ the Lord who vindicates His helpless people, rescuing them by taking on their weak and mortal frame in order to die in their place. There is no god beside Christ the Lord who takes the idolatrous sins of His people upon Himself to endure the agony of hell that such deserves so that His people might be rescued from it. There is no god beside Christ the Lord who kills in judgment, but who wounds us first that we would repent and so, by trusting in His sacrifice on the cross for us, not be eternally killed but be made alive now and forever.

There is no god beside Christ Jesus who, instead of fleecing us of our time, money, and energy in sacrifices to it, instead sacrifices Himself, giving us the fat of the sacrifice and the wine of the drink offering by giving us His body and His blood in the Lord's Supper and, with them, the forgiveness of our sins and the pledge of the resurrection to life in the world to come. There is no God beside Christ Jesus who holds us so tightly in His nail-scarred hands that nothing and no one, not our worst sin, not death, not even the devil himself, can snatch us away from Him.^{viii}

There is no god beside Christ Jesus the Lord who is worthy of our devotion, our faith, our life of service and sacrifice. *But He is worthy!* For He is our God who became a true man to suffer and die that we might live forever where suffering is no more. So let us put away all our foolish idols

by which we serve ourselves, all which leads to eternal destruction, and instead gladly serve Christ Jesus the Lord who has healed us by His forgiveness, made us alive by His Spirit, and keep us safe in His mighty hand until we enter heavenly glory. Amen!

ⁱ Numbers 14:20-38. Only Joshua and Caleb of that generation were allowed to enter the Promised Land because they trusted in the LORD and encouraged the people to enter Canaan even as the rest of the people rebelled.

ⁱⁱ Hebrews 11:24-25. All quotes are from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version* (ESV) unless otherwise noted.

ⁱⁱⁱ Numbers 20:10.

^{iv} Luke 12:48.

^v Deuteronomy 32:36.

^{vi} Deuteronomy 32:37-38.

^{vii} Deuteronomy 32:39.

^{viii} Cf. John 10:28.