

# Ministers Message

Mission Department Newsletter



## Noteworthy

### Upcoming Events

LLC Ministers Webinar  
The Letters to the  
Hebrews—An Overview  
August 25, 2022  
@ 8:00 pm CDT

Ministers & Wives Camp  
September 23–25, 2022  
Hasscib Lake Camp

LLC Bible Course  
A Man after Mine Own  
Heart—The Life of King  
David  
October 7–9, 2022  
Stony Lake Camp

LLC Ministers Webinar  
November 3, 2022  
@ 8:00 pm CST

### Reminder

If you plan to attend the  
Ministers & Wives Camp  
or the LLC Bible Course,  
remember to sign up  
soon.

## Old Testament Metaphors

During the May LLC Ministers Webinar, a question came up regarding the Old Testament priest Melchizedek. We promised then to provide some material dealing with that subject. We have now posted four articles in a series entitled “Old Testament Metaphors.” The series includes one article that deals specifically with Melchizedek. Two articles, one dealing with the high priest and the other with the priesthood of Aaron also speak about Melchizedek. The last article deals with Old Testament sacrifices in general. You will be able to find the articles at the Ministers Resource page (<https://www.llchurch.org/minister-resources>) under the title Old Testament Metaphors.

Another source for information on Melchizedek is Einari Lepistö’s: *In the Footsteps of the Sheep*. It has a section that deals with the office of the priesthood in the Old Testament including a subsection that deals with the priesthood of Melchizedek.

The subject of Melchizedek links nicely to the topic for LLC Ministers Webinar #2, which is coming up on August 25th. At that webinar John Stewart will present an overview of the Letter to the Hebrews, the New Testament epistle that delves into Old Testament sacrificial worship and also speaks of Melchizedek. John will also give us a glimpse of Keijo Nissilä’s commentary on the Letter to the Hebrews, *Let Us Look unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of Our Faith*. The commentary also includes a chapter that explains Melchizedek and the priesthood of Melchizedek.

Because the webinar medium is not ideal for discussion, we suggest that you gather with other ministers in your congregation and reserve a little time to discuss the presentation immediately after the webinar. The webinar will start at 8:00 p.m. CDT on August 25th. We will send out a Zoom link a day or two prior to the webinar. We look forward to seeing you then.

John 7:1-10

## Dispute With Family

Esa Tuomaala

“For neither did his brethren believe in him” (John 7:5). As is the case with almost all people in the world, Jesus also, as True Man, had a childhood home: Mary, His mother, Joseph, His guardian, as well as brothers and sisters. Of Joseph and Mary’s children, only sons are named in the Bible. They were James, Joses, Judas, and Simon (Matt. 13:55). Jesus was older than His brothers. Although an elder brother often has a notable effect on the younger ones through word and example, it isn’t the case that a big brother could ensure that the younger will be preserved in faith. Not even parents, their children’s teachers, are able to do this on their behalf. Everything is dependent upon God’s protection and blessing and, on the other hand, is a matter of individual endeavor. Jesus’ natural brothers had fallen into unbelief when they grew up, although the entire grace and truth of God’s kingdom was close to them.

The context in which the Evangelist John relates of the unbelief of Jesus’ brothers is a discussion about going to Jerusalem for the feast of the tabernacles. This seven-day festival was kept on one hand, as a harvest festival, and for that reason, was an especially joyful festival. On the other hand, it was kept as a remembrance of the wilderness journey, and that’s why the people lived in temporary huts covered with green



## JESUS CONVERSES

The gospels present us with a rich picture of Jesus’ public ministry. There we find His works and miracles, teachings, parables, and also some of His conversations. Some of those conversations were with adversaries, some with the curious, and others with the downcast or seeking. Some of the conversations were with individuals and others were with groups.

In these conversations we can see how Jesus approached people and responded to their questions. His teaching, methods, and manner offer us valuable lessons. We can apply them in our own lives and in our work as servants of the Word. The articles in this series will examine some of the enlightening conversations that took place between the Son of God and His contemporaries.

fronds. All the people of Israel went there.

Jesus, however, had a special reason for delaying His departure to the festival. He said to His brothers, “My time is not yet come” (John 7:6). The Jews already then wanted to kill Jesus. Although Jesus knew that this time would come, He understood that this was not yet the time to leave himself in the hands of the murderers. God’s time was fulfilled later.

Jesus’ brothers were leaving to Jerusalem. They would have wanted to have their big brother accompany them. They loudly and clearly justified their request: “Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world” (John 7:3, 4). His brothers had watched Jesus’ miraculous cures with astonishment. They fully accepted those deeds and admired them. However, one matter about His doing them bothered them. Jesus did not do His deeds spectacularly and publicly enough in their opinion. This was evident, by the way, in Jesus’ actions, for example, when He awakened the dead, He might drive the entire audience out before He performed the miracle. Similarly, He might even forbid a person cured from an illness to

tell anyone about it. These at least revealed that Jesus did not, in accord with human thinking, seek His followers' favor, fame, and fleeting glory. People have burdened themselves for these things throughout time.

Jesus' brothers were slaves to the world's way of thinking. Why on earth did Jesus avoid publicity? It would have been a matter of honor perhaps to His whole family and kindred, if more were spoken about Jesus' good works. To the suspicious and angry world these deeds might seem to be "heavenly signs."

Jesus did not fall into the temptation that His brothers presented. He had had the same temptations of honor and popularity from the world after His baptism when the Tempter showed Him all the world's kingdoms and their glory in the wilderness and promising them to Him for the price of a single bow (Matt. 4:8–10). The same temptation was at hand when the people wanted to make Jesus an earthly king (John 6:15). At that time also, Jesus left to be alone on the mountain. Jesus reveals to His own natural brothers that His lot is not the world's honor and favor but rather its anger: "The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil" (John 7:7). James, Joses, Judas and Simon, who belonged to this group of brothers, were spared from anger and contempt because of their unbelief. Jesus received these as His lot, not because of His miraculous works—these the people even generally accepted—but because of His testimony, which contained rebuke and judgement for the unbelieving world. Jesus traveled a different road than His brothers did. He also went to the Feast of Tabernacles, but not in pursuit of popularity, but as it were in secret (John 7:10).

It is comforting to see that at least some of Jesus' brothers were found in the early congregation of Jerusalem after the Redeemer's ascension to heaven. "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren" (Acts 1:14). James, especially, is mentioned by name several times. Another James, the son of Zebedee, was killed quite early during Herod's

persecution (Acts 12:2). However, the Lord's brother, James, was still in a key role in the early congregation much later (Acts 21:18). The mystery of God's kingdom and faith in Christ opened up to Jesus' brothers also, although the Bible does not relate in more detail when and under what circumstances this happened.

The temptation for the world's glory has not ended. The desire to show off has not receded from the flesh and blood of even Christians. The carnal mind and reason would like to respond to the unbelief and suspicion of the world by indicating and shouting with the loudest possible voice into the ears of the deaf world. That is not according to Christ's example and instruction. Instead of seeking publicity, Jesus often fled it. Matthew saw in this the fulfillment of the prophetic prediction: "He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets" (Matt. 12:19).

Are we satisfied to follow Christ's footsteps, brothers and sisters? It pays to be satisfied on account of the preciousness of believing and the worth of the eternal goal. The follower of Jesus often experiences a headwind from the world. Cold squalls often nip the traveler's face. The Tempter would advise us to flee the world's anger. The same Tempter advises the believing youth who have received many gifts from the Creator: Your gifts will be wasted if you don't show them to the world, if you don't gather favor, points, rewards, and applause. Shouldn't gifts be used, since they have been received? Certainly, but it's important to consider where they will be used. The Bible instructs that on the narrow way all the gifts that we have received are suitable to be used to the honor of God, the Giver of gifts, and to serve our neighbor. Then they are used correctly. On the other hand, we pray against our desires for self-glory as the hymnist did: "Many to the hills, to the heights here strive for glory. But under Your hand, I'm taught to only follow You below. Jesus, when only You are mine, my only glory, I will be satisfied with my lot."

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Romans 1:1-7

## Apostles' Day

Pentti Sinervo

### THE GOSPEL IS THE MESSAGE OF JESUS

Paul said he was a servant of Jesus Christ. He had been called to be an apostle and chosen to proclaim God's gospel. God had already chosen him in his mother's womb and in His grace called him to His work (Gal. 1:15). God saw it good to allow His Son to appear to Paul so that he would go to proclaim the message of Jesus to foreign nations. Jesus said to His disciples that as the Father sent Me, so I also send you. This mission work continues in the apostles' letters. We understand that the mission command Jesus gave is in force even today.



## Serving the Lord

### Apostles' Day

Apostles' Day was already celebrated in the early Middle Ages. Originally the day was celebrated in memory of Peter and Paul. Nowadays all apostles are remembered on this Sunday. The day's texts speak of their calling and of the duty of the disciples.

There are several narrations in the Bible concerning the calling of servants of the Word into their office. The day's texts relate how Paul became an apostle. The texts especially emphasize Jesus' status and significance as the foundation of faith.

Paul emphasized that he is Jesus Christ's apostle, or messenger. He is called an apostle and "separated" to proclaim the gospel. The duty of every apostle is to convey the message from the one who sent him.

The day's texts emphasize the significance of God's Word. It is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and for instruction in life according to God's will.

### WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

The core message of the apostles is the gospel of God. It is a message of God's Son, Jesus Christ. According to human genealogy, He was a descendant of David. At the same time, He was God's Son. In Him was realized that which John in the beginning of his gospel writes: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth" (John 1).

Sin separates man from God. That's why it is necessary to have one's sins forgiven. For this, God has given us the gospel. The core of the gospel is the forgiveness of sins. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to all who believe. God has ordained the office of the word of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:19). The apostles preached the forgiveness of

# Epistle Postil



Luther explains these greetings in his preface to the Letter to the Galatians, he says that the words grace and peace contain the entirety of Christianity. “Grace forgives sins and peace calms the conscience.”

The apostles conveyed many words of teaching and instruction to the Christians of old in their letters. The instruction which Paul gave to Timothy is precious: “But thou, O man of God, flee these things [greed]; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.” (1 Tim.6:11, 12).

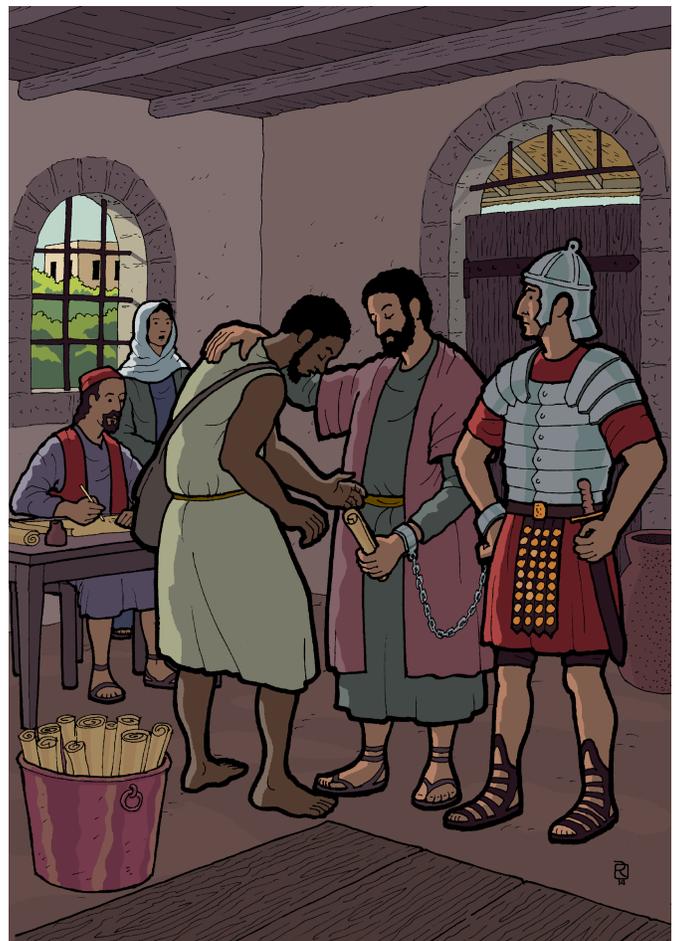
sins as authorized and obliged by it. The Bible testifies of the gospel that what is forgiven on earth is also forgiven in heaven. The Apostle Paul took his duty seriously. He once exclaimed, “Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!” (1 Cor. 9:16).

## THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH

In our text, Paul hopes that obedience to God’s living word would be begotten through the believing of the gospel. In the Finnish language the word obedience is derived from the verb “to hear.” It is thus important to hear God’s Word, which forms a whole. “All scripture is given by inspiration of God.” It contains teaching, advice, rebuke, even chastisement. In Bible narratives, many fell into the sin of disobedience. God has given His holy Word to be obeyed.

## GRACE AND PEACE BE ONTO YOU

The greeting of grace and peace appears at the beginning of almost every apostle’s letter. The greetings are greetings of grace and peace from God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. When



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