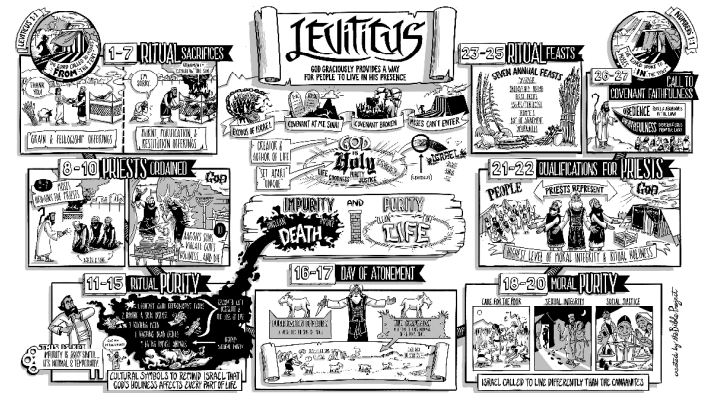


The Congregation at Prayer  
The Whole Story

2025

A Daily Devotional  
St. Paul LCMS, Ida Grove, IA



Week #12-The Whole Story

Second Week of Lent

March 16-March 23, 2025

Start Every Day

*“In the Name of the Father, and + of the Son, and  
of the Holy Spirit. Amen”*

recite **APOSTLE’S CREED**



**Read Catechism—The Fourth Commandment  
Honor your father and your mother.**

*What does this mean?* We should fear and love God so that we do not despise or anger our parents and other authorities, but honor them, serve and obey them, love and cherish them.

VERSE: Romans 6:23 ***“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”***

**PRAYER of the WORD**

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, without Your help our labor is useless, and without Your light our search is in vain. Invigorate our study of Your holy Word that, by due diligence and right discernment, we may establish ourselves and others in Your holy faith; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

**Sunday, March 16**

- Read **Psalm 75** (We give thanks to you, O God.)
- Read ***The Torah: Leviticus 19-21***

**CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA:** Do you see how the law proclaims simultaneously the justice and goodness of God, who provides food unstintingly for all? Again, in the grape harvest the harvesters are forbidden to go back and cut anything that has been left over or to collect fallen grapes. The same rules are applied to olive gatherers. In fact the principle of tithing crops and flocks was an education in honoring the divine. We are not to be

### 431 NOT ALL THE BLOOD OF BEASTS

- 1 Not all the blood of beasts  
On Jewish altars slain  
Could give the guilty conscience peace  
Or wash away the stain.
- 2 But Christ, the heav'nly Lamb,  
Takes all our sins away;  
A sacrifice of nobler name  
And richer blood than they.
- 3 My faith would lay its hand  
On that dear head of Thine,  
While as a penitent I stand,  
And there confess my sin.
- 4 My soul looks back to see  
The burden Thou didst bear  
When hanging on the cursèd tree;  
I know my guilt was there.
- 5 Believing, we rejoice  
To see the curse remove;  
We bless the Lamb with cheerful voice  
And sing His bleeding love.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748, alt.

Text: Public domain

totally absorbed by profit but to share humanely with the neighbor as well. STROMATEIS 2.86.1.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Monday, March 17**

- Read **Psalm 76** (In Judah God is known; his name is great in Israel.)
- Read ***The Torah: Leviticus 22-24***

**CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA:** Scripture says, “At least grant the offspring to its mother for its first seven days.” For if nothing comes to be without reason and milk flows in the mothers for the nourishment of the offspring, then in taking the offspring away from the providential endowment of the milk, a person is doing violence to nature. So Greeks and anyone else who runs the law down ought to blush for shame if the law is generous over irrational beasts. Yet some people actually expose human offspring to abortive death. By prophetic authority the law has for a long time cut short their ferocity through this commandment of which we have been speaking. For if the law refuses to allow the offspring of irrational creatures to be separated from their mother before taking milk, it is far more forceful in preparing human beings against that cruel, uncivilized view [exposure to death of

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<sup>1</sup> Lienhard, Joseph T., and Ronnie J. Rombs, eds. 2001. [\*Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy\*](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

infants]. If they ignore nature, at least they may not ignore the lessons of the law. STROMATEIS 2.92.2–4.<sup>2</sup>

### **Tuesday, March 18**

- Read **Psalm 77** (I cry aloud to God, aloud to God, and he will hear me.)
- Read ***The Torah: Leviticus 25-27***

**BASIL THE GREAT:** Seven weeks of years in ancient times produced the celebrated jubilee, in which the earth kept the sabbath, debts were canceled, slaves were set free and, as it were, a new life was established again, the old one in a certain way attaining its fulfillment in the number seven. These things are figures of this present age which revolves through the seven days and passes us by; an age in which the penalties for the lesser sins are paid according to the loving care of the good Lord, so that we may not be handed over for punishment in the age without end. LETTER 260.<sup>3</sup>

### **Wednesday, March 12**

- Read **Psalm 78** (Give ear, O my people, to my teaching)

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<sup>2</sup> Lienhard, Joseph T., and Ronnie J. Rombs, eds. 2001. [Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

<sup>3</sup> Lienhard, Joseph T., and Ronnie J. Rombs, eds. 2001. [Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

### **Luther's Evening Prayer**

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

### **Sunday, March 16**

- Read **Psalm 82** (God has taken his place in the divine council.)
- Read ***The Torah: Numbers 13-15***

### **End Every Day**

#### **Pray the *Collect for 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Lent***

O God, You see that of ourselves we have no strength. By Your mighty power defend us from all adversities that may happen to the body and from all evil thoughts that may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord. Amen.

#### **Personal Prayers**

##### *pray* **LORD'S PRAYER**

#### **Luther's Morning Prayer**

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and

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<sup>7</sup> Lienhard, Joseph T., and Ronnie J. Rombs, eds. 2001. [\*Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy\*](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

- Read ***The Torah: Numbers 1-3***

**ORIGEN:** We gather from the book of Numbers that there may be something greater than Israel too. For there the whole of Israel is numbered and reckoned in twelve tribes, as under a fixed number. But the tribe of Levi, being of greater eminence than the others, is accounted extra to this number and never thought of as being one of Israel's number [of twelve]. COMMENTARY ON THE SONG OF SONGS, PROLOGUE.<sup>14</sup>

### **Thursday, March 13**

- Read **Psalm 79** (O God, the nations have come into your inheritance)
- Read ***The Torah: Numbers 4-6***

**PATERIUS:** What does it mean that Nazirites cultivate their hair, except that they cultivate pleasing thoughts through their lives of continence? What does it mean that, when the time of his vow is fulfilled, the Nazirite is bidden to shave his head and to put his hair in the sacrificial fire? It means that we reach the height of perfection when we have so conquered external vices that we restrain even superfluous thoughts in our minds. And to burn these thoughts in sacrificial fire means to burn them in the flame of divine love, so that one's

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<sup>4</sup> Lienhard, Joseph T., and Ronnie J. Rombs, eds. 2001. [\*Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy\*](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

whole heart burns with the love of God. We burn up our superfluous thoughts and consume the hair of the Nazirite, as it were, in perfect devotion.

EXPOSITION OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT, NUMBERS 1.<sup>5</sup>

### **Friday, March 14**

- Read **Psalm 80** (Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock.)
- Read ***The Torah: Numbers 7-9***

**PATERIUS:** What is indicated by the twenty-fifth year, in which the flower of young manhood blooms, except those battles against every vice? And what is meant by fifty, which contains the repose of the jubilee, except the internal peace that comes when the war of the mind is won? What do the vessels of the tabernacle mean, except the souls of the faithful? Hence the Levites serve the tabernacle from their twenty-fifth year, and from their fiftieth year they become the keepers of the vessels. This means that those who are still struggling with vices and risk consenting to them should not presume to undertake the care of others. For when the elect are still subject to temptation, they must be subjected and engage in service and grow tired through their duties and

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<sup>5</sup> Lienhard, Joseph T., and Ronnie J. Rombs, eds. 2001. [\*Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy\*](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

labors. But when they have won the war against temptations and are secure in their inner tranquillity, they are given the care of souls. For in the tranquil age of the mind, when the heat of temptation abates, they are guardians of the vessels and become healers of souls. EXPOSITION OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT, NUMBERS 4.<sup>6</sup>

### **Saturday, March 15**

- Read **Psalm 81** (Sing aloud to God our strength; shout for joy to the God of Jacob!)
- Read ***The Torah: Numbers 10-12***

**PATERIUS:** “Make for yourself two trumpets of hammered silver.” The army is led by two trumpets because the people are called to readiness in faith by the two commandments of charity. Scripture bids them to be made of silver, so that the words of the preachers may shine with gleaming light and not confuse the minds of the hearers with any darkness of their own. They are to be hammered, because those who preach the life to come grow through the blows of the present tribulations. Scripture says well, “When the short signal sounds, the camps will move.” When the preacher’s word is subtle and concise, the hearers are aroused more ardently for the struggle against temptation.

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<sup>6</sup> Lienhard, Joseph T., and Ronnie J. Rombs, eds. 2001. [\*Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy\*](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.