



Minutes With Messiah

Volume 22, Issue 9

Web Site: <http://www.minuteswithmessiah.com>

July 2021

BUYING PRIESTHOOD

Did you know that you can become an ordained priest, with a valid license in every state of the United States? The certificate of ordination lets you perform marriages and baptisms, do religious counseling, start or head churches, and lead Bible studies. And it will only cost you anywhere from \$50 to \$150. You do have to agree to the Calvinist statement of faith.

Even better than that, you can get your ordination for free, valid in all but two states. In doing so you can join a number of celebrity ministers, such as Stephen Colbert, Duane “the Rock” Johnson, Lady Gaga, Paul McCartney, and Ian McKellan. For this one, the only statement of faith is to do good and worship any way you want.

Most of the online ordination sites tout their product so that you can perform marriages. That is really interesting because marriage is essentially a non-religious rite. People can marry if they are religious, non-religious, members of any faith or no faith. Officiants at a wedding don’t even have to be religious if they hold certain government, or sometimes non-government, positions.

King Jeroboam of Israel set up golden calves in his country. Most of the Levites, the people ordained to priesthood by God, had fled to Jerusalem, where the Temple was. So Jeroboam decided that anyone could be an ordained priest of his idols. There was a cost, and it was greater than \$150.

Whosoever cometh to consecrate himself with a young bullock and seven rams, the same may be a priest of them that are no gods. (2 Chron 13:9)

The difference is that Jeroboam’s priest were not primarily wedding officiants. They were there to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings to hunks of metal. They were to replace the legitimate priesthood.

Have ye not cast out the priests of the LORD, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites, and have made you priests after the manner of the nations of other lands? (2 Chron 13:9, just before the previous quotation)

Jesus came to be a priest. He was not from the tribe of Levi, so he could not ordinarily attain the priesthood.

For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man

have somewhat also to offer. For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things. (Heb 8:3-5)

Jesus had to “have somewhat also to offer.” He did not bring “a young bullock and seven rams.” He brought something better.

Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. (Heb 9:12)

Under the Law of Moses, the descendants of Aaron were eligible to become High Priest. They each died and were succeeded by another relative. Jesus became a better high priest. “Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.” (Heb 9:28) He has no need of descendants to take his place because he lives forever as the High Priest.

Also under the Law, the High Priest was assisted by other priests. Normally these would also be descendants of Aaron. During the reign of Hezekiah, however, circumstances dictated that these assistants were other members of the tribe of Levi. (2 Chron 29:34) As our High Priest, Jesus also has priests to assist him in his duties; not in the offerings on the altar, because he did that once, but in other duties related to worship and his church. We are those priests. We assist in the worship.

Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. (1 Pet 2:9)

CONTENTS

Buying Priesthood	1
The Temptation	2
Not Who I Was	4

All articles Copyright 2021 by Tim O’Hearn unless otherwise noted. The ideas expressed in these articles are those of the authors and are not to be considered the doctrine of any specific congregation or eldership.

THE TEMPTATION

Fasting has a long history in many countries. Fasting as means of protest was common, most notably in Ireland and India. In ancient Ireland, the law allowed a person to fast on the doorstep of someone they thought had wronged them or owed them something. There was a similar practice in India, which was only outlawed in 1861. It is interesting that those two countries took fasting to the extreme, in the form of prisoner hunger strikes.

In Ireland, hunger strikes became common protests against the British government. Bobby Sands is possibly the most notable of those who died in hunger strikes at Maze Prison in 1981, dying after 66 days. (See *Nothing but an Unfinished Song*, a book by my brother, Denis O'Hearn.) One of the leading hunger strikers in India was Mohandas K. "Mahatma" Gandhi, who engaged in multiple hunger strikes: the British released him each time thinking it would not do to have one of his fame die on their hands. One of Gandhi's contemporaries, Bhagat

Most people will say they are tempted by one food or another, such as chocolate.

Singh, set a record by not ending his fast until after 116 days.

Hunger striking was also common in the Suffragist movements in England and Ireland. The most notable hunger strikers, who suffered physical harm by being force-fed, were Mary Clarke (died) in England and Alice Paul (health problems for life) in America.

The Jewish people were commanded to fast (afflict themselves) one day a year, on *Yom Kippur*. Unlike the Irish, Indians, and Suffragists, this was not a form of protest. This was often interpreted as an opportunity to spend the day in self-examination and repentance. The practice was adopted by some on more than the one prescribed day.

Jesus participated in a forty-day fast. There are some aspects of that fast and what followed that we sometimes miss in a casual reading.

Matthew 4:1 says the Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness for the express purpose of being tempted by the devil. It was no chance thing. God wanted the devil to tempt Jesus at this time. There were apparently other temptations (Lk 4:13) It was important to God that Jesus suffer temptation. Jesus was to become our great high priest.

For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. (Heb 4:15)

It is one thing to be sinless because one has never been tempted, if that were possible. It is quite another thing to remain sinless in the face of temptation. Jesus qualified as our high priest because he was tempted.

Food

The first temptation involved fasting and food. It is unclear whether the forty-day fast was part of the temptation or simply a period of prayer in preparation for what Jesus knew was coming. It certainly opened the opportunity for the first temptation.

Most people like food. We don't like missing a meal. An obsession with not eating or with unhealthy weight loss is considered a medical pathology. Most people will say they are tempted by one food or another, such as chocolate. To go forty days with only water is generally unthinkable. That is why what Jesus did may have been as much a part of the temptation as what follows.

And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. (Matt 4:3)

Later in his ministry, Jesus would comment on the similarity in appearance of rocks to bread. Loaves of bread were generally a little larger than the size of a hand, therefore the size of a large stone. "Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?" (Matt 7:9) Perhaps when he said this he thought back on this temptation.

The response Jesus makes to the tempter may have multiple meanings. He quotes a scripture from the final speech Moses makes in the wilderness.

And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live. (Deut 8:3)

We know he just quoted part of that, but quoting a part includes the context. First, he is telling the devil that he would not need to turn rocks to bread. God fed Israel in the wilderness with manna; he could do the same for Jesus. Second, and most obviously, he says that even if God provided him with manna, the whole meaning of the manna was that man lives by every word from God. Manna was a teaching tool. At another place, Jesus says

what his real nourishment is. “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.” (Jn 4:34)

Protection

Safety. Protection. From our earliest years as a newborn to our oldest years seeking social security, we want to feel safe and protected. Psychologist Abraham Maslow proposed a hierarchy of needs. Security came above the basic needs of food, water, warmth, shelter, and rest. He proposed that one could not even have friendships until these basic needs, including security were met. Before you can motivate someone to do something, these basic needs must be satisfied. Many Christians understand that until you meet the basic needs of the homeless it is useless to talk to them about Christ, but if you satisfy those needs they will listen.

The devil played on this need with the next temptation of Christ. He took Jesus to the “pinnacle” of the Temple. Unlike what many people picture as a sort of steeple, the pinnacle was actually the corner of the Temple wall above the deepest valley around the Temple Mount. From here there is at least a 450 foot (45 story) drop.

And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. (Matt 4:6)

Note that the devil may even quote scripture (Ps 91:11-12) if it fits his purpose. In this case his purpose was to tempt Jesus with security.

This could have been a valid temptation. From where they were standing they could be seen by many people. If Jesus were to jump off without harm, that would be a miracle greater than almost any he would subsequently perform, and with a larger crowd. If Jesus saw his purpose on earth as performing miracles, rather than dying for atonement, this would be the ideal time and place.

Instead he responds, “It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.” (Matt 4:7; Deut 6:16) The passage in Deuteronomy continues with an admonition to follow the commands of God.

The selection of this passage may also have served two purposes. It reinforces the response to the first temptation; live by the word of God. We sometimes miss the other purpose. Jesus is reminding the devil that God is even his God. The Messiah, therefore, is also his superior. He is reminding the devil that he is not in control.

Fame

Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. (Matt 4:8-9)

“Fame. I’m gonna live forever.” It seems most people want to be recognized. We want some degree of

fame; some more than others. Even if we never hope to achieve fame for ourselves, we identify with sports figures or entertainers because of their fame. It was with just such fame that the devil then tempted Jesus. What could be more famous than the ruler of the whole world. Alexander had tried it. Julius Caesar had tried it. Napoleon and Hitler would later try.

The devil is a deceiver and has been from the beginning. From the time he deceived Eve until now, he has lied to mankind. He even lies to Jesus. Do you see the subtlety here? I will make you the ruler of the world if you will submit to me. That would make the devil the real ruler.

What the devil forgot was that he was talking to one who was already the ruler of the world. He already had all the glory.

The devil may quote scripture if it fits his purpose.

But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth. (Php 2:7-10)

Knowing who he was, Jesus replied with a quote from the Septuagint (Greek) version of Deuteronomy 6:13. “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.” Again this choice of scripture may contain subtleties we sometimes miss.

The obvious meaning of the scripture is that Jesus should not worship the devil because only God is worthy of worship. Below that, however, Jesus may be reiterating that he is the Messiah; he is God. Also it reinforces that the devil should also be worshipping God. Ultimately, by the use of this scripture Jesus is telling the devil that he will not worship him because the devil should be worshipping Jesus.

There are some people who say that Jesus never claimed to be divine. Others say we should not pray to Jesus but to God only. In his responses from the book of Deuteronomy, Jesus is telling the devil, and us, that he is claiming divinity. He is the Son of God. As such he is worthy of or praise, and we can even pray to him.

Jesus may have started his temptation with a fast. But in another sense of the word, he was fast in his response to temptation. The only way we can be that fast is to familiarize ourselves with scripture. Then we can answer the devil the way Jesus did.

NOT WHO I WAS

There is an old myth that every cell in the body is replaced every seven years. That would mean that the you that now is is not the you that was seven years ago. In truth, some cells do replace themselves frequently. The lining of the stomach, which is in contact with acids, is replaced about every two days. The skin, which is subject to external forces, may replenish itself every two weeks, although scar tissue may last longer than that, as many of us can attest. Red blood cells last about four months. In contrast bone cells may last ten years. Unfortunately, so do fat cells. And then there are the cells you have with you for life: tooth enamel, the lenses of your eyes, and most of your brain. So while some parts regenerate more rapidly than others, you never replace all the cells in your body. You are still the you of your birth.

Physically, that is true. Spiritually, however, it is possible to say, "I am not who I was."

That is a good thing. Just as our bodies are subject to decay, our spirits may suffer as well. We were made in the image of God, but spiritually we don't stay there. We may be born sinless, but we don't stay that way for very long. "Death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Rom 5:12) We may not be held accountable for our sins until we are able to acknowledge them and repent, but everyone sins. That is spiritual decay. The ultimate end of that decay, as with the physical, is death.

What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death;

but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Rom 6:21-23)

We don't have to die, however. Our physical cells may regenerate, or they may not. Through Christ our spirits may also regenerate.

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour. (Tit 3:5-6)

That spiritual regeneration is due to a physical death. We attain regeneration by reenacting that death.

We are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. (Rom 6:4-5)

Peter noticed that there might be some people who do not understand this regeneration. They don't understand change.

We walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you: Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead. (1 Pet 4:3-4)

When others ask why you don't join them in what you used to do, you can truly answer, "I am not who I was."

Timothy J. O'Hearn
737 Monell Dr NE
Albuquerque NM 87123