

A beautiful prayer for you:

"[Your name], perceiving the mercy and justice of the King, was glad, and kneeling, kissed his hand, and departed in joy and content."

Volume 3, number 9: September 2008

*The Dunedain  
Rings*

**A Monthly Reflection on Tolkien's Lord**



Tuesday of the 21st week, Ordinary Time. In today's Holy Gospel, Jesus said, 'Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You pay tithes of mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier things of the law: judgment and mercy and fidelity. But these you should have done, without neglecting the others.'

At the beginning of the Fourth Age of Middle-earth, King Elessar (Aragorn) has to administer justice and judgment; that is one of the duties of a king. Here we see quite a contrast between a good leader and the scribes and Pharisees of first-century Palestine. Aragorn, who is a type or "prefiguration" of Christ the King, has not "neglected the weightier things of the law"; rather, he gives us a marvelous example of "judgment and mercy and fidelity."

In the days that followed his crowning the King sat on this throne in the Hall of the Kings and pronounced his judgements. . . . And there were brought before him many to receive his praise and reward for their valour; and last the captain of the Guard brought to him Beregon to be judged.

And the King said to Beregon: 'Beregon, by your sword blood was spilled in the Hallows, where that is forbidden. Also you left your post without leave of Lord or Captain. For these things, of old, death was the penalty. Now therefore I must pronounce your doom.

'All penalty is remitted for your valour in battle, and still more because all that you did was for the love of the Lord Faramir. Nonetheless you must leave the Guard of the Citadel, and you must go forth from the City of Minas Tirith.'

Then, the blood left Beregon's face, and he was stricken to the heart and bowed his head. But the King said:

'So it must be, for you are appointed to the White Company, the Guard of Faramir, Prince of Ithilien, and you shall be its captain and dwell in Eryn Arn in honour and peace, and in the service of him for whom you risked all, to save him from death.'

And then Beregon, perceiving the mercy and justice of the King, was glad, and kneeling, kissed his hand, and departed in joy and content.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Return of the King* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1994) 267.

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And so may it be for us, my friends. May we give ourselves over to the King of Kings, the one King who was never tainted by any sin, the spotless Lamb, who has ransomed us, whose mercy and justice is perfect! (It's no mistake; I use the singular form of the verb "to be," because God's justice and mercy – like all His attributes or perfections – are one.)