

## Malcolm's Monday Musings : 29 November 2021

Greetings.

This is my 'Monday Musings' email.

The following meditation draws attention to 'the power of Jesus' word'.

Happy reading.

Advance notice:

Given that the attached document is on the long side, I intend to let it suffice for two weeks. That is, I plan to keep next Monday's Musings very brief.

Yours in our Lord Jesus,

Malcolm

### SCRIPTURE

When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, saying, 'Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented'.

And Jesus said to him, 'I will come and heal him'. The centurion answered and said, 'Lord, I am not worthy that you should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed' ...

Then Jesus said to the centurion, 'Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you'. And his servant was healed that same hour.

Now when Jesus had come into Peter's house, He saw his wife's mother lying sick with a fever. So He touched her hand, and the fever left her. And she arose and served them.

When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick ...

When He got into a boat, His disciples followed Him. And suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But He was asleep.

Then His disciples came to Him and awoke Him, saying, 'Lord, save us! We are perishing!'

But He said to them, 'Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?' Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. So the men marvelled, saying, 'Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?'

Matthew 8. 5-8, 13-16, 23-26 (*The New King James Version*)

## The Power of His Word.

### Introduction.

In this meditation, I want to consider *the power of our Lord's word*.

First, we will think briefly, in a general way, about the power of His word in the distant past, in the present and in the future.

### 1. The power of our Lord's word - past, present and future.

#### (i) The power of His word in creation.

The apostle John assures us that, 'All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything ('no, not one; not even one') made that was made'<sup>2</sup> ... 'from the highest angel to the meanest worm'.<sup>3</sup>

And the Lord Jesus accomplished it all by His word. As it is written, 'By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth ... For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast'.<sup>4</sup> Out of nothing, that is, the universe was formed and was confirmed in existence by the power of His word.

At His voice creation  
sprang at once to sight,  
all the angel faces  
all the hosts of light,  
thrones and dominations,  
stars upon their way,  
all the heavenly orders  
in their great array.  
(C. M. Noel)

But not only was our Lord Jesus the agent of creation; He also sustains the universe which He made.

#### (ii) The power of His word in providence.

We read that the Lord Jesus upholds 'all things by the word of His power'.<sup>5</sup>

His providential government not only (a) maintains and sustains the vast universe so that it does not sink into anarchy or into nothing<sup>6</sup> but also (b) carries it on to its destined end.<sup>7</sup>

But not only was the power of His word exercised in *creation* in the distant *past* ... not only is the power of His word exercised in *providence* in the *present* ... but the power of His word will also be exercised in *judgement* on His foes in the *future*.

#### (iii) The power of His word in judgement.

When the mighty Warrior-King comes out of heaven to 'judge and make war in righteousness ... , out of His mouth proceeds a sharp sword, that with it He might strike the nations'.<sup>8</sup> Then, as it is written, 'He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked'.<sup>9</sup>

At that time, 'the armies which gather to make war against Him'<sup>10</sup> will find to their cost that His word carries a destructive power infinitely greater than that of any weapon conceived by man.

### 2. The irresistible power of our Lord's word - during His life on earth.

Having surveyed briefly the power of the Lord's word in the distant past, in the present and in the future, I want now to focus on the irresistible power of our Lord's word 'in the days of His flesh',<sup>11</sup> during that short period when 'He was in the world'.<sup>12</sup>

I begin by noting that *disease* and infirmity were unable to withstand the power of His word.

#### 1. Disease.

I draw your attention to two examples from Dr Luke's case book.

**(i) Ask Simon Peter's mother-in-law.**

He (Jesus) rose up and left the synagogue and entered Simon's house.<sup>13</sup> Now Simon's wife's mother was in the grip of<sup>14</sup> a major fever, and they appealed to Him for her. And He stood over her and rebuked<sup>15</sup> the fever, and it left her. And at once she arose and served them.<sup>16</sup>

One commentator claims: 'Every word is a medical term. "In the grip of" is the medical Greek for someone definitely laid up with an illness. The Greek medical writers divided fevers into two classes: major and minor. Dr Luke knew just how to describe this illness'.<sup>17</sup>

The word 'rebuked' is telling us that our Lord's word was sufficient to effect the cure.

And I note that, following our Lord's rebuke of the fever and its consequent departure, it was 'at once' ('all of a sudden'<sup>18</sup>) that Peter's mother-in-law's strength returned and 'she arose and served them'.

This particular detail is mentioned only by Luke, who, as a doctor,<sup>19</sup> would have known better than any that a 'major' (a 'high') fever indicated a most exhausting illness, which would normally be followed by a long period of convalescence accompanied by great physical weakness. But not in this case!

**(ii) Ask Bartimaeus.**

It happened, as He was coming near Jericho, that a certain blind man<sup>20</sup> sat by the road begging.

And hearing a multitude passing by, he asked what it meant. They told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by.

And he cried out, saying, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!'

Those who went before warned him that he should be quiet; but he cried out all the more, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!'

Jesus stood still and commanded him to be brought to Him.

And when he had come near, He asked him, saying, 'What do you want me to do for you?'

He said, 'Lord, that I may receive my sight'.

And Jesus said to him, 'Receive your sight; your faith has made you well'.

And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.<sup>21</sup>

What a wonder, that our Lord stopped and 'stood still' for the healing of a blind man, even though He was then pacing His way to Jerusalem, striding ahead of His disciples.<sup>22</sup>

It was around that time that He expounded in more detail than previously to His disciples what experiences awaited Him at Jerusalem, where He would be betrayed, condemned, scourged, spat on and killed.<sup>23</sup>

And you and I know now, as He did then, that this was, indeed, the very reason He had come into the world – 'to give His life a ransom for many'.<sup>24</sup>

And yet, although on the way to the cross to accomplish 'eternal salvation',<sup>25</sup> such is the Saviour's compassion that He stopped to speaking healing to one blind beggar! 'Receive your sight', He said, 'and immediately he received his sight!'<sup>26</sup>

It would certainly be difficult to miss that the effect of the Great Physician's powerful word was both instantaneous and complete.

But, if disease was no match for the power of His word, neither was distance.

## 2. Distance.

I now draw your attention to two distinguished individuals from the city of Capernaum – one of whom was deeply concerned about a servant who was 'at the point of death'<sup>27</sup> and one of whom was deeply concerned about a son who was 'at the point of death'.<sup>28</sup>

**(i) Ask the centurion of Capernaum.**

Drawing on the accounts in Matthew 8 and Luke 7,<sup>29</sup> we read:

When Jesus concluded all His sayings in the hearing of the people, He entered Capernaum. And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear to him,<sup>30</sup> was sick and at the point of death.<sup>31</sup>

The centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, saying, 'Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented'.

And Jesus said to him, 'I will come and heal him'.

The centurion answered and said, 'Lord, I am not worthy that you should come under my roof,<sup>32</sup> but *speaking the word only*, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to one, "Go", and he goes; and to another, "Come", and he comes; and to my servant, "Do this", and he does it'.

When Jesus heard it, He marvelled,<sup>33</sup> and said to those who followed, "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel ...

Then Jesus said to the centurion, 'Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you'. And his servant was healed that same hour.<sup>34</sup>

The centurion argued that his own authority was delegated ... that it was derived ultimately from Caesar himself. Consequently, when the centurion spoke (in his office as a Roman centurion, of course; not when speaking to his wife. Perish the thought) he spoke with the emperor's full authority, and his command was therefore obeyed. Anyone who disobeyed his word would be defying, not so much him as Caesar. And *that was not* a good idea!

The centurion was expressing his faith that Jesus was vested with the authority of God Himself and that, to heal his servant, He, the Great Physician, had no need to pay a home visit to the patient ... He needed to '*speaking the word only*'!

The Lord didn't need to send any medication. Nor did He need to send one of His disciples with the equivalent (i) of Elisha's staff, to lay it on the face of the sick lad<sup>35</sup> or (ii) of Paul's handkerchiefs or aprons to heal him<sup>36</sup> ... He needed 'to *speaking the word only*'.

And events proved that the centurion was right. Without completing His journey<sup>37</sup> and without entering the centurion's house, Jesus spoke the word ('as you have believed, so let it be done for you') and the centurion's servant *was* healed 'that same hour'.<sup>38</sup>

#### ***(ii) Ask the nobleman of Capernaum.***

Jesus came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman whose son<sup>39</sup> was sick at Capernaum.

When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and implored<sup>40</sup> Him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death ...

The nobleman said to Him, 'Sir, come down<sup>41</sup> before my child<sup>42</sup> dies!'

Jesus said to him, 'Go your way; your son<sup>43</sup> lives'.<sup>44</sup>

The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way. And as he was now going down, his servants met him and told him, saying, 'Your son lives!'

He inquired of them the hour when he got better. And they said to him, 'Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him'. The father knew that it was at the same hour in which Jesus said to him, 'Your son lives'.

When Jesus 'came again' to Cana, He was met by a 'nobleman' (a 'royal official'<sup>45</sup>) whose home was in Capernaum. The man had undertaken the arduous journey to Cana to ask Jesus to accompany him to Capernaum and there heal his sick son. The case was urgent – his boy was at death's door.

Clearly, the man took it for granted that Jesus' presence was necessary to perform a cure. Jesus' response must, therefore, have taken him by complete surprise. Because the Lord matched the official's request, '*Come down*, before my child *dies*', with His, '*Go your way*, your son *lives*'.<sup>46</sup>

I observe that Jesus did not say, 'your son will live'. This was no mere prophecy on Jesus' part that the man's boy was going to recover; it was a long-distance miracle, performed by His spoken word. And it certainly was a long distance. The official knew this very well; he had just travelled some 25 miles on the road which stretched from Cana to Capernaum!<sup>47</sup>

The man had nothing but Jesus' bare word. But that was enough. 'He went his way', retracing his steps down the road which led home.

But the following day, before he reached his home, the official was met by his servants. On enquiry, he discovered that his son's fever had left him the very same hour that Jesus had announced that his son lived.

What a discovery! ... that the cure had been instantaneous ... that (if I may put it this way) the Lord's word had shot faster than lightning those many miles to heal his dying son ... that, in

the words of one commentator, 'Jesus spoke the healing word in Cana and the boy was cured at Capernaum'.<sup>48</sup>

Yes, indeed, both cases proved distance to be no more a match for the power of Jesus' word than disease.<sup>49</sup>

(i) 'Go your way', the Lord Jesus said to the centurion ... 'and his servant was healed that same hour'.<sup>50</sup>

(ii) 'Go your way', He said to the royal official ... and the official received confirmation from his servants the following day that his son was healed 'at the same hour in which Jesus said to him, "Your son lives"'.<sup>51</sup>

But, if disease and distance were no match for the power of His word, neither were demons.

### 3. Demons.

This time, I draw your attention to four cases recorded by Mark where the Lord Jesus 'cast out the spirits with a word'.<sup>52</sup>

#### ***(i) Ask the man with the unclean spirit in the synagogue of Capernaum (Mark 1. 23-27).***

Listen to the first recorded miracle in the Gospel of Mark:

Now there was a man in the synagogue with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, saying, 'Let us alone! What have we to do with you,<sup>53</sup> Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!'

But Jesus rebuked him, saying, 'Hold your peace<sup>54</sup> and come out of him!'

And when the unclean spirit had convulsed the man and cried out with a loud voice, he came out of him'.

And they were all amazed ... saying, '... with authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him'.<sup>55</sup>

#### ***(ii) Ask 'Legion' (Mark 5. 1-20).***

The pitiable demoniac named 'Legion' is mentioned along with a fellow sufferer in Matthew's account.<sup>56</sup> But, for our present purpose, we will listen to Mark's account:

They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes.<sup>57</sup>

And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling among the tombs;<sup>58</sup> and no one could bind him, not even with chains, because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces ... always, night and day, he was ... crying out and cutting himself with stones.

When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran ... and cried out with a loud voice and said, 'What have I to do with you, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?<sup>59</sup> I implore you by God that you do not torment me'.<sup>60</sup> For He said to him, 'Come out of the man, unclean spirit!' ...

He asked him, 'What is your name?' And he answered, saying, 'My name is Legion; for we are many' ...

(The men of the city) went out to see what it was that had happened. They came to Jesus, and saw the one who had been demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid ... Then they began to plead with Him to depart<sup>61</sup> from their region.<sup>62</sup>

Jesus had only to speak His liberating word to set Legion free, not from his chains and shackles (the man had proved himself adept at doing that without any outside help), but from the demonic powers which 'for a long time'<sup>63</sup> had held him in bondage.

#### ***(iii) Ask the father at the foot of the Mount of Transfiguration (Mark 9. 14-29).***

Listen to Mark's incredibly moving account:<sup>64</sup>

One of the crowd said, 'Teacher, I brought you my son, who has a mute spirit. And wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; he foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and becomes rigid. I spoke to your disciples, that they should cast it out, but they could not'.

He answered him and said, 'Bring him to me'.

They brought him to Him. And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit convulsed him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming at the mouth.

He asked his father, 'How long has this been happening to him?'

'From childhood', he said, 'And often he has thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us'.

Jesus said to him, "'If you can"! All things are possible to him who believes'.

Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, 'Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!'

When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying, 'Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!' Then the spirit cried out, convulsed him greatly, and came out of him.

Even the exceptionally strong demon at the foot of the Mount of Transfiguration was altogether unable to withstand the might of Jesus' word.

I say, 'exceptionally strong demon', because the Lord's statement, '*this kind* does not come out except by prayer', singled out *this* spirit as no ordinary, run-of-the-mill demon.

This was a particularly nasty, strong and malicious spirit, who had successfully defied the combined attempts of nine helpless and embarrassed apostles to expel it.

But when the Lord came and issued the order, 'Dumb and deaf spirit, **I** command you, come out of him and never enter him again!' the demon 'came out' ... and it did so 'instantly'!<sup>65</sup>

#### **(iv) Ask Mary Magdalene (Mark 16. 9).**

'Mary called Magdalene'<sup>66</sup> was one of 'many women' who 'followed Jesus from Galilee'<sup>67</sup> and who 'ministered to Him of their substance'.<sup>68</sup>

But Mary was distinguished from the other women, not only (a) in that she was the first person to whom the Lord appeared 'when He rose early on the first day of the week', but also (b) in that, from her, He had previously cast out no less than 'seven demons'.<sup>69</sup>

But, if disease, distance and demons were no match for His word, neither was the devil himself.

## **4. The Devil.**

When tempting our Lord in the wilderness for forty days,<sup>70</sup> Satan finally came out into the open with his final temptation.<sup>71</sup>

I note that each of the three recorded temptations was staged at a higher elevation than the one before:

First, our Lord was 'led up' from the Jordan into the wilderness.<sup>72</sup>

Second, He was 'taken (up)' to Jerusalem and there set on the pinnacle of the temple, several hundred feet above the valley below.<sup>73</sup>

Third, He was transported to 'an exceedingly high mountain',<sup>74</sup> where the tempter showed Him all the world's kingdoms 'in a moment of time'.<sup>75</sup>

Let me attempt a paraphrase of the tempter's gambit:

'There ... do you see them? And "all this authority will I give you, and the glory of them: for that is delivered to me; and to whomever I will I give it. If you therefore will worship before me, all shall be yours".<sup>76</sup>

'At your baptism, God *did* say, "You are my Son", didn't He? And you know where *those* words came from, don't you? Yes, of course you do ... from the second Psalm,<sup>77</sup> verse 7 to be precise.

And what does God say in the very next verse? "Ask of me, and I will give you the heathen for your inheritance".<sup>78</sup>

'Yes, but, as you know well, a whole lot of water is to pass under the bridge before that is to happen. For, between now and then, you will have to face "the cross" with all its shame and suffering.

'But it really doesn't have to be that way. Frankly, I can offer you a short-cut.

'I can offer you the kingdom on the cheap. Just think of it, *to gain the kingdom without facing the cross – to enjoy the glory without enduring the suffering.*

'Now that, I tell you, is some bargain!

'To state it simply: if God says, "*I will give you the heathen for your inheritance*" ... someday, I say, "*all these things I will give you*" ... and I will give them to you now!

'So, what about it? Go on, worship me!'<sup>79</sup>

And it is at this point that our Lord drew Satan's temptations to an abrupt end with His firm rebuff and sharp rebuke:

'Get hence ('begone', 'go'), Satan'.<sup>80</sup>

To which Matthew adds, 'then [no surprises here!] the devil left Him'.<sup>81</sup>

'Go' ... one short, pointed word<sup>82</sup> from Jesus was sufficient to expel and banish the overlord of darkness.<sup>83</sup> Just one word from our Lord and the mighty monarch of evil was on his way!<sup>84</sup>

But, if disease, distance, demons and the devil proved no match for the power of Jesus' word, neither did 'the king of terrors',<sup>85</sup> death.

## 5. Death.

Now I draw your attention to three cases where our Lord's word proved more powerful than death:

### ***(i) Ask Jairus and his wife.***

Jairus and his wife would never forget the Saviour's all-powerful word addressed to their twelve-year-old daughter – their only daughter<sup>86</sup> ... addressed to one who had died just a *short time before*: 'Young woman, I say to you, arise', and who immediately 'rose up and walked'.<sup>87</sup>

### ***(ii) Ask the widow of Nain.***

The widow of Nain would never forget the Saviour's all-powerful word addressed to her only son – to one who had died *some time before* and who was being carried out for burial:<sup>88</sup> 'Young man, I say to you, arise', and who sat up and began to speak.<sup>89</sup>

### ***(iii) Ask the family of Bethany.***

Neither Mary nor Martha nor Lazarus would ever forget the Saviour's powerful word (His 'loud voice') addressed to one who had been dead (not for just a few hours or for some little time but) for *four days*:<sup>90</sup> 'Lazarus, come out'.<sup>91</sup>

For His commanding word had then battered down the stronghold of death and the grave, and (as John reported), 'the one who had died came out'.<sup>92</sup> Truly, Lazarus had heard the voice of the Son of God and had come out of his tomb, just as one day all men will hear that same voice and come out of theirs!<sup>93</sup>

Noticeably, the Lord Jesus restored (i) Jairus's daughter to her parents, (ii) the young man of Nain to his mother and (iii) Lazarus to his sisters.

Make no mistake ... all (whether disease, distance, demons, devil or death) were unable to resist the power of the Saviour's word.

But neither could the natural elements withstand the power of His word.

## 6. The Natural Elements.

On one occasion, faced with 'a great tempest'<sup>94</sup> and twelve fearful disciples,<sup>95</sup> the Lord Jesus 'arose'<sup>96</sup> and rebuked the winds and the sea<sup>97</sup> with the words, 'Peace ('hush', 'be quiet'<sup>98</sup>), be still ('be muzzled'<sup>99</sup>)'.<sup>100</sup> As a result, the 'great tempest'<sup>101</sup> became a 'great calm'.<sup>102</sup>

All three synoptic gospels record this particular incident and each writer makes his own distinctive contribution:

### ***(i) Matthew.***

Interestingly, the word rendered 'tempest' or 'storm' in most English translations is the Greek word<sup>103</sup> normally rendered 'earthquake'.<sup>104</sup>

Matthew reports that the 'tempest/earthquake' was '*in the sea*'<sup>105</sup> (not '*on the sea*'), thereby indicating that there was a 'shaking', a 'movement to and fro'.<sup>106</sup> Seemingly, there was a disturbance below the surface of the lake ... a violent movement in the seabed, causing great turbulence above. The trouble, that is, is traced to that which came up.

**(ii) Luke.**

Luke says that 'a storm (the word for 'a whirlwind' or 'a hurricane'<sup>107</sup>) of wind came down on the lake'.<sup>108</sup>

**(iii) Mark.**

For his part, Mark describes graphically how 'the waves were beating'<sup>109</sup> into the boat, so that it was now filling<sup>110</sup>.<sup>111</sup>

That is, Mark is saying,<sup>112</sup> the waves, churned up by the strong wind, were cascading over the side of the boat and the water level was rising frightfully fast.

**Combining the three accounts.**

Putting the three accounts together, the evidence is that, on account of:

- (i) that which, according to Matthew, came up from below,
- (ii) that which, according to Luke, came down from above, and
- (iii) that which, according to Mark, came in from outside,

the disciples were, to use Luke's language, 'in danger'.<sup>113</sup>

But the disciples were 'in danger' only until our Lord's commanding word sounded to lull the fierce storm to sleep.

Confronted with such a demonstration of Jesus' authority over the natural elements, it is hardly surprising that the disciples posed the question, 'Who then is this ...?'<sup>114</sup> 'Who', indeed!

In response to the disciples' question, you and I may well recall the words of Ethan's psalm: 'O Lord God of hosts, who is a strong Lord like you? ... You rule the raging of the sea ... when its waves rise, you still them'.<sup>115</sup>

In concluding this 'Natural Elements' section, let me remind you that both Moses and Elijah (who later stood with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration<sup>116</sup>), had long before controlled mighty waters.

But Moses had needed his rod<sup>117</sup> and Elijah had needed his robe,<sup>118</sup> and that simply, in each case, to divide the waters.<sup>119</sup> Our Lord needed neither rod nor robe; His powerful word was sufficient ... and it was sufficient, not to divide, but to master and control the unruly sea.

**Summary.**

No! ... neither **disease** nor **distance** ...neither **demons** nor the **devil** ... neither **death** nor the **natural elements** ... was a match for our Lord's powerful word.

None was a match for that powerful word by which, as we saw at the outset, (i) He **made** all things in the distant past, (ii) He **upholds** all things in the present and (iii) He will **smite** all His foes in the future.

**Ah, but ... .**

Ah, but ... there was **one thing** (just one thing) **which lay altogether outside the range of His powerful word**. And that 'one thing' was my dire spiritual need.

For, as one who had grievously sinned against God, I needed that which would cost the Lord Jesus *much more than His word*. I needed that which would cost the Saviour His very life; I needed 'salvation'.

I was interested to read some time ago in the apocryphal First Book of Maccabees how, in the period between our two Testaments,<sup>120</sup> Eleazar, a brother of Judas Maccabaeus, rushed to certain death during a battle in an attempt to kill an elephant. The reason was that Eleazar believed (wrongly as it proved) that this particular elephant was carrying the infamous Greek king and persecutor of the Jewish people, Antiochus IV Epiphanes.



'Eleazar', the historical record runs, 'saw that one of the animals was equipped with royal armour. It was taller than all the others, and he supposed that the king was on it ... he courageously ran into the midst ... killing men right and left, and they parted before him on both sides. He got right under the elephant, stabbed it from beneath, and killed it; but it fell to the ground upon him, and he died'.<sup>121</sup>

'**He gave his life to save his people**' was the narrator's comment.<sup>122</sup> And, in one sense, that was true. But Eleazar failed; he did **not 'save his people'** and effectively died to no purpose.

But, thank God, our Lord Jesus stands in marked contrast to Eleazar. For, before He was even conceived in the womb of Mary, an angel of the Lord informed her betrothed husband, Joseph: 'you shall call His name Jesus, for **He shall save His people** from their sins'.<sup>123</sup>

Unlike Eleazar, our Lord Jesus did not fail ... He did not die in vain. Let us praise Him today for the 'great salvation'<sup>124</sup> that we enjoy ...

**which lay altogether outside the range of even His powerful word  
but which was secured for us by His suffering and death.**

When we see Thee, as the victim,  
Bound for us upon the tree,  
For our guilt and folly stricken,  
All our judgment born by Thee—  
Lord, we own, with hearts adoring,  
Thou hast loved us unto blood:  
**Glory, glory everlasting,  
Be to Thee, Thou Lamb of God!**

(J. G. Deck)



## Notes

<sup>1</sup> A. Plummer, 'The Gospel according to St. John (Cambridge Greek Testament)', page 65. The Greek expression is 'οὐδέ εἶν'.

<sup>2</sup> John 1. 3. The verb translated 'made' is 'ἐγένετο'. The same verb occurs no less than twenty-three times in the creation narrative of Genesis 1. See, for example, 'God said, Let there be light: and there was light', Gen. 1. 3; so too Gen. 1. 5 (2), 6 (2), 8 (2), 9, 11, 13 (2), 14, 15, 19 (2), 20, 23 (2), 24, 30, 31 (2).

'Contrast both ἐγένετο and γέγονεν [both rendered 'made'] with ἦν [rendered 'was'] in John 1.1-3. The former denotes the springing into life of what had once been non-existent; the latter denotes the perpetual pre-existence of the Eternal Word', A. Plummer, *ibid.*, page 65.

<sup>3</sup> 'Matthew Henry, 'Commentary on the Whole Bible' on John 1. 1-5.

<sup>4</sup> Psa. 33. 6, 9.

<sup>5</sup> Heb. 1. 3. 'This is an active and powerful word which upholds the universe', Edward Fudge, 'Our Man in Heaven', page 7.

<sup>6</sup> Compare the words of the apostle Paul, 'in Him all things consist', Col. 1. 17.

<sup>7</sup> 'He upholds the universe not like Atlas supporting a dead weight on his shoulders, but as one who carries all things forward on their appointed course', F. F. Bruce, 'The Epistle to the Hebrews (The New International Commentary on the New Testament)', page 6.

<sup>8</sup> Rev. 19. 15; cf. 'the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of Him who was sitting on the horse', Rev. 19. 21..

<sup>9</sup> Isa. 11. 4. Compare the words of Paul, 'the lawless one shall be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus shall consume with the breath of His mouth', 2 Thess. 2. 8.

<sup>10</sup> Rev. 19. 19.

<sup>11</sup> Heb. 5. 7.

<sup>12</sup> John 1. 10.

<sup>13</sup> Quite likely, I suggest, Jesus entered Peter's house for the main meal of the Sabbath, which was served just after the synagogue service.

<sup>14</sup> 'In the grip of' is the rendering of The New Jerusalem Bible. The verb (συνέχω) is used in Luke 19. 43 to mean 'to hem in' and in Luke 22. 63 to mean 'to hold (prisoner)'. 'That she "was racked" (ἦν συνεχομένη) by this fever, which literally means that she "was held fast", suggests that Luke understands the fever to be a force that had taken her captive. Given Jewish understanding of the disease, a great fever requires a great feat to vanquish it. Jesus "rebuked" it and forces it to "release" its hold of her. This incident illustrates the theme of Jesus' release of the captives (Luke 4. 18)', David E. Garland, '*Luke (Zondervan Exegetical Commentary of the New Testament)*', comments on Luke 4. 38-39.

<sup>15</sup> Just as He later 'rebuked the winds and the sea', Matt. 8. 26.

<sup>16</sup> Luke 4. 38-39.

<sup>17</sup> William Barclay. '*Daily Study Bible: The Gospel of Luke*', page 48.

<sup>18</sup> This is not the usual word translated 'immediately' (εὐθέως) in the New Testament, where it occurs 80 times. Indeed, the word used by Luke here (παραχρήμα) is found only twice in the entire New Testament outside of Luke's writings; namely, in Matt. 21. 19-20.

<sup>19</sup> Col. 4. 14.

<sup>20</sup> The blind man's name was Bartimaeus, Mark 10. 46. Matthew informs us that there were, in fact, two beggars; clearly, Bartimaeus was the more prominent of the two.

<sup>21</sup> Luke 18. 35-43.

<sup>22</sup> Mark 10. 32a; the account of the healing of Bartimaeus follows soon after, Mark 10. 46-52. 'Truly, it had been a remarkable moment when "the sun stood still" over the Canaanite city of Gibeon in response to the cry of Joshua, when he asked God to grant him more time to conclude his military victory over an alliance of Canaanite kings, Josh. 10. 12-13. And yet how much *more* wonderful when, on His way to the cross to accomplish the central act (i) of all history and (ii) of God's eternal programme, "Jesus stood still" at the cry of a poor blind beggar!' (Reproduced from page 3 of the '*Remember Me*' document which accompanied the Musings for 8 November 2021.)

<sup>23</sup> Mark 10. 32b-34.

<sup>24</sup> Mark 10. 45.

<sup>25</sup> Heb. 5. 9; cf. 'eternal redemption', Heb. 5. 9.

<sup>26</sup> Luke 18. 42-43.

<sup>27</sup> 'A centurion had a servant who was sick and *at the point of death* (ἤμελλε τελευτᾶν)', Luke 7. 2.

<sup>28</sup> 'He went to Him and implored Him to come down and heal his son, for he was *at the point of death* (ἤμελλε ἀποθνήσκειν)', John 4. 47.

<sup>29</sup> Luke tells us that the centurion approached Jesus through his Jewish friends; Matthew omits this detail and represents him as approaching Jesus directly. Commenting on the role played by the friends of the centurion in Luke's narrative, one writer has suggested: 'Perhaps we can discern something of the differing purposes of the Evangelists in their treatment of the messengers. Matthew was concerned primarily with the centurion's faith and nationality; to him the messengers were irrelevant, even a distraction. But Luke was interested in the man's character and specifically in his humility; to him the messengers were a vital part of the story', Leon Morris, *'Luke (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries)'*, page 151.

<sup>30</sup> The Greek philosopher Aristotle (384-322 BC) taught: 'There can be no friendship, nor justice, towards inanimate things; indeed not even towards a horse or an ox, nor yet towards a slave as slave. For master and slave have nothing in common: a slave is a living tool, just as a tool is an inanimate slave', Aristotle, *'Nicomachean Ethics'*, page 1161b. And the Roman scholar Varro (116-27 BC) maintained that the only difference between a slave, a beast, and a cart was that the slave could talk. (Source: Marcus Terentius Varro, *'De Re Rustica'*, Book 1, Paragraph 17, Section 1.)

Happily for his sick servant, the centurion of Capernaum entertained no such inhumane ideas.

<sup>31</sup> Luke 7. 1-2.

<sup>32</sup> The centurion does not say, '*My servant* is not worthy that you should enter into *his room*' but '*I* am not worthy that you should enter under *my roof*'.

The Gentile centurion does not argue the question of whether or not a Jewish teacher should enter his house; to him such a question is irrelevant.

<sup>33</sup> 'On two occasions only do we read of the Lord Jesus that He marvelled. Once He marvelled at the unbelief of the men of Nazareth, Mark 6. 6. Here, at Capernaum, He marvels at the faith of a Gentile centurion', J. Flanigan, *'Moments with the Master'*, Precious Seed Publications, page 126.

<sup>34</sup> Matt. 8. 5b-13.

<sup>35</sup> See 2 Kings 4. 29.

<sup>36</sup> See Acts 19. 12.

<sup>37</sup> 'He was not far from the house', Luke 7. 6.

<sup>38</sup> Matt. 8. 13.

<sup>39</sup> Greek: *υἱός*.

<sup>40</sup> The imperfect tense, conveying the thought of a persistent, continuous request.

<sup>41</sup> Capernaum 'is on the sea coast', Matt. 4. 13. It is necessary to travel 'down' to any point on the coast of the Lake of Galilee; the level of the lake is almost 700 feet below sea level and the surrounding land is much higher. 'Cana is in the hills of Galilee', Gary M. Burge, *'John (The New International Version Application Commentary)'*, comments on John 4. 47-49.

<sup>42</sup> Greek: *paidivon mou* ... a term of affection..

<sup>43</sup> Greek: *παῖς*.

<sup>44</sup> Jesus' words, 'Your son lives' (*ὁ υἱός σου ζῆ*) remind us of the words of Elijah, 'Your son lives' (*ζῆ ὁ υἱός σου*), 1 Kings 17. 23 (Greek Old Testament).

<sup>45</sup> Quite likely, the man was one of Herod Antipas's court officials. Herod Antipas 'was tetrarch of Galilee from 4 BC to 39 AD and not properly a "king" at all; but he was popularly considered one (Matt. 14. 9; Mark 6. 14)', D. A. Carson, *'The Gospel according to John (Pillar New Testament Commentary)'*, page 238.

<sup>46</sup> 'Jesus' reply ... is admirably glossed by Theodore of Mopsuestia (350-428 AD) as, "It is not necessary for me to come down; for me, it is sufficient that I should simply speak", J. F. McHugh, *'John 1-4 (International Critical Commentary)'*, page 320.

<sup>47</sup> Cana in Galilee 'is approximately 25 miles = 40 km distant from Capernaum, by a road which climbs from more than 600 feet (212 metres) below sea level to some 750 feet (250 metres) above it', J. F. McHugh, *ibid.*, page 318.

<sup>48</sup> Leon Morris, *'The Gospel according to John (The New International Commentary on the New Testament)'*, page 288.

<sup>49</sup> Compare the case of the daughter of the Syrophenician woman, from whom the Lord expelled a demon when He was not present; Matt. 15. 21-28; Mark 7. 24-30. See especially, 'she went home and found the child lying in bed and the demon gone', Mark 7. 30, and 'her daughter was made whole *from that very hour*', Matt. 15. 28.

<sup>50</sup> Matt. 8. 13.

<sup>51</sup> John 4. 52-53.

<sup>52</sup> Matt. 8. 16.

<sup>53</sup> 'Today we might express the same thought by saying, "Why are you meddling with us?"' Thomas Constable, *'Expository Notes'*, on Mark 1. 24. In effect, 'Mind your own business!'

<sup>54</sup> 'Be silent'. This is the word used for muzzling an ox; see note 100 below.

<sup>55</sup> Mark 1. 23-27.

<sup>56</sup> Matt. 8. 28-34.

<sup>57</sup> 'The locale seems to have been in the district controlled by the town of Gadara, near the village of Gerasa', D. A. Carson, *'Matthew (Expositor's Bible Commentary)'*, comments on Matt. 8. 28.

<sup>58</sup> A man with an *unclean spirit* in, what to the Jews, was a ceremonially *unclean place*.

<sup>59</sup> Clearly, the demons possessed some independent knowledge of Jesus' identity; cf. Acts 19. 15.

<sup>60</sup> The recognition by the unclean spirit that Jesus will one day discharge the divine function of judgement follows naturally from the recognition that He is the 'Son of the Most High God'.

<sup>61</sup> 'They preferred pigs to persons, swine to the Saviour', D. A. Carson, *ibid.*, comments on Matt. 8. 32-34.

Contrast the men of Sychar, who not only 'came to Him' and 'believed in Him', but who also 'urged Him that He *would stay with them*', John 4. 30, 39-40.

<sup>62</sup> Mark 5. 1-17.

<sup>63</sup> Luke 8. 27.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Matt. 17. 14-18; Luke 9. 37- 42.

<sup>65</sup> 'From that hour', Matt. 17. 18 (literal translation).

<sup>66</sup> Luke 8. 2.

<sup>67</sup> Matt. 27. 56.

<sup>68</sup> Luke 8. 3.

<sup>69</sup> Mark 16. 9; Luke 8. 2.

<sup>70</sup> Mark 1. 13.

<sup>71</sup> Matt. 4. 8-9. My expression 'his *final* temptation' follows the order of Matt. 4. 3-9, rather than that of Luke 4. 3-12. 'Luke reverses the order of the last two temptations for topographical reasons. Matthew's order is almost certainly original', D. A. Carson, *ibid.*, introductory comments on Matt. 4. 1-11.

<sup>72</sup> Matt. 4. 1.

<sup>73</sup> Matt. 4. 5; Luke 4. 9.

<sup>74</sup> Matt. 4. 8.

<sup>75</sup> Luke 4. 5.

<sup>76</sup> Luke 4. 6. Note the repeated 'I' and 'me', in striking contrast to the way in which the devil had previously been careful to keep himself very much in the background.

<sup>77</sup> Written by David, Acts 4. 25.

<sup>78</sup> Psa. 2. 8.

<sup>79</sup> Matt. 4. 8-9; Luke 4. 5-6.

<sup>80</sup> Matt. 4. 10.

<sup>81</sup> Matt. 4. 11.

<sup>82</sup> Greek, *υπαγε*.

<sup>83</sup> Note that the three temptations began when the tempter came and said to Him, 'If you are the Son of God, say (literally) that these stones become loaves of bread'.

<sup>84</sup> Yet the devil left only 'for a season' ('for a time'), Luke 4. 13; cf. Luke 22. 53; John 13. 27; 14. 30. Both the ESV and the NIV render the Greek expression (*ἄχρι καιροῦ*) as 'until an opportune time', but James Barr takes issue with this rendering; '*Biblical Words for Time*', pages 54-56.

<sup>85</sup> Job 18. 14; '*rex tremendus*'.

<sup>86</sup> Luke 8. 42.

<sup>87</sup> Mark 5. 41-42. 'When the centurion said to Christ, "Lord, don't trouble yourself" (Gk. *μὴ σκύλλου*, Luke 7. 6), it was an expression of faith. When someone from Jairus's house told him not to "trouble" the Teacher any more (Gk. *μὴ σκύλλε*, Luke 8. 49), it was a temptation to give up faith in Christ on the grounds that it was now too late, the situation had gone beyond Christ's ability to do anything about it', David Gooding, '*According to Luke*', page 151.

<sup>88</sup> Luke 7. 12.

<sup>89</sup> Luke 7. 14-15. Interestingly, both Elisha and Jesus raised to life an identified mother's son beside the Hill of Moreh. 'The southern slope of the Hill of Moreh saw the prophet Elisha raise the dead son of a woman from Shunem (2 Kings 4. 18-37) ... Jesus raised a widow's son on the north side of the Hill of Moreh in a town called Nain (Luke 7. 11-17)', Wayne Stiles, '*The Harod Valley*', accessed at ... <https://waynestiles.com/the-harod-valley-your-overwhelming-anxiety-finds-its-peace/>.

<sup>90</sup> John 11. 39.

<sup>91</sup> John 11. 43.

<sup>92</sup> John 11. 44.

<sup>93</sup> John 5. 28-29.

<sup>94</sup> Matt. 8. 24.

<sup>95</sup> 'Why are you afraid', Matt. 8. 26; Mark 4. 40.

<sup>96</sup> Jesus 'arose' from sleep, Matt. 8. 24; Mark 4. 38; Luke 8. 23. When *the disciples* cried out in the face of the storm, *Jesus slept*; when *Jesus* cried out in the face of the cross, *the disciples slept*, Matt. 26. 40-45; Mark 14. 37-41; Luke 22. 45-46.

<sup>97</sup> Matt. 8. 26; that which Luke describes as 'the wind and the raging ('surging') waves', Luke 8. 24.

<sup>98</sup> Greek, '*σιωπάω*' – 'be dumb' 'be silent', 'be mute'.

<sup>99</sup> The word of 1 Cor. 9. 9 and 1 Tim. 5. 18: 'You shall not *muzzle* an ox when it treads out the grain'.

<sup>100</sup> Mark 4. 39.

<sup>101</sup> Matt. 8. 24.

<sup>102</sup> Matt. 8. 26.

<sup>103</sup> The Greek word, 'σεισμός', means 'shaking'; from it we derive the English words, 'seismic', 'seismatic' and 'seismology'.

<sup>104</sup> The word is rendered 'earthquake' on every one of its thirteen other occurrences in the New Testament; namely, Matt. 24. 7; 27. 54; 28. 2; Mark 13. 8; Luke 21. 11; Acts 16. 26; Rev. 6. 12; 8. 5; 11. 13 (2), 19; 16. 18 (2).

<sup>105</sup> Greek, 'ἐν τῇ θαλάσῃ', Matt. 8. 24.

<sup>106</sup> See W. E. Vine, 'Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words', the article 'Earthquake'.

<sup>107</sup> Greek, 'λαίλαψ'. 'Whirlwind, hurricane', (i) J. Lust, E. Eynikel and K Hauspie, 'A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint', article 'λαίλαψ,-απος', and (ii) F. W. Danker (based on W. Bauer and W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich). 'A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature', article 'λαίλαψ, απος, ἡ', page 515.

<sup>108</sup> Luke 8. 23.

<sup>109</sup> Imperfect tense.

<sup>110</sup> Present tense.

<sup>111</sup> Mark 4. 37 (literal translation).

<sup>112</sup> Possibly relating a vivid recollection of Simon Peter.

<sup>113</sup> Luke 8. 23.

<sup>114</sup> Mark 4. 41.

<sup>115</sup> Psa. 89. 8-9. Cf. 'The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea', Psa. 93. 4.

<sup>116</sup> Matt. 17. 3; Mark 9. 4; Luke 9. 30.

<sup>117</sup> Exod. 14. 16, 21.

<sup>118</sup> 2 Kings 2. 8.

<sup>119</sup> Of the Red Sea, Exod. 15. 4; Psa. 136. 13, and the River Jordan, 2 Kings 2. 7, respectively.

<sup>120</sup> Probably in 163 BC. See, F. F. Bruce, 'Israel and the Nations', pages 155-156.

<sup>121</sup> 1 Maccabees 6. 43-46 (NRSV).

<sup>122</sup> 1 Maccabees 6. 44 (NRSV).

<sup>123</sup> Matt. 1. 21.

<sup>124</sup> Heb. 2. 3.