

Malcolm's Monday Musings : 14 November 2022

(i) Scripture.

To us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of His government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Isaiah 9. 6-7 (English Standard Version)

(ii) Food for thought.

'Mine elect, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon Him' (Isa. 42. 1).

'The demonstration of the delight of the Father in Him was the coming of the Holy Spirit upon Him, in fulfilment of this prophecy (Matt. 3. 16; Mark 1. 10; Luke 3. 22; John 1. 32, 33).

'This statement, "I have put My Spirit upon Him," is the centre one of three great declarations in Isaiah concerning the Holy Spirit in connection with Christ. (i) The first is "the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him" (*Isa. 11. 2*), which speaks of His *incarnation*. (ii) The second, here (*Isa. 42. 1*), points to His *baptism*. (iii) The last is "the Spirit of the Lord God is upon me" (*Isa. 61. 1*), pointing to the beginning of His *public ministry*'.

(W. E. Vine, '*Isaiah*', comments on Isa. 42. 1.).

True happiness (in the King James Version).

- (i) '*Happy* is the man whom God correcteth' (Job 5. 17).
- (ii) '*Happy* is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help' (Psa. 146. 5).
- (iii) '*Happy* is the man that findeth wisdom' (Prov. 3. 13).
- (iv) 'He that hath mercy on the poor, *happy* is he' (Prov. 14. 21).
- (v) 'Whoso trusteth in the Lord, *happy* is he' (Prov. 16. 20).
- (vi) 'If ye know these things, *happy* are ye if ye do them' (John 13. 17).
- (vii) 'We count them *happy* which endure' (Jam. 5. 11).
- (viii) 'If ye suffer for righteousness' sake, *happy* are ye' (1 Pet. 3. 14).
- (ix) 'If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, *happy* are ye' (1 Pet. 4. 14).

The Levites in Numbers 1 and Numbers 26.

One notable 'difference between the first census and the last regards the Levites.

'They were numbered separately in *the first* because they were excluded from military responsibilities (Num. 1. 47-50).

'They were numbered apart in (*the second*) because their inheritance in the land was not a separate piece of real estate (Num. 26. 62): "The Lord said to Aaron: "You shall have no inheritance in their land, nor shall you have any portion among them; I am your portion and your inheritance"' (Num. 18. 20)'.
(J. B. Nicholson Jr, '*The Plot Thickens*', Taste and See, Uplook Ministries', 14 October 2022.)

'In loving kindness Jesus came' (opening words of the hymn, 'He lifted me', by C. H. Gabriel).

1. Expectation: the one who was to come.

- (i) 'The woman (of Samaria) said to Him, "I know that Messiah is *coming*"' (John 4. 25)
- (ii) 'The men, having seen the sign which Jesus had done, said, "This is truly the prophet which is *coming* into the world"' (John 6. 14).
- (iii) 'John, calling two of his disciples, sent them to Jesus, saying, "Are you He that should *come*?"' (Luke 7. 19).
- (iv) 'She (Martha) said to Him, "... I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is *coming* into the world"' (John 11. 27).

2. Fulfilment: the one who came ... and why.

- (i) '*Coming* into the world He says, "Sacrifice and offering you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me"' (Heb. 10. 5).

(ii) 'Then said I, "Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do your will, O God"' (Heb. 10. 7).

(iii) 'I am come in my Father's name' (John 5. 43).

(iv) 'I am come down from heaven, not that I should do my will, but the will of Him that has sent me' (John 6. 38).

(v) 'I am come that they might have life, and might have it abundantly' (John 10. 10).

(vi) 'I am come a light into the world' (John 12. 46).

(vii) 'To this end was I born, and for this cause I came into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth' (John 18. 37).

(viii) 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners' (1 Tim. 1. 15).

'To us a child is born, to us a son is given' (Isa. 9. 6).

'A child was born, that is natural; a Son was given, that is divine'.

(H. D. McDonald, '*Jesus—Human and Divine*', page 21.)

'Things which Jesus did' (John 21. 25).

(i) 'The chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did' (Matt. 21. 15).

(ii) 'Tell them how great things the Lord has done' (Mark 5. 19).

(iii) 'They glorified God ... saying, "We have seen strange things ('extraordinary things') today"' (Luke 5. 26).

(iv) 'The people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him' (Luke 13. 17).

'No more'.

When dictating an epistle, the apostle Paul declared that 'Christ being raised from the dead dies no more' (Rom. 6. 9).

When preaching in a synagogue, he declared that God 'raised Him up from the dead, no more to return to corruption' (Acts 13. 34).

Christ's superior sacrifice in Hebrews 9. 6-14.

'His own blood is of such value that He has entered the holy place once for all because the redemption He has obtained is eternal, v. 12. He therefore needs not to enter every year, v. 7.

'In contrast with the ignorant, involuntary, physically perfect animal sacrifices, v. 13, Christ's sacrifice was intelligent ('eternal Spirit'), voluntary ('offered Himself') and of moral perfection ('without spot'), v. 14.

'Animal blood procured external sanctification, v. 13, but Christ's blood, inward purging, v. 14.

(A. Leckie, '*Day by Day through the New Testament*', page 323.)

The death of Jesus: three unique features among many.

(i) **He chose to die.**

Men often choose how they die and when they die. King Saul, Ahithophel and Judas Iscariot are three obvious examples (1 Sam. 31. 4; 2 Sam. 17. 23; Matt. 27. 5).

But men do **not** choose that they die: 'it is appointed unto men once to die' (Heb. 9. 27; cf. Psa. 89. 48; Rom. 5. 12).

Only one chose that He would die: 'I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but *I lay it down of myself*' (John 10. 17-18; cf. 'I am He who lives, and *became* dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore', Rev. 1. 18). Death had no more claim on the Lord Jesus when He was alive in the world than it had hold on Him when He was dead (Acts 2. 24).

'No mere man ever laid down His life for others in the sense in which Christ laid down His life for the world. Every man must die at some time ... When a man sacrifices his life he does but sacrifice a few days or years; he does but lay it down earlier instead of later. But Christ did not choose between dying at one time rather than at another; He chose between dying and not dying'.

(Franklin Johnson, '*The Fundamentals*', Volume VI, Chapter IV, page 61.)

(ii) **Never dying.**

'Our Lord was never a dying man. He died, but was never dying. Death with Him was an act, not a gradual process.

'When all things were accomplished, He bowed His head, voluntarily and with royal dignity (John 19. 30), not because of weakness, but in conscious triumph. He dismissed His spirit (Matt. 27. 50)'.

(J. M. Davies, '*The Mount Everest of Scripture and of Time*', page 5.)

(iii) **A decease.**

The apostle Peter could speak of a 'decease' ('departure', 'exodus') which he was soon to experience (2 Pet. 1. 15), but Moses and Elijah could speak of a 'decease' ('departure', 'exodus') which the Lord Jesus was soon to accomplish (Luke 9. 31).

'His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead' (Eph. 1. 19).

Pilate instructed the chief priests and Pharisees concerning Joseph of Arimathea's sepulchre, 'Make it as sure as you can' (Matt. 27. 65).

Little did he know that it would have been far easier to stop the sun in heaven (Josh. 10. 13) from rising than the Son out of heaven (John 6. 51) from rising!

'Raised for our justification' (Rom. 4. 25).

Rome declared Jesus a messianic pretender, but by resurrection God declared Him the Son of God (Rom 1. 4). In 1 Timothy we read that Jesus was "justified" by the Spirit (1 Tim. 3. 16), the Spirit that raised Him from the dead (Rom. 8. 11).

'That is why the forgiveness of sins (1 Cor. 15. 17) and justification (Rom. 4. 25) are bound up with the resurrection of Jesus and not only the cross of Jesus'.

(M. F. Bird, *'Justification: Five Views'*, page 150.)

'He is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through Him' (Heb. 7. 25).

'That word "uttermost" includes all that can be said.

'Take an estimate of all our *sins*, all our *temptations*, all our *difficulties*, all our *fears*, and all our *backslidings* of every kind—still the word "uttermost" goes beyond them all'.

(John Newton, *'The Letters of John Newton'*, letter to "Mr W___", dated 9 July 1767.)

'A great high priest' (Heb. 4. 14); 'an advocate' (1 John 2. 1).

'Priesthood is that I may behave well. Advocacy is when I do not behave well.

'Priesthood keeps my heart in constant dependence in my walk. Its exercise is that I may not go wrong. Advocacy is when I have gone wrong'.

(J. N. Darby, *'Food for the Flock 6 (1879)'*, p. 53.)

Forgiveness.

In January 1999, Graham Staines (an Australian missionary), along with his two young sons, was burnt to death in India by members of a Hindu fundamentalist group.

Following the funeral, a report in the New York Times quoted his widow, Gladys Staines, as having said 'of those who murdered her husband and boys': 'I can forgive their deeds, but I cannot forgive their sins. Only Jesus can forgive their sins. And they will have to ask'.

(Source: The New York Times, quoted in J. C. Arnold, *'Why Forgive?'* page 49.)

'Be thankful' (Psa. 100. 4; Col. 3. 15).

Let us determine to focus: (i) on what we have and not on what we have not (Heb. 13. 5), (ii) on our blessings and not on our losses.

'Communicated—privately ... Said—before them all' (Gal. 2. 2, 14).

'While the Gospel is something worth contending for [Jude 3], there are right ways and wrong ways to go about this business.

'When Peter's inconsistency is public and doing public damage, Paul's rebuke is public (Gal. 2. 11–21). When Paul is trying to clear the air, find out what is going on, and present the tenor of his own work, he approaches the others "privately" (Gal. 2. 2).

'His concern, after all, is the advance of the undiluted Gospel, not his own public vindication'.

(D. A. Carson, *'For the Love of God'*, Volume 1, 26 September.)

Contemporary.

'I think we have confused novelty and change and have hidden this confusion under the guise of being contemporary. Change for the sake of change is simply novelty, and it does not last. Change for the sake of improvement is progress, and progress is what we need.

'The sad thing about the contemporary emphasis is that it may keep us from diagnosing the real sickness in the church and securing the remedy. We are rearranging the furniture while the walls are falling down ...

'Identification with the world and its needs is one thing; imitation of the world and its foolishness is quite another'.

(Warren W. Wiersbe, *'God Isn't in a Hurry'*, page 35.)

Features of a Christian's character in 1 Peter 3 (English Standard Version).

- (i) 'A tender heart' (1 Pet. 3. 8);
- (ii) 'A humble mind' (1 Pet. 3. 8).
- (iii) 'A good conscience' (1 Pet. 3. 16).

Early Christian families.

'When the first Christians spread the good news across the Mediterranean world, their witness contrasted sharply with the promiscuity and decadence of Roman society. Widows and orphans were cared for (Acts 6. 1-6; Jam. 1. 27), and no one was in need, for entire congregations shared everything they had (Acts 2. 44; 4. 32). Husbands learned self-discipline and self-sacrifice (Eph. 5. 25, 28), and women were honoured as co-equal heirs of salvation (1 Pet. 3. 7).'

(Charles E. Moore, 'Jesus' Surprising Family Values'.)

Pleasure in being praised.

'Pleasure in being praised is not Pride. The child who is patted on the back for doing a lesson well, the woman whose beauty is praised by her lover, the saved soul to whom Christ says "Well done", are pleased and ought to be. For here the pleasure lies not in what you are but in the fact that you have pleased someone you wanted (and rightly wanted) to please.

'The trouble begins when you pass from thinking, "I have pleased Him; all is well", to thinking, "What a fine person I must be to have done it"'.
(C. S. Lewis, 'Mere Christianity', pages 125-126.)

'According to His promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth' (2 Pet 3. 13).

'God desires in us instant expectancy and readiness for eternity. With us, the last things should always be the first'.

(Erich Sauer, *The Triumph of the Crucified*', page 103.)

Heaven.

'We know very little about heaven, but I once heard a theologian describe it as "an unknown region with a well-known inhabitant", and there is not a better way to think of it than that'

(J. I. Packer, 'Your Father Loves You', the meditation for 23 September.)

(iii) Go on, smile.

All up in the air.

1. On the short flight from South Wales to Scotland, a young Welsh lad found he had been seated next to a middle-aged Scottish gentleman and, when he realized that he'd forgotten his watch, he turned to the man seated next to him and asked him for the time.

The Scottish man sniffed, continued to read his magazine, and totally ignored both the lad and his question for the remainder of the flight.

As the plane touched down in Edinburgh, the middle-aged man turned to the younger man and said, 'It's half past three'.

'Thank you', the Welsh lad replied, 'but tell me, sir, why wouldn't you answer me before?'

"Well, you know how things are', the Scottish gentleman replied, 'We would have started talking and, because we share Celtic blood, I'd have felt obligated to invite you in for a meal. I happen to have a lovely daughter and you two might fall in love and get married. And, to be honest, *I don't want a son-in-law who can't even afford a watch!*'

2. When Ron enlisted in the Royal Air Force, his ambition was to join the famous Parachute Regiment. So, he went to see one of the instructors in charge and asked for advice about jumping with a parachute.

'Well', explained the instructor, 'the first thing you must do is to prepare yourself for a safe landing. The final leg of the parachute landing pattern comes at 300 feet. At that point, you must turn into the wind'.

'But however will I know when I'm at 300 feet?' enquired Ron.

'That's easy', replied the instructor. 'At 300 feet you can recognize the faces of people on the ground'.

Mystified, Ron asked, 'But *what happens if there's no one there I know?*'