

Malcolm's Monday Musings : 10 March 2025

Greetings,

1. You may have read or heard about how, a few weeks ago, North Korean hackers pulled off what has been described as '*the single largest known theft of any kind in all time*', stealing about \$1.5 billion (about £1.1 billion) in digital tokens from a crypto exchange.

(Source: <https://www.reuters.com/technology/cybersecurity/cryptos-biggest-hacks-heists-after-15-billion-theft-bybit-2025-02-24/>.)

I do not question that this is '*the single largest known theft of any kind in all time*' but you and I know of '*a thief*' who committed **a far, far greater crime almost 2000 years ago**:

(i) 'Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples (who was about to betray Him) ... was *a thief*' (John 12. 5-6).

(ii) 'Those that you have given me I have kept, and none of them is lost ('destroyed'), but *the son of perdition* ('of destruction')' (John 17. 12).

(iii) 'The Son of man goes as it has been determined, but *woe to that man* by whom He is betrayed!' (Luke 22. 22).

Praise God, the evil act of the man who '**delivered**' the Lord Jesus to the chief priests for thirty pieces of silver (Matt. 27. 26), was overruled for our eternal good by the One who 'spared not His own Son, but **delivered** Him up for us all' (Rom 8. 32).

2. Separately, last Thursday marked the anniversary of the occasion, on 6 March 1924, when the Egyptian government opened the mummy case of Tutankhamun, a pharaoh of the Eighteenth Dynasty of ancient Egypt.

That anniversary reminded me of a more dramatic moment some 16 months previous—which featured in my circulated 'Musings' on Monday, 11 January 2021. Here is a reproduction of that item:

'Wonderful things'.

It was 26 November 1922. A group of men gathered around the entrance to the (as yet) unopened tomb of the boy king, Tutankhamun, in the Valley of the Kings in Egypt. One of those men was the British archaeologist, Howard Carter, and another was his wealthy patron, Lord Caernarvon. The moment had come.

'With Caernarvon and other observers looking on, Carter drilled a small hole in the top corner of the doorway and placed a candle inside. The candle flickered and Carter peered in. As his eyes grew accustomed to the darkness beyond, he heard Caernarvon asking: "Can you see anything?" "Yes", Carter replied. "Wonderful things. *Wonderful things!*"

(Source: '*Tut's Tomb*', National Geographic History magazine, March/April 2018, page 30.)

For our part, as believers, we know of *far more wonderful things*'—done by divine persons:

(i) 'O Lord, you are my God. I will exalt you, I will praise your name, for *you have done wonderful things*' (Isa. 25. 1).

(ii) 'When the chief priests and scribes saw the *wonderful things that He did*, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were indignant' (Matt. 21. 15).

3. Finally, I should not be surprised if some of you have treasured the 'advance notice' which brought last week's 'Musings' to a conclusion: 'Given the size of this week's attached document, *I shall reduce the size of the 'Musings' which, God willing, I shall circulate next Monday*'.

Well, in the words of Jephthah of old, 'I have opened my mouth ... and I cannot go back' (Jud. 11. 35).

I present below, therefore, today's



SMALL set of Musings!

Happy - albeit, brief - reading.

Yours in our Lord Jesus,

Malcolm

(i) Scripture.

I turned and came down from the mountain, and the mountain was burning with fire. And the two tablets of the covenant were in my two hands.

And I looked, and behold ... you had made yourselves a golden calf. You had turned aside quickly from the way that the Lord had commanded you.

So I took hold of the two tablets and threw them out of my two hands and broke them before your eyes.

Then I lay prostrate before the Lord forty days and forty nights. I neither ate bread nor drank water, because of all the sin that you had committed, in doing what was evil in the sight of the Lord to provoke him to anger.

For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure that the Lord bore against you, so that he was ready to destroy you. But the Lord listened to me that time also.

And the Lord was so angry with Aaron that he was ready to destroy him. And I prayed for Aaron also at the same time.

Then I took the sinful thing, the calf that you had made, and burned it with fire and crushed it, grinding it very small, until it was as fine as dust. And I threw the dust of it into the brook that ran down from the mountain.

Deuteronomy 9. 15-21 (*English Standard Version*)

(ii) Food for thought.

Aaron and Christ.

'Between God's designation of Aaron to be high priest and Aaron's consecration to office, Aaron himself crafted the golden calf. Moses later recalled, "And the Lord was so angry with Aaron that He was ready to destroy him" (Deut. 9. 20).

'After Aaron and his sons were consecrated as priests, Nadab and Abihu disregarded God's holiness and died for their disobedience. In fact, the sin of every priest in Aaron's line was on display every year on the Day of Atonement, when the high priest first had to present a sin offering for himself (Lev. 16. 1-14), before he sacrificed and interceded for the Israelites ...

'Jesus is the great high priest whose blameless integrity (Heb. 4. 15; 7. 26) stands in sharp contrast to the sin that stained Aaron's priestly order'.

(D. E. Johnson, 'Hebrews 2', Crossway Daily Devotional, meditation for 28 February.)

'Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?' (1 Cor. 3. 16).

'The Corinthian church was a temple that God's Spirit indwelt.

'Paul was not speaking here of individual believers being temples of God, though we are (1 Cor. 6. 19), or of the church universal as the temple of God, though it is (Eph. 2. 19-22; 1 Pet. 2. 5).

'He meant the collective body of believers that made up the local church, as is clear from his use of the plural "you" and the singular "temple". The local company was not just any building (1 Cor. 3. 9) but a sanctuary that God inhabited. The presence of the Spirit alone marked them off as God's sanctuary in Corinth'.

(T. E. Constable, 'Expository Notes on the Bible', comment on 1 Cor. 3. 16.)

Christ received.

(i) 'He came to His own, and His own people did not receive Him. But to *all who did receive Him*, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God' (John 1. 11-12).

(ii) 'I have come in my Father's name, and *you do not receive me*' (John 5. 43).

(iii) '*Whoever receives me* receives the one who sent me' (John 13. 20).

(iv) '*As you received Christ Jesus the Lord*, so walk in Him' (Col. 2. 6).

Seven Old Testament books concerned with Israel's return from the Exile.

There are seven books that describe the conditions towards the end of the captivity and the return of the Jewish captives to their own land.

'Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther are *historical*, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi are *prophetic*, and Daniel is *both historical and prophetic*'.

(J. B. Nicholson Jr, 'Ezra's place in the Bible', Taste and See, Uplook Ministries, 25 February 2025.)

'Where I am'—the words of the Lord Jesus.

(i) 'If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be' (John 12. 26).

(ii) 'If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also' (John 14. 3).

(iii) 'Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory' (John 17. 24).

'Father, I will that they ... be with me where I am' (John 17. 24).

'Jesus no longer says, "I pray" (John 17. 20) but "I will". This expression, found nowhere else in the mouth of Jesus, must be taken in its relation to the unique character of the situation. It is the saying of a dying man: "Father, my last will is ...". It is truly His testament which Christ thus deposits in His Father's hands'.

(F. Godet, 'Commentary on the Gospel of St. John', page 214.)

'His grace' in Ephesians 1 and 2.

(i) 'To the praise of the glory of His grace' (Eph. 1. 6).

(ii) 'According to the riches of His grace' (Eph. 1. 7).

(iii) 'That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace' (Eph. 2. 7).

'Wearied' (Isa. 43. 22-24).

(i) 'You have not called on me, O Jacob; but you have been weary of me, O Israel (Isa. 43. 22).

(ii) 'I have not caused you to serve with an offering, nor wearied you with incense' (Isa. 43. 23).

'The phrase ... does not mean that God had not required sacrifice, but simply that God had not imposed sacrifice as a wearisome burden of no profit ... the entirety of the sacrificial system was not intended to be a burden of no profit, but rather a joyful offering of sacrifices in which the offerer would approach the Lord with a willing heart'.

(E. J. Young, 'The Book of Isaiah', Volume III, comment on Isa. 43. 23.)

(iii) You have burdened me with your sins; you have wearied me with your iniquities' (Isa. 43. 24).

'Not to do my own will but the will of Him who sent me' (John 6. 38).

'It is remarkable that in the gospel of John, which presents Christ to us as the eternal Son, we see Him everywhere, and constantly, taking the place of the Servant. In accordance with this position, we find Him asserting three things:

(i) first, that He did not come of Himself, but that He was sent by the Father (John 7. 28; 8. 42);

(ii) secondly, that He did not speak His own words (John 7. 16; 8. 26, 28; 12. 49; 14. 10, 24); and

(iii) thirdly, that He did not do His own works (John 5. 19, 30; 8. 28).

'In a word, He came, as He tells us, not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him (John 6. 38)'.

(E. Dennett, 'The Conditions of Guidance', The Christian Friend, Volume 9, 1882, page 33.)

'I delight to do your will, O my God' (Psa. 40. 8; cf. Heb. 10. 7).

O Lord! We would the path retrace
Which Thou on earth hast trod —
To man Thy wondrous love and grace,
Thy faithfulness to God.

Faithful amidst unfaithfulness,
'Midst darkness only light,
Thou didst Thy Father's name confess,
And in His will delight.

J. G. Deck

(iii) Go on, smile.

Albert Chivers was sitting with his little granddaughter Rachel on his lap, reading her a bedtime story. Suddenly, his hearing aid beeped, telling him that the battery was low.

Startled, little Rachel looked up at him and said, 'Guess what, Gramps, *you just got an e-mail*'.