

Malcolm's Monday Musings : 24 March 2025

Greetings.

This coming Thursday marks the four hundredth anniversary of the death (on 27 March 1625) of King James I.

Apparently, King James was not without humour. As an example of His royal wit, he is reported to have said, '*Dr Donne's verses are like the peace of God; they pass all understanding*'.

(According to 'Oxford Essential Quotations', page 329, this remark was noted at the time by Archdeacon Plume.)

But James I is best known to most of us on account of his sponsorship of 'The King James Version' (KJV)—still known to some as 'The Authorised Version' (AV). Briefly, he convened a Conference at Hampton Court in January 1604, where a new English translation of the Bible was commissioned. That Bible was printed and published in 1611.

The following is an extract from the preface to that Bible:

'We do not deny, nay we affirm and avow, that the very meanest translation of the Bible in English, set forth by men of our profession ... containeth the word of God, nay, is the word of God ... We never thought from the beginning, that we should need to make a new Translation, nor yet to make of a bad one a good one ... but to make a good one better, or out of many good ones, one principal good one; that hath been our endeavour, that our mark'.

(The original preface to *the King James ('Authorised') Version 1611*—quoted previously in the Musings for 2 December 2024.)

I set out below today's 'Musings'. (It will probably come as no great surprise that the 'Scripture' passage at the beginning is quoted from the King James Version.)

Happy reading.

Yours in our Lord Jesus,

Malcolm

(i) Scripture.

By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth ...

Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. For He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.

The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: He maketh the devices of the people of none effect. The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of His heart to all generations.

Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom He hath chosen for His own inheritance.

The Lord looketh from heaven; He beholdeth all the sons of men. From the place of His habitation, He looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth ... He considereth all their works ...

Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His mercy;

Psalm 33. 6-18 (*King James Version*)

(ii) Food for thought.

'It is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him' (1 John 3. 2 RV).

'There remain many things impossible to say or to hear now.

'Impossible for God to say, for earth has no language wherein to describe these heavenly things. *Impossible for us to hear*, for as yet we have had no experience to enable us to bridge the gulf, to pierce the veil, that separates the material from the spiritual world.

'And this the apostle John asserts when he writes that "it is not yet made manifest what we shall be". But *if, in the meantime, satisfaction is denied to the intellect, there remains at least comfort for the heart*, for, "we know that, if He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him".

(C. F. Hogg and W. E. Vine, *'Touching the Coming of the Lord'*, page 55.)

Distinguishing 'things that differ: 'children' and 'sons'.

1. 'The idea of being children, as distinguished from being sons ... 'is that of a *community of nature* as distinguished from that of a *dignity of heirship*'.

(B. F. Westcott, *'The Gospel according to John: The Greek Text with Introduction and Notes'*, page 17.

2. 'The word "child" carries with it more thought of internal intimacy, moral characteristics, community of life and nature, whilst the latter word "son" directs the mind to a position given ... and the dignities resulting from it'.

(J. S. A., *'The Difference between Teknon and Huios as used in the New Testament'*, The Bible Treasury, Volume 12.)

3. 'In the Gospel of John, the believer becomes a "child" of God, but only Jesus is the "son" of God. The language is unlike that of Paul, who describes both Jesus and the believer as "son" of God, but believers are "sons" only by adoption. Thus, both writers presume *a distinction between the "sonship" of believers and the unique "sonship" of Jesus*'.

(D. A. Carson, *'The Gospel according to John'*, page 126).

'The adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the descendants of the captivity were building the temple of the Lord God of Israel' (Ezra 4. 1).

'Count on it—when God's people begin to work, the enemy soon shows up. When the sower plants good seed, the enemy sows tares (Matt. 13. 24-25). If "a great and effective door has opened to me", be sure "there are many adversaries" (1 Cor 16. 9).

'But notice the enemy's first tactic: "Let us build with you, for we seek your God as you do" (Ezra 4. 2). This may seem very encouraging on the surface, but ... this was clearly a ploy, and it becomes obvious by what follows: "Then the people of the land tried to discourage the people of Judah. They troubled them in building, and hired counsellors against them to frustrate their purpose" (Ezra 4. 5-6). They were (i) *insistent in their ploys*, (ii) *resistant in their purpose*, and (iii) *persistent in their plan*.

'If you're facing headwinds in your ministry, be encouraged. The devil doesn't bother sleeping saints. God is for you!'

(J. B. Nicholson Jr, *'Who Shows Up At The Worksite?'*, Taste and See, Uplook Ministries, 13 March 2025).

'Abraham said to his young men, "... we will worship, and come again to you"' (Gen. 22. 5).

'What did he mean by telling his two servants that he and the lad would come again to them? These words, compared with those of Hebrews 11. 17-19 explain the whole story.

'They show that Abraham from the first believed that the lad would in some way be restored to him, because God had said, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called" (Gen. 21. 12; cf. Rom. 9. 7). He expected no other than that he should have to slay him and that he would be burnt to ashes; but, if so, he was persuaded that he should receive him again, "Accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead". Such was *the victory of faith!*

(Andrew Fuller, *'Abraham commanded to offer up Isaac'*, Discourses on Genesis, page 215.)

The Lord Jesus: 'above all/every'.

(i) 'He who comes from above is *above all*' (John 3. 31).

(ii) 'The working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named' (Eph. 1. 19-21).

(iii) 'He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all the heavens' (Eph. 4. 10).

(iv) 'God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name' (Phil. 2. 9).

'Under the sun': twenty-nine times in the Book of Ecclesiastes.

'In the garden of Eden, Adam and Eve lived with significance and satisfaction—until they sought for satisfaction apart from God. That's when everything changed. Their work, which was intended to bring great pleasure—caring for and exercising dominion over the earth—was reduced to exasperating toil. On that day, the entire creation was "subjected to futility" (Rom. 8. 20). It is this futility that the Preacher laments ...

'We can see something the Preacher could not see. We live in light of God's fullest revelation of Himself in the person and work of Christ. So, we know that there is life beyond the few years lived "under the sun". We live in confident hope of resurrection life beyond the grave.

'We know that, though this life sometimes seems futile, Jesus has accomplished all that is necessary for all of creation to be set free from its futility. The world will not be this way forever'.

(N. Guthrie, 'Crossway Daily Devotional', meditation for 6 March.)

God's power matched by His love.

At the close of Psalm 62, David asserts: (i) 'Power belongs to God' and (ii) 'to you, O Lord, belongs loving-kindness' (Psa. 62. 11-12).

Compare the words of Paul in his letter to the Ephesians: (i) 'That you may know ... what is the exceeding greatness of His power' (Eph. 1. 18-19) and (ii) 'That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us' Eph. 2. 7).

'His love is as great as His power
and knows neither knows measure nor end'.

(Joseph Hart)

Hebrews 1 and 2.

1. 'In Psalm 2, we have the Father speaking to the Son (Heb. 1. 5). In Psalm 45 and Psalm 102, we have what God says about the Son (Heb. 1. 8-12). In Psalm 22, we have Jesus's own words (Heb. 2. 12)'.

(D. Stevens, 'The Breakthrough That Helped Me Understand the Old Testament'.)

2. 'The chain of Old Testament testimonies demonstrating the Son's superiority to the angels (Heb. 1. 5–14) has been moving toward a goal: the exhortation to heed the message God has spoken through the Son (Heb. 2. 1-4).

'This first of many exhortation sections (Heb. 3.7–4. 13; 5. 11–6. 12; 10. 19–31; 12. 1–17; 12. 25–29) in this "word of exhortation" (Heb. 13. 22) contains a grave warning of the consequences of drifting away from the salvation achieved and announced by Christ. The greater the dignity of the messengers whom God sends, the greater the punishment for ignoring the message (cf. Heb. 12. 25). If disregarding God's word spoken "long ago" through angels at Sinai brought punishment, all the more does ignoring the "last days" message spoken in the Son have eternally disastrous consequences ...

"We must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it" (Heb. 2. 1). The term translated "pay attention" frequently had the general sense of giving heed to something of import (e.g., Heb. 7. 13; Luke 21. 34; 1 Tim. 4. 13). Here it is contrasted with a verb meaning to "drift away", describing a ship loosened from its mooring and at the mercy of strong currents. The writer later evokes the nautical image of an anchor (Heb. 6. 19), so here too he may be imploring his readers to be like a vessel secured to its dock, not slipping away from its safe haven'.

(Dennis E. Johnson, 'Hebrews: ESV Expository Commentary', pages 41-42.)

'The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all' (Isa. 53. 6).

1. I have read (but cannot vouch for the genuineness of the anecdote), that:

'The great evangelist of the 19th century, D. L. Moody, was having a gospel campaign in the city of Philadelphia. At the end of the week, he was leaving the city by train. A man could be seen running after the train on the station platform as it pulled away. "Mr. Moody, what must I do to be saved?"

'Moody, standing at the rear of the train yelled, "Go home and read Isaiah 53. 6. Enter in at the first all ("all we like sheep have gone astray") and come out at the second all ("The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all")'.

2. 'The Hebrew word translated "laid on" is used frequently in the Old Testament to describe those who meet or fall on others with a view to smiting and killing them (e.g. 1 Kings. 2. 25, 34, 46). Our text should probably be understood, therefore, as saying that, at the cross, our iniquity rushed on the Lord Jesus, falling on Him as would a destroying foe.

'During our Lord's passion, men rushed on Him with hostile intent; for there came "a great multitude with swords and staves" (Matt. 26. 47, 55). So too did the overlord of evil with his demonic forces; for Jesus said, "this is ... the power of darkness" (Luke 22. 53; cf. Col. 2. 15).

'But, for Jesus, the extreme agony of His passion lay, not in the violent assaults which He suffered from men and demons, but in that which He suffered from our sins.'

'Who made it happen? It was the Lord God Himself who caused "the iniquity of us all" to fall on the Saviour and to attack Him. The apostle Paul similarly noted that it was God who "spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all" (Rom. 8. 32).

It was, therefore, for "us all" that God delivered up His own Son, even as it was the iniquity of "us all" which He encountered at the cross.'

(*'Christ Foreshadowed'*, Precious Seed Publications, page 303.)

'The Lord God said to the serpent, "Her seed ... will bruise your head" ... and He drove out the man' (Gen. 3. 15, 23-24).

'Man got out of paradise, the place of earthly blessing, and he never can get back again.

'I cannot get there; but I have received the same place of dignity Christ has gained; not the paradise Adam lost, which was earthly: our place of blessing in Christ is heavenly; and what is before us is the ground and way of our blessing ...

'The first thing, when men fell, was the word that Another should come—"The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head". It is not a promise made to Adam, but a revelation in his hearing that his faith could take hold of, that Another should come.

'When Adam sinned, he was turned out of paradise ... Being in heaven is not blessedness in the garden of Eden. There is no going back to a state of innocence; that is impossible'.

(J. N. Darby, *'Are you praising with Christ?'*, Collected Writings, Volume 16, pages 262-263).

It is not only among men that handmade is special.

A fourfold testimony to human beings as the work of God's 'hands':

(i) Job: 'Your hands have made me and shaped me' (Job 10. 8; cf. Psa. 119. 73).

(ii) Elihu: 'He is not a respecter of the persons of princes, nor respects the rich more than the poor; for they all are the work of His hands' (Job 34. 19).

(iii) David: 'Your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever. Do not forsake the work of your hands' (Psa. 138. 8).

(iv) Isaiah: 'We are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand' (Isa. 64. 8).

'When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt' (Hos. 11. 1).

'The quotation of this verse in Matt. 2. 15 enables us to find Christ here. For, when He came to earth, He identified Himself in grace with Israel's history: the sojourn in Egypt, and the temptation in the wilderness.

Where Israel had been the subject of God's preserving care, there He also trod (His faithfulness displaying itself in shining contrast to Israel's failure).

'This He did that He might, in a very real way, be able to sympathise with, to support and to succour the hearts of His people in days to come; when God shall again bring them from the lands of their oppression and cause them to pass through the wilderness (see Ezek. 20. 34, 35; Isa. 11. 16; Hos. 2. 14), before establishing them in the land which He had promised them'.

(H. P. Barker, *'Christ in the Minor Prophets'*, page 12.)

(iii) Go on, smile.

Pets and vets.

1. Poppy, the Wilson family cat, had been injured and needed to stay at the vet clinic for several days. The three Wilson children were so concerned that several times a day Mum and Dad Wilson had to reassure them that Poppy was safe and was being well cared for by 'the animal doctor'.

Finally, Dad Wilson had a phone message to tell him that Poppy was ready to come home. Driving to the vet's, it became clear that four-year-old Lucas had been doing a lot of thinking about Poppy's absence.

'Mummy', he asked, 'what kind of animal is the doctor?'

2. Little Oliver's dog, Rocky, was sick and the boy was afraid that his dad would come back from the vet with bad news.

As his dad stepped through the door, with Rocky in his carrier, Oliver rushed to find out what the vet had said.

'I'm afraid it's not good news, son', said his father. 'The vet thinks Rocky's only got another three weeks or so to live'.

Hearing this, Oliver burst into tears.

'Rocky wouldn't want you to be sad', said the father, putting a comforting arm around Oliver's shoulder.

Little Oliver rubbed his eyes and asked quietly, 'Can we give Rocky a funeral?'

'Sure we can, son', said his father.

'Can I invite all my friends?'

'Yes, of course you can'.

Oliver brightened. 'And can we have chocolate cake and ice-cream?'

'You can have whatever you want'.

'Dad', said Oliver, 'can we ask the vet to stop Rocky living today?'