

Malcolm's Monday Musings : 17 November 2025.

(i) Scripture.

In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when He was taken up, after He had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom He had chosen.

He presented Himself alive to them after His suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

And while staying with them, He ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, He said, 'you heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now'.

So, when they had come together, they asked Him, 'Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?'

He said to them, 'It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by His own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth'.

And when He had said these things, as they were looking on, He was lifted up, and a cloud took Him out of their sight.

And while they were gazing into heaven as He went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven' ...

In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120) and said ... 'One of these men must become with us a witness to His resurrection'.

Acts 1. 1-11, 22 (*English Standard Version*)

(ii) Food for thought.

Acts chapter 1 and the endings of the four Gospels.

'Matthew concludes with the resurrection, Mark with the ascension, Luke with the promise of the Holy Spirit, and John with the promise of the second coming.

'Acts 1 brings all four records together and mentions each of them (Acts 1. 2, 5, 11, 22).

The four Gospels funnel into Acts, and Acts is the bridge between the Gospels and the Epistles'.

(J. V. McGee, 'Acts: Thru the Bible', Volume 40, page 23.)

Four occasions on which Judas Iscariot 'went'.

(i) 'One of the twelve, whose name was Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests' (Matt. 26. 14).

(ii) 'After receiving the morsel of bread, he went out immediately; and it was night' (John 13. 30).

(iii) 'Having cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, he departed, and went and hanged himself' (Matt. 27. 5).

(iv) 'This ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place' (Acts 1. 25).

['He had been chosen for one place, but had made choice of another for himself. The writer does not define what this was, but what this phrase meant in a Jewish mouth is ... Gehenna, the place of torment', R. R. Lumby, 'The Acts of the Apostles: Cambridge Greek Testament', page 91.]

Peter's discoveries.

'It was when Peter meant his best, he found out what a wretched heart he had (Mark 14. 29-31); it was only when he did his worst, he found out what a blessed heart Christ had (Luke 22. 61; 24. 34; cf. Mark 16. 7)'.
(J. N. Darby, 'The Garden and the Cross', Food for the Flock, Volume 1, 1874, page 174.)

To eat or not to eat, that is the question!

It is in some ways ironic that the man who successfully defended himself against the criticism of the brethren at Jerusalem for the offence of eating with Gentiles (Acts 11. 2-18) should, years afterwards,

stand condemned before the brethren at Antioch for the offence of refusing to eat with Gentiles (Gal. 2. 11-21).

'Delight yourself in the Lord', (Psa. 37. 4; cf. Isa. 58. 14).

'When I am tempted to complain about my circumstances, I must ask myself some questions to gain perspective and conduct a serious heart assessment:

'(i) if I am always seeking an escape from discomfort or trial, am I truly satisfied in Christ alone?

'(ii) Am I looking to material things, people or enjoyable experiences to find peace or joy?

'(iii) Am I truly content with what God has already provided for me in Christ?'

(E. R. Massey, *'Delight in the Lord'*, accessed at <https://www.crosswalk.com/devotionals/your-daily-prayer/a-prayer-to-find-delight-in-the-lord.html>).

'I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of His robe filled the temple' (Isa. 6. 1).

'Seven centuries were to elapse before the occupant of that throne should stoop to thirty-three years of deepening humiliation that should culminate in the sorrows of the tree' (Acts 5. 30; 10. 39; 13. 29; 1 Pet. 2. 24).

'In the day of Isaiah's vision, He dwelt in His rightful sphere, and was seen sitting upon a throne high and lifted up (or "lofty") as befitting "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy" (Isa. 57. 15).

'The flowing robe of His vestment of majesty filled all the temple; there was room in that place for one King (Isa. 6. 5), and only one'.

(H. C. Hewlett, *'The Glories of our Lord'*, pages 22-23.)

Seven details of our Lord's forthcoming passion which He foretold in Matthew 26. 1-35.

(i) The timing and manner of His death: 'He said to his disciples, "You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of man will be delivered up to be crucified" (Matt. 26. 2).

(ii) His burial: 'In pouring this ointment on my body, she has done it to prepare me for burial' (Matt. 26. 12).

(iii) The identity of His betrayer: 'Verily, I say to you, one of you will betray me ... He who has dipped his hand in the dish with me will betray me' ... Judas, who betrayed Him, answered, "Is it I, Rabbi?" He said to him, "You have said so" (Matt. 26. 21-25).

(iv) The shedding of His blood: 'This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins' (Matt. 26. 28).

(v) The stumbling and the scattering of His disciples: 'You will all be made to stumble because of me this night. For it is written, "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered"' (Matt. 26. 31).

(vi) His resurrection: 'After I have risen again, I will go before you to Galilee' (Matt. 26. 32).

(vii) Peter's threefold denial of Him: 'Verily I say to you, that during this night, before the cock shall crow, you will deny me three times' (Matt. 26. 34).

'Thus saith the Lord, I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown' (Jer. 2. 2-3).

'The children of Israel were brought through the Red Sea. They were brought into the joy of complete deliverance from the power of the oppressor and from the land of judgement.

'Jehovah Himself became everything to them—their strength, their song, and their salvation (Exod. 15. 2); His victory and glory, and His thoughts and purposes, filled their hearts.

'They were absorbed with Himself. The song of Exodus 15 is all, "Thou", "Thy", "Thee", "Thine"—if they speak of themselves, it is as, "Thy people" (Exod. 15. 16). It was a wonderful moment.

'You may say that it did not last long (Exod. 15. 24). That is true; but think of the wonderful blessedness of it while it did last.

'It was what Jehovah could remember and speak of more than eight hundred years afterwards as "the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals".

'Such a moment as that has come in the history of every soul who knows the salvation of God ...

'Eight hundred years had passed in Israel's history—long centuries of backsliding and rebellion—but the Lord never forgot the brief moment in which He was everything to their hearts.

'How far has He to look back to find such a moment in your history or mine?'

(C. A. Coates, *'Affection for Christ'*, in the volume, *'The Paths of Life'*, pages 86, 92).

Kept—from head to foot.

- (i) 'The very hairs of your head are all numbered' (Matt. 10. 30).
- (ii) 'He will keep the feet of His saints' (1 Sam. 2. 9).

The Lord Jesus our example.

- (i) In humble service: 'If I then, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you' (John 13. 14-15).
- (ii) In love: 'as I have loved you, you also are to love one another' (John 13. 34; cf. Eph. 5. 2).
- (iii) In receiving: 'receive one another, as Christ also received us' (Rom. 15. 7).
- (iv) In forgiving: 'forgiving one another ... as Christ has forgiven you' (Col. 3. 13).
- (v) In uncomplaining suffering: 'Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in His steps ... when He was reviled, He did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but continued entrusting Himself to Him who judges justly' (1 Pet. 2. 21-23).

'The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want' (Psa. 23. 1).

'It is cheering to remember that for the sake of His own name, and of His own glory, as well as for the sake of His great love, the full supply of all our needs is guaranteed by our relationship to Him as our Shepherd.

'A lean, scraggy sheep, with torn limbs and tattered fleece, would be small credit to the shepherd's care; but unless we will wander from our Shepherd, and will not remain restfully under His protection, there is no fear of such ever being our lot.

'We may lie down in peace (Psa. 23. 2), and sleep in safety, because the "Shepherd of Israel" (Psa. 80. 1) neither slumbers nor sleeps (Psa. 121. 4).

'No lion or bear (1 Sam. 17. 34) can ever surprise our ever-watchful Guardian, or overcome our Almighty Deliverer.

'He has once laid down His life for the sheep (John 10. 11, 15, 17); but now He ever lives to care for them, and to ensure to them all that is needful for this life, and for that which is to come'.

(James Hudson Taylor, 'God's Guardian Care', in 'China's Millions', 1884, page 14.)

'Let not your heart be troubled ... I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myself, that where I am you may be also' (John 14. 1-3).

'It is Jesus who is deeply "troubled" in heart (John 12. 27 and spirit (John 13. 21). Yet on this night of nights, when of all times it would have been appropriate for Jesus' followers to lend Him emotional and spiritual support, He is still the one who gives, comforts, instructs ...

'Jesus' departure is for the disciples' advantage. True, He is going away, but He is going away to "prepare a place" for them ... the words presuppose that the "place" exists before Jesus gets there.

'It is not that He arrives on the scene and then begins to prepare the place; rather, in the context of Johannine theology, it is the going itself, via the cross and resurrection, that prepares the place for Jesus' disciples.

'And if He takes such trouble, all to prepare a place for His own, it is inconceivable that the rest should not follow: "I will come again, and receive you to myself, that where I am you may be also"'.
(D. A. Carson, 'The Gospel according to John', page 489.)

'We shall see Him' (1 John 3. 2).

'Oft times the day seems long, our trials hard to bear,
We're tempted to complain, to murmur and despair;
But Christ will soon appear to catch His Bride away,
All tears forever over in God's eternal day.

'It will be worth it all when we see Jesus.
Life's trials will seem so small when we see Christ;
One glimpse of His dear face all sorrow will erase,
So bravely run the race till we see Christ.

'Sometimes the sky looks dark with not a ray of light,
We're tossed and driven on, no human help in sight;
But there is one in heaven who knows our deepest care,

Let Jesus solve your problem – just go to Him in prayer.

*'It will be worth it all when we see Jesus,
Life's trials will seem so small when we see Christ;
One glimpse of His dear face all sorrow will erase,
So bravely run the race till we see Christ.*

(E. K. Rusthoi, 1909-1962)

The mercy of the Lord.

'The character of His mercy:

'1. His mercy is great (Num. 14. 18; Psa. 103. 11; 145. 8). It is great, because the Father is the source of it; it is great, because of the price it cost before it could reach us, for sin had blocked up the way. The cost was the blood of Christ.

'2. His mercy is enduring (1 Chron. 16. 34, 41; 2 Chron. 5. 13 ... Psa. 136. 1-26, Jer. 33. 11.). Having put His hand to the plough, He never looks back.

'3. His mercy is plenteous (Psa. 86. 5, 15; 103. 8). He does not dole it out grudgingly, but showers it upon us abundantly.

'4. His mercy is tender (Luke 1. 78). He has mercy upon us, not as a judge, but as a father.

'5. His mercy is rich—He is rich in mercy (Eph. 2. 4). He keeps not the riches of His mercy to Himself, but, like Joseph, who gave of his abundance to his brethren, even so the Lord gives us of His fulness.

'6. His mercy is saving (Titus 3 5). We should never have been saved if our salvation had depended upon ourselves; but He held out the sceptre of mercy to us, as Ahasuerus did to Esther.

'7. His mercy is abundant (1 Pet. 1. 3). It is not like a brook that dries up in the summer, but like the sea, which is unlimited. His mercy shall be as an attendant to accompany us (Psa. 23. 6), and as an army to encompass us (Psa. 32. 10).

(F. E. Marsh, 'Five Hundred Bible Readings', page 178.)

(iii) Go on, smile.

With apologies to all nice mothers-in-law.

1. Dylan, a farmer living in Mid-Wales, was giving a tour of his farm to his new mother-in-law. The newlywed farmer genuinely tried to be friendly to his new mother-in-law, hoping that they would enjoy a warm, non-antagonistic relationship.

All was to no avail though. She kept nagging him at every opportunity, demanding changes, offering unwanted advice, and generally making life unbearable to Dylan and to Ffion, his new bride.

While Dylan was showing his mother-in-law around his barn, Dylan's mother-in-law walked close behind Dylan's donkey. For no apparent reason, the donkey suddenly reared up and kicked the mother-in-law violently, killing her instantly.

At the close of the funeral service, Dylan and Ffion stood at the chapel door as well wishers paid their respects.

The chapel minister who had taken the service noticed that whenever a woman whispered something to them, Ffion would nod her head and say something.

But, whenever a man walked up and whispered to Dylan and Ffion, Dylan would shake his head and mumble a reply.

Curious about this rather bizarre behaviour, the minister later asked Dylan what it was all about.

'Oh', Dylan replied, 'the women would say, 'What a terrible tragedy' and Ffion would nod her head and say, "Yes, indeed it was".

*'The men would ask, 'Can I borrow your donkey?' and I would shake my head and say,
"I'm sorry. It's fully booked for the rest of the year".'*

2. Separately, I was amused at the quotation: 'I haven't spoken to my mother-in-law for three weeks.

'I don't like to interrupt her when she is speaking'.