

Malcolm's Monday Musings : 11 January 2021

Greetings.

This is my 'Monday Musings' email.

Having recently entered a New Year, which may well prove a rough ride for some of us, my mind turned to part of the description which Moses gave of the land of Canaan when he was in the land of Moab.

He noted that it was 'a land that the Lord your God cares for. The eyes of the Lord your God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year' (Deut. 11. 12).

You and I can take encouragement from the realisation that, just as God 'cared for' and had His eyes continuously upon that select geographical area, so *He exercises His watchful care over each one of us* (1 Pet. 5. 7) '**from the beginning of the year to the end of the year**'.

Yours in our Lord Jesus,

Malcolm

(i) Scripture.

By the word of the Lord the heavens were made,
And all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.
He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap;
He lays up the deep in storehouses.

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

The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to nothing;
He makes the plans of the peoples of no effect.
The counsel of the Lord stands forever,
The plans of His heart to all generations.

Psalm 33. 6-11 (*The New King James Version*)

(ii) Food for thought.

'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: [https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/magazine/2018/03-04/findingkingtutstomb/.](https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/magazine/2018/03-04/findingkingtutstomb/))

For our part, as believers, we know of '*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).

The word of God cannot be shaken.

'We are assured of this in Mark 13 verse 31; "Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away". The word of God lives and abides forever (1 Pet. 1. 23-25).

a) Its promises cannot be shaken. There are promises for every believer and for every situation and circumstance of life; not one has ever failed and not one ever will fail.

b) Its power cannot be shaken. It has power to convict, convert, cleanse and comfort; it is our chart and compass.

c) Its prophecies cannot be shaken. Men may scoff at the promise of Christ's second coming, as in the apostle Peter's day (2 Pet. 3. 3), but God has said, "I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion" (Psa. 2. 6). Christ must reign and of His government and peace there shall be no end (Isa. 9. 7). His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; it never will be shaken (Heb. 12. 28; 2 Pet. 1. 11).
(Eric Parmenter, 'New Year's Day Meditation: January 1st 2021'. Quoted with permission.)

John chapter 1.

John's first chapter ... is a miniature encyclopedia of the titles and pictures of Christ. As the Word, v. 1, He is the One through whom God speaks; as the Lamb, v. 29, He is the One by whom God saves; and as the Light, v. 9, He is the One through whom God shines in this dark and dingy world'.
(David Newell, 'Moments with the Master', Precious Seed, page 16.)

'That you love one another, as I have loved you' (John 13. 34; 15. 12).

'It may be difficult to provide a perfect definition for Christian love. But it is not difficult to find its supreme example'.

(D. A. Carson, 'For the love of God', 8 September.)

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

I read in my New Testament:

- (i) of wise men who once travelled to see Him (Matt. 2. 1, 11);
- (ii) of devout Simeon who once waited to see Him (Luke 2. 25-26);
- (iii) of close family members who once stood nearby hoping to see Him (Luke 8. 20);
- (iv) of rich Zacchaeus who once climbed up into a tree to see Him (Luke 19. 4);
- (v) of Herod Antipas who once desired to see Him (Luke 9. 9; 23. 8); and
- (vi) of certain Greeks who once requested to see Him (John 12. 21).

But the wonder is that one day **I** shall 'see Him'.

(Quoted from page 4 of the attached Word document.)

'Which of them'.

"Truly the Son of man goes, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom He is betrayed!" And they began to enquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing. And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest' (Luke 22. 22-24).

How quickly the disciples shifted from (i) enquiring 'which of them' was the worst to (ii) arguing 'which of them' was the first. They had much to learn about *true* greatness. How much do you and I have yet to learn?

Eight points in common between (a) Adam and Eve and (b) Noah.

- (i) Both (a) Adam and Eve and (b) Noah were given *the same mandate*; namely, to 'be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth' (Gen. 1. 28; 9. 1, 7).
- (ii) Adam and Noah were our only two ancestors *from whom the whole of mankind is descended*.
- (iii) God brought (a) the earth *out of the waters* during the week of creation and prepared it for Adam and Eve (Gen. 1. 2, 9-10; 2 Pet. 3. 5); God brought (b) Noah and the earth *through the waters* of the Flood and prepared it for Noah and his family (1 Pet. 3. 20).
- (iv) Both (a) Adam and Eve and (b) Noah *sinned as a result of partaking of a fruit*; namely, (a) the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 3. 6) and (b) the fruit of the vine (Gen. 9. 20-21).
- (v) (a) Adam and Eve had *three sons, one of whom sinned grievously* (Gen. 4. 8, 25); (b) Noah also had three sons, one of whom sinned grievously (Gen. 9. 19, 22).
- (vi) (a) The sin of Adam and Eve resulted in *the awareness of their nakedness* in the Garden (Gen. 3. 7); (b) the sin of Noah resulted in his *becoming naked* in his tent (Gen. 9. 21).
- (vii) (a) The nakedness of Adam and Eve was *covered with clothing by Another* (Gen. 3. 21); (b) the nakedness of Noah was *covered with clothing by others* (Gen. 9. 23).
- (viii) (a) The sin of Adam resulted in *dire consequences* for all his posterity (Rom. 5. 12); (b) the sin of Noah resulted in dire consequences for some of his posterity (Gen. 9. 25).

The sigh and the song.

I like to link together the following two texts:

- (i) 'The children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage' (Exod. 2. 23), and
- (ii) 'then sang ... the children of Israel this song' (Exod. 15. 1).

By means (i) of the blood of the Passover lamb (Exod. 12. 27) and (ii) of His own great power (Exod. 32. 11; 2 Kings 17. 36), God wonderfully transformed Israel's sigh into a song.

In a coming day, God will *again* turn Israel's 'sigh' into a 'song', when, in the coming Messianic kingdom, He will 'give to them ... the oil of joy for mourning' (Isa. 61. 3).

Thankfully, in the present time also, the Lord has very often converted the sighs of His people into songs. If *you* are feeling somewhat downcast today, bring *your* sighs to Him and let Him turn them into a song for you.

‘Singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord’ (Eph. 5. 19).

‘The Lord doesn’t come to our services to be entertained by our singing, however good we are. *He gets better singing at home!* (Rev. 5. 8-9) So there has to be some other reason why He comes and we sing’.

(G. C. G. Craig, in conversation. Quoted with permission.)

‘God who ...’.

- (i) ‘God, who *dwells* on high’ (Psa. 113. 5).
- (ii) ‘God, who *created* all things’ (Eph. 3. 9).
- (iii) ‘God, who *cannot lie*’ (Tit. 1. 2).
- (iv) ‘God, who *knows* the heart’ (Acts 15. 8).
- (v) ‘God who *judges*’ (Rev. 18. 8).
- (vi) ‘God, who *gives life* to all things’ (1 Tim. 6. 13).
- (vii) ‘God, who ... *spoke* in time past to the fathers by the prophets’ (Heb. 1. 1).
- (viii) ‘God, who *quicken*s the dead’ (Rom. 4. 17).
- (ix) ‘God, who *is rich* in mercy’ (Eph. 2. 4).
- (x) ‘God, who has *reconciled* us to Himself by Jesus Christ’ (2 Cor. 5. 18).
- (xi) ‘God, who *calls* you to His own kingdom and glory’ (1 Thess. 2. 12).
- (xii) ‘God, who *gives His Holy Spirit* to you’ (1 Thess. 4. 8).
- (xiii) ‘God, who *encourages* the downcast’ (2 Cor. 7. 6).
- (xiv) ‘God, who *gives us richly all things* to enjoy’ (1 Tim. 6. 17).
- (xv) ‘God, who *answered* me in the day of my distress’ (Gen. 35. 3).
- (xvi) ‘God, who *gives to all* liberally’ (Jam. 1. 5).
- (xvii) ‘God, who *gives us the victory* through our Lord Jesus Christ’ (1 Cor. 15. 57).

The Living God is the Giving God.

‘There is no giving in the "far country", not even of husks. Satan sells all and dearly—our souls are the price. You must buy everything. The world's principle is "nothing for nothing" ... Would you find a giver? You must come to God’.

(J. N. Darby, ‘Parables of Luke 15’, Collected Writings, Volume 12, page 167.)

Ongoing spiritual warfare.

The Anglo-Zanzibar War was fought between the United Kingdom and the Zanzibar Sultanate on 27 August 1896. The conflict lasted less than 45 minutes and is the shortest war in history. (*)

Sadly, *the spiritual conflict in which you and I are engaged is not over so quickly*, ‘for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places’ (Eph. 6. 12).

Our arch-enemy is spoken of as ‘the ruler of the authority of the air’ (Eph. 2. 2), and, like it or not, for as long as we remain in this world, each of us is, therefore, vulnerable to air strikes!

‘Sooner or later every believer discovers that the Christian life is a battleground, not a playground, and that he faces an enemy who is much stronger than he is’.

(Warren Wiersbe, ‘The Bible Expository Commentary’, Volume 2, page 56.)

(*) At https://military.wikia.org/wiki/Anglo-Zanzibar_War, and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglo-Zanzibar_War.

An opportune time.

Perhaps now, in early January, is a good time for us to ‘reboot’ our faith and our Christian commitment.

Detailed notes. [See the attached Word document, ‘What manner of love’.](#)

Additionally, as a New Year ‘treat’, I attach the ‘near-final version’ of a short ‘Lord’s day’ meditation (‘[Three things which Jesus acquired](#)’) that I wrote for circulation yesterday in my home assembly.

(iii) **Go on, smile.**

Public speaking: two true stories from America.

1. ‘I was speaking at an assembly in the Arkansas Ozarks one summer when a sudden shower held my audience captive ... Since no one could leave without getting soaked, I attempted to time my conclusion with the end of the shower.

The presiding officer sat on the edge of his seat, nervously watching the rain and the speaker. The rain and I finished simultaneously and the presiding officer rushed to the podium.

His first words were: “*Now that the drip has stopped ...*”.

(W. L. Howse, ‘Southern Baptist Brotherhood Journal’.)

2. 'Governor Claude A. Swanson of Virginia had made a long and rambling speech. Afterwards, a woman came up to shake his hand.
"How did you like my speech?" he asked.
She answered, "I liked it fine. But it seems to me you missed several excellent opportunities".
Swanson was puzzled. "Several excellent opportunities to do what?"
"To quit", she replied'.

(Stevens W. Anderson, Editor, '*A Touch of Classics*', page 233.)