

Malcolm's Monday Musings : 20 September 2021.

Greetings.

This is my 'Monday Musings' email.

This past Wednesday/Thursday marked the present year's 'Day of Atonement'.

(Precisely, the 'Day of Atonement' ('Yom Kippur') in 2021 was observed from sundown on Wednesday, 15th September, to sundown on Thursday, 16th September.)

About this time last year, I wrote a short meditation on the subject. This meditation can be accessed freely at <https://voicesforchrist.org/writings/1016>.

Today, I wish to focus upon just one feature of the biblical requirements for the observance of the festival.

At the heart of the ceremonies of the Day of Atonement lay the 'sin offering' of two goats:

'He (Aaron) shall take the two goats, and present them before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat' (Lev. 16. 7-8).

The high priest was required to lay both his hands on the head of the scapegoat and to confess 'all' the iniquities, transgressions and sins of the people over it (Lev. 16. 21). This action clearly represents the transferring of the guilt of the people to the goat.

Symbolically laden with the sins of the people, the scapegoat was then sent away into 'an uninhabited land', thereby bearing those sins away (Lev. 16. 22) and making atonement for the people (Lev. 16. 10).

The scapegoat provides us with a graphic and moving picture of our Lord Jesus, upon whom 'the Lord has laid the iniquity of us all' (Isa. 53. 6) and 'who Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree' (1 Pet. 2. 24 JND).

The significance of the picture/type is captured beautifully in the following poem:

I saw a land, a solitary land,
A land from every other land afar.
No sun had ever kissed the gloomy strand,
Nor dawn, nor day, nor moon, nor morning star.
I saw a goat with heavy head drooped low,
With sunken eye, and worn, far-travelled feet:
In that sad land alone, a living woe,
I heard its hoarse, forsaken, piteous bleat.
It pierced the moral universe on high,
Upon eternal shores the echoes brake,
That lone, that loud, that lamentable cry:
'My God, my God, why didst Thou me forsake?'

(I. Y. Ewan, 'Azazel', stanzas 1, 4 and 5, from 'The Caravanserai' collection of poems.)

Yours in our Lord Jesus,

Malcolm

(i) Scripture.

Aaron shall take from the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats as a sin offering.

... He shall take the two goats and present them before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. Then Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats: one lot for the Lord and the other lot for the scapegoat. And Aaron shall bring the goat on which the Lord's lot fell, and offer it as a sin offering.

But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make atonement (with) it, and to let it go as the scapegoat into the wilderness.

... Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send it away into the wilderness ... the goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land.

Leviticus 16. 5-9, 21-22 (*The New King James Version*)

(ii) Food for thought.

'The Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day' (1 Sam. 7. 10).

The Philistines, alarmed to hear that Israel convened a national assembly, launched a pre-emptive attack (1 Sam. 7. 7)

Understandably, the Israelites were petrified. But, very wisely, they looked to the prayers of Samuel and to the intervention of God to deliver them (1 Sam. 7. 8). Their hope lay in God alone, and their words at Mizpeh, 'that He will save us out of the hand of the Philistines', stand in marked contrast to their earlier words at Aphek, 'that ... it may save us out of the hand of our enemies' (1 Sam. 4. 3).

True to form, Samuel fought on his knees, and the *voice of God* ('the Lord thundered with a great thunder'; cf. Psa. 29. 3-4) answered the *voice of Samuel*. And God's thundering 'with a great thunder' at Mizpeh accomplished what all Israel shouting 'with a great shout' at Aphek had signally failed to do (1 Sam. 4. 5).

This day Samuel witnessed a striking fulfilment of words his mother had sung following his birth, 'The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall He thunder upon them' (1 Sam. 2. 10)'.
(*Living in the Promised Land*, Precious Seed Publications, page 110.)

Twelve examples of spiritual experiences 'in the Lord'.

- (i) **Faith**: 'Believe in the Lord your God, so shall you be established' (2 Chron. 20. 20).
- (ii) **Joy**: 'Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord' (Phil. 3. 1).
- (iii) **Strength**: 'Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord' (Eph. 6. 10).
- (iv) **Delight**: 'Delight yourself also in the Lord' (Psa. 37. 4).
- (v) **Rest**: 'Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him' (Psa. 37. 7).
- (vi) **Encouragement**: 'David encouraged himself in the Lord' (1 Sam. 30. 6).
- (vii) **Trust**: 'Trust in the Lord with all your heart' (Prov. 3. 5).
- (viii) **Hope**: 'Let Israel hope in the Lord' (Psa. 130. 7).
- (ix) **Boldness**: 'Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord' (Acts 14. 3).
- (x) **Toil**: 'Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord' (Rom. 16. 12).
- (xi) **Faithfulness**: 'Timotheus, who is my beloved son and faithful in the Lord' (1 Cor. 4. 17).
- (xii) **Steadfastness**: 'Stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved' (Phil. 4. 1).

Faith and the word of God.

'I thought that someday faith was going to come down, and strike me like lightning. But faith did not seem to come

One day I read in the tenth chapter of Romans, "Now faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God". I had closed my Bible and prayed for faith. I now opened my Bible, and begun to study, and faith has been growing ever since'.

(D. L. Moody, *Pleasure & Profit in Bible Study*, 1895, chapter 12, page 88.)

Four thought-provoking extracts from volume 8 of 'Ministry by J. B. Stoney'.

(i) 'There are two kinds of hypocrisy – (a) covering up what you are, and (b) pretending to be what you are not'. (Page 19).

(ii) ['The glory of the Lord went up', Ezek. 11. 23.] 'The glory never returned to the earth from Ezekiel's day until the scene in Luke 2, when it came to announce the coming of Christ to the earth'. (Page 45).

(iii) 'In type, Solomon is connected with Jonah: the latter sets forth the sufferings of Christ, the former His glory'. (Page 49).

(iv) 'Every believer knows that his **sins** are forgiven through faith ... but **sin** is not put away by being forgiven, but by being condemned'. (Page 367).

Seven things in which God's people 'delight'.

(i) In *the Lord Himself*: 'Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart' (Psa. 37. 4).

(ii) In *the Lord's will*: 'I delight to do your will, O my God' (Psa. 40. 8).

(iii) In *the Lord's works*: 'Great are the works of the Lord, sought out by all who delight in them' (Psa. 111. 2).

- (iv) In *the Lord's words*: 'Your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart' (Jer. 15. 16).
- (v) In *the Lord's law*: 'Your law is my delight' (Psa. 119. 77, 174).
- (vi) In *the Lord's righteousness*: 'Let those who delight in my righteousness shout for joy' (Psa. 35. 27).
- (vii) In *the Lord's presence*: 'They delight to draw near to God' (Isa. 58. 2).

'Love your enemies ... and pray for them which ... persecute you' (Matt. 5. 44).

(i) 'It is precisely because He is a gracious and compassionate God that we ought to pray for the conversion of our enemies. How could we do anything less than ask God to show our enemies the same grace He showed us, when we were His enemies?'

(Joe Carter, 'How to Pray for Afghanistan—and the Taliban', accessed at ... <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/how-to-pray-for-the-taliban/>.)

(ii) 'You have enemies; for who can live on this earth without them? Take heed to yourselves: love them. In no way can your enemy so hurt you by his violence, as you hurt yourself if you love him not'. (Augustine of Hippo, 'On the Lord's Prayer in St. Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 6. 99, etc., paragraph 14.)

(iii) "The Bible is clear", said the speaker. "You must retaliate!" The group was stunned into silence; division filled the room.

"Wait, brothers!" the speaker continued. "Let me finish my sentence. Luke 6 (verses 27-29) teaches us clearly to retaliate, but in doing so, we need to choose our weapons. When someone curses you, you don't just accept it. You retaliate by blessing him. When someone mistreats you and persecutes you, you don't just accept it. You retaliate by praying for him. When someone slaps you in the face, don't stand for it. Retaliate! Turn your other cheek".

(R. B. Klama, 'Christians in Indonesia ponder retaliation, self-control', accessed at ... <https://www.mnnonline.org/news/christians-indonesia-ponder-retaliation-self-control/>.)

'The mystery of Christ ... that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel' (Eph. 3. 4-6 RV).

'The Jews, who had a direct interest in the Messiah, had rejected Him and shed His blood. This had caused them, as a nation, to be set aside, and had ended, until their restoration, all those purposes to which the covenants and promises referred. God had therefore turned, as it were, to another object.

"The blood of Christ," which caused the national rejection of the Jews, was made the means of bringing people nigh. But in this sovereign and wonderful action of grace, God was no longer confined within the channels traced out by prophecy. All the prophetic blessings were postponed, because the nation in whom they centred was rejected. A new class of blessings, richer, higher, and with no restriction of nation or class, was thus brought in'.

(T. B. Baines, 'A Man in Christ', chapter 2.)

'The World, the Flesh, and the Devil'.

(i) *Demas* fell, through the *world*—2 Tim. 4. 10.

(ii) *David* fell, through the *flesh*—2 Sam. 11. 2-4.

(iii) *Peter* fell, through the *devil*—Matt. 16. 23'.

(F. E. Marsh, 'One Thousand New Bible Readings', page 395, number 849.)

Three things to be obtained.

(i) *Mercy* in the *past*: 'I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief' (1 Tim. 1. 13; cf. v. 16).

(ii) *Help* in the *present*: 'Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day' (Acts 26. 22).

(iii) *Glory* in the *future*: 'The obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ' (2 Thess. 2. 14).

'Be imitators of me' (1 Cor. 4. 16; 11. 1 ESV).

'His (Paul's) conversion, we read, was a delineation of the ways of Christ in others (1 Tim. 1. 16); his service for Christ was for imitation of the Lord's labourers (1 Cor. 4. 6); in his giving offence to none, but seeking to please all for their profit that they might be saved, he imitated Christ, and was a pattern for all saints in their intercourse with those around (1 Cor. 10. 32-33; 1 Cor. 11. 1); in his own personal walk, he was their model (Phil. 3. 17); and his sufferings put him into blessed companionship with his Lord and Master, as yet another example to any who were enduring fierce persecution for His name's sake (1 Thess. 1. 6).

(HRD, 'A Strait Betwixt Two', The Christian's Friend, 1878, page 281.)

Seven ways in which Christians should walk.

(i) 'Walk in newness of life' (Rom. 6. 4).

(ii) 'Walk in the Spirit' (Gal. 5. 16, 25).

(iii) 'Walk in ... good works' (Eph. 2. 10).

(iv) 'Walk in love' (Eph. 5. 2).

(v) 'Walk in wisdom' (Col. 4. 5).

(vi) 'Walk in the light' (1 John 1. 7).

(vii) 'Walk in the truth' (3 John 4).

'Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come' (1 Tim. 6. 19).

'Such goods are worth getting and owning, as will not sink or wash away if a shipwreck happens, but will wade and swim out with us'.

(Quoted in Thomas Brooks, '*Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*', page 109.)

'Looking for'.

(i) Our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ' (Phil. 3. 20).

(ii) 'Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ' (Tit. 2. 13).

(iii) 'To them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation' (Heb. 9. 28).

(iv) 'Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life' (Jude 21).

(v) 'Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat' (2 Pet. 3. 12).

(vi) 'We, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness' (2 Pet. 3. 13).

(vii) 'Seeing that you look for such things, be diligent that you may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless' (2 Pet. 3. 14).

'So shall we ever be with the Lord' (1 Thess. 4. 17).

'The thing I find most precious in the coming of the Lord is, that the Person of the Lord becomes so prominent. ... He is coming to take me to be with Himself. It is the Person who is the object of our affections as Christians ... It is not our glory that is the great satisfaction, but being with Him. It sets Christ personally as the One before our eyes'.

(J. N. Darby, '*The Second Coming of Christ*', The Christian Friend, 1883, page 3.)

The courage of one's convictions.

Recently, I read a short article about Violetta Skvortsova. On 21st July 2017, the 19-year-old athlete from Belarus won the Women's Triple Jump event during the European Athletics U20 Championships. Outrageously, during the following awards ceremony, the organisers played the anthem of another European country instead of that of Belarus.

Hearing the beginning of the tune, and still wearing her well-earned gold medal, Violetta stepped down from the podium and refused to climb back, despite the threat of disqualification. When, however, the organisers realised their mistake, they issued an apology and staged a new awards ceremony the following day.

Speaking of her action at the first ceremony, Violetta said, 'I understood that I was breaking the procedure of the awards ceremony and that this could entail sanctions, up to the loss of the medal ... I was born in Belarus, which is very beautiful. My love for it cannot be expressed in words'. Certainly, her action that day was clear evidence of her love for her homeland and her unwillingness to see it dishonoured.

Violetta's action reminded me of a reported incident in the life of Mr A. McLay, a Christian businessman from my home city of Cardiff. The report of that incident reads:

'On one occasion the dining-room of a hotel was full of businessmen taking lunch, including a person well known as an inveterate blasphemer and specialist in all that is unsavoury. Mr McLay was silently partaking of his meal.

Opportunity was taken by the foul-mouthed infidel to break forth into a prolonged harangue in which exceptionally vile things were said about the Lord Jesus Christ ... No one responded, and there was a dead silence. Presently, and probably to break the spell, someone said, "Mr McLay, haven't you anything to say to all this?"

... With restrained emotion, he said, "Well, gentlemen ... Many of you know me intimately; you also know my wife. You know her worth and what I owe to her ... You realize what my feelings would be, dared anyone utter scandal regarding her. Yet this man in his ignorance and blindness presumes to speak these untrue words against the One Who is infinitely more to me than the closest earthly friend, One Who has died for me ... My reply is that I declare my heart's allegiance to my Lord Jesus Christ, crucified for sinners, now made both Lord and Christ at the right hand of the throne of God".

There was such character behind those words and such grace, that the writer was informed by an eye-witness that, two excepted, (those present) rose as one man and with gusto shouted, "Hurrah, Mr McLay!"

(*'Preciousness of Christ'*, moreillustrations.com.)

(iii) Go on, smile.

'A short pause' and 'a long silence'.

1. Mrs Willoughby, a Sunday School teacher had come to the conclusion of her lesson on the subject of the forgiveness of sins. To ensure that her class had understood what she had told them, she asked, 'Can anyone tell me what you must do before you can obtain God's forgiveness for transgressing one of His commandments?'

There was a short pause and then young Cedric spoke up. 'Yes, Mrs Willoughby', he volunteered, '*you must transgress one of His commandments*'.

2. A salesman telephoned, hoping to drum up some business. It was four-year-old Annie who answered the phone.

'Hi', the salesman began. 'May I speak to your mother?'

'She's not here', Annie answered.

'Is anyone else there?' the salesman continued.

'My sister, Lizzie, is', Annie said.

'Okay, fine', the salesman said, 'May I speak to her, please?'

'I guess so', Annie responded.

There followed a long silence.

Eventually, the salesman heard Annie's voice. 'Hello', she called out.

'Oh, it is still you', the salesman said with a sigh. 'I thought you were going to get your sister'.

'I did try, honest', Annie replied, 'but *I couldn't lift her out of the playpen*'.