

Malcolm's Monday Musings : 5 September 2022.

Greetings.

Please find below a meditation entitled, 'Our Lord's first recorded words'.

But, first, two relevant readings from **SCRIPTURE**:

1.

His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover.

And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast.

When they had finished the days, as they returned, the boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem. And Joseph and His mother did not know it; but supposing Him to have been in the company, they went a day's journey, and sought Him among their relatives and acquaintances.

So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him.

Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, 'Son, why have you done this to us? Look, your father and I have sought you anxiously (better, 'sorrowing', 'distressed')'.

And He said to them, 'Why did you seek me? Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?' But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them.

Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men.

Luke 2. 41-52 (*The New King James Version*)

2.

Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, 'They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him' ...

Then the disciples went away again to their own homes.

But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. Then they said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' She said to them, 'Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him'.

Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?'

She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, 'Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away'.

Jesus said to her, 'Mary!'

She turned and said to Him, 'Rabboni' (which is to say, 'Teacher').

Jesus said to her, 'Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren and say to them, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God"'.

Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her.

John 20. 1-2, 10-18 (*The New King James Version*)

Happy reading

Yours in our Lord Jesus,

Malcolm

Our Lord's first recorded words.

INTRODUCTION

In this meditation, I set out to compare and contrast (1) our Lord's first recorded words *after He entered the world* to (2) His first recorded words *after He rose from the dead*.

1. OUR LORD'S FIRST RECORDED WORDS ON EARTH

The first recorded words of Jesus on earth are found in the closing section of Luke chapter 2.¹ It has been well said that, '*after the host of witnesses to Jesus* in Luke 1. 5-Luke 2. 40, *Jesus now speaks for Himself* for the first time'.²

He was then twelve years of age³ and had accompanied Mary and Joseph to Jerusalem for the Feast of Passover.⁴

On the return journey, after failing to locate the young Jesus among their friends and acquaintances,⁵ Mary and Joseph went back into the city, where they finally found Him in the temple, engaged in both asking and answering questions⁶ of the Rabbis.⁷

'Since Mary and Joseph found Jesus together, we know this was in the outer courts or porticoes of the temple, because women were not permitted in the inner chambers'.⁸

'When they saw Him', we read, 'they were amazed' ... 'amazed', as the word suggests, to the point of being overwhelmed.⁹

When Mary challenged Him, 'Child, why have you done this to us? Behold, *your father* and I¹⁰ have sought you in great distress', Jesus replied, 'Why did you seek me?¹¹ Did you not know (literally translated) that I must¹² be in the (things) of *my Father*?' Clearly, 'Jesus here in a special sense calls God His Father because He, and not Joseph, is His real Father'.¹³

This first recorded saying of the Lord Jesus can well be compared with His last recorded saying before He died, '*Father*, into your hands I commit my spirit'. Both His first and His last recorded words, that is, express His unique, filial relationship to God.

His second question¹⁴ signified, presumably, either:

(i) 'that I must be about *my Father's business*'¹⁵ ('about my Father's affairs', perhaps).

'His reply to His mother ... shows that He realised His relationship with God as His Father, and He Himself as under the irresistible necessity of being about His business'.¹⁶

or

(ii) 'that I must (had to) be in *my Father's house*'.¹⁷

'The learned doctors knew the Old Testament inside out. In all the long biblical record, not even Moses who had built the tabernacle, not David who had longed to build the temple, nor Solomon who had actually built it, no prophet, no king or commoner, not the most exalted of them, had ever referred to the tabernacle or temple as "my Father's house". The child was conscious of a relationship with God that none had conceived of, let alone expressed, before'.¹⁸

'From the very beginning Jesus indicated that there was a divine necessity compelling His every action, and nothing would get in the way of His submitting to that divine necessity'.¹⁹

'But they did not understand',²⁰ we read, 'the statement which He spoke to them'. This sentiment is hardly surprising in the circumstances and, indeed, it will be echoed on several occasions later in our Lord's life in connection with the apostles' failure to grasp the Saviour's foretelling of His future sufferings.²¹

The whole incident is enclosed between two statements of Jesus' '*wisdom*'. Immediately before, we read that 'the child grew and became strong in spirit, *filled with wisdom*',²² and, at the close, we read that 'Jesus *increased in wisdom* and stature, and in favour with God and men'.²³

On the latter, H. C. Hewlett has commented helpfully:

'As His path on earth began with birth, and hence He was first the infant, and then the child and the youth, so in each of these periods of life, He showed such mental and moral powers as were appropriate thereto.

'That He increased in favour with God did not mean that God was at any moment other than well pleased with Him. Rather did it proclaim that **each successive stage**, with its wider employment of faculties, and its greater experience of life, **drew forth corresponding pleasure on the part of God**.

'Similarly, that He increased in wisdom did not mean that His wisdom was at any time at fault. Indeed, we read that as a child, He was "filled with wisdom". Rather does this increase in wisdom show that **His consciousness developed in its powers in suitability to each stage of physical growth**, even as the bud unfolds to the flower and each is perfect in its place'.²⁴

2. OUR LORD'S FIRST RECORDED WORDS IN RESURRECTION

The **first** words spoken by our Lord the other side of death are found in John 20; 'when He rose early on the first day of the week, He appeared **first** to Mary Magdalene'.²⁵

Initially, Mary Magdalene had accompanied another Mary ('the mother of James and Joses'²⁶) and Salome²⁷ to the tomb where Jesus had earlier been buried by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus.²⁸

At the outset, all Mary saw was 'that the stone had been taken away from the tomb'.²⁹ But that, in itself, was all it took to persuade her that the body of Jesus had been 'taken away', in much the same way that an open safe door would speedily notify its owner that its contents had likely been removed.

When the other women left, Mary ran to fetch Peter and John. But when, sometime later, they had returned to their own homes, she had stood weeping at the tomb.³⁰

Stooping to look inside, she now saw two angels in white sitting there. But she was no more interested in the two angels than she had been in the two apostles. The truth was that **Mary had lost her greatest treasure**.

With Jesus she had everything; without Him she had nothing. And so, as she made clear to the angels, her concern lay solely with the One whom she still regarded as her Lord: 'they have taken away my Lord', she said, 'and I do not know where they have laid Him'.³¹

And then she 'saw' Him—'saw' the Saviour Himself—yet failed to recognise Him until He spoke her name.³²

But, in that one moment, everything changed for Mary.

For, although (i) she didn't recognise Him from **His physical appearance** ('supposing Him', we read, 'to be the gardener') and (ii) she didn't recognise Him from **His kindly enquiry**, 'Why are you weeping? Who are you seeking?',³³ there was no mistaking **His unique pronunciation** of her name.

Clearly, nobody else spoke her name, 'Mary', in quite this way ... only the Good Shepherd, who knows and calls every one of His sheep by name.³⁴

When she heard Jesus say her name, Mary's whole world must have 'turned upside down'.³⁵

To both apostles and angels, she had expressed her (then) belief, that **'they'** (whoever 'they' were!) had 'taken away the/my Lord'.³⁶ But, when she heard her name spoken as only Jesus could pronounce it, **she knew that there was no 'they'!**

Her 'Lord' was alive!

Instinctively, Mary acted much as the Shunammite said that she had (possibly, when dreaming³⁷) toward her beloved almost a thousand years before, 'I found him whom my soul loves. ***I held him, and would not let him go***'.³⁸

But, when Mary attempted to hold on to the Risen Lord, He immediately responded, 'Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren and say to them, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God"'.³⁹

I said that Mary Magdalene had 'initially' accompanied Salome and Mary 'the mother of James and Joses'⁴⁰ to the tomb that morning, and so she did.⁴¹ But I was interested to note that, although these **three** women⁴² had been present earlier at the cross ('looking on'),⁴³ only the two Marys were present at the tomb to observe where Jesus was laid.⁴⁴ Salome, that is, was missing!

I don't think it's difficult to guess the reason for Salome's absence.

It seems clear that Salome was both (i) the sister of Mary, the Lord's mother, and (ii) the mother of the apostle John.⁴⁵ And we know that, when (on the cross) our Lord had committed His own mother to

John's care, 'from that hour', as the apostle later recorded it, he (John) had taken 'her to his own home'.⁴⁶

Piecing together the facts, I think we can assume that Salome accompanied her son when he escorted her heart-broken sister to his home. Hence her absence from the tomb when, several hours later, Jesus was buried.⁴⁷

And so, Mary Magdalene was one of only two women to witness our Lord's actual burial. And, just as we read that, immediately prior to the *beginning* of His life on earth, *two women* were linked together by their *joyful expectation* (I refer, of course, to Elizabeth and Mary the virgin⁴⁸), so we read that, immediately following its *close*, *two women* (Mary and Salome) are linked together by their *sorrowful devotion*.⁴⁹

NUMEROUS COMPARISONS AND CONTRASTS

At this point, we note *several fascinating links* between our Lord's first recorded words on earth and His first recorded words in resurrection:

1. Just as the Lord's first recorded words on earth were spoken some '*three days*'⁵⁰ after a Feast of the Passover,⁵¹ so also His first recorded words after He rose from the dead were spoken some '*three days*' after a later Passover Feast.⁵²

2. Just as His first recorded words on earth were spoken to *one Mary*, who, in her own words, had '*sought*' Him distressed and sorrowing,⁵³ so His first recorded words in resurrection were spoken to *another Mary*, who also, we are told, '*sought*' Him,⁵⁴ and who sought Him distressed and sorrowing (her loud and uncontrolled weeping bearing witness to her great sorrow⁵⁵).

3. Both Marys had jumped to wrong conclusions. Along with her husband, Mary the mother of Jesus had '*supposed*' our Lord 'to have been in the company' when they had left Jerusalem to return home. For her part, Mary Magdalene, when first she saw the Lord at the tomb, had '*supposed*' Him 'to be the gardener'.⁵⁶ Both women were, of course, sorely mistaken; the one didn't know at first *where* He was and the other didn't know at first *who* He was.

Mary the mother of Jesus 'supposed', that is, that He was *present when He was absent*, whereas Mary Magdalene 'supposed' that He was *absent when He was present*.

4. Both Mary's were gently corrected by the Lord for their actions.

(i) Following His question, '*Why did you seek me?*', the Saviour asked His mother, 'Did you not know that I must be in the things of my Father?'

(ii) Following His question, '*Who are you seeking?*', He charged Mary Magdalene, 'Do not cling to me ('Stop clinging to me', literally)',⁵⁷ 'for I have not yet ascended to my Father'.

Evidently, Mary had clutched and held on to the risen Lord as the One she had known and loved ever since He had expelled the seven-fold demonic power which had once enslaved her.⁵⁸ But He rejected her clasp, pointing her to that greater and more intimate nearness which she would enjoy after He had ascended.⁵⁹

For, had He remained on earth, Mary might at most have touched Him occasionally, but when He ascended back to the Father she could, by the indwelling of His Spirit, benefit from that abiding and unbroken fellowship for which she longed.

5. Over against the way in which Mary, 'the mother of Jesus',⁶⁰ '*kept*'⁶¹ everything to herself ('His mother *kept* all *these things* in her heart'⁶²), Mary Magdalene '*told*' what she had seen and heard ('Mary Magdalene came and *told* the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken *these things* to her'⁶³).

6. In both incidents, the Lord Jesus spoke plainly of God as His Father.

(i) In Luke 2, fully conscious of His unique filial relationship, He had answered His mother, 'Did you not know that I must be in the things of *my Father?*', His words 'my Father' clearly standing in deliberate contrast to her description of Joseph as 'your father'.

(ii) In John 20, His words to Mary, 'I have not yet ascended to *my Father*', were immediately followed by His instruction, 'go to my brethren and say to them, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father"'.⁶⁴

A BLESSED DIFFERENCE

We can hardly miss the vast and glorious difference between these two sayings of our Lord, highlighted clearly by those last three words: '**and your Father**'.⁶⁴

And that 'vast difference' is accounted for solely by 'the cross of Jesus',⁶⁵ which forms the basis for our spiritual relationship to God as 'Father'. Praise God that we who formerly were, by *nature*, '**the children of wrath**'⁶⁶ are now, by *grace*, '**the children of God**'.⁶⁷

Having, therefore, earlier spoken of His followers as '*my sheep*',⁶⁸ '*my disciples*',⁶⁹ '*my friends*',⁷⁰ and '*my servants*',⁷¹ now, with His death and resurrection behind Him, the Lord Jesus speaks of them as '**my brethren**',⁷² directing Mary (and them) to God, not only as *His* Father, but as *theirs* also.

So that, by the Holy Spirit which they should shortly receive, *they* would be able to cry out, as *He* had Himself in the Garden of Gethsemane, '**Abba, Father**'.⁷³

And that unspeakable privilege is *yours and mine too!*

When we meet together, well then might we sing from the heart the words of Mr J. G. Deck:⁷⁴

*"Abba, Father", We approach Thee
In our Saviour's precious Name,
We, Thy children, here assembling,
Now Thy promised blessing claim.
From our sins His blood hath washed us,
'Tis through Him our souls draw nigh;
And Thy Spirit, too, hath taught us,
"Abba, Father", thus to cry.*

Notes

¹ Luke 2. 41-52.

² D. L. Bock, *'Luke: IVP New Testament Commentary'*, introduction to Luke 2. 41-52.

³ (i) Luke 2. 42; this was the same age as was the daughter of Jairus when He later raised her back to life, Luke 8. 42.

(ii) 'If the Mishna is relevant to the first-century Jewish practice, which is likely in this case, then religious instruction would have become more intense for Jesus upon his reaching twelve (m. Niddah 5:6; m. Megilla 4:6; m. 'Abot 5:12)'.

(D. L. Bock, *loc.cit.*)

(iii) 'Of much later origin is the modern expression, *bar mitzvah*, "son of [the] commandment", as well as the ceremony related to it'.

(J. Fitzmyer, *'The Gospel according to Luke: I-IX'*, page 440.)

⁴ (i) It was their custom to journey to Jerusalem every year to observe the Feast of the Passover, Luke 2. 41-42;

cf. Exod. 23. 14-17; Deut. 16. 16 – note 'the Feast of Unleavened Bread ... which is called the Passover', Luke 22. 1.

(ii) 'The dispersion of the Jews made it impossible for them to comply literally with this commandment. And even after the return of a remnant to the land of the fathers, it was still very difficult for many who lived a long distance away from Jerusalem to go there three times a year. Therefore, it became the custom of many to attend once a year'.

(W. Hendriksen, *'Luke: New Testament Commentary'*, on Luke 2. 41.)

(iii) 'By the first century, God-fearing Jews made only one journey a year because of the distances involved ... Only men were required to make the journey, so Mary's presence shows her commitment'.

(D. L. Bock, *op. cit.*, on Luke 2. 41-45.)

(iv) Yet note the claim of Frédéric Godet, 'There was no such obligation for women. But the school of Hillel required them to make at least the Passover pilgrimage'.

(F. L. Godet, *'The Gospel of Luke'*, page 146.)

(v) Certainly, the Mishnah expressly exempts women from the obligation to attend the three pilgrim festivals (Chagigah 1. 1). The relevant section of the Mishnah can be accessed at ...

https://www.sefaria.org/Mishnah_Chagigah.1.1?lang=bi.

Yet see the example of Hannah: 'each year when she went up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice', 1 Sam. 2. 19.

⁵ (i) Consider the view of David Gooding:

'As pilgrims Mary and Joseph were travelling in a large caravan which included a number of friends and relatives. It was not careless of them but very natural therefore, that during the first day of the return journey they did not know exactly where the boy Jesus was. He could have been with any one of the members of their extended family, or even with friends; and, anyway, He was a boy of twelve and well able to look after Himself during the day'.

(D. Gooding, *'According to Luke'*, page 58.)

(ii) 'Only in the evening, when they necessarily had to seek Him as the family groups came together for the night, did they discover that He was not there'.

(N. Goldenhuys, *'The Gospel of Luke: New London Commentary'*, page 126.)

⁶ 'The astonishment that greets Jesus' understanding and His answers anticipates the amazement that will greet Jesus' teaching when He begins His ministry (Luke 4. 32) and the amazement of the scribes at His answers (Luke 20. 26)'.

(R. E. Brown, *'The Birth of the Messiah'*, page 489.)

⁷ 'Διδάσκαλων', Luke 2. 46.

(i) 'This is the only place Luke uses διδάσκαλος for the Jewish teachers'.

(A. J. Thompson, 'Luke: Exegetical Guide to the New Testament', on Luke 2. 46.)

(ii) 'That Hillel must have been one of the "doctors" (teachers) in the Temple (Luke 2. 46) scarcely admits of doubt'.

(W. O. E. Oesterley, 'Sayings of the Jewish Fathers', page 9.)

(iii) 'In Luke 2. 21-40, Jesus intrigued prophets; in Luke 2. 41-52, He intrigues teachers of the law'.

⁸ R. Kent Hughes, 'Luke', on Luke 2. 46-47.

⁹ Luke 2. 48.

'The verb ("amazed") means, "to be so amazed as to be practically overwhelmed"'.

(M. Parsons, M. Culy and J. Stigall, 'Luke: A Handbook on the Greek Text', page 97.)

¹⁰ 'Note the prominence given to "your father" by what is, for Greek, the odd word order "your father and I"'.

(J. Nolland, 'Luke: Word Biblical Commentary', Volume 1, page 130.)

¹¹ 'The "me" in this question and the "I" in the next question are in the emphatic position in Greek, coming at the very end of both questions'.

(R. E. Brown, *op. cit.*, page 475.)

¹² This is the first of many 'must' (imperative: δεῖ) expressions in the Gospel of Luke; cf. Luke 4. 43; 9. 22; 13. 33; 17. 25; 19. 5; 22. 37; 24. 7, 44.

¹³ N. Geldenhuys, *op. cit.*, page 128.

¹⁴ Luke 2. 49.

'There was something in Him and in His previous history, which ought to be known to Mary and Joseph, that justified His being where He was and forbade their anxiety about Him'.

(M. B. Riddle, 'The Gospel according to Luke: The International Revision Commentary', page 43.)

¹⁵ As in: King James Version, New King James Version, J. N. Darby, Geneva Bible.

¹⁶ H. D. MacDonald, 'Jesus—Human and Divine', page 28.

¹⁷ As in: Revised version, English Standard Bible, New American Standard Bible, New International Version, Good News Bible.

(i) 'The neuter plural of the definite article with the preposition *en* is well attested in the meaning "in the dwelling-place of"; e.g., the LXX of Job 18. 19, "Strangers will dwell in his place [*en tois autou*]", and of Esther 7. 9, "A gallows has been set up in the premises of Aman [*en tois Aman*]". An important parallel is found in Josephus *Contra Apion* 1. 18: "in the place (temple) of Zeus [*en tois tou Dios*]". ... The more specific identification of "place" as "house" is encouraged by the fact that Jesus is in the Temple, which ... is referred to as God's house (*oikos*); see Luke 19. 46; John 2. 16 ("my Father's house") ... This translation is supported by the Syriac, Armenian, and Persian versions, by the Greek Church fathers, and by many of the Latin fathers, following Augustine'. (R. E. Brown, *op. cit.*, page 475-476.)

(ii) 'The emphasis on *place* (where Jesus was) encourages a rendering that is spatial: "in my Father's house". However, the issue is not simply a matter of location ... the notion of "household" in the Greco-Roman milieu was not only a designation of place but also of authority ... Jesus is in the temple, the locus of God's presence, but He is there under divine compulsion ... The point is that He must align himself with God's purpose'.

(J. B. Green, 'Luke: New International Commentary on the New Testament', on Luke 2. 49.)

¹⁸ D. Gooding, *op. cit.*, page 59.

¹⁹ Guy D. Nave Jr., 'The Role and Function of Repentance in Luke-Acts', page 17.

²⁰ (i) Contrast His 'understanding' (σύνεσις), Luke 2. 47, with their lack of 'understanding' (σύνηκαν), Luke 2. 50.

(ii) 'This [Luke 2. 50] is a verbal form (*synienai*) related to the noun synesis used in verse 47 of Jesus, so that Luke is drawing a sharp contrast between the parents' lack of understanding and Jesus' astounding understanding'.
(R. E. Brown, *op. cit.*, page 477.)

²¹ See, 'they did not understand this saying', Luke 9. 45, and 'they understood none of these things', Luke 18. 34.

²² Luke 2. 40.

²³ Luke 2. 52. For our Lord's wisdom, see Matt. 12. 42//Luke 11. 31; Matt. 13. 54//Mark 6. 3; 1 Cor. 1. 24; Col. 2. 3.

²⁴ (i) The full quotation is:

'We read that "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (Luke 2. 52). As His path on earth began with birth, and hence He was first the infant, and then the child and the youth, so in each of these periods of life, He showed such mental and moral powers as were appropriate thereto.

'That He increased in favour with God did not mean that God was at any moment other than well pleased with Him. Rather did it proclaim that each successive stage, with its wider employment of faculties, and its greater experience of life, drew forth a corresponding pleasure on the part of God.

'Similarly, that He increased in wisdom did not mean that His wisdom was at any time at fault. Indeed, we read that as a child, He was filled with wisdom (Luke 2. 40). Rather does this increase in wisdom show that His consciousness developed in its powers in suitability to each stage of physical growth, even as the bud unfolds to the flower and each is perfect in its place.

'Yet in the mystery of His Person nought of this detracted in any way from His constant possession of the fulness of Deity. Even at the age of twelve He could speak in true knowledge of His filial relationship with God'.

(H. C. Hewlett, '*The Glories of our Lord*', page 51.)

(ii) See too: 'Jesus' mental, social, and spiritual powers developed along with His physical powers. He was fully man as well as fully God'.

(Thomas Constable, '*Expository Notes*', on Luke 2. 52.)

²⁵ Mark 16. 9.

(i) What, we may well ask, was our Lord's very first activity on the busy day of His resurrection? His very first action – and surely love would have it so – was to comfort and satisfy a broken heart. Before ever He addressed the need of Peter's '*soiled conscience*' or the Emmaus disciples' '*straying feet*', Mary's '*sorrowing heart*' had the first claim, we may say, on our Lord's attention.

(Based on comments made by C. A. Coates in his address, '*The Active Grace of Christ Risen*'.)

(ii) The Saviour's *very first* words were a repetition of the angels' words, 'Woman, why are you weeping', John 20. 15 with John 20. 13.

²⁶ Matt. 27. 56.

²⁷ Mark 16. 1.

'Mary and Salome are the two most popular female names' in the period covering the New Testament [330 BC to AD 200].

(Richard Bauckham, '*Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*', page 71.)

²⁸ John 19. 39-42.

²⁹ John 20. 1.

³⁰ John 20. 10-11.

³¹ Peter and John have offered no solution to the mystery of the missing body, so Mary boldly challenges the two unknown occupants of the tomb.

³² 'Never was there a one-word utterance more charged with emotion than this'.

(R. V. G. Tasker, '*The Gospel according to St. John*', page 221.)

³³ The second question ('Whom are you seeking?') had already been asked twice by Jesus at the time of His arrest, John 18. 4, 7. Just as the mob found the 'Jesus' whom they sought, so too does Mary.

³⁴ Just one word dispelled her sorrow and dried her tears. John 10. 14, 16. Mary had no more questions!

'The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice', John 10. 3-4.

³⁵ For the expression, see Isa. 24. 1 and Acts 17. 6. We might well compare two other light-bulb moments when the mere disclosure by a speaker of his/His name turned the world of others 'upside down'; Gen. 45. 3-4; Acts 9. 5; 22. 8; 26. 15. 'What's in a word', indeed.

³⁶ John 20. 2, 13.

³⁷ See J. M. Flanigan, '*Song of Solomon and Isaiah: What the Bible Teaches*', page 44.

³⁸ Song of Songs 3. 4.

³⁹ John 20. 1, 11-17.

⁴⁰ Mark 16. 1 with Matt. 27. 56.

⁴¹ Mark 16. 1-2.

⁴² Along with other women, each of whom had ministered to our Lord when He had been in Galilee, Matt. 27. 55.

⁴³ Mark 15. 40-41.

⁴⁴ Mark 15. 47.

⁴⁵

SOME OF THE WOMEN WHO OBSERVED THE CRUCIFIXION

Matthew 27. 56 Mark 15. 40 **John 19. 25**

Mary Magdalene

Mary Magdalene

Mary Magdalene

Jesus' mother

Mary the mother of James and Joseph Mary the mother of James the less and Joses Mary the wife of Clopas

The mother of Zebedee's sons

Salome

Jesus' mother's sister

⁴⁶ John 19. 27.

⁴⁷ See further, note 40 to '*The Parable of the Workers in Vineyard: Part 2*', attached to the 'Musings' for 22 August 2022.

⁴⁸ Luke 1. 39-56.

⁴⁹ Mark 15. 46-47. In his gospel, Luke tells us that, when the Saviour was born, He was 'wrapped' in swaddling cloths and 'laid' in a manger, Luke 2. 7, and that following the Saviour's death, He was 'wrapped' in linen and 'laid' in a tomb, Luke 23. 53. How remarkable that, at His birth, our Lord had been 'wrapped' and 'laid' by a Mary while a Joseph looked on, and that, at His burial, He had been 'wrapped' and 'laid' by a Joseph while two Mary's looked on.

⁵⁰ 'When the days [of the Feast] were fulfilled, as they returned ... After three days they found Him in the temple', Luke 2. 43-46. In all probability, this means on the third day after they had left Jerusalem. That is, the first day was spent travelling towards home, Luke 2. 44, the second was spent on the return journey to Jerusalem, and the third was spent locating the Lord Jesus. (Jerusalem was eighty miles from Nazareth; the trip would take three days.)

⁵¹ Luke 2. 41.

⁵² Mark 8. 31.

⁵³ Luke 2. 48.

(i) 'Your father and I have *sought* you'; compare 'they went a day's journey, and *sought* Him among their relatives and acquaintances', v. 44.

(ii) 'Anxiously': 'The verb (*ᾄδυνάω*), which is only used by Luke in the New Testament (also Luke 16. 24, 25; Acts 20. 38), means "to experience great distress or anxiety"'. (M. Parsons, M. Culy and J. Stigall, *op. cit.*, page 97.)

⁵⁴ Previously, Mary Magdalene had been looking on, Mark 15. 40-41; now she was looking for.

⁵⁵ By using the present participle, the Holy Spirit lays emphasis on Mary's unrestrained sobbing, John 20. 11.

⁵⁶ John 20. 15.

⁵⁷ 'The phrase translated "Do not hold on to me" translates a Greek phrase consisting of an imperative verb (*ἄπτω*) with a negative. We refer to this imperative + negative construction as a prohibition. It is significant here that the imperative verb (*ἄπτω*) is in the present tense. In a prohibition the present tense is used to indicate that ongoing action must cease. What this means is that Jesus is not saying, "Don't touch me", but "Stop touching me, "Let go of me!"' (B. H. Bryant, 'John: *The College Press NIV Commentary*', on John 20. 17.)

⁵⁸ Mark 16. 9.

⁵⁹ Contrast Matt. 28. 9, where our Lord raised no objection to the other women taking hold of His feet.

⁶⁰ For the expression, see John 2. 1. 3; Acts 1. 14.

⁶¹ *Διατηρέω*; with the sense here of 'pondered' or 'treasured'.

⁶² (i) Luke 2. 51. Cf. 'all those who heard them kept them in their hearts, saying, "What kind of child will this be?"' Luke 1. 66, and, especially, 'Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart', following the visit of the shepherds, Luke 2. 19.

(ii) 'Some families today keep notebooks of the striking things their children come out with. Mary kept her notebook in her heart, and this remark in particular will have gone straight there with a stab'. (N. T. Wright, 'Luke for Everyone', page 29.)

⁶³ John 20. 18.

⁶⁴ 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God' ... 'The two prayers of the apostle in the Epistle to the Ephesians (that of chapter 1 and that of chapter 3) will be seen to be respectively based upon these two titles. The prayer of chapter 1 is founded upon the second title, viz., that of "God of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 1. 17); and that of chapter 3 upon the former, viz., that of "Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 3. 14). The first title is used in relation to glory, the second to communion in love'.

(J. N. Darby, 'On worship', Collected Writings, Volume 7, page 96.)

⁶⁵ John 19. 25.

⁶⁶ Eph. 2. 3.

⁶⁷ John 1. 12; Rom. 8. 16; 1 John 3. 1.

⁶⁸ John 10. 27.

⁶⁹ John 13. 35.

⁷⁰ John 15. 14.

⁷¹ John 18. 36.

⁷² Matt. 28. 10; John 20. 17.

⁷³ Gal. 4. 6 with Mark 14. 36.

For the meaning and significance of the Aramaic word, 'Abba', see:

(a) 'To call God 'Abba, Father' is to speak to him with reverence as well as confidence. Abba does not mean 'Daddy.'

'To prove this point, the Oxford linguist James Barr wrote an article for the Journal of Theological Studies [39 (1988), pages 28-46] called "*Abba isn't 'Daddy'*". What Barr discovered was that "*abba*" was not merely a word used by young children. It was also the word that Jewish children used for their parents after they [the children] were fully grown. "*Abba*" was a mature, yet affectionate way for adults to speak to their fathers.

'The New Testament is careful not to be too casual in the way it addresses God. The Aramaic word "*abba*" appears three times in the New Testament (Mark 14. 36; Rom. 8. 15; Gal. 4. 6). In each case it is followed immediately by the Greek word "*pater*". "*Pater*" is not the Greek word for "Daddy". The Greek language has a word for "Daddy"—the word "*pappas*"—but that is not the word the New Testament uses to translate "*abba*". Instead, in order to make sure that our intimacy with God does not become an excuse for immaturity, it says, "*abba, pater*".

'The best way to translate "*abba*" is "Dear Father," or even "Dearest Father." That phrase captures both the warm confidence and the deep reverence that we have for our Father in heaven. It expresses our intimacy with God, while preserving His dignity'.

(Philip Ryken, *When You Pray*, pages 57-58.)

(b) 'It is true that in the Jewish Talmud and other Jewish documents we find statements such as, "When a child experiences the taste of wheat (i.e., when it is weaned), it learns to say '*abbā* and '*immā* (= our "dada" and "mama")' (Berakot 40a in the Babylonian Talmud). However, even if the term *abba* began as a childish babbling sound (and this is far from clear), at the time of Jesus it was a regular adult word meaning "father" or "my father" (as terms of address) or "the father" or "my father" (as terms of reference).

'That is, *abba* was not a childish term of the nursery comparable to "daddy". It was a polite and serious term, yet also colloquial and familiar, regularly used by adult sons and daughters when addressing their father. Ideas of simplicity, intimacy, security, and affection attach to this household word of childlike trust and obedience ...

'There are four further reasons it is inappropriate to translate *abba* by "daddy". First, in all three New Testament passages where the word *abba* occurs (Mark 14. 36; Rom. 8. 15; Gal. 4. 6), it is immediately translated by the term "Father" (the Greek articular nominative, *ho patēr*, used in a vocative sense). Second, Jesus Himself directed His followers to address God as "our Father", *pater hēmōn* (Matt. 6. 9). Third, each of the seventeen prayers of Jesus (not counting parallels) recorded in the Gospels begins with "Father", presumably *Abba* in each case. Fourth, for Christians, young or old, to address God as "daddy" would be inappropriate, for in English usage the term is too casual and flippant and unassuming to be used in addressing the Lord God Almighty, the Creator and Sustainer of all things.'

(Murray J. Harris, *Navigating Tough Texts: A Guide to Problem Passages in the New Testament*, on Gal. 4. 6.)

See also Géza Vermès, *Jesus and the World of Judaism*, pages 41-42.

⁷⁴ This is the version printed in 'Hymns for the Poor of the Flock', 1840, compiled by Sir E. Denny.