

Malcolm's Monday Musings : 13 January 2025

Greetings.

First, last week's Bible quiz question.

Congratulations to those who identified the man who was 'not of royal blood' but who was buried 'among the kings' as '**Jehoiada**' (2 Chron. 24. 15-16).

(One respondent correctly described Jehoiada as 'greatly honoured'. To me, that description ranks him alongside Epaphroditus in the New Testament, of whom the apostle Paul directed, 'hold such in honour', Phil. 2. 29.)

Interestingly, although Jehoiada was 'not of royal blood', he married into the royal family, being the husband of Jehoshabeath ('Jehosheba', 2 Kings 11. 2), the daughter of Jehoram and granddaughter of Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. 22. 11). Again, interestingly, Jehoiada is the first individual of whom Scripture speaks specifically as 'high priest' (2 Kings 12. 10).

(Re: the clue given in last week's main 'Musings' document—the contemporary 'king of Judah who was *not* buried among the sepulchres of other kings of Judah' was, of course, '**Joash**', 2 Chron. 24. 25. Sadly, Joash wasn't the only king of Judah not buried in the sepulchres of the kings; the same was true of Jehoram {of whom it was recorded solemnly that he 'departed without being regretted!'}, 2 Chron. 21. 20, and Ahaz, 2 Chron. 28. 27.)

Second, I set out below the 'Musings' for this week.

Happy reading.

Yours in our Lord Jesus,

Malcolm (*currently, along with many others in the UK, persevering - with due acknowledgement to Christina Rossetti - 'in the bleak midwinter'!*)

(i) Scripture.

This Melchizedek ... being translated 'king of righteousness', and then also king of Salem, meaning 'king of peace', without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually ...

For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident that, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest, who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life ...

He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. Therefore, He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

Hebrews 7. 1-3, 14-16, 24-25 (*The New King James Version*)

(ii) Food for thought.

'You thought that I was altogether as yourself' (Psa. 50. 21).

'What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us'.

(A. W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, page 1.)

'In all their affliction ('distress', 'troubles'), He was afflicted ('distressed', 'troubled')' (Isa. 63. 9).

We have been educated into the idea that the Lord is above emotions, either of sorrow or pleasure. That He cannot suffer, for instance, is laid down as a self-evident postulate. But is that quite so clear?
...

'What means the Scripture which says that man's sin before the flood made the Lord repent that He had made man on the earth, "and it *grieved* Him at His heart" (Gen. 6. 6)? Is there no meaning in the Lord's own language, "Forty years long was I *grieved* with this generation" (Psa. 95. 10)? Are we not forbidden to *grieve* the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4. 30)? Is He not described as having been *vexed* by ungodly men (Isa. 63. 10)? ...

‘For my part, I rejoice to worship the living God, who, because He is living, does grieve and rejoice. It makes one feel more love to Him than if He dwelt on some serene Olympus, careless of all our woes, because incapable of any concern about us, or interest in us, one way or the other.

‘To look upon Him as utterly impassive and incapable of anything like emotion does not, to my mind, exalt the Lord, but rather brings Him down to be comparable to the gods of stone or wood, which cannot sympathise with their worshippers...’

‘The Lord is, however, continually represented as displaying joy. Moses declared to sinful Israel, that if they returned and obeyed the voice of the Lord, the Lord would again rejoice over them for good, as He rejoiced over their fathers (Deut. 30. 9). The Lord is said to rejoice in His works (Psa. 104. 31) and to delight in mercy (Mic. 7. 18), and surely we must believe it. ...

‘Many passages of Scripture speak very impressively of God’s joy in His people. Zephaniah puts it in the strongest manner: “He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing”. Our God is for ever the happy—the blessed—God (1 Tim. 1. 11)’.

(C. H. Spurgeon, ‘*The Reception of Sinners*’, a sermon preached on 22 November 1874 at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, London.)

‘The Lord stirred up (‘moved’) the heart of Cyrus king of Persia’ (2 Chron. 36. 22; Ezra 1. 1).

‘When the Persians took over from the Babylonians (who had sent Judah into exile), King Cyrus of Persia reversed the Babylonian policy. The Babylonians (and the Assyrians before them) transported the aristocracy and leading citizens of subjugated territories ... ‘

By transporting all the leaders of every branch of a culture to some new territory far removed from their own land (thereby disconnecting people and land), these empires secured a kind of peace. Obviously, they also introduced enormous dislocation, which must have had many negative effects, not least economic.

‘Whatever the reasons, Cyrus not only stopped this policy, but permitted exiles—including the Jews—to return home.

‘But Ezra is right in understanding this to be the work of God: “The Lord moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia” (Ezra 1. 1).

‘At another time, the Lord would cause a census to be taken of the entire Roman world, to bring a pregnant woman to Bethlehem—once again to fulfil an ancient Scripture (Luke 2)’.

(D. A. Carson, ‘*For the Love of God*’, Volume 2, meditation for 1 January.)

‘A priest upon His throne’ (Zech. 6. 13).

Significantly, it was in the year that king Uzziah of Judah died that Isaiah saw the Lord Jesus (Isa. 6. 1-10; John 12. 40-41). King Uzziah died a leper because he ventured into God’s presence to offer incense, a service which was to be performed only by legitimate Levitical priests (Num. 16. 40; 2 Chron. 26. 16-21).

The divine pattern was clear: kings were from Judah; priests were from Levi (cf. Heb. 7. 14). Only in the One whose glory Isaiah was privileged to see (John 12. 41) would the two offices one day unite: ‘A man whose name is the Branch ... shall be a priest upon His throne” (Zech. 6. 13).

Consistent with this, Melchizedek (the first priest mentioned in Scripture) was ‘made like to the Son of God’, not only—(i) as far as the written record goes in the case of Melchizedek, in ‘having neither beginning of days, nor end of life’, but also—(ii) in being both king and priest: ‘Melchizedek ... being by interpretation “King of righteousness”, and after that also King of Salem, which is, “King of peace” ... made like to the Son of God; abides a priest continually’ (Heb. 7. 1-3).

‘Seven times that we read “Jesus saw” in the Gospel by John.

(i) He saw the anxious enquirers, and bade them come to and with Him (John 1. 38).

(ii) He saw the devout worshipper, and commended him (John 1. 47-50).

(iii) He saw the impotent man, and healed him (John 5. 6).

(iv) He saw the hungry multitude, and supplied their need (John 6. 5).

(v) He saw the blind man, and revealed Himself as ‘the light of the world’ (John 9. 1).

(vi) He saw the weeping mourners, and was troubled for them (John 11. 33).

(vii) He saw the distressed mother, and cared for her (John 19. 26)’.

(F. E. Marsh, ‘*Five Hundred Bible Readings*’, pages 153-154.)

‘Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, and said unto them, What will ye give me and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver’ (Matt. 26. 14-15).

The most expensive painting ever sold at public auction was that of 'Salvator Mundi' ('Saviour of the world'), attributed in whole or in part to Leonardo da Vinci. The painting was sold for \$450 million (about £360 million) on 15 November 2017 in New York.

Yet the subject of the painting—the true 'Saviour of the world' (John 4. 42; 1 John 4. 14)—was sold for just 30 pieces of silver!

Betrayed!

'It was as a rejected king that David crossed the brook Kidron (2 Sam. 15. 23). He had been betrayed by Ahithophel, his companion and trusted counsellor (2 Sam. 15. 12).

'History repeated itself some 970 years later. The Lord Jesus crossed the Kidron (John 18. 1), having been betrayed by one of His companions, Judas Iscariot. Interestingly, both traitors subsequently hanged themselves (2 Sam. 17. 23; Matt. 27. 5).

'It is of Judas that the Lord speaks when He says, 'I know whom I have chosen: but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, "He that eats bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me"' (John 13. 18—quoted from Psa. 41. 9, which likely originally referred to Ahithophel).

'Earlier, Jesus had said to His disciples, 'One of you which eats with me shall betray me' (Mark 14. 18). To accept hospitality carried great significance for a Jew; it placed the recipient under considerable obligations. The fact that Ahithophel had formerly enjoyed David's hospitality rendered his treachery all the baser and more contemptible. The same was true of Judas. The idea behind lifting the heel may be that of a horse kicking violently at its master. Certainly, the expression describes the deliberate infliction of an injury.

'We note that, when quoting from Psa. 41. 9, the Lord omits the words, 'mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted'. These words could not have been applied truthfully to Judas and the Lord Jesus was never insincere. When He later addresses Judas as 'friend', Matt. 26. 50 KJV, the word He employs is not the normal word used to describe 'a friend'—such as He used, for instance, when speaking of Lazarus (John 11. 11). The word He uses of Judas denotes an associate or companion.

(Adapted, with permission, from 'Day by Day in the Psalms', Precious Seed Publications, 1986, page 303.)

'Amen, come, Lord Jesus' (Rev. 22. 20c).

'In His last recorded words, Jesus said, "Surely I come quickly" (Rev. 22. 20b). In contrast to the other announcements in this chapter ("I come quickly", Rev. 22. 7, 12) this announcement adds the word "Surely", a particle used to enforce an affirmation.

'Thus the announcement of Christ's coming is wrapped in words that emphasize its certainty. With the word "Amen", John begins his own prayer of response'.

(J. F. Walvoord, 'Revelation', 2011, page 350.)

The importance of the death of the Lord Jesus.

'In the Gospels, the word "cross"' in connection with our Lord is used to denote that on which He was crucified:

- (i) "And He, bearing His cross, went forth" (John 19. 17).
- (ii) "They ... found ... Simon, him they compelled to bear the cross" (Matt. 27. 32).
- (iii) "Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross" (John 19. 19).
- (iv) "Come down from the cross" (Matt. 27. 42).

'In the Epistles, however, the word is used to denote the Lord's death and expiatory sufferings:

- (i) "Having made peace through the blood of His cross" (Col. 1. 20).
- (ii) "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross" (Gal. 6. 14).
- (iii) "They are the enemies of the cross of Christ" (Phil. 3. 18).

'No one can read the Gospels and their record of the life and death of Christ, without being impressed with the relative importance given to the events connected with His crucifixion in comparison to any other ...

- (i) Two of the Evangelists pass over His birth.
- (ii) Only a very few of His miracles are recorded by each of the four Evangelists.
- (iii) Many of His discourses are to be found only in one Gospel.
- (iv) The sermon on the mount is only recorded by Matthew, except for a few sections in Luke.
- (v) John alone gives us His discourses on the New Birth, the Water of Life, the Bread of Life, and His teaching to the twelve in the upper room. Even His prayer is given only by John (John 17).

'But on the contrary, each vies with the other in giving a detailed account of Gethsemane, His trial, His crucifixion, His burial and His resurrection. Almost three chapters are devoted by each Evangelist to these events.

'It is very evident, therefore, that, in the minds of the writers of the sacred narrative, the event which superseded all others in its importance is His death'.

(J. M. Davies, 'The Mount Everest of Scripture and of Time', page 2.)

'Sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints' (1 Cor. 1. 2).

'In both the Old and New Testaments, the language used for "sanctification" contains the idea of being devoted to a special purpose, withheld from ordinary use ...

'This is what "sanctification" means: God has put His "reserved" sign on something—temple vessels for example (2 Chron. 29. 19)—or on someone who thereby becomes a "saint", a person reserved for the Lord. He marks us out for His personal possession and use. We belong to Him—and to nobody else, not even to ourselves. We become devoted to God'.

(S. Ferguson, 'Devoted to God', page 11.)

'The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ... predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself' (Eph. 1. 3-5).

'The people Paul was addressing were under Roman rule. In addition, Paul was born a Roman citizen, a citizenship he evidently prized and used to his advantage ...

'Under Roman law, the procedure of adoption had two steps:

(i) In the first step, the son had to be released from the control of his natural father. This was done by a procedure whereby the father sold him as a slave three times to the adopter. The adopter would release him as a slave two times and he would automatically again come under his father's control. With the third sale, the adoptee was freed from his natural father.

(ii) Regarding the second step, since the natural father no longer had any authority over him, the adopter became the new father with absolute control over him, and he retained this control until the adoptee died or the adopter freed him. The son was not responsible to his natural father but only to his newly acquired father. The purpose of this adoption was so that the adoptee could take the position of a natural son in order to continue the family line and maintain property ownership ...

'This means that believers, formerly labelled as "sons of disobedience" and "children of wrath", have absolutely no responsibility and/or obligation to their old "father, the devil" (John 8. 44) ... Rather, they are now God's sons and daughters and consequently He controls their lives and property. And since God does not die, the saints will always be under His control'.

(H. W. Hoehner, 'Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary', pages 195-197.)

The attitude of gratitude: 'Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise: be thankful' (Psa. 100. 4).

'What can we be thankful for?

(i) We can express gratitude that our majestic God rules from heaven (Psa. 103. 19).

(ii) We can give thanks for the work of Christ on our behalf, and be grateful and glad that Jesus did not leave us without a helper, teacher, and comforter (John 14. 26).

(iii) We can express gratitude for our transformed lives, that God equips each of us for service (1 Tim. 1. 12) ...

'Great spiritual blessings occasionally come wrapped in packages with black bows of trial or pain. Sometimes gratefulness is forged in the furnace of adversity ...

'Lisa Beamer, wife of Todd Beamer who died in the United Airlines Flight 93 crash on September 9, 2001, faced this tough circumstance with courage ... "Slowly I began to understand", she wrote, "that the plans God has for us don't just include 'good' things, but the whole array of human events ... Somewhere along the way, I stopped demanding that God fix the problems in my life and started to be thankful for His presence as I endured them".

(D. Wilson, 'Seven Amazing Ways Wonder Boosts Our Gratefulness', accessed at ...

<https://www.biblestudytools.com/slideshows/7-amazing-ways-wonder-boosts-our-gratefulness.html>).

(iii) Go on, smile.

Overweight? Let's just say that Gilbert was, to put it politely, well upholstered. Fed up of being constantly nagged about his 'corpulence' by his friends, he went to see his doctor for a physical check-up.

Dr Conway told Gilbert that he needed to lose weight immediately, and the best way to do it would be for him to run seven miles every day.

Troubled by the doctor's serious tone, Gilbert decided to follow his advice.

And Dr Conway's counsel certainly seemed to work; after only 40 days, Gilbert had lost almost 15 kilograms.

When Gilbert phoned Dr Conway to thank him for his advice, Gilbert ended the conversation with a question: 'Tell me, doctor, when do you think I should stop my daily run? *I am already 280 miles away from home*'.