

Malcolm's Monday Musings : 15 September 2025.

(i) Scripture.

(i) Some wandered in desert wastes, finding no way to a city to dwell in; hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted within them.

(ii) Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and He delivered them from their distress.

(iii) He led them by a straight way till they reached a city to dwell in.

(iv) Let them thank the Lord for His steadfast love, for His wondrous works to the children of man!

...

(i) He commanded and raised the stormy wind, which lifted up the waves of the sea. They mounted up to heaven; they went down to the depths; their courage melted away in their evil plight; they reeled and staggered like drunken men and were at their wits' end.

(ii) Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and He delivered them from their distress.

(iii) He made the storm be still, and the waves of the sea were hushed. Then they were glad that the waters were quiet, and He brought them to their desired haven.

(iv) Let them thank the Lord for His steadfast love, for His wondrous works to the children of man!

Psalm 107. 4-8, 25-31 (English Standard Version)

(ii) Food for thought.

'Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me' (Psa. 23. 4).

'The valley of the shadow of death holds no darkness for the child of God. There must be light, else there could be no shadow. Jesus is the light; He has overcome death'.

(Attributed to D. L. Moody.)

'With me in paradise' (Luke 23. 43).

'As likely as not, men crucified the Lord between two malefactors to add to the stigma of His death; in a very literal sense, 'he was numbered with the transgressors' (Isa. 53. 12; Mark 15. 27-28). Three times in his gospel, Matthew speaks of men being on the right hand and the left hand, and each time it is Jesus who is in the centre; previously the issues had been those of ambition (Matt. 20. 21), and division (Matt. 25. 33); now it is that of derision (Matt. 27. 38).

'Impressed no doubt by the Saviour's demeanour and patience, and encouraged by His prayer for His persecutors, the one malefactor requested that the Lord remember him for good (cf. Gen. 40. 14) when He came in His kingdom. This was a remarkable expression of faith. There was as yet no physical evidence to suggest that Jesus was 'the Christ'; hence the other robber's gibe (Luke 23. 39 lit.). To all intents and purposes, the man on the central cross seemed more likely to inherit the criminals' mass grave ... than a kingdom.

'Yet, in faith, the malefactor grasped hold of the fact that, at some time in the future, Jesus was to receive the long-awaited messianic kingdom. The man may have been a *rebel* in the past (cf. Mark 15. 7) but he now publicly confessed his desire, if the King would only accept him, to take his place as a willing *subject* in that kingdom.

'The robber was granted far more than he asked or thought (cf. Eph. 3. 20). The Lord assured him that he would not have to wait for the coming of the kingdom but that on that very day he would be in 'paradise'—a word deliberately employed by the Lord to call up in the robber's mind scenes of beauty, rest, joy and peace.

'And yet there was something even better—'Today with me' were the Saviour's words (Luke 23. 43 lit.). All heaven lay in this expression. And it lies there still for every believer. What a thrill to know that, should we die, we will be swept immediately into the presence of the Lord Himself (2 Cor. 5. 6-8; Phil. 1. 21, 23).

'What a day it was for the robber! At dawn, he still knew the guilt of sin, at noon, he knew the grace of Christ, and at nightfall, he knew the glory of heaven.

('Day by Day: Moments with the Master', Precious Seed Publications, page 364; reproduced with kind permission.)

Disappointments in life.

'Two things destroy the peace and tranquillity of our lives: our bewailing past disappointments or fearing future ones'.

(John Flavel, *'The Mystery of Providence'*, pages 167-168.)

'He presented Himself alive to them after His suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days' (Acts 1. 3.)

'As forty days of temptation in the wilderness preceded Jesus' earthly ministry (Luke 4. 2), so He introduced His present ministry with a forty-day period of preparation.

'Jesus' baptism with the Spirit occurred before His 40-day test, whereas the reverse order of events appears here in Acts.

'God had instructed Moses for forty days on Mount Sinai in preparation for Israel's mission in the world. Now Jesus instructed the Apostles for forty days in preparation for the church's mission in the world'.

(T. E. Constable, *'Expository Notes on the Bible'*, comment on Acts 1. 3.)

'To fulfil all righteousness' (Matt. 3. 15); 'in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin' (Heb. 4. 15).

"The chief end of man" declares the Westminster catechism "is to glorify God and enjoy Him for ever".

'The fulfilment of this chief end as man in glorifying God involved two necessities: the meeting of every demand of righteousness and the resisting of every approach of evil.

'In this respect the Baptism and the Temptations of our Lord are important. In the Baptism, He publicly does what throughout He has always done—fulfils all righteousness. At the Temptations, He does anew what He has always done—resists all evil.

'There is, of course, more in the two experiences for Him than we can ever fathom. But this we know, that His Baptism was important and His Temptations real. In both He revealed Himself as the man who made it His chief end to glorify God'.

(H. D. McDonald, *'Jesus—Human and Divine'*, page 29.)

'Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me' (John 14. 19).

'The world was not to see Him again ... but *they* were to see Him.

'And so, it comes to pass. He was seen of them for forty days, and He spoke to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God (Acts 1. 3). But this was all in secret.

'The world has not seen Him since the hour of Calvary, nor will they, till they see Him in judgment (Mark 14. 62)'.
(J. G. Bellett, *'The Moral Glory of the Lord Jesus Christ'*, page 52.)

The Book of Judges and the Lord Jesus.

'After chronicling the sad cycle of idolatry-repentance-deliverance-idolatry for 16 chapters, Judges ends with a lengthy and sordid epilogue (chapters 17–21). One of Israel's cities becomes like Sodom, and one of its tribes is almost wiped out. Not once but four times during this epilogue, we're told that "in those days there was no king in Israel" (Judg. 17. 6; 18. 1; 19. 1; 21. 25).

'The book's final verse reads, "In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judg. 21. 25; cf. Judg. 17:6). The reader is meant to see a connection between the absence of a king and the presence of anarchy, and to pray, "God, please send us a king, since we clearly need one!"

'As the biblical storyline progresses, this will soon lead Israel to sinfully demand a king (1 Sam. 8–10). For this, God gives them the king they deserve, a king after their own heart (Saul).

'But the fact that Israel asks with bad motives (1 Sam. 8. 7–9) doesn't mean that wanting a king is wrong in and of itself, or that they don't need one. We know this not only because of how Judges ends but, because generations earlier, Moses had spoken of a day when Israel would seek to set up a king over them. This king, though, must be a man who fears God and keeps His law, rather than doing what's right in his own eyes (Deut. 17. 14–20).

'This is how Judges points to Jesus—by showing us a God who is not only angry at sin but also filled with pity for sinners.

'This is the kind of king Judges leaves us longing for—a man after God's own heart who loves righteousness and hates lawlessness and trembles at God's Word. God would eventually give them just such a king in the person of David (1 Sam. 13. 14; Acts 13. 22), a man who also fulfilled God's promise that the sceptre would come from Judah (Gen. 49. 10).

'But, as exemplary as David was, he wasn't the ultimate king (1 Kings 15. 5). Someone greater than David was needed. And according to the New Testament, 'someone greater than' David is here—a King from the house of David who will sit on the throne forever (2 Sam. 7. 13–29; Isa. 9. 6–7)—a King

so powerful He can stop the downward spiral we see in Judges—a King able to subdue our strongest passions and cause us to walk in his statutes (Jer. 31. 33; Ezek. 36. 26–27; Rom. 6. 14).

(J. Dillehay, 'How Judges Points to Jesus', accessed at <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/how-judges-points-jesus/>.)

'Who, being in the form of God, did not regard being on equality with God as something to be grasped tightly and used for His own advantage ... God also highly exalted Him' (Phil. 2. 6, 9).

'There is a striking parallel (in reverse) to this passage in the impiety of the hero Salmoneus as set forth by the mythographer Apollodorus (Book 1, Chapter 9., Paragraph 7): He "was arrogant and wanted to make himself equal to Zeus, and because of his impiety he was punished; for he said that he was Zeus".

'Jesus was obedient, certainly did not want (or need) to make Himself equal to God, and was exalted'.

(R. Grant, 'Gods and the One God', page 105.)

[Malcolm's note: Out of interest, the full text from 'The Library' (traditionally attributed to Apollodorus, as translated by J. G. Frazer) reads: 'Salmoneus at first dwelt in Thessaly, but afterwards he came to Elis and there founded a city. And being arrogant and wishful to put himself on an equality with Zeus, he was punished for his impiety; for he said that he was himself Zeus, and he took away the sacrifices of the god and ordered them to be offered to himself; and by dragging dried hides, with bronze kettles, at his chariot, he said that he thundered, and by flinging lighted torches at the sky he said that he lightened. But Zeus struck him with a thunderbolt'. Now that must have really spoiled his day! Exit Salmoneus!]

'Made of the seed of David ... and declared to be the Son of God' (Rom. 1. 3-4).

'He was put to death on the double counts that (i) He made Himself a king (cf. Luke 23. 2), and (ii) He made Himself the Son of God (cf. Mark 14. 61-64; Luke 22. 70-71), which they said were respectively charges of high treason and blasphemy, and therefore were capital crimes punishable by death (John 19. 7, 12).

'Yet He (i) was of the seed of David according to the flesh and, therefore, entitled to the throne and (ii) was declared to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead (Rom. 1. 3-4).

(E. W. Rogers, 'The Unique Person of Christ' in 'God the Son: A Symposium', edited by R. E. Harlow, page 51.)

All things subject to the Lord Jesus.

(i) 'For "God has put all things in subjection under His feet". But when it says, "all things are put in subjection", it is plain that He is excepted who put all things in subjection under Him'. (1 Cor. 15. 27).

(ii) 'Who will transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body, by the power that enables Him even to subject all things to Himself (Phil. 3. 21).

(iii) 'It was not to angels that God subjected the world to come ... It has been testified somewhere, "What is man ... you have crowned him with glory and honour, putting everything in subjection under his feet" ... At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. But we see Him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honour because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone' (Heb. 2. 5-9).

(iv) 'Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers being made subject to Him' (1 Pet. 3. 22).

(And to think that it was said concerning His supposed 'parents' that, during His early years in the world, 'He went down with them and came to Nazareth and was subject to them' (Luke 2. 51).

'In Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him' (Col. 2. 9-10).

'First of all, the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Him bodily. Instead of the misty speculations of men and fantastic aeons, we have the fulness of God bodily, in a real human body, and thus efficaciously for us, in the Person of Jesus Christ. In the second place, we are complete in Him; we need nothing out of Christ.

'On the one side, we have, in Him, God perfectly presented in all His fulness; on the other side, we possess in Him perfection and completeness before God. We are wanting in nothing as to our position before God. What a truth! ... God, in His perfect fulness, in Christ as man; we in Him before God, in the perfection of what He is'.

(J. N. Darby, 'Synopsis of the Books of the Bible', Volume V, pages 27-28.)

Never too old: "Though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day". (2 Cor. 4. 16).

'The Russian-born violinist, Mischa Elman, was among the finest violinists of the twentieth century. He was a child prodigy who began performing when he was a mere boy. He kept playing for audiences until his death in old age.

'Someone reportedly asked him if he could tell any difference in audience reactions between his early and his late performances. "I haven't noticed any difference", Mischa replied. "When I was a boy, audiences would exclaim, 'Imagine playing the violin like that at his age!' Now, they're beginning to say the same thing again!"

'The Lord has a plan for your life that spans your days and doesn't stop until He takes you home. I firmly believe that whatever our age, God can use us'.

(Amended slightly from R. Morgan, 'God Wants to Use You, Whatever Your Age', accessed at ... <https://faithgateway.com/blogs/christian-books/god-wants-to-use-you-whatever-your-age.>)

'To obey is better than to sacrifice' (1 Sam. 15. 22).

'From the ministering of the archangel to the labour of the insect—from the poisoning of the planets to the gravitation of a grain of dust—the power and glory of all creatures, and all matter, consist in their obedience, not in their freedom'.

(John Ruskin, 'The Two Paths, Lecture V', the section 'Iron in Policy: the Fetter'.)

'Not yet'.

(i) **The opening of way into the holiest of all:** 'the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing' (Heb. 9. 8).

(ii) **The 'hour' of our Lord's passion:** 'They sought to take Him; but no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come' (John 7. 30).

(iii) **Our Lord's ascension to the Father:** 'Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father' (John 20. 17).

(iv) **The giving of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost:** 'He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given' (John 7. 39).

(v) **All things put under our Lord's feet:** 'In that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him. But we see Jesus' (Heb. 2. 8).

(vi) **Made known 'what we shall be':** 'It is not yet manifest what we shall be, but we know that, when He is manifested, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is' (1 John 3. 2).

Three fears acknowledged by Augustine of Hippo (AD 354-430).

'Do you love anything beside the knowledge of God and of yourself? As I now feel, I can answer, "nothing", but it is safer to say "I do not know".'

'For it has frequently been my experience, when I did not believe it possible to be moved by anything else, yet, something coming into my mind would disturb me far beyond what I had believed possible ... it now seems to me that I can be disturbed by only three things, namely: the fear of losing those I love, the fear of pain, and the fear of death'.

(Augustine of Hippo, 'Soliloquies', Book I, Paragraph 16; translated by R. E. Cleveland, 1910.

[Malcolm's note: I think it likely that, in those final words, Augustine was referring to the process of dying and not to death itself. I note that he quoted 'confidently' (in his 'Treatise on the Merits and Forgiveness of Sins') the following text of Scripture, 'that through death He might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery' (Heb. 2. 14-15).]

(iii) Go on, smile.

Two clear cases of 'his train of thought was derailed and there were no survivors':

1. Two friends from Dublin are enjoying a walk together, when suddenly it begins to rain heavily.

'Quick, Mick', says Paddy. 'You'll have t'open your umbrella'.

'That's no' gonna be any help', Mick replies. 'My umbrella's full o' holes'.

Paddy's draw drops. 'Whyever', he asks, 'did you bring it with you in the first place?'

'To be shure now', Mick says,

'I never thought it'd rain today!'

2. Dafydd, a farm labourer from West Wales, walks into a hardware store in the local town. He asks the salesman for a chainsaw which would enable him to cut down six trees in a single hour.

The salesman recommends the top-of-the-range model. Dafydd is suitably impressed and buys it.

The next day, he brings the chainsaw back. He says to the salesman, 'Oi, there's something wrong with this machine you sold me. I was only able to cut down one tree yesterday and that took me all afternoon!'

Puzzled, the salesman takes the chainsaw from Dafydd, plugs it in and starts it up to check if there was a fault somewhere.

Alarmed, Dafydd exclaims,

'What's that dreadful noise?'