

Malcolm's Monday Musings : 19 April 2021

Greetings.

This is my 'Monday Musings' email.

As I explained in last week's email, on account of the length of the document attached then, I am sparing you a further document today.

In case you don't know, today (the 19th of April) is a big day in American history. It was on the 19th of April in 1775 that *the opening shot* was fired which ignited the American Revolutionary War and led to the creation of the United States of America.

Courtesy of the opening stanza of Ralph Waldo Emerson's 'Concord Hymn', that shot became known as *'the shot heard round the world'*.

More wonderfully for you and me, Scripture speaks of God's twofold revelation which has been sounded out 'round the world'. I refer to the worldwide reach and range of (i) *the voice of creation* (Psa. 19. 1-4) and (ii) *the preaching of the gospel* (Rom. 10. 18; Col. 1. 23).

As the Lord Jesus said on several occasions, 'He who has ears to hear, let him hear'.

Yours in our Lord Jesus,

Malcolm

(i) Scripture.

Enoch lived sixty-five years, and begot Methuselah. After he begot Methuselah, Enoch walked with God three hundred years, and had sons and daughters. So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.

Genesis 5. 21-24 (*New King James Version*)

By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, "and was not found, because God had taken him"; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Hebrews 11. 5-6 (*New King James Version*)

(ii) Food for thought.

'He that has seen me has seen the Father' (John 14. 9).

Admiral Horatio Nelson's naval victory over the French fleet at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805 is commemorated by 'Nelson's Column' in Trafalgar Square in London. It took three years to construct this 169-foot high memorial, on top of which stands an 18-foot sandstone statue of Lord Nelson. The statue is so high that it is impossible for tourists or other passers-by to make out Nelson's features with the naked eye.

But, in the Nelson Room at the Old Royal Naval College in Greenwich, an exact replica of Nelson's statue stands at eye-level. This replica enables visitors to see for themselves what Nelson's features on the original statue look like.

This is a very faint (and somewhat defective) picture of what the Lord Jesus has achieved for us. The apostle John noted at the close of the so-called 'Prologue' of his gospel: 'No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him ('He has told Him out')' (John 1. 18).

'All things were made by Him' (John 1. 3).

'His holy fingers made the bough
That grew *the thorns* that pierced His brow;
The nails that pierced His hands were mined
In secret places He designed.

He made the forest whence there sprung
The tree on which His body hung;

He died upon a cross of wood,
Yet made *the hill* on which it stood.
The sky that darkened o'er His head
By Him above the earth was spread.
The sun that hid from Him its face
By His decree was poised in space.
The spear which spilled His precious blood
Was tempered in the fires of God.
The grave in which His form was laid
Was hewn in rock His hands had made'.

(F. W. Pitt, 'The Maker of the Universe', verses 2-5.)

If you were 'the only ...'.

1. 'I will not forget you' (Isa. 49. 15).

'He who counts the stars and calls them by their names, is in no danger of forgetting His own children. **He knows** your case as thoroughly as if you were the only creature He ever made, or the only saint He ever loved'.

(C. H. Spurgeon, 'Morning and Evening', 24 February: Evening.)

2. 'The Son of God ... gave Himself for me' Gal. 2. 20).

'When **Christ died**, He died for you individually just as much as if you'd been the only man in the world'.

(C. S. Lewis, 'Mere Christianity: Time And Beyond Time', page 82. You can hear C. S. Lewis saying this at ...

<https://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/cslewisbeyondpersonality.htm>, audio from 4.07 to 4.14.)

'For whom Christ died' (1 Cor. 8. 11).

The Lord Jesus is the only man who has ever lived for whom He did not need to die.

The 'heir of all things' was cut off and had nothing!

(i) 'God ... has spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things' (Heb. 1. 2).

(ii) 'After the sixty-two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, and shall have nothing' (Dan 9. 26 JND).

The heirs of heaven are of more value to God than the birds of heaven.

(i) 'We are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ' (Rom. 8. 16-17).

(ii) 'Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feeds them. Are not you of much more value than they?' (Matt. 6. 26 RV).

Sanctified through the blood of Christ.

'The blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified' (Heb. 10. 29); 'Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood' (Heb. 13. 12).

'These passages ... teach a most precious truth. The sanctification of which they speak is neither practical nor progressive (this being effected by the Holy Spirit through the Word) but indicates the setting apart of believers to God as His people on the earth. That is, everyone who comes through faith under the shelter of the blood of Christ is thereby separated from all the world, and set apart to God.

The nature of this sanctification may be illustrated by the consecration of Aaron and his sons to the office of the priesthood. We read that Moses took of the blood of the ram of consecration, and "put it upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron, and upon the tip of the right ear of his sons, and upon the thumb of their right hand, and upon the great toe of their right foot" (Exod. 29. 20.) Thereby, they were set apart to hear, to act, and to walk for God according to the perfection of the blood of Christ'.

(Edward Dennett, 'The Efficacy of the Blood of Christ', The Christian's Friend (1881), page 51.)

The believer's walk.

Scripture speaks of believer's 'walking':

(i) 'before' the Lord in uprightness and sincerity (Gen. 17. 1);

(ii) 'after' the Lord in obedience and service (Deut. 13. 4; Hos. 11. 10);

(iii) 'in' the Lord in union and dependence (Col. 2. 6);

(iv) 'with' the Lord in close and intimate communion (Gen. 5. 22, 24; 6. 9). [In Enoch and Noah, God found men 'with' whom He could 'walk' again; cf. Gen. 3. 8, 24.]

Musings on Enoch.

1. Enoch and Adam.

The genealogy of Genesis 5 makes mention of two unique men, Adam (Gen. 5. 5) and Enoch (Gen. 5. 21-24).

Adam died, never having been born; Enoch, having been born, never died!

[It is possible that the man through whose sin 'death' entered the world (Rom. 5. 12) met the man who never died (Heb. 11. 5), because, according to the genealogy, their lives overlapped by more than 300 years (Gen. 5. 3-24).]

2. Enoch and Enoch.

Two men bore the name 'Enoch' in the early history of mankind. The one was the third from Adam in the line of Cain (Gen. 4. 1, 17); the other was 'the seventh from Adam' in the line of Seth (Gen. 5. 3-24; Jude 14).

[Their characters were very different. The one had a *memorial* raised to him by his father, in that his father called the first city by his name (Gen. 4. 17). The *memorial* to the other was given to him by God Himself, in that He gave him 'this testimony, that he pleased God' (Heb. 11. 5). The Cainite city of Enoch has long since crumbled to dust, but 'the word of the Lord (including God's testimony to godly Enoch) endures for ever' (1 Pet. 1. 25).]

3. Enoch and Lamech.

As 'the seventh from Adam' through Seth (Jude 14), Enoch stands in marked contrast to bigamous, blasphemous and ungodly Lamech, the seventh from Adam through Cain (Gen. 4. 1, 17-18).

[It is likely that our Lord had the words of Lamech in mind when he taught Peter to forgive times without number. His words were, 'I do not say to you seven times, but *seventy times seven*' (Matt. 18. 22). Lamech had boasted to his wives that, if vengeance would have been exacted by Cain 'seven times', he would exact it *seventy times seven*' (Gen. 4. 24; this is how the Greek Old Testament renders Lamech's words, which is exactly how our Lord's words are recorded {ἐβδομηκοντάκις ἑπτά}).

'A definite allusion to the Genesis story is highly probable. Jesus pointedly sets against the natural man's craving for ... revenge, the spiritual man's ambition to exercise the privilege of ... forgiveness'. (J. H. Moulton, 'The Grammar of New Testament Greek', page 98.)]

4. Enoch and Methuselah.

The lifespan of Enoch (365 years) is the *shortest* recorded in Genesis 5 (Gen. 5. 23). The lifespan of his son, Methuselah (969 years) is the *longest* (Gen. 5. 27).

[God's judgment in the Flood fell the same year as the death of Methuselah: (i) Methuselah was 187 years old when he fathered Lamech; (ii) Lamech was 182 years old when he fathered Noah; (iii) Noah was 600 years old at the time of the Flood. In summary, the time from the birth of Methuselah to the Flood was 969 years (187+182+600). We may well associate the long life of Methuselah with 'the long-suffering of God' which also 'waited in the days of Noah' (1 Pet. 3. 20).]

5. Enoch and us.

Enoch 'walked with God' (Gen. 5. 22, 24) and 'he pleased God' (Heb. 11. 5).

Let each of us aspire to follow his example and 'to walk and to please God' (1 Thess. 4. 1).

'Behold, I stand at the door, and knock' (Rev. 3. 20).

'Sadly, the One who had once suffered *outside His own city* (John 19. 16-18, 20), must now stand *outside one of His own churches*. Sadly, too, it was the very church which claimed that it had everything (Rev. 3. 17) which didn't even have the Lord.

They should have been standing at His door and knocking (Matt. 7. 7), but they weren't. Yet such is His loving patience with them that He condescends to exchange roles with them ... "It is the voice of (their) beloved that knocks, saying, 'Open to me'" (Song of Songs 5. 2).

(i) *He will not* beat at the door (Judg. 19. 22).

(ii) *He will not* attempt to break the door down (Gen. 19. 9).

(iii) *He will not* send His angel by night to open the door (Acts 5. 19).

(iv) *He will not* cause the door to open miraculously of its own accord (Acts 12. 10).

(v) *He will not* simply appear inside the shut door (John 20. 19).

He will not force Himself when and where His presence is not wanted. Patiently He will knock and ask for admission.

And His promise? "If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" ... The loving Lord assures us still that He desires the most intimate communion with each of us – even those of us who have failed Him badly, have backslidden and proved lukewarm'.

('I ... will sup with him', Bible Promises (Precious Seed), page 367.)

'Lead me to the rock that is higher than I' (Psalm 61. 2): A hymn and its story.

1. The hymn.

O safe to the Rock that is higher than I,
My soul in its conflicts and sorrows would fly;
So sinful, so weary, Thine, Thine, would I be;
Thou blest Rock of Ages, I'm hiding in Thee.

Refrain:
Hiding in Thee, hiding in Thee,
Thou blest Rock of Ages, I'm hiding in Thee.

In the calm of the noontide, in sorrow's lone hour,
In times when temptation casts o'er me its power;
In the tempests of life, on its wide, heaving sea,
Thou blest Rock of Ages, I'm hiding in Thee.

Refrain.

How oft in the conflict, when pressed by the foe,
I have fled to my refuge and breathed out my woe;
How often, when trials like sea billows roll,
Have I hidden in Thee, O Thou rock of my soul.

Refrain.

2. The story.

Mr William O. Cushing was an American preacher in the nineteenth century. Sadly, not long after his wife died, Mr Cushing developed a paralysis that robbed him of his voice. He was then in his late 40s.

Compelled to stop preaching, he asked the Lord to give him something to do. He discovered he had a talent for writing and kept himself busy doing that. He wrote over three hundred hymns, some of which are still sung today, including: (i) 'Under His wings', (ii) 'Down in the valley with my Saviour I would go', and 'When He cometh, when He cometh, to make up His jewels'.

Mr Cushing was an outstanding Christian, 'mindful of the suffering of others but oblivious to his own'. On one occasion, he gave all his savings (\$1,000 – an enormous sum in those days) to help a blind girl receive an education. It has been said that he 'was poor in purse, but rich in spirit'.

(Sources:

http://www.hymntime.com/tch/bio/c/u/s/h/cushing_wo.htm

https://hymnary.org/person/Cushing_WO

<https://www.wholesomewords.org/biography/bcushing.html>.)

Concerning the hymn, '*Hiding in Thee*', Mr Cushing reported that it 'was the outgrowth of many tears, many heart-conflicts and soul-yearnings, of which the world can know nothing. The history of many battles is behind it.

But the occasion which gave it being was the call of Mr Sankey. He said: "Send me something new to help me in my Gospel work". A call from such a source, and for such a purpose, seemed a call from God. I so regarded it, and prayed: "Lord, give me something that may glorify Thee".

It was while thus waiting, that "*Hiding in Thee*" pressed to make itself known'.
(Quoted by Ira D. Sankey, '*My Life and Sacred Songs (1906)*', pages 103-104.)

(iii) Go on, smile.

'Honey'ed words.

1. William was sprawled on the pavement outside the beauty parlour in his hometown. 'Bill, whatever happened to you?' his friend, John, asked when he discovered him lying there. William shook his head groggily and rubbed his bruised chin. 'As arranged, John, I met my wife when she came out of the beauty salon. The last thing I remember was saying, "Well, Honey ... *at least you tried*".

2. David's wife, Maureen, loved to sing, so she joined the church's singing group. She would often practise while she was preparing dinner. She noticed that, whenever she began to sing, David would rush out of the kitchen and stand on the porch outside the front of their house. After this happened three times, with hurt feelings, Maureen asked him, 'What's the matter, dear? Don't you like my singing?' 'It's not that, Honey', David replied, 'I love your singing. I just want to make sure the neighbours know *I'm not murdering you*'.

See the attached 'Not a good start' photo.

