

Malcolm's Monday Musings : 10 May 2021

Greetings.

This is my 'Monday Musings' email.

Here is a riddle to get your minds into gear this morning:

Two Bible characters were born at (or about) the same time. Both were male. They were not twins. Indeed, each of the two men was brother to the other man's mother.

Well, who are they?

(If you are struggling with solving the riddle, you will find 'further clues' below.)

Yours in our Lord Jesus,

Malcolm

(i) Scripture.

A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink' ...

Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, 'How is it that you, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?' For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.

Jesus answered and said to her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, "Give me a drink", you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water'.

The woman said to Him, 'Sir, you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do you get that living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?'

Jesus answered and said to her, 'Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life'.

The woman said to Him, 'Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw'.

John 4. 7-15 (New King James Version)

(ii) Food for thought.

Two central confessions.

'In Old Testament faith there is no more crucial confession than "[The Lord] is God" (see Deut. 4. 32-40 and 1 Kings 18. 21, 24, 36, 37, 39), just as "Jesus is Lord" (1 Cor. 12. 3) stands at the centre of New Testament faith'.

(Dale Ralph Davis, 'Joshua: Focus Commentary', page 175.)

David's three 'Who am I?' statements.

(i) Unworthy of such a relationship: 'that I should be son in law to the king?' (1 Sam. 18. 18).

(ii) Unworthy of such a favour: 'that you have brought me thus far' (2 Sam. 7. 18; 1 Chron. 17. 16).

(iii) Unworthy of such a privilege: 'and what is my people, that we should be able to offer willingly after this manner?' (1 Chron. 29. 14.)

My earthly possessions: mine yet not mine.

(i) 'Peter said, "Ananias, ... while it remained unsold, did it not remain your own?' (Acts 5. 3-4).

(ii) 'David said, 'Blessed are you, O Lord ... all things come from you, and of your own have we given you' (1 Chron. 29. 10, 14).

'Not as the world gives, give I to you' (John 14. 27).

'All that He is, is mine. And this is how Christ says He gives—not as the world gives. When the world gives, it gives away—it has no more the thing that it has given; but when Christ gives, He gives nothing away, He brings us into everything that He has Himself.

The peace that He gives us is "my peace" [John 14. 27]; the words that He has given us are "the words which Thou gavest me" [John 17. 8]; the joy is "my joy" [John 17. 13]; the glory is "the glory which Thou gavest me" [John 17. 22]; and the love is "the love wherewith Thou hast loved me" [John 17. 26]. He brings us into the enjoyment of all that He enjoys Himself'.

(J. N. Darby, 'The Believer's Place in Christ', Collected Writings, Volume 32, pages 358-9.)

Christ: preeminent in creation (Col. 1. 16-17)

- (i) The power of creation: 'by Him all things were created'.
- (ii) The purpose of creation: 'all things were created ... for Him'.
- (iii) The preserver of creation: 'in Him all things consist'.

The seven-fold holiness of the Lord Jesus.

- (i) Holy in His pre-existence (Isa. 6. 3 with John 12. 36-41).
- (ii) Holy in His birth (Luke 1. 35).
- (iii) Holy in His life (Mark 1. 24).
- (iv) Holy in His death (Acts 3. 14; 4. 27).
- (v) Holy in His resurrection (Acts 2. 27).
- (vi) Holy in His priesthood (Heb. 7. 26).
- (vii) Holy in the midst of the churches (Rev. 3. 7).

'I thirst' (John 19. 28).

'After six hours on the cross, [our Lord's] throat was parched (Psa. 22. 15; 69. 3) and, determined to proclaim loudly that His work here had been completed, He sought refreshment.

Yet the Son of David had no 'three mighty men' at hand to risk their lives to provide Him with pure spring water to slake His thirst (cf. 2 Sam. 23. 15-17). He was beholden to one of Pilate's soldiers for moistening His lips with ... a combination of sour wine and water; very different indeed from the 'good wine' which He had so liberally provided to meet the needs of others (John 2. 10).

In awe, consider who it was that cried, 'I thirst', that day. He was the self-same One:

- (i) who gives drink to every beast of the field, prepares rain for the earth and waters the hills from His chambers (Psa. 104. 10-11, 13; 147. 8);
- (ii) who satisfied the thirst of a whole nation throughout their forty years of wilderness wanderings (Exod. 17; Num. 20; Psa. 105. 41; 114. 8; 1 Cor. 10. 4);
- (iii) who had said on an earlier occasion, 'Give me to drink', but then only that He might provide a needy Samaritan woman with 'a well of water springing up into everlasting life' (John 4. 7-15); and
- (iv) who has offered to quench the spiritual thirst of the world; 'Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink' (John 7. 37) ...

It was the 'fountain of living waters' Himself (Jer. 2. 13; 17. 13) who was thirsty that day!

(*'Moments with the Master (Precious Seed Publications)'*, page 366.)

The Lord's grace.

We need:

- (i) Grace to Save (Eph. 2. 8; cf. 2 Tim. 1. 9; Tit. 2. 11).
- (ii) Grace to Strengthen (2 Tim. 2. 1; cf. Heb. 13. 9 RSV).
- (iii) Grace to Speak (Col. 4. 6).
- (iv) Grace to Suffice (2 Cor. 12. 9).
- (v) Grace to Serve (1 Cor. 15. 10; cf. 1 Cor. 3. 10; Eph. 3. 7).

Eight misunderstood sayings of Jesus in the Gospel of John.

- (i) 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up' (John 2. 19-21).
- (ii) 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born from above (*ἄνωθεν*) he cannot see the kingdom of God' (John 3. 3-8). **[*]**
- (iii) 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water' (John 4. 10-11).
- (iv) 'Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never thirst again' (John 4. 13-15).
- (v) 'I have food to eat that you know nothing about' (John 4. 31-34).
- (vi) 'I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh' (John 6. 51-53).
- (vii) 'Where I am going, you cannot come?' (John 7. 34-36; 8. 21-22, 51-53).
- (viii) 'Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him' (John 11. 11-14).

[*] The Greek word, *ἄνωθεν*, can mean either 'again' or 'from above'. Although Nicodemus understood it to mean 'again', leading him to conclude that the Lord was speaking of a second physical birth, the Lord's reply in verses 6-8 suggests strongly that He referred to the need for a spiritual birth, a birth 'from above'. I note that John uses the word elsewhere only with the meaning, 'from above' (John 3. 31; 19. 11, 23).

The three swords of our Lord's passion.

- (i) The sword that wasn't needed. 'Jesus said to (Peter), "Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and He will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matt. 26. 52-53).
- (ii) The sword that pierced through a woman's soul. At the time of our Lord's consecration in the temple, forty days after His birth, godly Simeon had prophesied concerning Mary that, metaphorically, 'a sword will pierce through your own soul' (Luke 2. 35). The day of Jesus' crucifixion was the day!

(iii) *The sword* of the Lord of hosts that smote 'the man ... my fellow ... the shepherd' (Zech. 13. 7; cf. Mark 14. 26-27).

'Jehovah bade His sword awake,—
O Christ, it woke 'gainst Thee!
Thy blood the flaming blade must slake:
Thy heart its sheath must be, —
All for my sake, my peace to make;
Now sleeps that sword for me'.

(Anne R. Cousin, 'O Christ, what burdens bowed Thy head' – originally titled, 'The Substitute'.)

'When Satan tempts me to despair, and tells me of the guilt within ...', Charitie L. Bancroft.

'I may take the accuser of the brethren who comes to accuse me day and night, and I may bring him to that place [the cross] and say, "This is the ground on which I am resting".

I may my fierce accuser face, and tell him ... what? Tell him I'm not so bad as he says? Tell him that he's got the wrong man; that I'm not the kind of dark blackened sinner that he tells me I am?

Oh, no; I'll tell him, "You haven't discovered the half of it yet, but come with me to this place where the judgment of God has been poured out upon sin ... and to the ground on which I stand".

(E. J. Alexander, 'The Cup of Bitterness, and the Cup of Blessing', page 4.)

'An inheritance ... reserved in heaven for you' (1 Pet. 1. 4).

'An inheritance' which:

(i) death cannot *touch* ('incorruptible'),

(ii) sin cannot *tarnish* ('undefiled'), and

(iii) time cannot *terminate* ('unfading').

Abounding in faith, hope and love.

(i) Abounding in *Faith* (2 Cor. 8. 7).

(ii) Abounding in *Hope* (Rom. 15. 13).

(iii) Abounding in *Love* (Phil. 1. 9).

'While they are yet speaking, I will hear' (Isa. 65. 24).

Sometimes, God sees fit to answer the prayers of His people *while they are praying*. Consider:

1. The following *two biblical incidents*.

(i) Abraham's servant 'said, "O Lord God of my master Abraham ... let it be that the young woman to whom I say, 'Please let down your pitcher that I may drink', and she says, 'Drink, and I will also give your camels a drink'—let her be the one you have appointed' ... And it came to pass, **before he had finished speaking**, that behold, Rebekah ... came out with her pitcher on her shoulder' (Gen. 24. 12-15).

(ii) Daniel wrote, '**While I was speaking** and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my plea ... **while I was speaking in prayer**, the man Gabriel ... came to me in swift flight at the time of the evening sacrifice ... saying, "O Daniel at the beginning of your pleas for mercy a word went out, and I have come to tell it to you" (Dan 9. 20-23).

2. The following *two true stories*.

(i) At the end of the seventeenth century, August Hermann Francke founded an Orphan House and school at Halle in Germany. He wrote:

'Another time all our provision was spent. Then it fell out, that in addressing myself to the Lord, I found myself deeply affected with the fourth petition of the Lord's prayer, 'Give us this day our daily bread'; and my thoughts were fixed in a more special manner upon the words '*this day*', because on that very same day we had great occasion for it. **While I was yet praying**, a friend of mine came before my door in a coach, and brought the sum of four hundred crowns'.

(A. H. Francke, 'The Footsteps of Divine Providence; or The Bountiful Hand of Heaven Defraying the Expenses of Faith', page 43.)

(ii) Some 130 years later, young George Müller wrote concerning himself and his wife:

'Our money had been reduced to two and half pence; our bread was hardly enough for this day. I had several times brought our need before the Lord. After dinner, when I returned thanks, I asked Him to give us our daily bread, meaning literally that He would send us bread for the evening. **Whilst I was praying**, there was a knock at the door ... a poor sister came in, and brought us some of her dinner, and from another poor sister, five shillings. In the afternoon she also brought us a large loaf. Thus the Lord not only literally gave us bread, but also money'.

(George Müller, 'A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller – First Part', page 81.)

[For an entirely different reason, these two incidents featured on page 2 of the document which was attached to the 'Monday Musings' for 19 October 2020.]

[See the attached 'The Mystery and the Victory' document.](#)

(You may recall that last week's document directed attention to the section in 1 Thessalonians 4 which concerns the coming again of our Lord Jesus, with particular emphasis on providing hope and

comfort to those who mourn the loss of loved ones. I decided to follow up this week with a document which focuses attention on the closing section of 1 Corinthians 15, the other passage in the New Testament that furnishes us with some of the details and implications of our Lord's return.)

The riddle (further clues):

(i) The two men had the same father.

(ii) Their father was also their grandfather.

Well? What are the names of the two men?

(If you are *still* stuck, 'final clues' can be found at the end of this email.)

(iii) Go on, smile.

Tania, a young mother, was cooking dinner for her two young sons Noah and Justin, five and four years old respectively. The boys were arguing loudly over who was to get the first burger.

Tania, wanting to teach her children to be kind and considerate, asked them to stop arguing and to think about their much-loved Uncle Albert. Looking sternly at her two boys, she asked, "Now, what do you think Uncle Albert would do if he were here? I'm sure you both know that he would say, 'Let my brother have the first burger'".

Justin quickly turned to Noah and said, '*You can play being Uncle Albert*'.

Tommy and Sid had put on far too much weight during the COVID restrictions and they realized it was time to do something about it.

'That's it', Tommy announced. 'I'm going on a diet!'

'Great', responded Sid. 'I'll join you. We can be dieting buddies and help each other. Whenever I feel the urge to drive out and get a burger and fries, I'll call you first'.

'Wonderful', Tommy replied. '*I'll go with you*'.

See the attached (i) 'Now, that's what I call a burger' and (ii) 'Burger and ...' pictures.

The riddle (final clues):

(i) Each man became the father of a nation.

(ii) You will find that a cave has a lot to do with the solution to the riddle!

(If, in spite of all the clues, you are still unable to solve the riddle, you will have to wait until next week's Musings for me to reveal the Bible reference.)

