

Malcolm's Monday Musings : 21 July 2025.

Greetings.

First, you may recall that, last Monday, I posed a simple Bible quiz question. I asked you to 'name the five people in Scripture who either (i) spoke concerning or (ii) addressed the Lord Jesus as "my lord"' ... I gave you the clue that 'there are three men and two women'.

I promised then that, God willing, the answer would be in today's 'Musings'. Well, here it is. In order of biblical mention, the five people are:

- (i) David (Psa. 110. 1);
- (ii) Elisabeth (Luke 1. 43);
- (iii) Mary Magdalene (John 20. 13);
- (iv) the apostle Thomas (John 20. 28); and
- (v) the apostle Paul (Phil. 3. 8).

Second, this coming Friday marks the anniversary of the birth of Stuart Hine on 25 July 1899. To many, Mr Hine is best known as the man who translated and extended Carl Boberg's poem 'O Store Gud' into the much-loved hymn, '**How great Thou art**'.

For those interested in the background to that great hymn, a potted history can be found on pages 3-5 of the document, 'Hymn Stories: Number 1', which was attached to the 'Musings' for 3 August 2020. (The document—together with 20 footnotes—can be accessed at <https://voicesforchrist.org/writings/124>.)

Truly, long before Carl Boberg and Stuart Hine, (i) the young man, Elihu, of the Book of Job, (ii) the Temple musician, Asaph, and (iii) the sweet psalmist of Israel, David, in his acrostic psalm, each had it right:

- (i) 'God is **great**' (Job 36. 26);
- (ii) 'Who is so **great** a God as our God?' (Psa 77. 13); and
- (iii) '**Great** is the Lord' (Psa. 145. 3; cf. 2 Sam. 7. 22; Psa 86. 10).

Third, I set out below this week's 'Musings' document.

Fourth (and finally), an advance notice.

On account of other pressing commitments, there will be no 'Musings' next Monday.

God willing, normal service will be resumed on the following Monday, 4 August.

Happy reading.

Yours in our Lord Jesus,

Malcolm

(i) Scripture.

Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer.

From the end of the earth, I call to you, when my heart is faint.

Lead me to the rock that is higher than I; for you are my refuge, a strong tower against the enemy.

Let me abide in your tent for ever, find refuge under the shelter of your wings. *Selah*.

For you, O God, have heard my vows; you have given me the heritage of those who fear your name ...

So I will always sing praises to your name, as I pay my vows day after day.

Psalm 61. 1-5, 8 (New Revised Standard Version)

(ii) Food for thought.

'I will dwell in thy tabernacle for ever' (Psa. 61. 4).

1. 'During the time the tabernacle was still being moved from place to place we hear no such mention of dwelling in God's tabernacle or house. It was David who coined this expression for loving fellowship with the God of revelation'.

(Keil and Delitzsch *'Commentary of the Old Testament'*, Volume V, page 206.)

2. David's 'expectation is full of confidence. He will, he believes, abide, or sojourn, for ever, in the tabernacle of God. He would dwell where God dwells. He would sojourn there, a stranger in the world but at home in the courts of the Lord'.

(J. M. Flanagan, *'Psalms: What the Bible Teaches'*, page 266.)

3. 'Psalm 61:

(i) 'Prayer enables you to reach farther (verse 2a) ...

(ii) 'Prayer enables you to go higher (verses 2b) ...

(iii) 'Prayer enables you to come closer (verse 4) ...

(iv) 'Prayer enables you to grow richer (verse 5) ...

(v) 'Prayer enables you to be happier (verse 8). David starts out crying and ends up praising; he starts out praying and ends up rejoicing'.

(W. Wiersbe, *'Prayer, Praise and Promises'*, Day 165.)

'Set your affection on things above' (Col. 3. 2).

'Christian, let your heart rejoice, for you are "accepted in the beloved" (Eph. 1. 6)—what do you have to fear? Let your face ever wear a smile; live near your Master; live in the suburbs of the Celestial City; for soon, when your time has come, you will rise up to where your Jesus sits'.

(C. H. Spurgeon, *'Morning and Evening'*, Morning, 4 April, page 190.)

'Be not conformed to this world: but be transformed by the renewing of your mind' (Rom. 12. 2).

'The world I am talking about is not the beautiful earth God has given us or the good things in it. Rather, it is the world that is in revolt against God and operates as if God didn't exist.

'It is all around us and is manifested in an intricate, interconnected web of beliefs, values, behaviours, institutions, and the culture they form. We will be tempted and enticed to love the things of this fallen world in which we live, which is a major challenge for believers today.

'But this is not a new problem, and ancient wisdom can help us. In the first century, Paul exhorted the believers in Rome ... in the vivid words of the New Living Translation, "Don't copy the behaviour and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think" ...

'Ask yourself, "What does my mind gravitate to when I am unencumbered and free to think whatever I wish?" Do I experience recurring fantasies? Upon what or whom do my affections tend to focus? What do I feel that I must acquire or accomplish in life?"

'Are any of these influences at work in me: pride, vainglory, envy, sloth, avarice, anger, gluttony, and lust. Over the centuries, prayerful self-examination has helped believers recognize sinful desires in their hearts and avoid being drawn into them'.

(T. A. Tarrants, *'The Transformation of our Heart's Desires'*, accessed at ...

<https://www.cslewisinstitute.org/resources/the-transformation-of-our-hearts-desires/>.)

'If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ' (Rom. 8. 17).

'Christ infinitely outvies all other princes; He has the highest throne, the largest dominions, and the longest possession. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever" (Heb. 1. 8). He has many heirs, but no successors'.

(Thomas Watson, *'A Body of Divinity'*, page 187.)

'As strangers and pilgrims' (1 Pet. 2. 11).

1. 'Earth is not our home, though some silly people would love to have it such. But God has prepared for the saints a better portion—heavenly ... We are in danger of loving our present abode, and He sends us trial after trial to remind us that this is not our rest. Perfection of character and the highest bliss cannot be attained in this world ...

'Anything is good for us that makes us pant after heaven. He who is well trained in the school of affliction often has little to do, when death comes, but to gather up his feet in his bed, and bid a glad farewell to earth and a joyful welcome to heaven'.

(W. S. Plumer, 'A Word to the Weary', pages 77-78.)

2.

*'This world is not my home,
I'm just a-passing through.
My treasures are laid up
Somewhere beyond the blue'.*

(Author uncertain, the first stanza of the spiritual Song, 'I Can't Feel At Home Any More'.)

'Now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus' (Rom. 8. 1).

'We are in Christ before God. The greatest expression of divine hatred of sin is found in His cross. The stroke of judgment fell; the thunder and lightning are exhausted; the sky is pure and calm for those who believe'.

(J. N. Darby, 'The Blood of the Lamb', Collected Writings, Volume 21, page 10.)

A suggested outline of Paul's epistle to the Galatians.

Passage	Content	Takes the form of ...	Paul counters the claim that ...
Chapters 1-2	Personal	(i) Autobiography	(i) he was a second-rate apostle.
Chapters 3-4	Doctrinal	(ii) Argument	(ii) circumcision is necessary for salvation and that his gospel was defective because it rests on faith and not on the law.
Chapters 5-6	Practical	(iii) Application	(iii) his gospel encourages immorality and license.

'My meditation of Him shall be sweet' (Psa. 104. 34).

'When languor and disease invade
This trembling house of clay,
'Tis sweet to look beyond my pains,
And long to fly away.

'Sweet to look inward, and attend
The whispers of His love;
Sweet to look upward, to the place
Where Jesus pleads above.

'Sweet to look back, and see my name
In life's fair book set down;
Sweet to look forward, and behold
Eternal joys my own.

'Sweet to reflect how grace divine
My sins on Jesus laid;
Sweet to remember that His blood
My debt of suffering paid.

'If such the sweetness of the streams,
What must the fountain be,
Where saints and angels draw their bliss
Immediately from Thee?'

(Adapted from Augustus Toplady, 'When languor and disease invade', 1780.)

Thirteen instances of people being 'afraid' (φοβέω) in the Gospel according to Mark.

(i) 'He said unto them, "Why are you so afraid? how is it that ye have no faith?"' (Mark 4. 40).

(ii) 'They were exceedingly afraid and said one to another, "What manner of man is this?"' (Mark 4. 40-41).

(iii) 'They saw the demon-possessed man ... sitting there ... and they were afraid' (Mark 5. 15).

(iv) 'The woman, afraid and trembling ... came and fell down before Him and told Him all the truth' (Mark 5. 33).

(v) 'Hearing the word spoken, Jesus said to the synagogue ruler, "Do not be afraid, only believe"' (Mark 5. 36).

(vi) 'Herod was afraid of John, knowing that he was a just and holy man' (Mark 6. 20).

(vii) 'Immediately He spoke with them, and said to them, "Be of good courage: it is I; be not afraid"' (Mark 6. 50).

(viii) 'They did not understand the saying, and were afraid to ask Him' (Mark 9. 32).

(ix) 'Jesus was going ahead of them ... and those who followed were afraid' (Mark 10. 32).

(x) 'The scribes and chief priests ... were afraid of Him' (Mark 11. 18).

(xi) 'They were afraid of the people, for they all held that John really was a prophet' (Mark 11. 32).

(xii) 'They sought to lay hold of Him but were afraid of the crowd' (Mark 12. 12).

(xiii) 'They fled from the tomb ... and said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid' (Mark 16. 8).

Two extracts from a 'Musing', entitled 'What manner of love', of four and a half years ago (accessible at <https://voicesforchrist.org/writings/160>):

1. 'It is always helpful when people tell you clearly why they are writing to you. And towards the close of 1 John, the apostle supplies us with one of several reasons he had for writing: "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God", he says, "that you may know that you have eternal life" (1 John 5. 13). Clearly then it was the apostle's intention (and, behind him, it was God's intention) that everyone who knows the Lord Jesus should have the assurance of his or her salvation ... that they should have the certainty of possessing eternal life.

'And to this end John provides his readers with a set of distinguishing evidences and characteristics of those who have experienced the new, spiritual birth. These are the birthmarks, if you like, *of those who, by faith, have become the children of God*.

'John's main checklist is in fact very short. Following the order in his letter:

(i) "Everyone who practices righteousness is **born of Him**" (1 John 2. 29).

(ii) "Everyone who loves is **born of God**" (1 John 4. 7).

(iii) "Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been **born of God**" (1 John 5. 1).

2. 'John has much to say in his writings about the new-birth. In his gospel, (i) he speaks of the means of the new-birth: "As many as received Him (the Lord Jesus), to them He gave the right (the authority) to become children of God, to those who believe in His name" (John 1. 12), and (ii) he stresses the necessity of the new-birth: we hear the words of Jesus to Nicodemus, "Marvel not that I said to you, 'You must be born again'" (John 3. 7).

'What led John, who recorded Jesus' words to Nicodemus, to marvel now was not "*how*" someone can be born again, but '*that*', by God's grace, he and others had been!

'In his gospel, therefore, John spoke of both the means and the necessity of the new-birth. But in his letter he traces it back to its source and its spring—to the Father's truly amazing love for us: "See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God" (1 John 3. 1).

'Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of Him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey His commands. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.' (1 John 5. 1-3).

'John discusses a number of evidences (some commentators call them "tests" or "tests of life") that clarify who truly is a Christian. Most people see three tests: (a) a test of truth, in particular the truth that Jesus is the Son of God; (b) a test of obedience, in particular obedience to the commands of Jesus; (c) a test of love, in particular love for our brothers and sisters ...

'Toward the end of this epistle ... the apostle begins with the truth test, with the person "who believes that Jesus is the Christ". That person is born of God—a point repeatedly reiterated in John's writings. But everyone who is born of God will surely love others who have been born of God—spiritual siblings, as it were. Thus, the truth test is linked, through the new birth, to the love test.

'How then do we know that we really do love the children of God? Well, first of all, by loving God himself, and then, in consequence, carrying out His commands. Indeed, it is ridiculous to claim to love God and not obey him. So obvious is this that one might go so far as to say that "love for God" is "to obey His commands".

(D. A. Carson, 'For the Love of God', Volume 2, comment for 26 May.)

(iii) Go on, smile.

A mouth and an arm.

1. Beryl Hopkins went to see the local doctor because she was worried about her husband John's temper.

'Doctor', she explained, 'I don't know what to do. Every day, my husband seems to lose his temper for no reason. Frankly, it scares me'.

The doctor, who (from her earlier visits) knew Beryl very well, assured her, 'There is really nothing to worry about. There is an easy cure. Whenever you sense that Mr Hopkins is becoming angry, just fill a tumbler with water and swish the water around it in your mouth. Swish it around and around. Don't swallow the water until your husband either leaves the room or goes to bed and falls asleep'.

Two weeks later, looking refreshed and untroubled, Beryl returned to the doctor's surgery.

'Doctor', she said, 'I don't understand how it works but that was a brilliant idea of yours. Every time John started to get mad, I swished with water and, just as you said, he calmed right down. You must tell me; how does a glass of water do that?'

'Actually', the doctor replied, 'the water itself does nothing ...

... It's keeping your mouth shut that does the trick'.

2. Patrick Flynn was a solicitor in a District Court in Dublin.

On one occasion, he was defending a bus driver against claims that his negligence had caused injury to the arm of a passenger—that of Brendan O'Connor, a local young man.

'Show us, please, how high you can lift your injured arm', Mr Flynn asked Brendan.

The young plaintiff obediently raised his arm to shoulder level, his face contorted with seeming great pain.

'Thank you', Mr Flynn continued, 'And show us now, please, how high you could lift that same arm before the accident'.

Brendan's arm immediately shot above his head.