

## Malcolm's Monday Musings : 13 June 2022

Greetings.

This is my 'Monday Musings' email.

### **Last Friday and 'Jan Hus'.**

And who, you may ask, is 'Jan Hus'?

Although, sadly, many Christians today hardly recognise either the name or its bearer's substantial contributions to the history of the Christian faith, I can tell you that Jan Hus (also known as 'John Hus' or 'John Huss') was a most remarkable man. In many ways, he proved to be an important forerunner of the Protestant Reformation.

Jan Hus was born in the latter half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century in what is now known as the Czech Republic. In part through his studies of the writings of John Wycliffe, he came to recognise and thereafter to proclaim the supremacy of scripture over the authority of the (Roman Catholic) Church. This led, inevitably, to many years of conflict with the powerful clergy of the Church.

Eventually, Jan Hus was tricked into appearing before a Church council in Constance, Germany. On arrival at the city, he was arrested, tried, convicted of 'heresy' and subsequently burned at the stake.

In a letter written a year before his execution, bravely and nobly, he asserts, 'It is better to die well than to live wickedly' [1]. Jan Hus chose to 'die well'!

The German Reformer, Martin Luther, followed a full century behind Jan Hus. At one point in his turbulent and momentous life, Luther acknowledged, 'I have taught and held all the teachings of Jan Hus, but thus far I did not know it' [2].

He (Luther) later wrote, 'Hus, a true martyr ... Oh! that my name was worthy to be associated with such a man' [3].

Yes, as I said, Jan Hus 'was a most remarkable man'. But, where, you may ask now, does 'last Friday' fit into this?

Simply, in this, that it was on **10 June** in 1415 that Jan Hus wrote the following letter to his fellow-Christians in Bohemia:

'Master Jan Hus, a servant of God in hope, to all the faithful Bohemians who love and will love God, praying that God may grant them to live and die in his grace, and dwell forever in the heavenly joy.

'Faithful and beloved of God ... *I entreat you and exhort you to love God, to spread abroad His word, and to hear and observe it more willingly. I entreat you to hold fast the truth of God ...*

*'I entreat you also, if any have heard in my preaching or private conversation that which is opposed to God's truth, or if I have ever written anything of that kind (I trust God that it is not so) not to hold to it.*

'I write this letter to you in prison, bound with chains and expecting on the morrow the sentence of death, yet fully trusting in God that I shall not swerve from His truth' [4].

Twenty-six days later, Jan Hus died at the stake.

I have one last quotation for you from his pen:

'Listen to the truth, learn the truth, love the truth, speak the truth, keep the truth, defend the truth with your very life' [5].

[Sources of the quotations above:

1. Jan Hus, quoted by Matthew Spinka in 'John Hus' Concept of the Church', page 149.)
2. Martin Luther, 'Letter to George Spalatin, Wittenburg – dated 14 February 1520', in 'Luther's Works, Volume 48', page 153.
3. Martin Luther, a letter to Otto Brunfels, 1524; quoted by D. S. Schaff in his 'Introduction' to the volume entitled, 'The Church: by John Huss', page 36.
4. 'The Letters of Jan Hus', translated by R. M. Pope, 1904, pages 230-232.
5. T. G. Masaryk, 'The Meaning of Czech History', page 14.]

The main 'Musings' for this week follow below.

Happy reading.

## ADVANCE NOTICE

You may or may not be glad to learn that (largely on account of a short holiday) I am taking a break (of just two weeks) from issuing the 'Musings'.

God willing, 'normal service will be resumed' on Monday, 4 July ... 'Independence Day' in the United States. (I suspect that any fireworks in America on that day will have nothing to do with the resumption of the weekly 'Musings'!)

Yours in our Lord Jesus,

Malcolm

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### (i) Scripture

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also

John 14. 1-3 (*King James Version*)

### (ii) Food for thought.

#### **'Is it not a little one?' (Gen. 19. 20).**

'The Bible's pages are marked by **small sins** that cost people greatly. *Eating* a forbidden fruit (Gen. 3. 6). *Looking* back at a city (Gen. 19. 26). *Hitting* a rock (Num. 20. 11). *Touching* the ark of the covenant (2 Sam. 6. 7). *Lying* about real-estate holdings (Acts 5. 1-11).

'Scenes like these teach an important lesson: there are no small sins against a holy God. **Sin** only seems *trivial* to us when God's **holiness** seems *trite*'.

(Garrett Kell, 'Why Did God Kill Nadab and Abihu in Leviticus 10?', TGC devotional for 7 April 2020.)

#### **The Book of Judges: who is fighting whom?**

'Not only do the prologue and epilogue (of the Book of Judges) both fall into two parts, but there are a number of cross-linkages between them so that they serve to frame the book.

'For example, the book opens with the question: "Who *shall go up first* for us against the Canaanites, to fight against them?" and God replies, "*Judah shall go up*" (Judg. 1. 1-2).

'Almost the same question is asked in chapter 20: "Which of us *shall go up first* to battle against the Benjaminites?" and the Lord said, "*Judah shall go up first*".

'The slight change from "Canaanites" to "Benjaminites" shouts loudly: the nation that *began* by fighting *external foes* ends with an internecine *civil war*'.

(G. J. Wenham, 'Story as Torah: reading Old Testament narrative ethically', page 47).

#### **'You have said, 'It is vain to serve God. What is the profit of our keeping His charge' (Mal. 3. 14).**

'Men who expect to be paid in this world for serving God have *mistaken God for mammon*'.

(T. V. Moore, 'Haggai and Malachi', page 178.)

#### **'A mighty tempest' (Jonah 1. 4); 'a tempestuous wind' (Acts 27. 14).**

'Much depends on the way we come into trouble. Paul and Jonah were both in a storm, but in very different circumstances'.

(John Newton, 'Life of the Rev. John Newton, written by himself', page 243.)

#### **"They shall be mine", says the Lord of hosts, "in the day when I make up my jewels" (Mal. 3. 17).**

The story is told by a Roman historian of a lady from Campania who visited the home of Cornelia, the daughter of the great Roman general who had defeated Hannibal and the army of Carthage, and the wife of one of the most powerful Romans of that generation.

In the course of her visit, the lady showed Cornelia her jewels, the finest in existence at that time. 'Cornelia remained talking with her', it is claimed, 'until her children returned from school. "And **these**", she said when they appeared, "**are my jewels**".' (Source: 'Valerius Maximus', Book 4, Chapter 4.)

Sadly, there is no way to establish if this reported incident is historically true.

But, whether the Roman historian's story is true or not, I suggest that, should, 'in the coming ages', some heavenly 'principality' or 'power' venture to ask the 'Lord of heaven and earth' **to display His jewels**, He would point, not to any precious metals or rare gems of earth, but to His purchased people and declare, **'These are my jewels'**.

After all, did not the apostle Paul declare that God has 'seated us ... in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the coming ages He might display the surpassing riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus'? (Eph. 2. 5-6.),

**'Your Father ... makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good' (Matt. 5. 45).**

'Suddenly, that simple word "**His**" freshly welcomed me into a God-filled world. The sun is God's sun, and He raises it, lovingly, like a father turning on the lights in a child's bedroom'.

(Scott Hubbard, 'The Word of God Is Worth the Work', devotional on 5 May 2022.)

**'I have compassion' (Matt. 15. 32).**

'The ready spontaneity of Jesus' pity is ... plainly shown when He intervenes by a great miracle to relieve temporary pangs of hunger: "I have compassion on ... the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and if I send them away fasting to their home, they will faint in the way; and some of them are come from far" (Mark. 8. 2; cf. Matt. 15. 32)—**the only occasion on which Jesus is recorded as testifying to His own feeling of pity**'.

(B. B. Warfield, 'The Emotional Life of Our Lord', pages 42-43.)

**'The bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh' (John 6. 51).**

'We think of food as packaged things. The reality is that when you eat a hamburger, you are eating a dead cow, dead wheat, dead lettuce, dead tomatoes, dead onions, and so forth ...

'Jesus's audience ... understood that other things die so that we may live; if those other things don't die, we do. Jesus gives His life so that we may live; **either He dies, or we do**. He is the true bread from heaven who gives His life "for the life of the world".'

(D. A. Carson, 'For the Love of God', Volume 2, the devotional for 16 March.)

**'To give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division' (Luke 12. 51).**

(i) '**There was a division** among the people because of Him' (John 7. 43)

(ii) 'Therefore said some of the Pharisees, "This man is not of God, because He keepeth not the sabbath day". Others said, "How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?" And **there was a division** among them' (John 9. 16).

(iii) '**There was a division** therefore again among the Jews for these sayings' (John 10. 19).

**A place of safety beneath the cross.**

'We are standing beneath the cross ... which like some noble lightning-conductor in the storm, takes itself all the death from the lightning, and all the fury from the tempest. We are safe.

'Loud mayest thou roar, O thundering law, and terribly mayest thou flash, O avenging justice! We can look up with calm delight to all the tumult of the elements, for **we are safe beneath the cross**'.

(C. H. Spurgeon, 'It is Finished', a sermon preached in The Metropolitan Tabernacle, London, on 1 December 1861.)

**'It is raised in incorruption ... in glory ... in power ... a spiritual body' (1 Cor. 15. 44).**

'Not only have I not passed my peak, I have never seen my peak. My peak will not come until the resurrection'.

(Andy Alcorn, 'Heaven and the New Earth', page 16.

The full document is freely downloadable from [https://www.cslewisinstitute.org/webfm\\_send/8689](https://www.cslewisinstitute.org/webfm_send/8689).)

**'Meet for the Master's use' (2 Tim. 2. 21).**

'In times past I prayed, "Lord, use me". I do not pray that prayer any more. ... Our prayer should be, "**Make us usable**". If you are usable, God will use you!'

(Vance Havner, 'Quote of the Day: 10 June 2022', accessed at <http://vancehavner.com/quote-of-the-day-295/>.)

**'I go to prepare a place for you' (John 14. 2).**

“Preparing a place” doesn’t mean construction in heaven, but crucifixion on earth ... “The way to where I am going” (John 14. 4) is the way of the cross. Without Jesus taking this way (on our behalf), there is no way for us (to His Father)’.

(David Mathis, ‘*The Most Controversial Claim Jesus Made*’, ‘Desiring God’ devotional on 20 July 2017.)

**‘I will come again, and receive you unto myself’ (John 14. 3).**

‘This is the language of affection. He does not say, “I will send for you”. No, that would not satisfy the heart—‘I will come’. He would not be content without having them where He is, and without coming to fetch them’.

(J. N. Darby, ‘*Our Hope*’, Pilgrim Portions: Meditations for the Day of Rest; fifty-second Week.)

**Prayer to the Lord Jesus.**

‘Prayer to Jesus Christ constitutes yet another evidence for His deity. Jesus instructed His disciples to pray to Him (John 14. 14; 15. 16; 16. 23-24). Acts 1. 24-25 records that the disciples prayed to Christ for guidance in choosing a replacement for Judas Iscariot. Stephen voiced two prayerful requests to Jesus: “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit” and “Lord, do not hold this sin against them” (Acts 7. 59-60). In Damascus, Ananias instructed Saul to be baptized and to call on the name of Jesus (Acts 22. 16). The apostle Paul later wrote that “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (Rom. 10. 3; see 1 Cor. 1. 2). Paul also appealed to Christ to remove the “messenger of Satan” from him (2 Cor. 12. 7-8). Indeed, the New Testament closes with a prayer to Christ: “Come, Lord Jesus!” (Rev. 22. 20)’.

(J. MacArthur Jr and R. Mayhue, ‘*Biblical Doctrine*’, page 256.)

**Two crucial days.**

‘The second-most crucial day of your life is the day you die. The most crucial day of your life is the day you decide where you will go when you die’.

(Slightly adapted from J. B. Nicholson Jr, ‘*Attainment or Atonement?*’, Taste and See: Uplink Ministries’, 9 February 2021.)

**‘Who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God’ (2 Cor. 1. 4).**

‘God does not comfort us to make us comfortable but to make us comforters’.

(J. H. Jowett; quoted by Mrs C. E. Cowman in ‘*Streams for the Desert*’, page 12.)

**‘How do you read it?’ (Luke 10. 26).**

‘In many cases individual feelings and personal experience have replaced sound biblical interpretation. The question “What does the Bible mean to me?” has become more important than “What does the Bible mean?”

‘That is a frightfully reckless approach to Scripture. It undermines biblical integrity and authority by implying that personal experience is to be sought more than an understanding of Scripture’.

(John Macarthur Jr., ‘*Our Sufficiency in Christ*’, page 33.)

**The potential inside each decision we make.**

‘Whether you have a great task or a small responsibility, do it joyfully, for out of your endeavours God will raise bountiful blessings. Remember, anyone can count the seeds in an apple, but only God can count the apples in a seed!’

(R. H. Schuller, ‘*The New Possibility Thinkers Bible*’, page 1128.)

**(iii) Go on, smile.**

Married couples.

1. Dialogue.

David and Dianne were out for dinner. David seemed more than a little distracted.

Finally, Dianne turned to him and said, David! You are not listening to a word that I am saying, are you?’

David, rather offended, replied, ‘Dianne, that’s *rather a strange way to start up a conversation*’.

## 2. Dresses.

Elsbeth said to Alastair, 'Honey, I think I need a new dress'.

'Now look, Elspeth', Alastair responded, 'you can't go shopping for new clothes all of the time'.

'But I really do need a new dress', Elspeth insisted.

'Well, I think that the dress you wear now is really lovely', Alastair said. 'Tell me, what would you say is wrong with it?'

'Only that it's a wee bit long', Elspeth replied, '*and the veil keeps getting in my eyes*'.