

Reflection #9 - New Beginnings

From 4 July we can go to pubs, restaurants and cinemas again along with other exciting changes like being able to go on holiday in the UK. We can even meet for worship, as long as we don't sing - this could be a challenge for me! I am so thankful that we are finally moving on, but it does raise the question of, *"What will the new normal look like?"*

Eating out and going to the cinema will be different, it won't be what we are used to...not quite. This has led me to think a bit about the end of the world - not in terms of an apocalyptic Coronavirus meltdown, but what the Bible says will happen with the world as we know it after Jesus returns and has dealt with the devil and those who don't believe in him.

Revelation Chapter 21 says, *1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth," for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. 2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." 5 He who was seated on the throne said, I am making everything new!" Then he said, Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."*

The world as we know it was always destined to change. Indeed heaven above us will also change, and a new eternal landscape will develop - sadly for those looking forward to cloud surfing you may be disappointed! And it will be amazing because the home of God (His dwelling place) will be among us, as we are told in v3. And as this happens those things of the past that held us back from feeling the fullness of God in our lives: death; mourning; crying and pain, they will be removed as God does a new thing among us, as he makes everything new (v5)!

Of course the 4 July probably won't usher in these end of days new things, but as we begin to venture out from our hibernation and we encounter a new normal, let's remember also to look for the signs of new things that God is doing and is going to do. Through lockdown it appears that many more people than usual have been engaging with God, so I think we should be seeking Him to see how He will use us, his church, to continue this engagement and see people being drawn into His kingdom.



Prayer

God of new life,
Breathe your life-giving Spirit into us,
So that we can be renewed by you,
But also recognise where and how you are
working around us.
As we venture into the new normal,
Guide us and lead us in the new things you
have planned.
In your name Jesus we pray.
Amen.