

Lectionary passages:-

Genesis 1 v1-9; Psalm 29; Acts 19 v1-7 ; Mark 1 v4-11

Christmas and New Year are well and truly over, 2021 looks very much like 2020 by now!

Last week we were thinking of John 1 which goes back even before creation to remind us where Jesus was before it all began! Now this week our passages begin at the beginning –The first five verse of Genesis one and John the Baptist in Mark.

Let us just put down a few markers...

1. In the beginning God created...the Christian will normally believe in God as creator. The Bible says so! It is a good place to start, as it helps us see the Bible then as the maker's instructions, guidance to get the best out of life. Many do not think like this today. No manufacturer gives rules to upset the user! A washing machine has instructions so it can be used to do its best work, to last as long as possible and do its best job. It is the same with God's rules he wants the best for us... so many think God is a spoil sport, giving us restrictions just for the sake of it. Thou shalt not steal for example is a sensible command which ensures society runs smoothly. Keep the Sabbath day holy is more controversial! But to me it is interesting to note significant increase in mental health issues since the 1994 change to Sunday trading laws. Many now have to work a seven day week with little spare time. Even if one does not worship God, or believe in him, I believe a human being needs one day in seven different from the rest, for maintenance of physical and mental health.
2. The earth was formless and void and God's spirit brooded...hovering over the waters. Sounds to me very much how the scientists think their alternative to creation happened!
3. God made day and night. He has a plan, a long term plan for the world we live in and the universe in which it is situated. That plan will involve a partner in creation, Man and Woman, partners who mess up and who eventually need rescuing by Jesus so God's original plans can be fulfilled. We too are God's partners.
4. The whole of our Bible is a map of the journey necessary to return men and women into friendship with God, to enable the original plan God had for the world to BEGIN! In this sense the true history of the world has not yet begun. To become a Christian sets us up to start again with God, so in the eternity we are offered, by faith in Jesus, we can work with him to bring about his Kingdom and his purposes in heaven as on earth! Amazing.
5. To put it in Bible terms - we are like the Israelites wandering in the desert for 40 years waiting and looking forward to the Promised Land, a place where God dwells. As Christians we are looking forward, with the Apostle Paul, to the time when the wanderings and pains of this life are over. To a time when we shall dwell forever with God in heaven.