

## REFLECTION ON THE THEME: A New Heaven and a New Earth

To me the most telling words in our 2018 Mandorla theme are: ...”and then I saw” This of course could be interpreted in a simple temporal sense: “the next thing that happened was...” But more significant is a “causal” sense: that something that went on before has brought about a new heaven and a new earth. The former heavens and earth had passed away and there was a “new Jerusalem”. Is it possible that we are the ones who are to bring about the new heaven and earth? When in the Book of Genesis, at the beginning of the Bible, God gave to us the custody of the earth: the plants, the beasts, the water and indeed the sky, it was as a sacred trust. We would like to think that we have within us the strength and the courage to be custodians of this wealth.

A clue not to miss here is that in the previous chapter we read of a Last Judgement where each person is “judged according to his conduct.” This brings the whole scene right into our own lives and homes and places of work and play.

A pertinent idea in this passage is HOPE. The Christians for whom this book was written had been facing persecution, torture and death. After chapters of symbolism: dire actions and frightening sufferings, there was this promise of something better from the hand of God, a new heaven and a new earth. No wonder there were visions of streets of gold. It is an “end time” of glory.

There is to be no temple in that new city, nor sun nor moon. Its light is “God the Almighty and the Lamb”. Here is the opportunity for artists to expand their interpretation beyond merely “good works” done in the name of humanity or faith. Something much greater lies beyond. It is the fulfilment of all our dreams and ambitions in the embrace of a God who loves us, cares for us and fills us with his infinite bounty and beauty.

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