

And the sea was no more ...

I expect that many kiwis would hear those words and be horrified. What no sea! What about boats, fishing, diving, sailing and water skiing? What about swimming and surfing? Paddling at the waters edge, body boarding ... or simply sitting and watching the waves or the water? What about the glistening sparkle as the sun rises over it, and that beautiful slow fade of colour as the sun sets in it at night? That beautiful sound of the waves crashing in the early hours when everything else is quiet. It's almost heavenly.

What about holidays? Where would we go if there was no sea, no beach? No drift wood fires, no volleyball or beach cricket, no coastal exploring or camping in the dunes overnight? No sunbathing or sandy BBQ's?

For a lot of New Zealanders, life would be unimaginable at the sound of those words.

And the sea was no more ...

But the biblical idea of the sea is not like ours. The people of the Jewish Bible did not view the sea as their plaything. As something to be enjoyed and frolicked in, it wasn't a place for pleasure and recreation, a treasured centre of happy holiday snaps or quiet meditation and inspiration.

The sea was the place of primordial chaos. It is the lair of Leviathan, the dragon, and is the place from which evil constantly arises, and in Revelation already, it has been the site of an intense struggle between God and Satan, it is also the place the Beasts emerge from in chapter 13.

The sea throughout scripture is the home of chaos and destruction, so the idea there was no more sea ... wasn't a bad one! In fact, it suggests the resolution of all that is problematic with the world.

And the sea was no more ...

The hearers of Johns Revelation were in the midst of chaos. The Roman Empire controlled their world, many were slaves, or worse. They had no choice in or about their lives, no power, authority or autonomy. They did as they were told or suffered the consequences. They were surrounded by the sea out of which horrors flowed. Sacrifices to other gods, temple prostitution, the violence of the roman circus, floggings, persecutions and the harsh and cruel state of life as lived at the lowest point of the economic and social scale.

Revelation says that things have changed. That the temporal power of Empires isn't what it used to be, and is no match for God and the Lamb looking like it has been slain. Jesus' death and resurrection has changed everything, for John's hearers now personally, but perhaps more importantly, for them eschatologically ... for the future ... everything was different. Chaos has been overcome. This is good news.

And the sea was no more ...

As we hear this, hopefully we get this too. That in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, everything, including eschatology has changed for us as well. At the end of all things when heaven meets earth **and the sea is no more ...**

the chaos of war in Ukraine and other places will be overcome. The chaos of cancer, Parkinson's, poverty, dementia, depression, and divorce. The chaos of widowhood, old age, loss, loneliness, leaky homes and homelessness will be overcome.

The chaos of murder, domestic violence, theft, rape, robbery, ram raids and youth crime. The chaos of political and public dishonesty, of not fitting in, fear, fraud, infidelity, anxiety, assault and addictions will be overcome.

The chaos of tears and pain will be overcome.

The chaos of death will be overcome.

“And the home of God will be among mortals, and God will be with them.”

And the sea was no more ...

And in spite of the feelings of millions of Kiwis ...

Good job I say!

Amen.

Thanks be to God.