7-13 January 2024 God shakes things up

Genesis 1: 1-5

The Beginning

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

3 And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. 4 God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.

Bible notes

At the start of everything is God, bringing order in chaos and light in the darkness. Whatever this account is saying about cosmic origins, one thing is certain, God is at work. The words about God creating light are echoed at the start of John’s Gospel (1:5,9). The word for wind also means breath and spirit, a reminder that God is personally involved and invested in everything that happens around us and within us. God is at the start of everything but is also the throbbing heartbeat in everything. In another creation song, the psalmist sings of God’s active involvement in the world God has made (Psalm 104). Isaiah looks forward to a time when God will do all this again, making anew heaven and new earth (Isaiah 65:17-25), and both John and Paul speak of Christ as the one who creates and sustains and brings about what Isaiah saw. The picture of the creating and sustaining God is a thread running through the whole Bible story.

Reflection

Spend a few moments thinking about what stands out for you from the Bible reading. This idea may help.

Back to school, back to work, subdued and short of cash, or raring to go, looking for new beginnings?

We may be looking for new targets, or working on those set by others. Maybe it is, for you, ‘Veganuary’ or ‘Dry January’. Maybe we could devise our own name for January, an expression of our own new year targets. What might we call it if we focus on God’s targets? During Epiphany, we may think about the Magi looking for the new thing that is being revealed to them. Perhaps we should be doing the same; looking for new things that God is seeking to show us. And if our experience is anything like that of the Magi, the answers may be found in unexpected places.

**Questions for reflection**



**Questions**

* If you made a snow globe, what would you put in it?
* If you could shake the world and start over, what would you want to see emerge?
* What can you do to help your vision take a step towards reality?

## Prayer

Adapt to your local context.

**A prayer of thanksgiving**

All powerful God, you shake us out of complacency,  
you remind us of the meaning of service,  
you restore our relationship with you and others,  
you empower us with your spirit and bless us with your grace,  
you speak your words of reassurance over us.  
Thank you for each new day, each new beginning,  
and each touch of your grace in our lives.  
**Amen.**

## **A prayer to end the Bible study**

Help us to look for you, Lord, around every corner,  
in every place and at every time.  
Help us to be in tune with new things you are doing,  
and help us to join in.   
**Amen.**

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