

# Coach House Church

# BEACONS

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## REFLECTIONS

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7TH JUNE 2021

I love kayaking on the sea or on a lake, especially when the water is dead flat. It's like a mirror and I can see the sky and surrounding landscape reflected on the surface. Recently we've enjoyed wonderful sunny weather with blue skies which has been a welcome surprise after the wet, wet May we experienced.

You may have seen beautiful reflections when you've walked around the Lake District, seeing the trees and fells perfectly replicated on the surface of the lake. It makes you appreciate the creation around you as you look at it from a different perspective, not having to crane upwards but looking straight ahead.

As I was kayaking, I could see the clouds reflected in the water and it reminded me of a verse in the bible:

Colossians 1:15 Christ is the visible image of the invisible God.

The clouds and vapour trails high up are far out of reach but are down on earth as a perfect copy. This verse talks about Jesus being the reflection of Almighty God. God is far off, out of reach but becomes visible to us on earth in human form.

When the people of Israel were wandering around the desert wilderness they became disillusioned. They forgot what they had escaped from and the promises that God had made for their future. They decided to create an image of their own. What they perceived as a distant God, they wanted to be visible and close, so they decided to make a golden statue, an image, a representation. No matter how much they tried, no single image could be reflective of the whole character of God. What they were worshipping was not a reflection of God at all, it was a replacement. The image was created by them, by human hands.

In fact, they had been commanded not to make an idol or image in Exodus 20:4. And later, in Leviticus 19:4, it says: Do not put your trust in idols or make metal image of gods for yourselves. I am the Lord your God.

Jesus, on the other hand, as the image of the invisible God, is not created as it tells us in John 1:2

He existed in the beginning with God. God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him.

Although Jesus is the image of God on earth, we are told in Colossians 1:19 that Jesus is also fully God. He is not just a perfect reflection, he also has the full authenticity of the original. That is the mystery of the trinity – 3 aspects of a pure and powerful Holy God, all interlinked.

Moses experienced a part of God's power when he saw the burning bush. In Exodus 3:5 God tells Moses not to approach any nearer, then to take off his sandals because he is standing on holy ground in the very presence of God. In verse 6 it tells us: Even when Moses heard God speaking to him, he covered his face because he was afraid to look at God directly. Later in Exodus 33, Moses asked God to demonstrate his presence again. In verse 18, he asks God: show me your glorious presence. In the verses prior to this, we find that Moses is asking this because he wants everyone to know that the people of Israel have the protection of God with them, that they are being led to the new land promised to them. It was something of a confidence booster, to know that God was supporting and guiding Moses as he led the people.

**Exodus 33:19-23** <sup>19</sup> The Lord replied, "I will make all my goodness pass before you, and I will call out my name, Yahweh,<sup>[c]</sup> before you. For I will show mercy to anyone I choose, and I will show compassion to anyone I choose. <sup>20</sup> But you may not look directly at my face, for no one may see me and live." <sup>21</sup> The Lord continued, "Look, stand near me on this rock. <sup>22</sup> As my glorious presence passes by, I will hide you in the crevice of the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. <sup>23</sup> Then I will remove my hand and let you see me from behind. But my face will not be seen."

Moses hid in the rock and experienced God passing by. Even so, he had to hide his face and could not look directly at God. But the amazing thing was that Moses was covered with God's hand and actually saw part of God – not just an image. What a confidence boost and what a privilege.

In Hebrews 11:27 we are told that Moses kept on going through the wilderness years because he kept his eyes on the one who is invisible.

Later in verse 29 it explains that Moses earned a good reputation because of his faith. He was not perfect by any means but his faith and trust in God earned him righteousness, a right standing in God's eyes.

Just like Moses and others mentioned in the Old Testament, the pure power of God is too much for us to handle. In our usual sinful state, we have no chance of coming within any distance of a Holy God so we need access in a different way. The bible tells us that nothing except perfection enters heaven.

Hebrews chapter 12 explains how the old system, at the time of Moses and the Israelites, relied on the priest offering sacrifices for sins, asking for forgiveness continually. However, the sacrifices had to be offered over again. The good news of the New Testament which retells Jesus' time on earth, is that Jesus became the acceptable sacrifice that only needed to be offered once. We are told that Jesus is the only way to see God and to enter heaven. Moreover we have the benefit of God's power through his holy spirit living in us, to bring comfort, peace and strength. We don't have to wait to enter heaven itself before we experience the power of God. By asking for forgiveness, believing in Jesus and his sacrifice, we can ask for God to be with us every day.

### **Hebrews 10:19-22**

**19** And so, dear brothers and sisters,<sup>[f]</sup> we can boldly enter heaven's Most Holy Place because of the blood of Jesus. **20** By his death,<sup>[g]</sup> Jesus opened a new and life-giving way through the curtain into the Most Holy Place. **21** And since we have a great High Priest who rules over God's house, **22** let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting him. For our guilty consciences have been sprinkled with Christ's blood to make us clean, and our bodies have been washed with pure water.

When you see the sky, clouds or hills and trees reflected in lakes, puddles or the sea, just remember Jesus, God's son. The distant God that was too powerful to be near us, is now accessible and with us.



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