

# God Is Doing a New Thing

by Peter Maiden

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*Expecting new things from God is a crucial aspect of the Christian life, as it allows us to experience His renewal and creation in our lives and in our ministry.*

**Duration:** 32:32

**Scripture:** Isaiah 43:14, Isaiah 43:16-18

**Topics:** "New Thing"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of remembering the Lord's greatness and power in our lives. He starts by reminding the audience of God's intervention at the Red Sea, where He saved Israel and destroyed the Egyptians. The speaker then highlights the need to recognize and acknowledge the Lordship of God, especially during difficult times. He encourages the audience to reflect on their spiritual growth and the recent experiences of God's activity in their lives. The sermon emphasizes the continuous work of God as a Creator and His promise of continual change and transformation in our lives.

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## Transcript

Let's read together from the book of Isaiah. Our subject tonight is God is doing a new thing. Isaiah chapter 43, commencing to read at verse 14.

Isaiah 43, verse 14. This is what the Lord says, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, for your sake I will send to Babylon and bring down as fugitives all the Babylonians in the ships in which they took pride. I am the Lord, your Holy One, Israel's Creator, your King.

This is what the Lord says, he who made a way through the sea, a path through the mighty waters, who drew out the chariots and horses, the army and reinforcements together, and they lay there never to rise again, extinguished, snuffed out like a wick. Forget the former things. Do not dwell on the past.

See, I am doing a new thing. Now it springs up. Do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland.

The wild animals honor me, the jackals and the owls, because I provide water in the desert and streams in the wasteland to give drink to my people, my chosen, the people I formed for myself, that they may proclaim my praise. And then to the 104th Psalm. Psalm 104.

Our God is a creator, isn't he? At the beginning of time we're told that God created for six days, and then on the seventh day he rested from his work. But those six days were not the sum and total of God's creative activity. And here in Psalm 104, you have a magnificent, majestic tribute to the overall creatorial work and power of Almighty God.

I want you to look first at verses five to nine, and notice the past tense in this section. For example, verse five, he set the earth on its foundations. Or verse seven, at your rebuke the waters fled.

Or verse nine, you set a boundary, and so on. But in the rest of the psalm, it's the present tense which predominates. Look, for example, at verse 10, he makes springs pour water into the ravines.

Or verse 14, he makes grass grow for the cattle. But it's the 30th verse that I want us to think about for a few minutes this evening. Here, the psalmist is speaking of the many living creatures which God makes.

And he writes, when you send your spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth. So by this majestic, creatorial power, God is constantly renewing the face of our earth. Now sometimes, this is done in a most dramatic way.

Think back to the days of the flood. By that flood, the earth was stripped of almost all of its life. And yet that majestic, creative power of God so quickly and fully filled the desolate world.

And we see something similar every year, don't we? The miraculous process is already well on its way again this year. Through the winter months, the earth, as the old hymn puts it, seems worn and old. But then spring comes and new life bursts forth.

Of course, we take it for granted. But this is our God once again renewing the face of the earth. And the scriptures tell us that in the future, we will see again in a dramatic way this renewing work of the Almighty.

The first chapter of Hebrews states that although our God is constantly renewing the heavens and the earth, they are still gradually growing old. And in verse 11 of Hebrews 1, the writer says, they will perish. One day, the heavens and this earth will perish.

He goes on to say, they're going to wear out. And just like a garment, they'll be rolled up. They're too old for any further use.

Not even Charlie in O.M. would accept them. The world is going to be rolled up just like an old garment, no further use for it. And God's eternal son, says the writer, is going to roll up the heavens and the earth.

And the writer says, they will be changed. Now, Peter writes about this in 2 Peter 3 and verse 13. He says, in keeping with God's promise, we are looking forward, and I hope you are too, to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

So the God who renewed the face of the earth so dramatically after the flood is going to do it again one day. Through his eternal son, he's going to roll up the present heavens and earth. And he's going to remake, he's going to give us a new heaven and a new earth.

Now, the marvelous thing is that the apostle John has already seen those days, the days of the new heaven and the new earth. He saw them by revelation. And the wonderful thing is, he wrote down a description of what he saw.

Let me read it to you from Revelation 21. It certainly makes thrilling reading. I've only got time to read the first five verses to you.

This is what John saw by revelation. I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away and there was no longer any sea. I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from out of heaven, from God, prepared as a bride, beautifully dressed for her husband.

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, now the dwelling of God is with men and he will live with them. They will be his people and God himself will be with them. He'll be their God.

He'll wipe away every tear from their eyes. There's going to be no more death, mourning, crying, or pain because the old order of things has passed away. And he who was seated on the throne said, I am making everything new.

Now, doesn't the adrenaline begin to rise a little as you hear those words? The book of Revelation isn't some kind of religious science fiction book. The eternal God was able to take John out of the normal restrictions of time. And he was able to show him right there and then on the island of Patmos, what one day will certainly be your experience and mine.

Now, I want to ask you a question. And I'm going to ask you the question again and again in the next 30 minutes. This is the question.

Do you have a sense of expectancy in your heart as you hear about this work of God? Do you expect that our creator God will actually do this for you and for me one day? That's the area that I want to challenge us all in tonight. What do we expect from our creator God? Our God who loves to make things new. Our God who loves to renew and loves to refresh.

And so my first point, if you're taking notes, would be this. Expect new things from God in your life and in your ministry because that is the very nature of God. He's a God of renewal.

He's a God of creation. But then secondly, I would encourage you to expect new things, not only because of his nature, but because of his promise. Paul, for example, assures us in 2 Corinthians 3 and verse 18 that a process is going on continually in our lives as the children of God.

Here's his description of that process. We are being transformed into Christ's likeness with ever increasing glory. Or as some of the modern translations have it, we're being transformed from one degree of splendor to another.

Paul also assured the Philippians that he was confident that God who had begun a good work in us will carry it on to completion until the day of Jesus Christ. Now these verses refer to a continual process of change in our lives. And the biblical illustrations of the Christian life underline that continual process of change.

For example, we're described in the Bible as plants in the Lord's field, constantly reaching upwards for the light. We're told that we're born into the family of God and in that family there are babes, there are little children, there are young men and women, and there are fathers in Christ. We're described as pilgrims or warriors or wrestlers and so on.

All of those descriptions are active descriptions. They are talking of progress and of change. And when you look at the exhortations which we have in the Bible, it's exactly the same.

We're told to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ. We're told to add to our faith. We're told to go on to know the Lord and so on.

All of these things remind me of the epitaph of a Swiss mountain guy. High up on one of the Alpine hills, I'm told, there's this simple epitaph, he died climbing. He died climbing.

And you know the Bible says that should be true of me. It says it should be true of you as well. There must be this continual process of change from one degree of splendor to the next until we see the risen Christ face to face.

Now my question is this, is that happening in my life? Is that happening in your life? Continual change. How many of you were here last year? Raise your hand. Well that's quite interesting, more than I expected.

Very good to look back for one year. Just do a little spiritual check. Think back to where you were in your walk with the Lord 12 months ago.

Think back to your spiritual desire and capacity then and ask yourself, has that God promised continual process of change from one degree of glory to the next actually been happening in your life and in mine? Or look at it in another way. Imagine that I called on you right now to come up onto this platform and give a testimony of what God has done in your life. I wonder how recent the experiences you would relate to us would be.

Would they be today's experience? Have you noticed, have you recognized the God who is always creating, always moving on? Have you recognized his activity in your life today? Do you recognize it this week? Or do you have to go back a year? Or do you in fact have to go back to your conversion to really relate an experience with the God of creation, the God of renewal in your own life? Well what's the alternative to this continual process? Quite simply, stagnation or regression. And it's so easy to slip, isn't it, into routine Christianity. I think some of you may well be here this weekend because you know your faith has become no more than a routine matter, and yet you know there should be more.

And to you particularly, I believe God wants to say this weekend, I want to do a new thing in your life. I want to begin the next part of that process of transformation into the likeness of our risen Savior. It's also possible to slip into merely the routine in our Christian ministry and leadership.

What we are doing today, we were doing yesterday in our Christian unions and in our churches and in our youth fellowships, and we'll be doing now and forever, world without end. Amen. I believe God wants to send many of us back from this weekend with a new sense of expectancy ringing in our hearts of what our Creator God can and will do.

He wants to send us back with the desire not just to crank the machine of our ministry, but he wants to send us back looking for God to intervene, looking for God to work in a new way. And so I go back, as I promised, to my challenge. Is this your expectation? Is it my expectation when I think of God? Do I see him as a God who loves to do new things? The God who is constantly creating? The God who desires that constant process to continue in my life, changing me from one degree of glory to the next? Well, if that's your expectation, I want you now to look with me at our text for this weekend.

You've seen it blazoned over the brochure that you're sent, and it's found in Isaiah chapter 43. We read it there in verses 18 and 19, and I'd like you to turn again to that text. Isaiah 43, 18 and 19.

These words, do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing. Now, the children of Israel were in exile in Babylon, and they'd been there for many, many years.

Faith and hope were at a very, very low ebb in the nation. They wondered if their situation would ever change. And I'm sure all kinds of questions were arising in their minds.

Could God really deliver them? And if he could, had he chosen not to? Had he deserted them? I wonder if you ever find yourself asking similar questions in your own life. Maybe you've longed for change in your life for some time. And yet, though you've had some good days, some memorable experiences, nothing really seems to change for you.

Well, I want you to look with me at how God deals with Israel in the depression of their exile. Think of them, they've been there for years, and they're wondering, will it ever change? Let's see how God deals with them. First, look at how God introduces himself to Israel.

Look at verse 14. This is what the Lord says, your Redeemer. There's the first part of his introduction.

I am the Lord, your Redeemer. It's so easy, isn't it, to forget the Lordship of God, particularly in times of difficulty. Two weeks ago, I stood in the bathroom with my son.

He'd been complaining of a sore leg, and we'd been to the doctor, and he'd given him some painkillers and told him to have a bath. So he got in the bath, and he got out, and he was dressing, and he called me, and he said, look, Dad, look at my leg. And almost before my eyes, I'm sure I'm exaggerating, because you tend to exaggerate these things, but in a very short time, his leg just went to about one and a half times its normal size, a blood clot caught in a main artery in the leg.

And I rushed him to hospital myself. And you can imagine the panic, the fear, both in him and in myself. And as I was driving that car, I had to remind myself of the Lordship of God.

He is the sovereign. He is the Lord. He is in control.

Now, the first time the Israelites had heard this thrilling title, the Lord, was when they were slaves in Egypt. Hundreds of years of slavery were behind them. And once again, I'm sure they were asking, will it ever change? And God appeared to Moses.

You read about it in Exodus 6. You don't need to turn to it. This is verse 2. God said to Moses, I am the Lord. I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob as God Almighty, as El Shaddai.

But by my name, the Lord, I did not make myself known to them. This was the first time they had recognized God as the Lord. Now, the significance of the title is seen three chapters earlier.

God is calling Moses to the task of being the deliverer of his people. And he's not very keen. He's got a lot of doubts and he's got a lot of questions.

One of them isn't at all unreasonable. Verse 13 of chapter 3, what if the people ask the name of the God who sent me? Not an unreasonable question. You're going to a nation which is in opposition to your own nation, and you're saying to the people of the nation, God has sent me.

What if they ask the name of the God who has sent me? And then in one of the most magnificent moments of Israel's history, God says to Moses, say to the Israelites, I am has sent me to you. God goes on in verse 15 to say to the Israelites, say, the Lord, the God of your fathers has sent me. And this is the name which I am to be known by forever.

The name which I am to be remembered by from generation to generation. And so this title, the Lord, had come to mean two things in particular to the Israelites. It spoke to them of God's eternity, the eternal I am, and it spoke of God's covenant from one generation to another.

This is the name by which I am to be known. Now those were two very important things to remind Israel of in this time of exile. The exile may have been long, but he is the eternal God.

He is the Lord. A day with him is like a thousand years. And he's the God who parted the Red Sea.

He's the God who brought about that release from Egypt. He's the eternal one, and his power is not diminished by time. But he's not just the Lord.

He reveals a little more in verse 14. I am the Lord, your Redeemer. Redemption, you see, is God's business.

Delivering people from all forms of slavery is God's divine prerogative, and it is his gracious work. But there's even more still in verse 14. I'm the Lord, your Redeemer.

I'm the Holy One of Israel. Now we've seen that he's unchanging, he's eternal, but he's also the Holy One. He's morally totally consistent and true.

His word can be trusted. It will never be changed. His promises are sure.

Every word of them will be made good. You know, as Isaiah brought these words of prophecy to Israel, I can imagine the hearts of the people leaping within them as they remembered the many promises of God. Maybe their minds went right back to that promise to Abraham to make them a great nation, and that all the nations of the world would be blessed through them.

Well, it was hardly that way as they languished in exile, was it? No one could argue that at that time all the nations on earth were being blessed through Israel, and yet their God was the Holy One. His word was true, and you almost sense the light beginning to dawn in Israel. God must be going to do a new thing.

He is committed by his promise. He will not leave us as we are. But there's more.

He's not just the Lord, the Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, because in verse 16 he continues his introduction. He's Israel's creator. God made Israel, didn't he? Remember his words to Abraham, I will make you into a great nation.

Could not the God who made them deliver them? Could he not remake them into a great nation once again? Haven't we just recognized that that's his constant activity, renewing, remaking. That's what God's about. And then finally, as God introduces himself to Israel, he says, I am your king, your king.

There in verse 16, he has chosen to own them as his people, chosen to preside amongst them. Babylon might appear to have authority over Israel, but their king still controls, and Babylon's authority is only by his permission. What an introduction to a depressed, exiled nation, probably asking themselves, can

anything ever change? And God says, I'm the Lord.

I'm eternal, and I'm in covenant relationship with you. I'm the Holy One. You can trust every word of my promise.

And I'm your creator. I made you, can't I remake you into a great nation? And am I not your king? Have I not chosen you to be my people and to preside amongst you? Must have been thrilling for them to hear this. But I hope it's equally thrilling to you tonight, because this is our God.

He has entered into this covenant relationship with us. And I ask you again, what do you expect from him? What do you think such a God might do in your life and in your ministry this weekend? Well, after introducing himself to Israel, he reminds them of how they've experienced his greatness and his power in the past. Look very briefly at verses 16 and 17.

He reminds them of God's intervention of the Red Sea, how he saved Israel and destroyed the Egyptians. It's a good thing, isn't it, to look back. A good thing to be reminded of the remarkable interventions of God in history and in our own lives.

Such memories can be an enormous encouragement and a great stimulus in the present. But that brings us to our text. While it's a good thing to look back, according to verse 18, it is not a good thing to dwell on the past.

Things ain't what they used to be can so easily become the cry of many Christians. We remember the good old days and we question whether things can ever be as they are when we first met with God, or when our Christian union was really going forward, or when that church that we're a member of was just beginning to grow and just beginning to emerge. They were great days.

We think back and that's good, it's good to be encouraged by that, but to dwell on such things, according to Isaiah, is wrong. There's a very interesting couple of verses in Jeremiah chapter 16. Again, don't turn to them, just let me read them to you.

14 and 15 of Jeremiah 16. The days are coming, declares the Lord, when men will no longer say, as surely as the Lord lives, who brought the Israelites up out of Egypt, but they will say, as surely as the Lord lives, who brought the Israelites up out of the land of the north, and out of all the countries where he had banished them. That must have been a great thing for Israel to hear.

God is saying, you Israelites, you're always talking about the great things which I did when I brought you up out of Egypt. You're always dwelling on that. You're always talking about that, but there's a day coming when you won't talk about that any longer, because I am about to do such great things amongst you, that those are the things you'll be talking about tomorrow.

You know, there's a great danger, even in a movement like OM, to dwell on the past. It's great to hear the stories of the early days of OM. I wasn't around, I'm far too young, but if you talk to Peter Conlon or Nigel Lee, they were around right at the very beginning of OM.

Incredible things which took place in the early days, and incredible is the word, I'm glad I wasn't around, really. But it is amazing to hear of the things God did in getting OM started. But are we just going to become a movement whose history is an encouragement to others? Or are we expecting, in OM, great things today? How about you? Is your life history just going to be an encouragement to others? Are you

expecting God to do something fresh, new today? Because we can ask the question about our own lives, we can ask the question about our own ministry.

You'll all have heard of the late David Watson. When he went to York, he went originally to a church called St. Cuthbert's. And I heard of great things which were happening at St. Cuthbert's, and I'm a member of a church in Carlisle, and I've been longing for great things to happen there for many years.

And I was getting married, and I was choosing a place to go on my honeymoon, and I suggested to my wife that the Yorkshire Dales, fairly near York, were beautiful, and she agreed. And so we went to the Yorkshire Dales, fairly near York, and on the Saturday I suggested, let's go and see what's happening at St. Cuthbert's. We've heard these stories, now let's go and check it out.

Is there some secret that we can introduce in Carlisle, and we'll see great things there as well? And we went about 6.10, and we just got in on the back row, and there were a couple of old ladies on the row just in front of us. You know, as the service went through, it was very, very normal. I remember David preaching a five-point sermon.

It was the five Ps, you know, peace, power. It was very, very normal and usual. The only abnormal thing in the whole of the service were these two old ladies in the row in front.

About 6.20, I'll never forget it, always remembered it, one old lady turned to the next, she said, I wonder what God's gonna do tonight. I wonder what God's going to do tonight. I have never felt in any meeting such a sense of expectancy of God.

You know, if God hadn't worked that night, and he did, but if he hadn't, those old ladies would have gone home confused and disappointed. The blessings of last week were not adequate. They were expecting God to move that night.

I ask you again, are you expecting something from God this weekend? Are you looking for it? Are you listening for it? If not, I don't really think you've understood God, because his very nature is to do new things. He's the creator God, consistently creating, constantly renewing, and he has promised to bring to completion that constant process which should be going in your life from one degree of glory to the next. So don't dwell on the past.

Good to be encouraged by it, but don't dwell on the past. Look to your Lord, your Redeemer, your King, your Creator, the Holy One who has made promises to you. His miracles did not cease at the Red Sea.

They did not cease last year. The days are coming when men will no longer say, as surely as the Lord lives who brought the Israelites up out of Egypt, I wonder if they will no longer be saying that because of what he's going to do in your life, or in my life, this weekend in Aston University. Are you expecting it? Are you looking for it? Our Creator God is going to do a new thing.

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