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## Nothing New Under The Sun

By John Edwards

Solomon declared, “The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us” (Eccl. 1:9-10).  
These are not new:

**Pandemics.** Though this Coronavirus may be novel, a new strain that has not been previously identified in humans, pandemics are not new. Widespread outbreaks of disease affecting entire continents and even the world have occurred throughout the course of history. The 1918 influenza pandemic was the most severe pandemic in recent history. It is estimated that about 500 million people or one-third of the world’s population became infected with this virus. The number of deaths was estimated to be at least 50 million worldwide with about 675,000 occurring in the United States. During that time, businesses, churches, schools and theaters were closed, public gatherings were banned, people were quarantined and face masks were required to be worn. Indeed, “there is no new thing under the sun”.

**Deaths.** Death has been faced from the beginning. “Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him” (Gen. 4:8). Paul wrote, “For as in Adam all die...” (1 Cor. 15:22). Death is no respecter of age or persons. Some died “being old and full of days” (Gen. 35:29). Some died “from the womb” (Job 3:11). There have been mass casualties, where many have died. 14,700 died in Numbers 14:49. According to Numbers 21:46, “much people of Israel died.” Numbers 25:9 says, “And those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand.” Many died after experiencing infirmities of age as expressed in Ecclesiastes 12:1-7. It is said of Moses, “when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated” (Dt. 34:7). Children buried their parents (Gen. 50:14) and parents buried their children (2 Sam. 18:33). Families died together (1 Chr. 10:6). “...it is appointed unto men once to die...” (Heb. 9:27). “Is there any thing”, with reference to death, “whereof it may be said, See, this is new?”

**Earthquakes.** When a major earthquake occurs somewhere in the world, some get to thinking the world is about to end, not considering there have been lots of earthquakes before! 1 Kings 19:11 says, “after the wind an earthquake...” There was a significant earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah referred to as “the earthquake” (Amos 1:1; Zech. 14:5). Matthew 27:54 records, “Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake...” Matthew 28:2, “And, behold, there was a great earthquake...” There was “...a great earthquake...” in Acts 16:26.

**Famines.** have been times of extreme drought and scarcity of food. The word “famine” occurs nearly 100 times in my Bible. In Genesis 12, “Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was grievous in the land” (v. 10). Genesis 26:1 says, “And there was a famine in the land...” In the days of Joseph, there were seven years of famine (Gen. 41:27) that consumed the land (Gen. 41:30), was over all the face of the earth (Gen. 41:56), so sore in all lands (Gen. 41:57). Ruth 1:1 reports, “Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land...” There was “a sore famine in Samaria” as described in 1 Kings 18:2. In Acts 11:28, Agabus “signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar.” We should remember, “The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be...”

**Floods.** Genesis 6-9 reports a worldwide flood that destroyed every living thing, with the exception of those in the ark God instructed Noah to make. In the Lord’s sermon on the mount, He mentioned, “And the rain descended, and the floods came...” (Mt. 7:25). So, there have been

lots of floods. And we expect there to be more, as long as the earth remains.

**Tragedies.** Tragedy is a stark reality of the human experience. Naomi was a woman who knew tragedy. Ten years in her life constituted a dramatic decade of change (Ruth 1). Famine in the land; sojourning in a foreign country; death of her husband; deaths of her two sons — this was bitter affliction for her! Unimaginable tragedy came upon Job in a day, which you can read about in Job 1:13-19. Have you suffered like he did? Yet both of these accounts show God bringing triumph out of tragedy. Amazing!

**Wars.** Folks get excited every time a war breaks out, thinking the world is about to end. There have been countless conflicts and wars without number. It's a long list of wars just of American involvement from colonial times to the present. The Bible mentions lots of "battles" (1 Samuel 8:20) and "wars" (1 Chr. 22:8).

Such are but an expression of our need for God, point out the uncertainty of life and the constant need to be right with God. History has a way of repeating itself. The present pandemic is a reminder, "no new thing under the sun". We are 20 years into this century and, for many, these have been years of peace and prosperity. Yet, in the last century, there was World War I (1914-1918), the influenza pandemic (1918-1919), the Great Depression (1929-1939) and World War II (1939-1945). It's been said, "God hath not promised skies always blue, Flower strewn pathways all our lives through; God hath not promised sun without rain, joy without sorrow, peace without pain." God is in control.

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