

Thought for the Day 20th July - John Reed

Read Matthew 24:32-44

The other day, Captain Mark Kelly flew his last flight on a Boeing 747, the plane we always called the Jumbo Jet, otherwise known as the Queen of the Skies.¹ This farewell joy flight was a fitting farewell for both pilot and plane as they retired. Captain Kelly is retiring after 36 years, and so too Qantas is retiring the Boeing 747.

The 747 has been the background to my life. It launched in 1969, when I was four years old. When my family moved back from England to Kenya in 1970, it was a 747 that took us. Every time we travelled back to the UK on furlough, you could be sure it would be a 747 that you got on (hopefully a British Airways one, because they handed out good stuff for the kids: playing cards, colouring books, mini mastermind games, which I've still got!). When, as a 12-year-old, I started at boarding school in England, it was a 747 that carried me home to Kenya every school holiday. When we moved back to the UK, and then soon after to Australia, it was always a 747 that carried us.

She rightly bore the title "Queen of Skies," because nothing challenged her rule in international travel. Until, in recent years, she began to age and rivals such as the Airbus A320 and A350 emerged. That, along with an increased interest in smaller medium-sized planes such as the 787, rang the death-knell for the grand old lady of the skies.

It's hard to see something that has been a fixture throughout your life disappear. There was a time when it would have been unimaginable that anything would take the place of the Jumbo. But this is the reality of life. Everything passes away. Our grandparents don't live forever. Empires rise and fall. One day, hopefully, we will look back on COVID-19 as a thing of the last.

But some things stand forever. Jesus says here in verse 35: "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away." John says in 1 John 2:17: "the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever." And Hebrews 1:10-12, citing Psalm 102, says of Jesus:

"You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning,
and the heavens are the work of your hands;
they will perish, but you remain;
they will all wear out like a garment,
like a robe you will roll them up,
like a garment they will be changed.
But you are the same,
and your years will have no end."

All things wither and fade, grow old and pass away. But not Jesus. And not his word. And not those who belong to him. So, the most important thing in life is to make sure we fall into that category.

¹ <https://www.traveller.com.au/qantas-boeing-747-jumbo-jet-retirement-veteran-pilot-says-goodbye-to-queen-of-the-skies-h1pf11>