



God saw that it was **BUEN**

God Saw that It was Good

Sky

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Have you ever played the game on a lazy, summer afternoon? You know, the one where you look up, watching the ever-changing vista of the clouds that float, twist, turn, billow, appear and fade away. Dreaming, imagining shapes among the clouds. I wonder what did you see? What did you perceive?

What do you see here in this cloud scape? Among the shapes of light and darkness. A swan, flying high, neck elongated, wings unfurled. Perhaps under it, an ornamental goldfish swimming gracefully and sedately across the sky. Or a face. Dark eyebrows, with a bulbous nose and blazing eyes looking down. And the mouth beneath; is that a smile or a frown?

What do you see? What do you perceive?

Do you see God?

Perhaps not, for as one of the songs of praise in the Bible says, “[God] makes darkness his covering around him, his canopy thick clouds dark with water.” (Ps 18v112) Clouds and hiddenness are constant companions in the Bible’s story. From the cloud that enveloped Moses as he met God on Mount Sinai. To the cloud that hid the risen Jesus as he ascended to heaven.

The hiddenness of clouds speak of the utter otherness of God. Otherness that evokes fear, an emotion can be part of wonder. Edvard Munch, self-portrayed, open-mouthed angst in his painting *The Scream* commented in his journal that as he saw a blood red sky “he felt a scream pass through nature”. Wonder, leaving us feeling small, isolated, as the lone tree

stands below the towering sky? Divine hiddenness revealed leaving us wanting hiddenness before the immensity of the one who shapes the sky. Or, longing for connection with the one holding it all together; holding on to us?

In shaping the clouds by our imagination is there an invitation too? To share in the playfulness of God found within creation. Delighting with the creator over that which he sees as good.

This is a never-ending game. God asks Job, “Who has wisdom to number the clouds?” Even today, with our scientific vision of creation provided by satellites orbiting far about the cloud tops, we struggle to know how much of the Earth is covered by clouds. Maybe sixty. Maybe seventy percent? Yet that has not stopped us naming their variety. From fluffy cumulus, supplying cooling shade on a summer day. To cumulonimbus, towering skyscrapers in the sky, white, grey and darkness, with lashing rain falling beneath to sweep the land. Flat stratus, moving slowly, relentlessly, gently watering the fields. Mackerel sky, rolling cells of air moving upwards and downwards breaking up flat sheets into hexagonal mosaics, tinged red by the setting sun. Angel wings of icy, wispy cirrus spreading, embracing village, towns, cities.

Yet, while we name them, we can never exhaust the infinite variety that the simple combination of flowing air, water and ice create. As Jesus said, “the wind blows where it chooses” and so it is with the Spirit of God. Hovering over the waters in the beginning of creation. Ever bringing forth and sustaining the glorious variety of all things as God “send[s] forth [the] Spirit” (Ps 104v30) ever creating clouds of inexhaustible variety. And our lives, in all their different and vitality, each reflecting an image of the one through whom and for whom “all things have been created” (Col 1v16).

Our scientific vision of the world enables us to see clouds as part of the world’s water cycle, connecting oceans, rivers and streams, ice sheets and snow fields, the land and air. Even the ancients caught a glimpse of this, one of Job’s challenges speaking of God “drawing up the drops of water, he distils his mist in rain, which the skies pour down and drop upon mortals abundantly.” (Job 36v27-28).

“In all things God works for good.” (Rom 8v28). Water makes up less than one hundredth of the air we breathe. Clouds, less than a thousandth. Yet, together they trap the heat of the sun, warming our world from a frozen snow ball to one teeming with the community of life, of which we are a part. In which, created in the image of God, we play our part. Before the clouds, another of the Bible’s songs of praise declares “Your steadfast love, O Lord, extends to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds.” (Ps 36v5).

Look up. Look to the clouds. What do you see?

Fear. Yet, faithfulness, towering about us beyond our imagining. The solidity of the faithful love of God among the tenuous, transience of clouds. Faithfulness, to be trusted among the tenuous, transience of our lives.