

COMMON RULE: (1) GOD AND US

Paragraph 8 (line 1 – 3): “Some days the distance between us and God may seem a very long way. But this is our perception, not God’s. Each new moment brings and invitation to renew our relationship with God.”

The year is 2020 and a global pandemic of unequalled proportion has spread across the world. How many times might it seem as though God, our Creator, has abandoned us? Do we wonder if perhaps God is not hearing our cries for some type of salvation from the loss of lives, jobs, and income? Isolated in our homes, and not permitted to attend the buildings we have come to call church, has depression and anxiety left us feeling more alone than ever? Why is it that in times of trouble, God feels so far away? Where is God today?

When I was a small child, I was taught that God is in the heavens, and indeed Psalms 115:3 states: “*Our God is in heaven, whatever he wills he does.*” But even as a child I connected to a different truth. I found myself asking, “Why is God so far away, and if he is, then why is it that I feel him deep inside my own being?” It took a lifetime to answer this question today, and the timing could not be better.

The book of Genesis states that, “In the beginning... the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a *wind [ruach]* from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light.” The Gospel of John then returns to this creation theme and takes it one step further.

John 1:1-4 “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.*”

From the very beginning we are told, there was God, there was the Word who would later be made flesh (John 1:14), and there was wind or spirit. The Hebrew word used in Genesis to describe wind is ‘*ruach*’, meaning *spirit* or *breath*. Thus, the holy Triune was present from the beginning. It has always been and will continue to be beyond time as we know it. The Holy Triune is God, three in one, Creator, Holy Spirit, Sacred Word. And, as wonderful as it is to know this, the better news is that from this simple set of lines we can start to answer that question, “Where is God?”

***Genesis 2:7** "... then the Lord God formed man from the dust on the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the **breath of life**; and the man became a living being."*

† † †

***John 20:22** "When [Jesus] had said this, he **breathed** on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."*

God is the Creator, but he spoke a Word to create, while his Spirit was used to give life. Indeed, it is the very Spirit of God that was breathed into my lungs to ignite that flame that is my soul. God is both in the heavens and on earth within me and within you. You cannot escape God's presence, because without his breath, you would not be alive here today. But Jesus goes and doubles us up on this assurance by breathing the Holy Spirit onto us yet again in order that we be saved by His grace. God will never turn away from us because his breath was like a promise to always be our light within the darkness. Our Creator is committed to this journey even when we have doubts or simply forget.

So then, "*If God is for us...*" (*Roman 8:31*) and indeed within us, we need not ever worry that we are standing alone, not even during a pandemic. Our Creator wants to have a relationship with us. All we need do is stop, breathe, and remember where that breath comes from. If we do not know God yet, then this may be the time to sit in silence and listen for the awesomeness of a God who gives us life as well as the light of our Savior Jesus Christ.

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