

May 21, 2023  
Psalm 68

Clouds can mean many things. When we look at them, we can see a beautiful day. We might look at them and see playful shapes, like fish or bunnies or dinosaurs. The clouds might tell us what the day will be; high, hazy clouds, tell us it will be dry and hot. Dark, low, rumbling clouds tell us there will be wind and rain. Clouds give us wonder and mystery. They give beautiful sunsets and destructive hail. They are above us and beyond us in so many ways.

The clouds are part of the heavens. In the pre-scientific world, what was above was the realm of the divine and what was below was the realm of the human. The sky was divine, beyond earthly understanding. For the writer of Psalm 68, the clouds belong to God. As late as the 1870s, no one knew what the sky was really like or what clouds were made of.

Those puffs of white in the air concealed as much as they revealed. And it was God's place to know those things anyway. The clouds were a mystery. They could bring good things or bad things. They were beyond the knowledge or control of any human.

And still, today, we cannot control the weather. We cannot change the clouds or move the clouds or eliminate the clouds. We know that they are made of moisture vapor; that they are part of a system of evaporation and humidity and are moved by the jet streams that encircle the earth.

We know WHAT clouds are, now, and WHY they are. But we can't do anything about HOW they are. We can't postpone them for our picnic.

We can't stop the great clouds bringing hurricanes or blizzards. Clouds are still above us and beyond us. With all the other things that are divine.

So as we consider the clouds today, first, let us be amazed by them. Let us admire their beauty, their being, their existence. For the way they float. For the way they allow themselves to be carried by the wind and go with the flow. Maybe we could be a little more like the clouds.

Trusting more in the goodness that carries us, relaxing into the wind of the Spirit that hold us.

Second, let us give thanks for what they shower upon us. For the rain they deliver that quenches our crops and fills our rivers. For the blessings they give from themselves to the world. Maybe we could be a little more like the clouds, blessing others around us with mercy and

compassion. Showering our families, our neighbors with patience and encouragement.

Third, let us be grateful for the protection of the clouds; for the way they shelter us and shade us. For the way they reflect the radiation of the sun and help form the precious bubble of our atmosphere. Maybe we could be a little more like the clouds; providing protection for the small and tender. Doing our part to care for this creation that we are part of.

Clouds are symbols of God's blessing and protection in the Bible. As part of the heavens, they are also part of God's power beyond and above.

Of God's judgment and God's demand that we live rightly and that we treat one another fairly. For those who think they are above others, that they are above the law or above respecting others, there is still God

above them. There is God watching, noticing, just there riding the clouds. Looking down on us and seeing what we do. Seeing how we

treat not just the great and mighty but the small and powerless. The

Psalm says that God looks down and sees the orphan and the widow.

God looks down and sees their struggle. God looks down and vows to

make things right, to rise up and protect them. Like a storm cloud, God

will wash away injustice. Like a raincloud, God will shower blessing on the least of these. Because the God who is up above cares about what is below, and will make things right for those at the bottom, on the underneath, who bear the weight of the world. Like a parent, the divine one up above will give those way below what they deserve, a home to live in and joy and delight. In the clouds, God's salvation will come. Unnoticed by some, unanticipated and unexpected, and then suddenly revealed.

Our God is above all things and over all things. Like the clouds, God is mystery and beauty and brings the rains of blessing. As the clouds offer shelter and protection, so God offers protection and a safe place to dwell. Like the clouds, God's justice is above all other justice and will make things right for the least and the last. Above us all, God is God.