

Title: The Spirit Hovers

Text: Genesis 1:2

Main Idea: God watches over and tends to His creation.

Division Statements:

1. God is present (v. 2).

It is possible that the God of verse 1 could have begun creation and then simply walked away or kept some respectable distance. But verse 2 immediately destroys any such thought for we see that God is right there, close by and “over the faces of the deep.” The word “faces” is very interesting. פָּנִים (panîm) always occurs in the plural in Hebrew, indicative of the fact that the face is a combination of a number of features. In the Hebrew mind, this word identifies something and reflects the attitudes and sentiments. As such, panîm when used of a person can be a substitute for the self or the feelings of the self. Moreover, the “face” describes not simply an exterior aspect of physiology, but rather the behavioral pattern, characteristics and quality. It is only natural that the face (panim) was considered to be extraordinarily revealing vis-a-vis a person’s emotions, moods, and dispositions.

What does this mean with regard to the phrase of Genesis 1:2 applied to inanimate matter. It simply means that God was ever present and intimately familiar with every possible aspect of His creation. We will learn later that God is the God who sees all things. He never slumbers or sleeps. Nothing is hidden from Him. He knows all the many faces of all things and all people.

2. God is personal (v. 2).

It is possible for God to be present and yet somewhat impersonally and emotionally distant. But verse 2 also dashes this thought, by showing us that God is not some impersonally distant and untouchable being, as in the god of deism. Neither is He some impersonal force that simply energizes creation. But the essential nature of God as an ever present **person** is seen wonderfully in the Hebrew word, “hovering.”

רָחַף (*rachaph*) is the word, and the verbal picture it gives is that of bird watching over its young. Indeed, Moses uses this exact same word in the song of Deuteronomy 32:11 to describe God’s character and relationship to Israel, “He kept him as the apple of His eye. As an eagle stirs up its nest, hovers over its young, spreading out its wings, taking them up, carrying them on its wings...” The personal nature of God is unfolded even more powerfully as the chapter unfolds, especially in the creation of man as a being “in His own image”, but here it begins on a beautiful note in the second verse of the Bible.

3. God is a provider (v. 2).

Beneath the hovering and unutterable beauty of the Spirit is darkness and chaos. But the darkness is as light to God (Ps. 139:12) and chaos is not His plan. The Hebrew words translated “without form, and void” (תְּהוֹ וְרֵבָהּ - tohu wabohu) were a common rhythmic expression in Hebrew to describe a place that was disordered, empty, and thus uninhabitable. God’s plan for the earth was the exact opposite as we see in the several days of creation as God designs, fills and provides for life on the earth. “Without form and void,” was simply a starting point, but it was not God’s aim or goal in creating, because God is a provider.

4. God is a caring God (v. 2)

This truth is a further implication of the participle “hovering” that appears in verse two and in the truth that the earth being without form and void was only the beginning of creation and not the end for which God was working. It is also implicit in the Spirit’s presence, closeness and concern for what He has created. Not only is God omnipotent, self-existent, self-sufficient and eternal as we saw in verse 1 of the Bible. Verse 2 brings home beautifully to us a wonder and joy beyond all others. This same omnipotent, utterly self-sufficient and eternal God is also a caring God.

Bridging From Text To Sermon

Textual Idea: God personally superintends and provides for what He has made preparing to give it order and the ability to sustain life.

Sermon Proposition: God watches over and tends to His creation.

Interrogative: How do we know that God watches over and cares for His creation?

Transition: The text reveals four attributes of God, that explain His interaction with His creation.

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