



Minutes With Messiah

Volume 2, Issue 10

Web site: www.geocities.com/riversidecoc

August 2001

God Had a Bad Day

Why is the second day of creation different than all the others? In reading Genesis 1, is there something special about the second day?

In a negative sense, there is something significant about this day. God leaves something out that happens on every other day. The passage says:

And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day. (Gen 1:6-8)

Think back to the account of creation. On every other day God “said” and God “saw.” The first time each day God said, “Let there be.” You see it in the passage above. But where is the “and God saw?” It’s not there. There is a “God made” and a “God called,” but not a “God saw.” What was it God saw on all other days that He didn’t see here? On every other day he saw that His work that day was good. The second day was not good.

This may be a strange thought to some. How could God do something that even He could not call good? And yet, here it stands out, because it is formulaic on all other days, that God created and didn’t call it a good day.

On day two God created the “firmament,” the expanse of the skies. There is nothing in that that seems to be less than good. But what did God do with that firmament? He used it to divide the waters from the waters. This is the first time that division came into the world. Granted that in the verses just previous God divided the light and the darkness (and the Hebrew word is the same). In that instance, though, He divided two different essences—light and dark, good and bad, righteousness and sin. In day two he divided the waters from the waters, the same essence. And He could not call that day good, because God does not like division.

God hasn’t changed. He still doesn’t like division. He doesn’t like anyone to cause division in

marriage. Jesus says that God hated this division from the beginning. “They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.”

God doesn’t like anyone to cause division in His church. “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you.” (1 Cor 1:10) God intended for there to be “one body” (Eph 6:4), and severe measures are to be taken to preserve it. “Mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.” (Rom 16:17)

More than anything, though, God hates that which separates between his creation and Himself—sin (Isa 59:2). Maybe this, more than anything else, is why he did not call the work of day two good. We are made in the image of God (Gen 1:27) and have the breath of God in us (Gen 2:7). We are of the same essence as God, as the waters above and below the firmament were of the same essence. When we depart from God, he uses the picture of divorce (Jer 3:1-2; Hos 2:2) to portray his disappointment. He hates being separated from us in the same way he hates divorce. Perhaps that explains the extreme measure of sending his son to die, so that we might be reconciled.

On day two of creation, God did not have a good day. Let’s not make it any worse for him. Let us work so that the division of the waters is the only division God has to worry about.

Contents

God Had a Bad Day	1
My Tailor is God	2
Climbing Mt. Fuji	4

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My Tailor is God

Many years ago, more than I care to admit, I worked in a men's clothing store. On those occasions when I sold a suit or a quality pair of slacks I had the occasion to try to find the best fit for the customer. This meant finding the right size and then pinning or marking it so that the tailors could make the appropriate changes in length or fit. The language of this process is part of our everyday speech. We talk of something suiting someone, or being fitting to the occasion. Well, the language is also part of God's scriptures as well.

As our spiritual tailor, God wants to find the best fit for us. This was true in the Garden of Eden. It is also true of our words and our lives.

Woman is a perfect fit

In the Garden, God saw man needed fitting. He tried several garments, but none could be altered properly. Therefore, God tailored the perfect fit from whole cloth, so to speak. The account is in Genesis 2:18-24:

And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fitting for him. And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to

Some buy their words "off the rack," and the fit is not beautiful.

the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found a helper fitting for him.

And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and

his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

Woman is a perfect fit for the man. Neither superior nor inferior, she is the only created thing that is in all ways appropriate to be man's mate, his companion, his helper. Of course, this lays several obligations on both the man and the woman.

One of those obligations is that the woman help the man. She is not to be too haughty to lend a hand. She is not to be too busy with her own things to come to man's aid when it is required. But this is a two-sided coin. The man is to require a helper, not a slave. Paul emphasized this balance as being a picture of Christ and the church. He even quoted Genesis 2 to make the point.

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. (Eph 5:22-31)

Another obligation is maintenance. What is the value of paying several hundred dollars for a tailored suit, and then spending a week gorging on fattening foods. The careful work of the tailor is soon spoiled by increased bulk. Instead one works to maintain the fit of the suit, not destroy it. So it is between a man and a woman. God tailored the fit. He wants us to maintain it. "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." (Matt 19:6) In essence, Jesus is saying, "once the fit is made, don't rip the seams."

Our words should fit

The tailor's ultimate goal is to make the customer look his best. God wants us to look our best. Unfortunately, some people choose to wear a suit that pulls here and sags there. They use their tongues to destroy the tailor's work.

Words of wisdom will wear well. In fact, God says they are specifically designed for our mouths. "Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply thine heart unto my knowledge. For it is a pleasant thing if thou keep them within thee; they shall withal be *fitted in thy lips*." (Prov 22:17-18, emphasis mine) He goes on to describe the beauty of such "fitted" words. "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver. As an earring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, so is a wise reprovcr upon an obedient ear." (Prov 25:11-12)

Some others, less wise, seem to buy their words "off the rack," and the fit is more destructive than beautiful. Paul described them as "whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters." (Rom 1:29-30) James speaks of the tongues of such men: "Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be." (Jas 3:9-10) Words that fit are fitting for use about God and man, not one or the other.

Our clothing should fit

As tempting as it would be, I am not going to talk about the appropriateness of our physical outer apparel. But there is a suit of spiritual clothing that has been tailored just for each of us.

The first part of it is one-size-fits-all, but still gives a tailored look. When we become a Christian we put this garment on, and it fits each of us perfectly. Paul talks about our garment in Galatians 3:27: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Jesus the Messiah is our basic garment, and like a tailored suit he makes us look good to God.

Nowadays we can walk into a store and buy a men's coat in small (36-38" chest), medium (40-42), large (44-46), or extra large (48-50). We can even expect a reasonable fit if we pick the right size. This is a luxury to our modern age. A Roman soldier who walked into the local armourer and asked for a cuirass (to protect his upper torso) and asked for it "to go" would be laughed out of the shop. Armor was fitted to the individual wearer like a Hong Kong suit, and took longer to prepare. So it is with our armor. God has this suit of armor for us, and he fits it to us.

Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of

righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit. (Eph 6:14-18)

Each aspect of our clothing, our armor, is both a fit and fitting. Each is appropriate to its purpose—fitting. But each is designed to fit each of us individually as well. Truth and righteousness are unchangeable, but we don't wear the belt of truth so loosely it falls off of us. Our righteousness is the

God fits prayer to each of us.

righteousness of our Savior, tailored to protect our vital organs fully. Peace fits our feet. As long as we are wearing those shoes we will not suffer blisters. Although the phrase "every man has his own faith" is usually used to justify any beliefs, it is true that we must each carry the shield of faith that fits us, that can easily be shifted to deflect the arrows coming at us. My salvation is fitted to me, as yours to you. Your sins are not necessarily my sins, so your forgiveness from God fits you and my forgiveness and salvation fits me, individually. And each has to have the sword fit his own hand. Not everyone can wield the sword the way I do. Not everyone is a preacher or Bible class teacher. But each must carry his own sword. Each sword is composed of the Spirit, the word of God, but we must fit it to our own hands. "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase." (1 Cor 3:6) And, public prayers notwithstanding, God fits prayer to each of us. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." (Rom 8:26)

The armor fits. But just as we must maintain our marriages to keep the fit, so we must also maintain our armor. We must keep it shining, and we must keep it in fit. The cost of the armor was so high, if we fail to maintain the fit, we can't pay for a new one.

I have seen tailoring jobs that looked like they came from Omar the Tentmaker. On the other hand, when God makes a fit, it is a perfect fit. When we go to the spiritual tailor, why settle for less than the best. After all, the price has already been paid. It was paid by the king, and the currency was blood.

Climbing Mt. Fuji

He who never climbs Mt. Fuji once is a fool.
He who climbs Mt. Fuji more than once is an
even greater fool.

Old Japanese proverb

Living practically in the shadow of Sandia Peak in Albuquerque, I regularly apply that proverb. I have climbed Mt. Fuji once. Clear to the top. 12,385 feet in altitude at sunrise, at age 28. That is why I use this proverb to justify not climbing the La Luz trail to the top of Sandia Peak (10,378 feet) at age 49.

On the other hand, climbing that venerable volcano did remind me that I am on a climb even yet. One that will reach a greater altitude, but also requires more effort. One that has taken me 49 years and I have yet to reach the summit. For as I struggled up Fuji one scripture repeated in my brain: Philippians 3:13-14.

Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Climbing a mountain, even one like Fuji with clear hiking trails, is not easy. In fact, for an out-of-shape, sea-level-living pencil pusher it can be downright hard.

One rule in climbing is the one Paul mentions—don't look down. Don't worry about where you have been. Forget those things which are behind. If you look at how little apparent progress you have made, you will get discouraged. If, on the other hand, you concentrate on how much closer the top is getting, you can keep

moving forward, reaching forth unto those things which are before.

Sometimes you make a misstep on the climb. You hit a loose rock and go downward for a while. I don't need to tell you that that happens on our spiritual climb as well. We have all experienced it. But Paul had the solution even to those slips. He said "I press toward the mark." When the slips come, the tendency of our lives should still be upward. After all, one step backward and two steps forward is still a net gain of a step.

The hardest thing for me on Fuji was dealing with the altitude. Some even buy bottles of oxygen to use on the way. A danger on our spiritual walk is dealing with the altitude. Thus we have the "holier than thou" syndrome, or the "Christianity is so stifling" disorder. We need the breath of oxygen, the Spirit of God, to help us keep our wits. We will never reach the heights without it.

Finally, one keeps going for the ability to say, "I did it." In my case, I have been rewarded with few sights like watching the sun rise over the clouds from the top of the mountain. But there is a reward of greater beauty in the climb to heaven. To see the sun of God's light will be a prize of the high calling. No greater prize can there be.

I had the opportunity to climb Mt. Fuji again. I didn't; I'm no fool. I haven't even tried the lower but steeper Sandia Peak. But our daily climb will be a one-time effort. If we don't make the top, we can't try again later. Let's make the most of it while we can.

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