

THE RAVEN AND THE DOVE

Genesis 8:7 *And he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth.*

Genesis 8:8 *Also he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground.*

How can we attract the Holy Spirit? Firstly, our salvation must be built carefully and correctly according to the word of God. During the forty days and nights of the Flood of Noah, the only structure left floating on the surface of the entire water-covered earth, was the ark built according to the dimensions of the word of God.

Genesis 6:14 *Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch.*

Genesis 6:15 *And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits.*

Genesis 6:16 *A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it.*

Notice that God said, “Make thee an ark ...” The ark was not for the benefit of God, but for the salvation of Noah’s family. Had Noah decided to change any of the building instructions, the ark would have capsized and the occupants would have drowned. Because Noah faithfully executed God’s orders, the only structure afloat on the entire earth, was the one built according to the dimensions received from the word of God. Amen!

Noah sent out two birds that point to opposing spiritual truths. Let us begin with the raven first. “And he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth” (Genesis 8:7). It represents the carnal nature. The raven seemed to have found some floating carrion, feasted on it and returned to the ark, but not to Noah – perhaps on the rooftop of the ark. It kept going back and forth until the waters receded and returned no more to the ark. The carnal nature is unclean, opportunistic and selfish; it has no real interest or concern for the things of God or the church, which Noah represented. Gossip, hatred, pride, greed etc. are all sins that God compares to feeding on carrion – it stinks and is repulsive in the eyes of Jesus. At night, when it was unsafe to sleep on floating carcasses, the raven was glad for the ark and most probably made itself comfortable on the roof and settled in for the night. Once dawn came, it flew straight back to care for its belly. Finally, when the waters receded, the raven returned no more to the ark. The carnal nature belongs to the world; like

the raven's heart, the carnal nature dreams of sin and the world. Once the opportunity presented itself, it flew off never to return. The raven was in the ark, but it did not belong to the ark. Similarly, the carnal nature is never comfortable in the church and with the ways of God. It is opportunistic; it dreams of the world and sin – and will depart at the first opportunity to return no more.

Nonetheless, there is hope for those who are tired of the carnal nature: God is able to control it. “And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there” (I Kings 17:4). God commanded the ravens who are selfish by nature to feed Elijah. God is able to command our carnal natures to be holy as he is holy. For three years the God who can change the nature of any of his creatures, commanded the ravens to feed one human being contrary to nature. All things are possible with God! I have preached earlier that God is holy and he can and wants to make us holy. All we have to do is abide in the ark, not on top of the ark, but return to Noah in the ark – return to Jesus, the God who is holy. To those who feel holiness is a difficult and perhaps impossible attainment, hear me out. Aaron, the brother of Moses, was constrained by his fellow-Hebrews to build the golden calf while his brother was receiving the Ten Commandments on the summit of Sinai. Yet, the great God of mercy, commanded Moses after some time: “And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother for glory and for beauty” (Exodus 28:2). Not least, God said this to the children of Israel not long after they had been rebuked for their sin.

Exodus 19:6 *And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.*

Believe with me and declare prophetically by faith: “God will make me holy!” Now, let us consider the dove that Noah sent forth out of the ark.

Genesis 8:9 *But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth: then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark.*

The dove is sensitive and selective. It is not in its nature to alight on that which God has cursed, which the carrion represented. Despite this, the dove tried hard to find a place to alight – yet it could not find anything. This is the Holy Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ! He is trying very hard to find someone upon whom he can alight. God always wrestles with humankind. “And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years” (Genesis 6:3). Let us tell him, “Lord Jesus,

please keep striving with me!” The dove belonged to the ark. It always returned to Noah and expected him to put forth his hand and take her into the ark. Not only do we belong to Jesus, Jesus belongs to the church, to the ark. He expects us to reach out and bring him into the church, into our homes and hearts. Just as Abraham saw the Lord passing by and he reached out and pleaded with many kind words, and the Lord accepted, we too must use many kind and persuasive words for the Spirit of Jesus to enter our hearts, homes and church.

Genesis 18:3 *And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant:*

Genesis 18:4 *Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree:*

Genesis 18:5 *And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said.*

Baptism in Jesus name destroys the sinful nature of Adam and immediately after that the Spirit of God begins to descend expecting to find a new body upon which to alight. This was symbolically demonstrated in the baptism of the Lord in the Jordan.

Matthew 3:16 *And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him.*

Each time the waters of baptism destroy the Adamic body, the heavens are opened, and the Spirit of Jesus begins to descend on the body prepared for his Spirit. Sadly, the dove could not find a place to rest the soles of its feet because the old world was still around. Fortunately, when the remnants of sin are still floating around in our lives, the Spirit of Jesus does not give up, but keeps coming back to check. The holy dove kept returning and checking with the Upper Room for 9 days – and returned. However, on the 10th day, the Day of Pentecost, the 120 were filled with the Holy Ghost: the dove landed. After 14 days, the dove brought an olive branch to Noah. The Spirit of God always brings good news, glad tidings! The raven only lived for the old carrion of the old world; the dove showed the fruits of the new world to Noah. The Spirit of God alone knows the secrets of the new world – of heaven. There is a new world bursting with new food that God has prepared for the people of God.

1Corinthians 2:9 *But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*

1Corinthians 2:10 *But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.*

The Spirit of God has the best fruits that we can covet. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith (Galatian 5:22). The minimum time it takes an olive tree to grow and produce fruit is 3 years; but the God of mercy caused the olive to appear after barely 64 days. A newborn Christian can begin to show spiritual fruits very quickly because of the indwelling Spirit of God.

In summary, there were two birds in the ark of Noah – the raven and the dove. They represent the carnal and the spiritual nature respectively. Notice, they never seemed to have anything to do with each other; their paths never seemed to cross. They both were given the same mission by Noah: to help Noah and his family determine whether the waters had receded or not. The raven ignored the mission and failed to guide Noah, while the dove constantly returned to Noah. The raven, like the carnal nature, will fail to guide us to the new world – heaven, but, thankfully, the Spirit of God, like the dove, will guide and bring us tokens of the new world. The raven was satisfied with the rotting food of the old world, but the dove touched nothing of the old world. Holiness is to follow the dove, not the raven; it is to rely on the Spirit of Jesus to guide and direct us to the new world of blessing. Judas is like the raven – he only cared for his belly and opportunistically betrayed the Lord. The apostles, such as John, on the other hand, represent the dove. John preached about the Comforter and, one day, he was invited to see and experience the new world of heaven. He, like the dove, brought back tokens of this New Jerusalem in the Book of Revelation. Praise Jesus! May the carnal nature of the raven leave us never to return! May God make us doves for his glory!