

03.30.25

Genesis

Chapter 8 - Reconciliation's Breath

The Wings of Hope (vs.6-12)

Genesis 8:6-12: Then it came about at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made; and he sent out a raven, and it flew here and there until the water was dried up from the earth. Then he sent out a dove from him, to see if the water was abated from the face of the land; but the dove found no resting place for the sole of her foot, so she returned to him into the ark, for the water was on the surface of all the earth. Then he put out his hand and took her, and brought her into the ark to himself. So he waited yet another seven days; and again he sent out the dove from the ark. The dove came to him toward evening, and behold, in her beak was a freshly picked olive leaf. So Noah knew that the water was abated from the earth. Then he waited yet another seven days, and sent out the dove; but she did not return to him again.

We read these familiar stories in Scripture; Noah and the flood and the ark and it brings back memories. Interesting pictures. The Old Testament really is about pictures, and in many respects, you have through the Bible a process of growing so that at the very beginning of a child's stage of life, if in fact you begin to teach them, you can't teach them in abstract ideas. It has to be in concrete ideas. So, you give them crayons to color stuff and you show them pictures and they make things out of clay and through the process of touching and feeling things, they began to have a concept of right and wrong, good and evil, and you begin to teach them. As they grow, your hope is that they go beyond just the concrete and ultimately into the abstract and the ability to think in terms of caring and sharing and feeling. All these things hopefully have been fostered through the process. You go to Exodus, and you begin to see the thing called the Law, you realize that the

Law teaches that you shouldn't do something, or you can do this, and you realize that's another step in a child's life. It takes them beyond just the sense of actually feeling and touching and maybe comprehending through that, but now it's actually wrong to do something to somebody else, and the child begins to grow.

Scripture tells us in Galatians that in the fullness of time Christ came. The point of that particular passage, as we talked about it a while back, was that God revealed at the time when He revealed Christ, what it meant to be an adult; the fullness of time, the fullness of age. He actually gives that example in the Book of Galatians, and the point is that at that moment through Christ, the Spirit of God's Son came within us, and we began to see things from a different level. Not just in the concrete or not just in the "Well, I shouldn't do that because I'd be in big trouble," but the sense of "I actually want to do the right thing." And Scripture tells us that we become a son of God or another way of putting it would be a mature follower of the Father. We'd actually be like Him. So, the whole process is an interesting process in Scripture.

As we're in Genesis, we're still in a concrete stage. So, the pictures are given to us and things are revealed to us. When you go in the New Testament, many of these things are explained, whether it be in 1 Corinthians 10, where Paul talks about Moses and he refers to the going through the Red Sea as a baptism which we wouldn't naturally place that, but once again, because of the Spirit of God, He takes us to a higher level of comprehension of that wasn't just the people of Israel going through and being rescued; that was more than that. It was God revealing that if you will walk by faith, He'll take care of you no matter how horrible things seem to be and how hopeless things seem to be that you begin to derive principles from these things. 1 Peter 3 will talk about actually, the baptism of Noah and make reference to this. All of these are pictures.

If I were to read to you in Luke 24 after the resurrection of Christ, He begins to meet with His disciples and He turns to them and He begins to explain to them all the things that were in the Old Testament.

The way that it reads is this way,

(Luke 24:44) “Now He said to them, “These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”

(Luke 24:45) Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.”

The point of the matter is that really, until you have the Spirit of Christ in you, you can't comprehend certain things. Without the Spirit of Christ in you, though you see the concrete and you see the pictures of Noah and the flood, you can't really understand what it's all about. What is this about? As is very clear in the Gospel of Luke, all of this was to point us to Christ. As Paul will write to the Galatians, the Law was a tutor to lead us to Christ. You were learning these things so that you might not only begin to build a conscience, but you might recognize the truth when Christ comes. So, all these things were preparatory. But if in fact you read the Old Testament and you read things like the flood, and in this particular passage that we're looking at, things like the process and the details of not only the land drying but the sending out

of birds, in some way, you go, “Well, that's an interesting story. There's a raven and there's a dove and they fly and some fly around and some fly back. What an interesting story.” But it's more than that. It's actually giving us fundamental principles, and it's those fundamental principles that we want you to see as we go through them.

Just by way of laying this foundation, if you go all the way back to Genesis 1, what you'll see is that the Old Testament is demonstrating through physical things spiritual thoughts. This is why 1 Corinthians 2 will say that you really can't understand anything in the Scripture. I mean, you can say, “Hey, that was an interesting story, and I can understand there was a flood, and I can understand there were people rescued, but I can't understand what this is all about” unless the Spirit of God begins to reveal it to us. And you realize that everything that God was doing in the Old Testament in order to really see what He's actually doing, you have to have the Spirit of God reveal these things to you. So, did these things actually happen? Yeah, they were very concrete things

that actually happened. However, they were teaching greater principles and actually drawing us into the realm of the eternal rather than the physical.

So, as you look in Genesis 1, you see this kind of lived out. All the way through Scripture, you see examples of this, especially if you go into the Book of Hebrews, which talks about all the stuff in the Old Testament were like shadows. So, you have a picture of Melchizedek who was actually king of Salem, but he is a picture as well. As his name meaning "*mel*," making reference to "*melek*," which makes reference to "king". So, his first name refers to he's king, "*zedek*," of righteousness. So, there was going to be one that was going to be a king of righteousness. Who was that? That was going to be Christ, and He was going to come to Jerusalem, "*salem*," and so, interesting pictures.

Hebrews talks about the tabernacle, and it says that this tabernacle was a picture. Of course, obviously Christ, as you look at the very beginning of the Gospel of John, it says, "and the word became flesh and tabernacled among us." So once again, the whole reason why the tabernacle

was made out of skins was to give that interesting picture of that which was going to be in days that would follow.

In Genesis 1, you look at the beginning of creation and if you look with me in verse 1, it starts off,

(Genesis 1:1) “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

(Genesis 1:2) The earth was formless and void, and darkness...”

So, what we begin to see is that not only the object of creation is giving us a picture of the spiritual, but also what He's going to be demonstrating is that the order in which things happen are giving us lessons. So, right off the bat what you have starting off the whole process, doesn't look good. I mean, formless and void, “*tôû bôû*”; things are empty and meaningless. I mean, that whole picture is something that immediately does not bring up hope in my thoughts in my mind.

So, it starts off that “the earth was formless and void, and darkness,” just in case you weren't depressed enough, “was over the surface of the deep...”

Now, the only thing that can remove this darkness is the Spirit of God moving across the surface of the waters. So once again, an interesting picture that is given to us. It's one of the reasons why obviously as you go through the New Testament, whether it be Paul or whoever will actually pull from these resources and begin to explain, "You want to know why that was done that way?" I mean, it wasn't like God actually had to start off with formless and void and darkness, but once again, God was telling the story and God was revealing specific things.

It says,

(Genesis 1:3) "Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light."

Now, what we know about God is that He Himself is Light. So, we know that light has always existed because God is eternal, He's immutable, and He's always existed. But the question is, why does He have to say, "Let there be light"? Well, in creation, darkness comes first because once again, it's telling the story. So, as Isaiah will tell us that God actually had to create darkness in order for darkness to exist. In all eternity past, darkness never existed, but

Isaiah tells us that He formed light, but He created darkness. So, darkness had to be created, and He created it at the very beginning of the stage, so as to reveal something. So, we're actually seeing as I would put it, a sense of order. But what we're seeing is and what you're going to see is a pattern in which God starts with this darkness, and then He goes to the light.

In 2 Corinthians 4:6, and probably many of you have that underlined, Paul will quote this statement, he says,

(2 Corinthians 4:6) “For God, who said, “Light shall shine out of darkness,” is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.”

So, what he's clearly doing is revealing to us what God was doing in creation, that He was actually telling a story.

Malachi 4:2, interestingly enough, actually makes reference to the “S-U-N,” sun of righteousness, and he said the sun of righteousness will come with healing in its wings. So, the point is, as Psalm 19 will further say that the sun rises like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber. Of course, once again, it's the picture of Christ

coming from the East, which Scripture will prophesy it will do that. Well, He was doing rehearsals all the way at the very beginning of all these things, and you begin to see that God through creation was telling a story.

Colossians 1:23 reads this way, Paul writes,

“... the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation...”

The gospel was proclaimed. It was not broadcasted, but it was proclaimed in creation. The heavens declare the glory of God, the firmament shows forth His handiwork.

Creation declares the good news of God by virtue of, if for no other reason, by virtue of spring. In spring, life comes out of death. You begin to see the wonderful gospel in so many wonderful things, and it really describes the great attributes of God.

In fact, Romans 1:20 will read this way, that all of creation actually declares the attributes of God; His eternal power, which you look at the universe and you go, “Where's the end of that?” and God goes, “You can't find it,” and I don't care how powerful your telescope is. You're still not coming to the end. So, what a great picture of eternal

power. Is there any end to His greatness? Is there any end to His power? Then it goes on to say, His “divine nature,” which would be His giving us of the sunlight; His giving us of rain; His giving us of beauty and majesty. I mean, you look at all of creation and all the things, and you go, “Wow, God is really great.” And you realize that God is actually telling a story, He's proclaiming a story, and even in creation He has aligned creation to actually feel with us.

Paul will write in Romans 8:19,

“... creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.”

Did you know creation was actually on the sidelines, rooting for the sons of God to be revealed so that it would no longer be subjected to futility? So, man sins and all creation suffer for it because we're attached, and this whole gospel thing, this whole creation thing is all together.

In Genesis 15, when God is talking to Abraham and letting him know that in the future this is what's going to happen

in the lives of his people. If you turn with me to Genesis 15, he'll start off by this statement,

(Genesis 15:12) “Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, terror and great darkness fell upon him.”

That's called a bad dream.

(Genesis 15:13) “God said to Abram, “Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years.”

We're starting off with bad news. It almost sounds like the creation story; formless, void, darkness.

“But I'm going to judge the nations. You're going to go back home and you're going to have all this stuff, and everything's going to work out ok.” (Genesis 15:14) So, what we're seeing is a process; what we're seeing is a kind of order that God has ordained.

Just one more picture, if you look with me in Jeremiah 4, and it shouldn't surprise you that Jeremiah 4 will actually use the quotation that's in Genesis 1. In Jeremiah 4:11, He

starts off by saying, “The time is coming when your people are going to go through a lot of suffering” and it gives this interesting description of this terrible, terrible time in which they're going to go into captivity.

It reads this way,

(Jeremiah 4:11) “In that time it will be said to this people and to Jerusalem, “A scorching wind from the bare heights in the wilderness in the direction of the daughter of My people—not to winnow and not to cleanse,

(Jeremiah 4:12) a wind too strong for this—will come...”

And actually, do a destructive force.

(Jeremiah 4:13) “Behold, he goes up like clouds,
And his chariots like the whirlwind;
His horses are swifter than eagles...”

It's actually talking about the Babylonians coming to capture them.

Then, of course, within the text, the cry is,

(Jeremiah 4:19) “My soul, my soul! I am in anguish! Oh,
my heart!

My heart is pounding in me...”

I guess that would be pretty ominous to see hundreds of thousands, if not millions of soldiers and chariots approaching and dust kicking up and you know they're coming.

It says this,

(Jeremiah 4:20) “Disaster on disaster is proclaimed, For the whole land is devastated...”

I mean, can you get any more clear about a bad day?

“... Suddenly my tents are devastated...”

(Jeremiah 4:23) “I looked on the earth, and behold, it was formless and void...”

Does that sound familiar? What God is revealing is that there's a pattern going on, and it's the way that God works.

Look,

(Jeremiah 4:24) “I looked on the mountains, and behold, they were quaking, And all the hills moved to and fro.”

Remember that phrase, “to and fro” because we're going to come into that a little bit later. You realize that this

ominous appearance is really revealing an unsettledness and unstable, and it's revealing the world of how insecure it really is.

One more, Isaiah 60, will give the same kind of picture. So, we can just solidify this pattern.

(Isaiah 60:1) “Arise, shine; for your light has come, And the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.”

When will the glory of the Lord rise upon me? Well, first, it's going to be darkness.

Read verse 2,

(Isaiah 60:2) “For behold, darkness will cover the earth And deep darkness the peoples; But the LORD will rise upon you...”

It's sort of like Psalm 35, right? Weeping may last for a short time, but joy comes in the morning. Once again, you go back to the Genesis 1, and how does it start off? How does the day begin? The day doesn't begin, “there was morning and there was evening. It begins, “there was evening, and there was morning, one day.” So once again, the order that God is establishing and showing us that

difficulty is going to come first. Peter will talk about this to the Christians, and he goes, “Look, if it's with difficulty that you come to the kingdom, what will happen to those that aren't believers?” And I think sometimes we think in terms of “Well, you know, we're not supposed to have any troubles.” And God goes, “No, no, no, no, no. There's going to be problems.” Now, the Lord rescues you out of them all, but it's a necessary ingredient in our lives.

It's for that reason as we come to this, and it's very interesting to me that he lets out the raven first and then the dove. So, if you come with me to back to Genesis 8, as Noah is looking for some sort of relief in the midst of this horrific flood. As the psalmist will say, surely in a flood of great waters, they shall not reach him, but God will rescue him. He's been clearly preserved in all of this, but it's not just the rescuing from the flood. It's a hope for tomorrow that you want.

One of the great songs that my father loved so much was “*Great is Thy Faithfulness*,” and one of the phrases that was in that particular song is “*strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow.*” Everybody needs that sense of

bright hope in the process of the world having to be dealt with. You look at a passage like Isaiah 33 and it talks about the destroyer coming, and in that, talking about the destroyer, you realize that a destroyer has to exist to destroy the destructive, but the destroyer can't touch God's people. In this particular setting, they're in the ark and God has protected them, but more than that, man doesn't just want to be protected. He longs for the hope of a bright tomorrow. So, this is kind of where we're coming. God is receding the waters, and now the hope of Noah is that "Can we get to prosperity? Can we get to a sense of hope? A bright hope for tomorrow?" It is interesting that the first bird that he sends out is the raven, and we're going to kind of talk about that as we go on because it's a very dark bird and in almost every single culture, it is perceived as it's actually a bad omen for a raven to come into your life. Ravens, though we know probably in the ark there were no crows, because raven would probably be the kind that was in the ark that would represent the crow and the raven, but ravens are quite a bit bigger. From what I understand their wing spread gets up to 48 inches. So, it's a pretty big bird and they're very

smart animals. I don't know. Probably off the bat, I would probably think in my way of thinking, "Well, why don't we send the smart guy out? You know? Maybe he can scout." They say that ravens are so smart that they can actually talk. So, they'll talk and they're good at mimicking sounds. They've had ravens that mimic car engines; they mimic waterfalls. They can mimic things like that. But one of the reasons why they do that and how they're so smart in figuring out these things is that, for instance, they'll learn how to mimic a wolf or a fox for the purpose of calling a wolf or a fox to an animal that has died that they can't open up because they want to eat because they are flesh eating birds that actually get a lot of their sustenance from the carnage. So, in the process, they can't tear open this big animal, so then they call the fox, or the wolf and they come, and they tear open the animal and then the raven comes in and finishes the process. What it's telling us and what we understand is this is a very smart, smart bird. However, everything about the bird when you get into Leviticus 11, it begins to describe as an unclean bird, which is obviously a bird that you can't eat because it is vulture like in its diet. So, the thought is that this is not

necessarily a bird that you would embrace. The interesting picture is, and we're talking about pictures in the Old Testament, you have Noah, he opens up this window and sends out this raven. Now, once again, let's take the picture of Noah himself, "*nōah*" making reference to rest. If you were to personify the rest of God, more specifically, if you could somehow draw a picture of what rest looked like, because that literally is Noah's name, and it was his father, Lamech's desire that Noah would bring rest on the earth. So, here you have this interesting picture of one that is called to bring rest on the earth. If you were to personify it, what would he look like? Scripture says it's this guy. What would he do? Well, I would say that the first longing would be to get rid of all the evil. So, why would he send out a raven? Because there's carnage. FBI says that it takes if in fact, the body is in the ocean, three to six months for it to totally disintegrate. Who would know better than a raven? The picture that's given within the passage is, (Genesis 8:6) "Then it came about at the end of forty days, that Noah..."

The one who really literally personifies the rest of God.

“... opened the window of the ark...”

Two words are being used within that particular phrase, “opened the window,” and it goes on to say,

“...which he had made.”

Both of them make reference to a piercing. Which is very interesting that what you're going to have is looking at the carnage through the window of a piercing, and an interesting picture, certainly of our Christ.

It says this,

(Genesis 8:7) “and he sent out a raven...”

It's very important that you just see the simple phrase of this, “he sent out a raven.” You're going to see a difference between that and the dove. Very subtle, but it's going to be a difference.

“and he sent out a raven, and it flew here and there...”

To and fro. It reminds me of a passage in Peter as well as in the Book of Job, and both of them actually refer to Satan. It's pretty interesting, isn't it? Which Peter will say Satan is like a roaring lion, prowling, or actually in some

texts, roaming to and fro, seeking something to devour. Now, that's an interesting picture of a raven, because the passage actually says that he goes to and fro, flies here and there, and you're saying, "Why is he flying here and there?" He's looking for carnage. That's what ravens do, looking for something to devour. Now, the wonderful thing the evil that searches for some sort of carnage is that we're alive in Christ. So, they don't touch us. But it's an interesting picture of seeking the total cleansing. If you were to finally step out of the ark, wouldn't you want to make sure that all the bodies were gone? Could you imagine? I mean, if we figure it right by the age span that existed, literally millions and millions of people had died in this great flood. Would you like to open a door and just see all those bodies all over the place? So it really is God's grace that is cleansing, and really, one of the first things on our mind is, "Is all this gone? Is it all cleansed?" It's one of the callings of the evil one; as we've oftentimes made reference, whether it's in the garden as a serpent, or whether it's like a bird that is going and picking bones, you have this interesting picture of one cleansing the world by virtue of revealing the dead. What God begins to

do is He begins to reveal what's carnage, and there is a kind of hope in that.

So, interesting picture as we have this and in Job 1, God turns to Satan, He goes, "What have you been doing?" And Satan goes, "I've been going to and fro throughout all the earth looking..." for what? Carnage. That's what he does, and there is a purpose in vultures cleaning up, so to speak.

So, the passage reads,

(Genesis 8:7) "and he sent out a raven, and it flew here and there until the water was dried up from the earth.

(Genesis 8:8) Then he sent out a dove..."

Now, what's interesting to me is that there's really no Scripture that says anywhere that God says, "Ok, in this order, you need to do this," or "This is what you need to do," but we also have the picture of rest and what does it do and what does it long for? So, the picture of rest longs for the dissipation and the disappearance of all carnage. No doubt about that. But that's still not enough. To come to the Lord and say, "I want to be clean from all my sin,"

that's a wonderful thing. Don't get me wrong. But you want bright hope for tomorrow. You want the great blessings; all mine and 10,000 besides, you want those things. So, you send out something more gracious. We not only have the mercy of God, but we have certainly the grace of God.

The picture then goes into verse 8,
(Genesis 8:8) “Then he sent out a dove...”

Now, watch the phrase here,
“...from him...”

The English word for this would be “propinquity,” which just simply means that it's expressing nearness.

You go back to the raven, and it says in verse 7,
“and he sent out a raven...”

Does it say he sent out a raven from him? No.

You know, evil's a necessary ingredient to exist, but God doesn't embrace it. It's an interesting picture. There are things necessary. I mean, as a father, I knew I'd have to discipline. I didn't embrace discipline. There was nothing I liked about it. You don't want to hold that close to you,

but the dove comes from him, and you begin to see an interesting picture of the heart of rest, don't you?

So it reads this way,

(Genesis 8:8) “Then he sent out a dove from him...”

There are so many passages that actually use that particular word.

Genesis 4:1, it goes on in Chapter 5, “Enoch walked with God” which would be the same as “from”. So, it shows that closeness, not only closeness of proxemics, but closeness of intent and heart. In other words, what would the heart of God look like? What would the heart of peace look like? It would have to do some difficult things, but it would be one that embraced peace.

So, it reads this way,

(Genesis 8:8) “Then he sent out a dove from him, to see if the water was abated from the face of the land;

(Genesis 8:9) but the dove found no resting place....”

Would you be surprised that it actually reads, “no *mānôah*,” “found no Noah”. Interesting word there.

(Genesis 8:9) “but the dove found no resting place for the sole of her foot, so she returned to him into the ark...”

I wonder why, “she”? Well, Scripture tells us, or actually, nature tells us that as God had created, that the female dove is unique in the sense that it does all the building of the nest herself. So, with many of the other birds, there's kind of cooperation between the two, but the dove, it's all on her. She builds the nest. So, what Scripture is wanting us to do is to see once again, this interesting and wonderful picture of a place being prepared. Initially, I think that in our lives we just want the evil to go away. It's hard for us to imagine that God would prepare a place for us, but He will.

So, it reads this way,

(Genesis 8:9) “but the dove found no resting place for the sole of her foot, so she returned to him...”

She couldn't find a “*nôah*” out there, so she returned to the “*nôah*” in the ark.

“...for the water was on the surface of all the earth. Then he put out his hand...”

Watch the interesting text. Is Scripture wanting you to see this or not?

“... Then he put out his hand and took her, and brought her into the ark to himself.”

Are you feeling the draw? I mean, I didn't feel that warm fuzzy thing with the raven. “Get out of here,” and then the raven goes to and fro, to and fro, to and fro. That's all he does, goes to and fro.

(Genesis 8:10) “So he waited yet another seven days...”

Now, you just have to underline the word “waited” here, and the reason why you have to underline is because he's going to demonstrate two kinds of waiting. In this first waiting, this particular word is making reference to not a gracious kind of waiting. It gives a picture of somebody wringing their hands. I remember a long time ago, I was at my grandfather's, and I don't know how it happened, but I dropped an anvil on my toe, and it's probably the best description I can give you of the waiting in this text, because it actually is used to describe a kind of dancing around in turmoil and twisting and convoluted. So, it's an interesting picture of Noah literally ringing his hands and

with his soul in great turmoil going, “What's going to happen?” I mean, it's one thing to say that evil's gone, but what's going to happen now? Scripture's wanting us to see a sense of anxiety and God having him wait another seven days.

“... and again he sent out the dove from the ark.”

(Genesis 8:11) The dove came to him toward evening, and behold, in her beak was a freshly picked olive leaf...”

They say that olive trees can actually bring forth leaf underwater. That's pretty interesting, isn't it? Comes with an olive leaf. Olive leaves, of course, became highly representative of the Jewish nation. David will we even say, “May the Lord bless me, for I am like an olive tree” and he actually uses that particular word. You go into the prophetic Book of Zechariah, and he gives a picture of the two that God sends, and he says these are two olive trees, and he gives a picture of anointing.

You're going to see the same picture, interestingly enough, in Revelation 11, of the two prophets that will come in the last days, and they're called two olive trees. The Scripture has given an interesting picture of not only

peace, but the fact that they're anointed, i.e. olive oil that comes from that, and it shouldn't surprise you that most Jewish menorahs are actually formed into as an olive tree, and thus giving out the oil that God had promised, which to the Jew is a picture of not only success, but a picture of life. Oftentimes, they'll actually call it the tree of life.

What should not surprise you is this, that the very place that the Christ will hang around most with His disciples and gather them together will be a place called the Mount of Olives. If you ask any of God's people, they know exactly what you're talking about. What the Bible is doing in an interesting way is preparing us for the bright hope for tomorrow. It's literally giving us the picture.

So, if you read with me, it goes on and says that this dove brought back into the ark this leaf that's freshly picked,

“... So Noah knew that the water was abated from the earth.”

That's a peace, isn't it?

Now, you look at verse 12 and you go, “So, why'd he send out the bird again?” The wonderful thing about doves, and of course once again, you're dealing with those that

were in the ark, so all kinds of doves actually come from the dove, so to speak, pigeons. One of the names for pigeons is called homing pigeon. The thing about homing pigeons is they have just such an acute way of knowing where home is. What they would oftentimes do in times of war, times of combat, to actually give some sort of message is they would take these homing pigeons, and they would take them in far distant places, but tie the note on them there and then they would send them, and they would just naturally know how to go back home because that's what they did. They went home. So, they always knew where home was. They have documented examples of homing pigeons finding their home from 1100 to 1200 miles away. No problem. I think it's interesting that Ararat to Jerusalem is 800 miles. I don't know how long it takes as the dove flies, but I do know that there is a place known for olives where it would find them. So, you have this picture of this homing dove that he lets out for the third time and the third seven, in which is not only complete evidence that God's hand is in it, but God has given us total best. Once again, we kind of start off going, "I just want bad to stop." He goes, "Ok, but I've

got far more for you than that.” And through the process of us wanting good to come, we oftentimes would perceive and maybe settle for second best, but God says, “Wait. Best is coming.”

And you have this picture,

(Genesis 8:12) “Then he waited yet another seven days, and sent out the dove; but she did not return to him again.”

And you know the reason why? The dove found home. Do you know where he landed? In John 1, and in Luke 3, as Christ was being baptized, the dove lands. The dove gives us this wonderful picture, this is home. It gives you that picture, as Jesus will say in John 14, “I'm the way. I'm the truth. I'm the life.” And there is no better symbol to give us then this wonderful picture of peace. One of the reasons why, when you consider places at war, they talk about giving the olive branch because it's that wonderful symbol of not only peace, but life that is promised.

There's a text in Lamentations that we oftentimes read, and I think it's important to somehow draw the truth out of this to somehow parallel it with the passage that we're

looking at. If you look with me in Lamentations 3, through the process of Jeremiah going through so much difficulty and seeing his own people suffer so much, no doubt, he came to a point, and if you've ever read the Book of Jeremiah or remember us going through it, you'll remember the many times in which Jeremiah would say not only, "You got the wrong guy," but also, "I'm done with this. I'm done with this." Because it was evil, and hardship is so overwhelming, but it has to be taken out of the way. But God is not just taking things out of the way. We look at these passages, and we see the raven, then days later and then days later and then days later and we see all these sevens and we go, "What is God doing?" And God says, "I'm fulfilling My promise to you." As you read in the Book of Zechariah, though, we would have a tendency to settle for second best. We would be in the ravine, and we'd go, "Hey, it's pretty comfortable here. It's nice shade." God says, "No, no, no, no, not the ravine, the mountain. You're going on the mountain." And in the process of waiting, we wring our hands. I can imagine Abraham, going, "Look, I'm 75. Where's the kid?" And He goes, "Another 25 years. Not that long." 100 years old,

right? It's just not feasible. I remember thinking, "I'm going to be 60 when I'm teaching my kid to drive."

But you look here in Lamentations, he cries out to God, and he goes,

(Lamentations 3:19) "Remember my affliction and my wandering..."

And I think in some cases it just doesn't seem to make sense, "Why are we going through all this and is there anything good that's going to come out of this?" is kind of our thoughts in the midst of the turmoil, the affliction and the pain and the suffering.

(Lamentations 3:20) "Surely my soul remembers
And is bowed down within me.

(Lamentations 3:21) This I recall to my mind,
Therefore I have hope.

(Lamentations 3:22) The LORD'S lovingkindnesses indeed
never cease,
For His compassions never fail.

(Lamentations 3:23) They are new every morning;
Great is Your faithfulness.

(Lamentations 3:24) “The LORD is my portion,” says my soul,

“Therefore I have hope in Him.””

The Lord is my portion.

(Lamentations 3:25) “The LORD is good to those who wait...”

You know, Noah, the last time that he sends the dove out, and it said that he was waiting, it actually uses a different word. The first was the wringing of the hands, but the second was an expectation of good.

God takes us through the process, and I personally believe that the difficulties in my life, the difficulties in your life, have to exist in order to bring me to an interesting point, and that is the point of maturity; the point of gratitude; the point of appreciating all that God has truly done, so that I can enjoy to the fullest the things He has given me, and ultimately for God to give me the greater good. God gives the greater good to those who wait, and there is no greater thing that you can do to display your love for God than to tell Him, “I expect good from You. I'm willing to

wait.” There is no greater way that you can literally express love to God than your willingness to wait on Him.

The way this reads is,

“The LORD is my portion,” says my soul,

“Therefore I have hope in Him.”

(Lamentations 3:25) The LORD is good to those who wait for Him,

To the person who seeks Him.

(Lamentations 3:26) It is good that he waits silently...”

I think at first, you're going to be walking back and forth, wringing your hands sometimes, maybe jumping up and down like you dropped an anvil on your toe, but the Lord is good to those who wait for Him, to the person who seeks Him. It's good for you to wait silently for the salvation of the Lord. Why is it good? I remember thinking, “Why do I have to wait? Why is that a good thing?” Have you ever seen anybody that never had to wait for anything? What a louse.

The Lord says,

(Lamentations 3:26) “It is good that he waits silently
For the salvation of the LORD.

(Lamentation 3:27) It is good for a man that he should
bear
The yoke in his youth.”

One of the reasons why, by the way, you don't want to give a young person everything when they're young. Let them work hard for it. They appreciate it, it matures them, but most of all, you're actually fostering a deeper kind of love because without waiting, you can't demonstrate that.

The passage goes on,

(Lamentations 3:28) “Let him sit alone and be silent
Since He has laid it on him.

(Lamentations 3:29) Let him put his mouth in the dust,
Perhaps there is hope.

(Lamentations 3:30) Let him give his cheek to the smiter,
Let him be filled with reproach.

(Lamentations 3:31) For the Lord will not reject forever,

(Lamentations 3:32) For if He causes grief...”

He will send the dove.

“... According to His abundant lovingkindness.”

He does not send out the raven willingly.

(Lamentations 3:33) “... Or grieve the sons of men.”

It's something that has to be done. Nobody enjoys that.

He's not trying to crush under His feet. (Lamentations

3:34) He's not trying to deprive you of justice.

(Lamentations 3:25) “God's unfair.” Look at verse 35.

“God's trying to deprive me of my rights.” God’s not trying

to deprive you of your rights. He’s not trying to defraud

you in the lawsuit. (Lamentations 3:36) He's growing you

up, but most of all, He's given you best. He's preparing

you. Interesting picture. The dove has landed. I'm

thankful for that.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we give You thanks for Your lovingkindness, for Your love for us, that we see these wonderful pictures in the Old Testament of not only You're cleaning up the mess, but of You giving us bright hope for tomorrow, and to realize that in the process, You'll give us strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow. Truly great is Your faithfulness.

Your heads bowed and your eyes closed. I know that there are times you feel like you're going through a difficult time. You're wondering and waiting for the waters to abate, and they just don't seem to be going down fast enough. You're seeing signs, you're hoping for signs, you're wringing your hands, you're tired of waiting, and then God turns to you and says, "Wait a little longer." But God has given you a picture that if you'll wait on Him, you won't be disappointed. Better is coming, and little could Noah even begin to imagine that this dove would light upon the Savior of the world that would bring eternal rest. How could he conceive such a thing? I don't know what God's doing in your life, and I don't know

where you are in the process, but I know this, good will come to those who wait on Him and will wait expectantly, believing that He does good. It's the greatest way for you to demonstrate your love for Him.