



THE DOVE
(GENESIS 8: 8-12)

THE DOVE'S FIRST VISIT — NO REST FOR THE SOLE OF ITS FOOT

"But the dove found no resting place for the sole of her foot, and she returned into the ark to him, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took her, and drew her into the ark to himself." (Genesis 8:9).

- When first Noah let loose from the ark, the dove found no rest on the earth overwhelmed by the waters of death.
- Here we read in allegory the condition of the world before Christ came into it.
- Mankind, in whom God would have delighted, had they been subject to His holy will, had rebelled against Him; and "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Moral and spiritual death had submerged the whole race.

THE SECOND VISIT — REST IN THE OLIVE TREE

And he waited yet another seven days, and again he sent the dove out from the ark. Then the dove came to him in the evening, and behold, a freshly plucked olive leaf *was* in her mouth; and Noah knew that the waters had receded from the earth. (Genesis 8:10-11)

- The olive branch tells of peace and blessing, and the dove of quietness and rest.
- In the Scriptures, the dove being figurative of the Spirit of God makes the olive branch that He brings tell of a peace that is permanent and eternal.
- Seven centuries waited for the fulfilment of this prophetic word. In due time, The Son of God came into this world. This Man shall be the peace, for He is more than man.
- The Father's heart was His undisturbed home, and He brought the peace of that sinless and unchanging Eternity into a storm-tossed and peace-less world. "*This Man shall be the peace,*" for in Him God intervened to bring light into the world's darkness and to establish peace.
- Thirty years passed by, years of secret testing and triumph, Jesus joined Himself, and though sinless, identified Himself with us in this act of righteousness.
- Then the heavens opened and the heavenly dove, the Spirit of God, came forth again, not this time to seek a resting place on earth in vain, but to come upon Him and there to abide, and the Father's voice was heard, speaking from the open heavens, and saying, "THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, IN WHOM I AM WELL-PLEASED."

THE OLIVE BRANCH PLUCKED OFF

- Then the "light of the world" was cast out and put on the cross.
- The Man who shall be the peace was rejected. "*And after three score and two weeks (sixty years and two weeks) SHALL MESSIAH BE CUT OFF, AND SHALL HAVE NOTHING*" (Dan. 9:26).
- The Messiah was the olive tree, but He was cut off. "*Away with Him,*" was their cry, when he was presented to them as their King. So that from that time until He returns in power to claim all that is His, He is "*the olive branch plucked off.*"
- Wide-spreading desolation and death covered the whole race of man when Christ lay in death, for "*WE THUS JUDGE THAT IF ONE DIED FOR ALL THEN WERE ALL DEAD.*"
- But on the resurrection morning He appeared above the waters of death — the olive branch, the pledge of peace to all who seek peace.

THE DOVE WITH THE OLIVE BRANCH IN HIS MOUTH

- God has not abandoned His purpose to bring men into peace, and the Holy Ghost has come from heaven as a witness of this.
- He came to bear witness of Christ on earth, and of peace through Him. He came to fulfil the Lord's words: *"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send to YOU from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceeds from the Father, He shall testify of me"* (John 15:26).
- He has come with His mouth full of Christ, for the gospel which is preached to men — the gospel of God — is concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, and there can be no peace with God apart from Him. But what infinite grace is this, that the Christ whom men slew is now presented to them as God's olive branch, His offer of peace to the uttermost part of the earth!
- The witness of the Holy Ghost, the heavenly dove, to Christ — the olive branch — has resulted in the establishment of God's Kingdom on the earth. It started at Pentecost and it continues to this day *"KINGDOM OF GOD IS NOT MEAT AND DRINK; BUT RIGHTEOUSNESS, PEACE AND JOY IN THE HOLY GHOST"* (Rom. 14:17).

THE HEAVENLY DOVE'S THIRD VISIT: THE EARTH FULL OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD (GENESIS 8:12)

So he waited yet another seven days and sent out the dove, which did not return again to him anymore. (Genesis 8:12)

- The Holy Ghost will not always abide in this world, bearing witness to Christ, and offering peace with God through Him.
- Indeed, everything points to the speedy close of His wonderful mission.
- He will return to heaven, making alive the mortal bodies of those in whom He dwells (Rom. 8), when the Lord rises from His throne to receive those whom the Holy Ghost has gathered out of this world for His name.
- Then when the day of judgment has come and is passed, and the earth has been purged and cleansed from its defilement and revolt against God, and all nations acknowledge Christ as King; the earth shall be a habitable place for the heavenly dove, and God's Spirit shall be poured forth on all flesh (Joel 2:28).
- He will come to abide on earth as a place in which righteousness reigns.