

# (Genesis) Genesis 8:1-19

by J. Vernon McGee

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*J. Vernon McGee explores the significance of Noah's experience during the flood, emphasizing the spiritual lessons of the raven and dove as symbols of our dual natures in Christ.*

**Duration:** 17:40

**Scripture:** Genesis 8:1-20, Matthew 28:19, 2 Peter 3:3-4, 1 John 2:15

**Topics:** "Genesis"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of spreading the word of God and winning souls for Christ. He compares believers to both ravens and doves, highlighting the need to choose the nature that aligns with God's will. The dove represents a love for the things of God and finding rest in Christ, while the raven symbolizes a love for the world and its pleasures. The preacher urges believers to live in their new nature and not be swayed by the temptations of the world. He also references the story of Noah's ark and the struggle between the old and new nature within believers.

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## Transcript

Today, friends, our study brings us to the 8th chapter of the book of Genesis, and if you have your Bible and will turn there, I hope you're reading along with us, and maybe you've read the 8th chapter. Now, we have seen last time the flood, and we were talking about the flood and saying that there were many details we were not going into, and I was quoting from a book that I highly recommend. The title of it is The Genesis Flood, and it's by Henry M. Morris and John C. Whitcomb, Jr. Both of these men are competent to write on such a subject, and they answer many questions for you today.

There has come from the press recently several books from men I consider pseudo-intellectuals and pseudo-theologians, for that matter. I know several of them, and they take the position that the flood was local. That is, it was confined to the Tigris-Euphrates Valley.

In other words, they had sort of a big swimming pool there, and that's about all that it was. May I say to you, this book absolutely demolishes that thought altogether, and I'm sure that most of you realize the Scripture made it very clear that the flood covered the whole earth. God said that the entire earth was to be destroyed by the flood, and He said that He would destroy.

The earth is filled with violence through them, and behold, I will destroy them with the earth. And then if you say that the flood was not universal, the human family had already got to North America, and the

animals were certainly here. Nobody would argue that point for a moment.

Well, the fact of the matter is, then you have somebody except Noah starting the human family all over again, and that's just not the way the Word of God tells it, friends. You either accept the Bible, or you don't make excuses for it. You either are on the horns of a dilemma, as I see it.

You either have to accept it, what it says, or you have to reject what it says. And my judgment to attempt to make a case like that is actually in the long run to reject the Word of God. I think it makes it very clear that it was.

It says, every living substance was destroyed, which was upon the face of the ground, both man and cattle and the creeping things and the fowl of the heaven, and they were destroyed from the earth, and Noah only remained alive and they that were with him in the ark. That is 7.23, Genesis 7.23. And it says in verse 24, that's where we left off last time, and the waters prevailed upon the earth a hundred and fifty days. In other words, for a period of approximately half a year, if you please.

For five months, the waters prevailed on the earth, and that is the story. Now, in chapter 8, we have the assuaging of the flood. Somebody said, what do you mean by the assuaging? Well, let's read verse 1 of chapter 8. And God remembered Noah, isn't that a lovely thing? And every living thing and all the cattle that was with him in the ark, and God made a wind to pass over the earth and the waters assuage.

Now, this book I've referred you to, I think, answers the question about whether it was a local flood, it was universal, and also answers this question of uniformitarianism. There are those that take that position, you know, that there was no such thing as a great convulsion or catastrophe like the flood. Well, that viewpoint is held by a great many, and I'm not going into detail.

This book gives a great deal of detail. And Peter, in his 2nd Epistle, makes that very clear, that we could expect there'd be those today that would come in the last days, knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers walking after their own lusts. Now, this is 2 Peter 3.3. Now I'm reading the 4th verse.

And what are they doing and saying? Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation. Well, you see, the scoffer has always been a uniformitarian. And this book makes it very clear that you couldn't very well hold that position and accept the integrity of the Word of God at this particular point.

That's very important to see. Now, we not only have here the building up of the flood, but also the prevailing and the assuaging of the flood. And we're told that God made a wind to pass over the earth and the waters assuage.

Now, it didn't happen just overnight. The buildup of the waters, over 150 days, and then actually there are 261 days in the assuaging. And that looks to me like it's something more than just a local flood.

And I'm not going to go through this. This is an exercise in mathematics. But you find here that verse 2 and 3, and let me read them.

Fountains also of the deep in the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained. And the waters returned from off the earth continually, and after the end of the 150 days, the waters were abated. And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month.

And then we're told, verse 6, And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made. Now, you have this beginning of the end, let's say, of the flood. Now, notice what he did.

He sent forth a raven which went forth to and fro until the waters were dried up from off the earth. And he sent forth a dove from him to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground. Frankly, Noah became a bird watcher.

He's sending out the two birds, the raven and the dove. Now, the thing that happened was this, 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 and unto him into the ark, and he stayed yet other seven days. And again he sent forth the dove out of the ark. And the dove came in to him in the evening, and low in her mouth was an olive leaf plucked off.

So Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth. He stayed yet other seven days and sent forth the dove which returned not again unto him any more. And it came to pass in the 600th and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from the earth.

And that, may I say, brings you to 200, as we have indicated, 261 days. So that the total time of the flood was 371 days, and that extended over a year. Now that, may I say, also conforms to the statement of Scripture that the flood was universal, that it was not just filling of a swimming pool.

It certainly was more than that. May I say that there are other things that have revealed something concerning the flood, and I'd like to pass that on to you. And I'm quoting now from another, from Dr. J.E. Shelley, and he takes the position that the flood was universal, covered the entire earth.

And I'm quoting from him now, and he says, the most striking example of this is found in the case of the mammoths. These elephants are found buried in the frozen silt of the tundra, Siberia, all over the length of the continent of Asia, and in the north of Alaska and Canada. They're found in herds on the higher ground, not bogged in marshes, hundreds of thousands in number.

Now he goes on to talk about them, that they've been examined, that they were drowned, and if they just got bogged up, they'd have died of starvation. And the farther north one goes, the more they are, until the soil of the islands of the White Sea inside the Arctic Circle consists largely of their bones mingled with those of saber-toothed tiger, giant elk, cave bear, musk ox, and with trunks of trees, and trees rooted in the soil. Now there are now no trees in those regions, the nearest being hundreds, almost thousands of miles away.

The mammoth could not eat the stunted vegetation which now grows in this region but for three months in the year, a hundred square miles of which would not keep one of them alive for a month. The food in their stomachs is pine, hawthorn branches. These mammoths were buried alive in the silt when the silt was soft.

They in the silt were then suddenly frozen and have never been unfrozen for they show no sign of decomposition. And then he goes on to tell about mammoth ivory has been sold on the London docks for more than a thousand years. The Natural History Museum purchased the mammoth's head and tusk from the ivory store of the London docks.

This head was absolutely fresh and was covered with its original fur. Explorers have saved their lives by eating the flesh of these animals which have been in cold storage for about 4,600 years. May I say to you, friends, if you want evidence of the flood and that it's universal, there is an abundance of evidence if you're willing to accept it.

Now, may I leave that and see a great spiritual truth that we have here in this 8th chapter when we read to you about the dove and about the raven, the old crow that was put out, you see. Now, we find here that when he sent the flood and Noah spent all that time, he was over a year in there, why now he sends forth a raven and the raven never came back. But the dove kept coming back and even brought in its beak a little bit of greenery, an olive leaf.

I don't know why that's always been the picture of peace, but it is. And I can't quite see that that is exactly the message at the first visit. But when he didn't return at all, when you have no dove, that's the sign the judgment is over and there is peace that's returned to the earth.

But of course, man going out again is the same type of man that all the sons of Adam were that provoked the flood in the first place as a judgment from God. And you're going to see not too much improvement in man after the flood, in fact, none whatsoever. Now, there's a great spiritual lesson here and I wouldn't have you miss that for anything in the world.

We find Noah here now engaged in what we'd call bird watching and he sends out the raven, the raven didn't come back. Why didn't that raven come back? Well, that raven, you have to recognize what it eats and that raven eats just about anything. In fact, the matter is there was a whole lot of flesh floating around after the flood.

You can think of the dead animals and all of that floating around and that's what this old crow ate was that kind of a thing. And he didn't return because after all, he was really going to a feast and he was having a very wonderful time. He's an unclean bird, by the way.

Now, the dove is a clean bird and so listed later on. And remember that he took into the ark both clean and unclean. Now, the dove brought back information.

It was a regular homing pigeon. And on its second trip, he's now a confirmed bird watcher as far as Noah's concerned because he's brought back evidence that the dry land's appearing. And then he did not return and the waters of judgment are gone.

Now, again, may I repeat something we've said before? All great truths of the Bible are germane in Genesis. The Bible teaches that the believer has two natures, old and a new nature. And if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation.

And the clean and the unclean are together. You and I, I have these two natures. That which is born of the flesh is flesh.

Our Lord said that. And that which is born of the spirit is spirit. And Paul says that I know that within my flesh dwelleth no good thing.

But he says, the will is present with me, but how to perform it I find not. And there was a struggle between the two natures, by the way. And there's a struggle today between the old nature and the new nature of a believer.

And the raven went out into a judged world, but he found a feast and a dead carcass because that's the thing he lived on. The bloated carcass of a dinosaur would have made him a banquet. I tell you, it would have been for him a bacchanalian orgy.

And back and forth, he is restless. They went up and down. May I say to you, that's the picture of the old nature.

The old nature is like that raven. The old nature loves the things of the world, feasts on them. That's the reason so many people look at TV Sunday night and don't go to church.

Oh, don't tell me that you've got some good excuse for that. You've got an old nature, but that's no excuse because you ought not to be living in the old nature. Now, the dove went out into a judged world, but he found no rest, no satisfaction.

He returned to the ark. You see, today it's a matter of viewpoint. One of these professors said to me, this matter of what's right and wrong is relative.

He's right, it is. It's what God says is right and what he says is wrong, and he doesn't find very much that's wrong. The old raven went out in the world and loved it, and the believers told today, love not the world nor the things that are in the world.

You and I are living in a judged world today. We're in the world, not of it. We are to use it, but not to abuse it.

We're not to fall in love with it, but we are today to attempt to win the lost in this world and get out the Word of God. This is the place to get it out today. He told us to go ye into all the world and preach the gospel.

Let's take care of our job down here right now and get the Word out down here. That's the important thing. But the dove recognized he's in that kind of a world, and he found no rest.

Only in the ark, and that ark sets forth Christ, if you please. Now, let me just ask you this very personal question, and you have to answer it for yourself. By the way, what kind of bird are you? Are you a raven or a dove? Well, you've got both natures, but which one are you living in today? You love the things of God, or don't you? Well, now let me drop down here.

I'm going to finish this chapter today. Verse 18, And Noah went forth, his sons and his wife, and his son's wives with him. Every beast, every creeping thing, every fowl, and whatsoever creepeth upon the earth, after their kinds went forth out of the ark.

Now God makes a covenant with Noah here, and we're going to see the new beginning next time when we get in that next chapter. Fact of the matter is, we're going to see that God made a covenant with him. He can now eat meat, and a covenant that has to do with capital punishment.

It's a very important one. When God made it with Noah, he made it with the human family that's on the earth today.

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