

## **“The Dove and the Olive Leaf”** (Genesis 8:1–12)(10.9.22)

Genesis 8:1–12 (NIV84)

But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and the livestock that were with him in the ark, and he sent a wind over the earth, and the waters receded.<sup>2</sup> Now the springs of the deep and the floodgates of the heavens had been closed, and the rain had stopped falling from the sky.<sup>3</sup> The water receded steadily from the earth. At the end of the hundred and fifty days the water had gone down,<sup>4</sup> and on the seventeenth day of the seventh month the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat.<sup>5</sup> The waters continued to recede until the tenth month, and on the first day of the tenth month the tops of the mountains became visible.

<sup>6</sup>After forty days Noah opened the window he had made in the ark<sup>7</sup> and sent out a raven, and it kept flying back and forth until the water had dried up from the earth.<sup>8</sup> Then he sent out a dove to see if the water had receded from the surface of the ground.<sup>9</sup> But the dove could find no place to set its feet because there was water over all the surface of the earth; so it returned to Noah in the ark. He reached out his hand and took the dove and brought it back to himself in the ark.<sup>10</sup> He waited seven more days and again sent out the dove from

the ark.<sup>11</sup> When the dove returned to him in the evening, there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf! Then Noah knew that the water had receded from the earth.<sup>12</sup> He waited seven more days and sent the dove out again, but this time it did not return to him.

## **The word of God for the people of God.**

LET US PRAY.

Title: **"The Dove and the Olive Leaf"**

INTRODUCTION:

Most everyone knows the story of the Great Flood. Before there was written history, people shared their oral history. And, many different cultures have accounts of a great flood. Some detractors of the Bible say that because other cultures share the account and there are some differences that it undermines any confidence in the truth of the Bible. I would argue that instead, it actually supports the fact of the flood and therefore it supports the truth of the Bible.

In the Christian faith, the story of Noah, the Ark, and the great flood is one of the most popular stories that we teach to children. Why? Well, first of all it is a Bible story. Second, it is a great captivating story – I believe the word used by the

movie industry might be epic – it is an epic story. Then we have the very appealing aspect of all the animals and living creatures being gathered two by two and taken onto the ark. And, depending on where you end the story – say with the beautiful rainbow – it ends happily ever after.

But, in the story that we generally share with children, part of it we tend to gloss over. We don't give the whole truth as given for adults in the Bible. What was the cause of the flood? Why was everything destroyed except one extended family and pairs of each type of animal? What does the Bible say?

Genesis 6:5–7 (NIV84)

<sup>5</sup>The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.<sup>6</sup> The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain.<sup>7</sup> So the Lord said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth—men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air—for I am grieved that I have made them."

Wow! This is hard for us to take in. It would be hard to come up with a more condemning statement about the condition of the human race

than those three verses. How often do we even consider that we could be causing our Heavenly Father pain?

In the last couple a years, a phrase has become part of the common vernacular – it is called “the great reset.” Truly, the Great Flood was “the great reset;” one of epic proportions. God determined that nearly every living thing, human and otherwise, needed to be wiped out. A clean slate was called for. There was one glimmer of hope.

Genesis 6:8–13 (NIV84)

<sup>8</sup>But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.

<sup>9</sup>This is the account of Noah.

Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God.<sup>10</sup> Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth.

<sup>11</sup>Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight and was full of violence.<sup>12</sup> God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways.<sup>13</sup> So God said to Noah, “I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth.

BODY:

No, we don't get into all that nitty-gritty with the children. As a matter of fact, even with adults, that aspect is often glossed over from the pulpit. We don't really want to look into that mirror of history in fear we might see some image reflected that might implicate us in some way.

After all, isn't the modern mantra that humankind is basically good. If we can only educate people enough, if we can only socialize them properly, then we can turn this world into some type of Shangri La. Take a look around. We have never been so well educated and had access to so much knowledge. We have so many social programs and activities to help people – government and private support groups.

But still, we seem to be a long way from Shangri La.

This past Friday evening, there was this online headline for the Washington Post: **'Armageddon' warning reflects Biden's instincts about Putin**

"President Biden's warning this week that Russia's threats to use nuclear weapons amounted to the most serious "prospect of Armageddon in 60 years" was not based on any new intelligence or information collected by the government, U.S. officials said Friday, but rather Biden's own

assessment of what Russian President Vladimir Putin could be capable of.

Biden and other U.S. officials have harbored concerns in recent weeks that as the war continues to go poorly for Moscow, Putin would resort to increasingly drastic measures, said a senior administration official, who like others spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss private conversations.”

That is pretty scary stuff; all the more so because there doesn't seem to have been a time when it might have been more likely to happen (except maybe the Cuban Missile Crisis when John F. Kennedy was President). I could give you extensive evidence, but because of time, I will only give you a two BBC headlines from this past week:

Ukraine war: Putin signs Ukraine annexation laws amid military setbacks

Ukraine war: Russia warns US of direct military clash risk

While the Russian invasion of Ukraine is the biggest and most well-known conflict, there are many others. This category is for war with 10,000+ casualties in 2020-2021:

## **Afghanistan**

Type: Civil War/Terrorist Insurgency

## **Ethiopia [also involved: Eritrea]**

Type: Civil War

## **Mexico**

Type: Drug War

There are several strong and ruthless drug trafficking gangs in Mexico, and the Mexican government is always at war with them. Between January 2006 and May 2021, it is predicted that at least 350,000 people have been killed as a direct result of the war on drugs, with over 72,000 persons still missing.

## **Yemen [also involved: Saudi Arabia]**

Type: Civil War

In the category for less than 10,000 casualties but more than 1,000, there are 17 countries. That brings the total in 2022 to 22 countries in a state of war; not including those involved in the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Also this week in the news, **Treasury announces new sanctions on Iran amid violent response to protests**

The sanctions come hours after Amnesty International reported that at least 82 people had been killed in the protests.

“The rights to freedom of expression and of peaceful assembly are vital to guaranteeing individual liberty and dignity,” Treasury Undersecretary Brian Nelson said in a statement. “The United States condemns the Iranian government’s Internet shutdown and continued violent suppression of peaceful protest and will not hesitate to target those who direct and support such actions.”

The announcement marks the second set of sanctions the U.S. has imposed against Iranian officials after the death of Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old woman who was arrested and accused of violating the country’s strictly imposed dress requirements for women.

Surely the news is better closer to home. Uh...no.

## **Philadelphia reaches a 'devastating' 300 homicides for the year**

By [Emily Shapiro](#)

July 19, 2022, 3:59 PM



Philadelphia, [which is battling an epidemic of gun violence](#), has reached 300 homicides for the year, police said.

The 300th victim was an 18-year-old man shot multiple times Monday night, according to [ABC Philadelphia station WPVI](#). Three weapons were used and at least 54 pieces of ballistics were recovered at the scene, Philadelphia Police Chief Inspector Frank Vanore told reporters.

Also among this year's victims are a [16-year-old boy who was fatally shot](#) three times in the face and a [17-year-old boy gunned down](#) near his high school in the middle of the afternoon.

"Every act of gun violence is an unspeakable tragedy. The fact that our city has lost 300 souls to date this year is devastating," Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney told reporters Tuesday. "The surging gun violence that we've seen in our city and cities across the country pains us all."

Last year [Philadelphia reached a record high](#), ending the year with 562 homicides.

**Police data highlights Philadelphia's continuing problem with carjackings**

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**PHILADELPHIA** - There have been over 750 carjackings in Philadelphia through the first seven months of the year, according to data obtained by FOX 29 from a law enforcement source.

The report found that of the 758 total carjackings in Philadelphia between the start of 2022 and July 31, more than 500 involved a gun and over 500 happened when the victim's vehicle was parked.

New Subject: Two days ago, Tucker Carlson did an interview with Kanye West. West told Tucker, "There are more black babies aborted [killed] in NYC than born. That became quite controversial. Abortion advocates pointed out that while that was true from 2012 to 2016, the following three years there were more black births than abortions. I say to you, "Is that really a defense? There should not be any comparison at all."

Let me now give you just a little insight into the proliferation of pornography. **Pornhub** is a Canadian-owned [internet pornography](#) website. It is one of several pornographic video-streaming websites owned by [MindGeek](#). As of June 2020, Pornhub was **the 10th-most-trafficked website in the world** and the third-most-trafficked adult website after [XVideos](#) and [XNXX](#). Note that that means 3 of the top 10 websites are for pornography.

Here are some of their stats:

\*Visits to Pornhub totaled 33.5 billion over the course of 2018, an increase of 5 billion visits over 2017. Pornhub's daily visits now exceed 100 million.

\*30.3 billion searches, or 962 searches per second.

\*Every minute, 63,992 new visitors arrive at Pornhub,

\*12 new videos and 2 hours of content are uploaded to Pornhub every minute.

What does this say about the human heart? What is it that we are actually searching for? What void are we trying to fill?

Probably by now, you have begun to shut down. It is too much to absorb. I could go on and on. Drug use, family breakdown, mental health, etc., etc., etc. Is God grieved today? Is God's heart filled with pain today? Because God never changes, I believe the answer is yes to both questions.

The glimmer of hope for the world today is much brighter than Noah. That bright Hope is the light of the world. The true light that gives light to every man has come into the world. The Lord Jesus Christ, the Word, became flesh and made His dwelling among us.

So...Adam and Eve failed. Then there was murder in the next generation. This continued until God's heart broke and He wiped everything clean with the Great Flood. That is two strikes against the human race. Noah was the reset. Here we are again it seems – the pitch has been thrown by Satan and it looks like we have started to swing the bat...and it is a change-up pitch. Three strikes and we will be out.

The flooding had stopped for Noah and his family and all the ark occupants. The ark came to rest on an unnamed mountain in the Ararat Mountain Chain. God forced the flood waters to recede. I want to point out a similarity between this biblical account and the account of Creation in Genesis One. Here, God sent a wind over the earth, and the waters receded. The Hebrew word for wind is the same word for spirit. Genesis 1:2 (NIV84) Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. Yes, God was starting again with Noah and his family.

In obedience and faith, Noah did not try to leave the Ark too soon. That family must have been tremendously anxious to get off that boat. And yet, they had to wait until the waters were fully receded and life on earth could be sustained.

Many commentators and preachers see significant symbolism here, with types and foreshadowing. First, Noah sends out a raven. The raven is a pretty good size bird. It is a bird of prey and a scavenger. It has often been perceived as an ominous omen.

Some see this raven as representing Satan. Noah sent out a raven, and it kept flying back and forth until the water had dried up from the earth. Some speculate that the raven didn't come back because there was plenty of carrion, death, and decay for him to feast on.

I see another connection to Satan in the description of the raven flying back and forth over the earth. Job 1:7 (NIV84) The Lord said to Satan, "Where have you come from?"

Satan answered the Lord, "From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it." This same query and answer happens in Job 2:2.

Then in 1 Peter 5:8 (NIV84) Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

The dove in scripture is called gentle. It could be used in the Jewish sacrificial system. When Joseph and Mary presented Jesus to the Lord at the Jerusalem Temple they offered a sacrifice of a pair

of doves in keeping with the Law of the Lord.  
Leviticus 12:8 (NIV84)

<sup>8</sup>If [a new mother] cannot afford a lamb, she is to bring two doves or two young pigeons, one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering. In this way the priest will make atonement for her, and she will be clean.' "

Most notably, the dove is remembered from the account of Jesus' baptism in the Jordan River by His cousin, John the Baptist. Mark 1:10–11 (NIV84)

<sup>10</sup>As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. <sup>11</sup>And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

It has been said that the dove that Noah released the first time represented the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. The Spirit of God acted in certain circumstances and came in a limited way. The third time the dove was released represented the Spirit of God coming on Pentecost. He came in power and stayed as Jesus promised His disciples.

The second dove released returned to Noah carrying an olive leaf. To this day, the olive branch is considered a sign of peace. God was telling us

that His wrath had been satisfied and that there was now peace between humankind and the Creator.

In the Bible, olives and olive trees are symbols of beauty, faithfulness, or plenty. The destruction of olive trees signifies disaster. Because of time, I will just give you one verse: Psalm 52:8 But I am like an olive tree flourishing in the house of God; I trust in God's unfailing love for ever and ever.

#### CONCLUSION:

But Satan's change-up pitch is coming at us; what are we to do? We have a promise in the prophecy in Isaiah 9:6 (NIV84)

<sup>6</sup> For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders.

And he will be called

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,

Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Jesus, the Savior of the world, is **the Prince of Peace**.

On that first Christmas Eve, the shepherds were in the fields when, Luke 2:<sup>13</sup> Suddenly a great

company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

<sup>14</sup> “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth **peace to men on whom his favor rests.**”

Colossians 1:19–20 (NIV84)

<sup>19</sup> For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in [Jesus],<sup>20</sup> and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by **making peace through his blood**, shed on the cross.

Romans 5:1 (NIV84) *Peace and Joy*

Therefore, since we have been **justified through faith**, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Our Lord Jesus is our Advocate who sits at the right hand of God our Father. As promised, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit, our comforter and counselor.

Romans 8:6 (NIV84) The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace;

Nowadays, it seems that even good news is bad news. Last Friday, it was reported that job growth was up and unemployment was down. The headline? “Wall Street dives on strong jobs report,



Dow Jones sheds 630 points.” It dropped over two percent.

Our good news is the gospel. The gospel is the message of Jesus Christ who proclaimed in John 3:16–21 (NIV84)

<sup>16</sup>“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.<sup>17</sup> For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.<sup>18</sup> Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.<sup>19</sup> This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.<sup>20</sup> Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.<sup>21</sup> But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God.”

Amen and amen. Let us pray.