

## **November 6, 2016 - Gen. 8:1–14 - The Flood Subsides**

Torah Readings: Gen. 8:1–14 - The Flood Subsides

Psalm 6

Haftorah - Habakkuk 3:2-10 + 19

### **God remembered Noah**

Genesis 8:1 - “And God remembered Noah, 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 asswaged”

It may have seemed to Noah that he was forgotten, after experiencing five months of destruction with no direct word from God. God also “remembered” Abraham (Genesis 19:29) and Rachel (Genesis 30:22).

And in the Psalms of Ascent, “LORD, remember David, and all his afflictions” (Psalm 132:1) - a psalm about a different Ark finding its resting place.

“Remembered” is “zakar” - possibly from a root that means shut up, preserve, to keep, but also “to pierce, pinpoint,” or “zero-in on” in order to bring to mind.

The waters were dried up from the earth by “a wind of mercies” according to the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem.

**Genesis 8:4** - “And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat.”

### **Resting of the Ark = Jesus’ Resurrection**

Israel had dual ways of marking the year. A tenth century B.C. inscription known as the Gezer Calendar begins in the Fall and lists the months according to what was harvested in that month. It is believed that after the Exile in Babylon, they instituted a separate “civil calendar” that began in the month Nisan.

If the Ark rested occurred in the seventh month of the original calendar, it would fall in Passover week, and the seventeenth day would mark the day of Jesus’ resurrection.

### **The Raven**

**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.”

When Noah sent the raven to see whether the waters were abated, it refused to go, saying: "Thy Lord hateth me; for, while seven of other species were received into the ark, only two of mine were admitted. And thou also hatest me; for, instead of sending one from the sevens, thou sendest me! If I am met by the angel of heat or by the angel of cold, my species will be lost." Noah answered the raven: "The world hath no need of thee; for thou art good neither for food nor for sacrifice." God, however, ordered Noah to receive the raven into the ark, as it was destined to feed Elijah (Sanhedrin 108b; Genesis Rabba 33.6). See 1 Kings 17:4–6.

The ravens also have a darker mission: Proverbs 30:17 - "The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it."

## **The Dove**

**Genesis 8:12** - "And he stayed yet other seven days; and sent forth the dove; which returned not again unto him any more."

Ancient sailors the world over used doves and other birds to help them find and navigate toward land.

Christian tradition says the "dove" returned at Jesus' baptism, when the Holy Spirit took that form.

**Matthew 3:16-17** - "As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.'"

Before the cross gained prominence in the fourth century, the second-century church father Clement of Alexandria urged early Christians to use the dove or a fish as a symbol to identify themselves and each other as followers of Jesus. The image of a dove holding an olive branch continues to be a symbol of peace. It's fluttering motion is reflected in Genesis 1:2 as the Spirit moved upon the face of the waters.

The low, cooing sound of a dove served as mournful imagery to evoke the suffering of the people of Judah (see Isaiah 38:14, 59:11; Ezekiel 7:16 and others).