

Genesis 8:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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 in unto him into the ark.

Analysis

But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark, for the... This passage belongs to the primeval history section (Genesis 1-11) which establishes universal truths about God, humanity, sin, and divine purposes before focusing on Abraham and Israel. These chapters answer fundamental questions about human origins, the spread of wickedness, God's judgment, and the preservation of a righteous remnant.

Recurring patterns emerge: human sin escalating from individual disobedience to societal corruption, divine patience followed by judgment, gracious preservation of a remnant, and covenant promises ensuring redemptive purposes continue. The genealogies connect historical persons, demonstrate the fulfillment of divine promises (blessing and multiplication), and trace the line leading to Abraham and ultimately Christ.

Key theological themes in this section include:

1. sin's destructive progression affecting all humanity
2. God's righteous judgment while preserving mercy
3. human pride and autonomy opposing divine sovereignty
4. cultural development as both blessing and potential idolatry
5. God's sovereign plan advancing despite human rebellion.

These narratives provide the necessary context for understanding God's calling of Abraham and the covenant promises through which all nations will be blessed.

Historical Context

The primeval history (Genesis 1-11) parallels ancient Near Eastern traditions including Sumerian King Lists (pre-flood longevity), Akkadian flood traditions (Atrahasis, Gilgamesh), and Mesopotamian city foundation myths. However, Genesis demythologizes these traditions, presenting monotheistic history rather than polytheistic mythology. The genealogies connecting Adam to Noah to Abraham provide historical framework absent in pagan myths.

Archaeological evidence confirms ancient urbanization (chapter 4's cities), agricultural development, metallurgy, and musical instruments emerging in Mesopotamia's early history. The Babel account reflects Mesopotamian ziggurat construction (stepped pyramid temples), particularly in Babylon. Linguistic diversity requiring explanation was obvious to ancient peoples, making the Babel narrative culturally relevant.

For Israel in covenant with Yahweh, these chapters explained their relationship to surrounding nations. All peoples descended from Noah, but Israel descended from Shem through Abraham—chosen for blessing all nations. The flood demonstrated God's justice and mercy: judging wickedness while preserving the righteous. This pattern would recur throughout Israel's history, assuring them that God's covenant faithfulness endures despite judgment on the wicked.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does this verse deepen our understanding of God's character and His relationship with creation?
2. What obstacles prevent us from living out the truths presented in this verse?
3. What connections can we trace from this verse to Jesus' life, death, and resurrection?

Interlinear Text

וְלֹא
H3808 found
מִצָּאתָה
H4672 But the dove
בַּיּוֹנֶה
H3123 no rest
מִןْ וּמִן
H4494 for the sole
לְכַף
H3709 of her foot
בְּגַלְלָה
H7272 and she returned
וְשָׁבָת

אֶל אֶל
H413 unto him into the ark
בְּתִיבָּה
H8392 כִּי
H3588 מִן
H4325 עַל
H5921 פִּנְגִּי
H6440 were on the face

כָּל
H3605 of the whole earth
וְשָׁלַח
H776 then he put forth
בָּאֵץ
H7971 his hand
וְיִדְוֹ
H3027 and took her
וְקִרְבָּה
H3947 and pulled her in
בְּאָזְנָה
H935

אֶל אֶל
H853 unto him into the ark
בְּתִיבָּה
H413 כִּי
H413 הַתִּבְהָה
H8392

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 116:7 (Parallel theme): Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee.

Matthew 11:28 (Parallel theme): Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Isaiah 60:8 (Parallel theme): Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?

John 16:33 (Parallel theme): These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

Deuteronomy 28:65 (Parallel theme): And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind:

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