Genesis 8:9, NIV

Blessed be the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Welcome to this Bible study, where we dive into the living Word of God.

In the days following the great flood, Noah sought to understand whether the waters had receded. To do this, he released two birds from the ark a raven and a dove.

Genesis 8:6–9 (NIV) says:

> *“After forty days Noah opened a window he had made in the ark*
> *and sent out a raven, and it kept flying back and forth until the water had dried up from the earth.*
> *Then he sent out a dove to see if the water had receded from the surface of the ground.*
> *But the dove could find nowhere to perch 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.”*

The raven flew around and did not return, while the dove, finding no clean or stable ground, returned to Noah.

Why did the dove come back, but the raven did not?

This distinction holds deeper theological significance rooted in the Old Testament laws concerning clean and unclean animals.

1. Clean vs. Unclean Animals

Before the flood, God gave Noah specific instructions:

Genesis 7:1–3 (NIV):

> *“The Lord then said to Noah, ‘Go into the ark, you and your whole family, because I have found you righteous in this generation.*
> *Take with you seven pairs of every kind of clean animal, a male and its mate, and one pair of every kind of unclean animal, a male and its mate,*
> *and also seven pairs of every kind of bird, male and female, to keep their various kinds alive throughout the earth.’”*

The raven belongs to the category of unclean birds:

Leviticus 11:13–15 (NIV):

> *“These are the birds you are to regard as unclean and not eat because they are unclean: the eagle, the vulture, the black vulture,*
> *the red kite, any kind of black kite,*
> *any kind of raven…”*

The dove, on the other hand, is a clean bird, often used in sacrificial offerings as a symbol of purity and peace (e.g., Leviticus 1:14).

2. Spiritual Implications

Unclean birds like ravens are scavengers. They feed on anything, including dead flesh. Spiritually, they symbolize the sinful nature those who are comfortable in corrupt, defiled environments. That may explain why the raven did not return: it found decay to feed on.

The dove, however, represents those who are pure in heart those who cannot settle in a defiled world. Seeing that the earth was still unclean (covered in water), it returned to the safety of the ark.

Theologically, this mirrors the distinction between the carnal person (symbolized by the raven) and the spiritual person (symbolized by the dove). Just as the dove returned to the ark (a symbol of Christ as our refuge), so too do the righteous find no rest in a sinful world but seek safety in Christ.

2 Corinthians 6:17 (NIV):

> *“‘Come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you.’”*

Romans 12:2 (NIV):

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”

If you feel at home in a world filled with sin, corruption, and immorality if you delight in unrighteousness and have no conviction then spiritually, you resemble the raven.

But if your heart longs for purity, if you cannot rest in a sinful environment, and you continually return to the presence of God for refuge then you walk the path of the dove.

3. The Ark as a Type of Christ

The ark was a place of safety during judgment. Spiritually, it represents Christ our ultimate refuge from the wrath to come.

John 14:6 (NIV):

> *“Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’”*

The dove found no place to rest in the judged world, so it returned to the ark. In the same way, believers those washed by the blood of Jesus find no lasting comfort in the pleasures of this

world. Their rest is found in Christ alone.

So, which are you a dove or a raven?

If sin still rules your life, it’s time to turn to Jesus. Repent and surrender to Him. He will receive you, cleanse you, and give you the Holy Spirit, who empowers you to live a holy life.

Matthew 15:18–20 (NIV):

> *“But the things that come out of a person’s mouth come from the heart, and these defile them.*
> *For out of the heart come evil thoughts murder, adultery,*
> *sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.*
> *These are what defile a person…”*

Reject the spirit of the raven. Be like the dove pure, discerning, and drawn to the presence of God.

The Lord bless you.

Maranatha—Come, Lord Jesus!

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