



"The Olive Branch" article nearby finds a great lesson in the story of Noah stuck in his ark during the flood, waiting for the end of the rain, and then for the flood to recede enough that both humans and animals could disembark safely and resume their lives. As I try to envision that, many questions arise in my mind about how this could realistically happen, but those are for another time.

As I replied to someone who responded to this article, "Yes, waiting is difficult. An emerging theme from The Chosen is one word: "SOON". And what does "soon" mean? They said it in the NT. They say it now. 2000 years apart! In The Chosen, the disciples found that word ironic and laughed together. 'Soon' to God is not the same as 'soon' to us. Sigh."

In "The Chosen", and in the Bible, the disciples waited for Jesus to reveal and fulfill His mission on earth, which they assumed to be a military victory over the hated Romans, driving them out of Israel. "When will You. . .", and "When do we . . ." So often the answer was (and is) to wait with patience. "Soon" became the answer Jesus would give them, which became their common by-word, as they rolled their eyes good-naturedly.

Of course, the disciples gradually learned that Jesus' mission was NOT political and aimed at removing the Romans, but rather to bring salvation to mankind, offering a path to reconciliation with God. After witnessing His miracles and being given the power to perform miracles themselves, they were convinced that Jesus was the Messiah Who had been promised in the Old Testament prophecies for a thousand years.

Then they began to ask "When will this or that event that was promised in the scriptures happen?" "When will God establish His kingdom on earth?" "When, when, when. . .???"

Jesus' answer was always "Soon". But since none of those events happened in that time, and since they haven't happened in the 2000 years since, "soon" becomes a flexible word. God's ways are not our ways, and His timing is not our timing. "Soon" to Him can be 2000 years.

The apostle Peter said in his letter to early Christians:

This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles, knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation." For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. (2 Peter 3:1-11)

Peter understood the issue, having experienced the wait himself. "Soon" our Lord will come and resolve all of this mess. SOON!

It means we'd better be ready for Him.

Are YOU ready for "Soon"?



WAITING . . .

Linda Gammel



The Olive Branch

After another 40 days, Noah opened the window at the top of the ark and released a raven, which flew back and forth until the waters had dried up. Then Noah sent out a dove to see if the waters had subsided, but the dove found no place to rest her feet and returned to the ark. So, Noah brought the dove safely back into the ark with him. Noah waited another seven days and again released the dove. And that evening, the dove returned to Noah, and in her mouth was a freshly plucked olive leaf. Noah waited another seven days and sent out the dove, only this time she did not return.

—iBIBLE Chapter 4

Scripture reference: Genesis 8:6-12

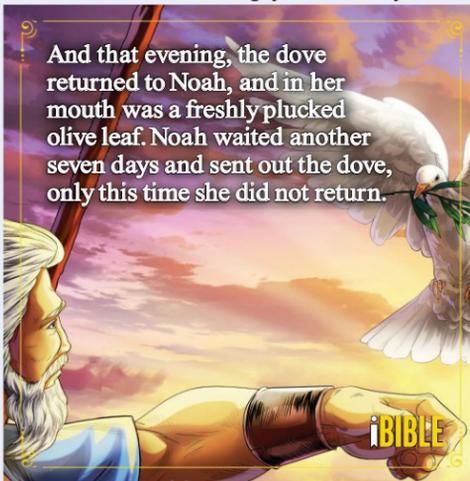
After another 40 days, Noah began the process of checking to see if the waters had sufficiently dried up. First, he sent a raven out from the ark. It flew out over the waters. Some believe that the raven never returned to the ark. Others believe that the raven flew back and forth from the ark, but never came back inside. Either way, the raven did not provide the information that Noah needed.

Ravens are known to eat any available food source—even carcasses—which means this particular kind of bird would not have needed the waters to have receded to eat its fill. Doves, however, primarily eat grain, seeds, berries, greens, and certain types of bugs only: they gather their food from the ground. So, when Noah decided to send out a dove next, he would get a much clearer picture about the state of the land surrounding the ark.

The first time the dove flew out, it could not find a place to rest its feet, so it came back into the ark. Seven days passed, then Noah tried again. The second time, the dove brought Noah an olive branch. The dove therefore indicated to Noah that the waters had receded far enough that the olive trees, at the very least, were exposed. Seven more days passed, and when Noah sent the dove out a third time, it did not return to the ark, having found a safe land to dwell in.

Three sets of seven days, and the dove finally revealed to Noah that the world was safe to enter back into. When the dove arrived back to the ark with an olive branch, it presented hope—the world was coming alive again, and they would soon safely be able to exit the ark.

Doves appear throughout Scripture. We see the Holy Spirit descending from Heaven in the form of a dove at Jesus's baptism (see Matthew 3:16-17). Doves are an important part of the sacrificial system of the Old Testament (see Leviticus 5:7-8). They are also used as images of beauty and peace (see Psalm 68:13, Song of Solomon 2:14). In the case of Noah, this dove was the herald of the new, safe world—a sign from the Lord that His promises were fulfilled, and that Noah, his family, and the animals were delivered.



And that evening, the dove returned to Noah, and in her mouth was a freshly plucked olive leaf. Noah waited another seven days and sent out the dove, only this time she did not return.

Our lives, riddled with the brokenness that sin brings, can feel unbearable in times of waiting. But God calls us to put our trust in Him in all times, even in the times we feel will not end. And in those moments, we can be assured of God's presence dwelling with us. In the story of Noah,

and in the stories of Jesus He gives us the promise that He will meet us in our waiting. He will equip us with the fortitude and strength to continue.

The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength.

Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

—Isaiah 40:28b-31

Seek the Lord and renew your strength as you wait. Find Him in His Word, run to Him in prayer, and receive the refreshment that you need so that you, like Noah, can abide the times of waiting with faith and perseverance.

A Prayer for This Week

Most Merciful God, meet us in our waiting. Help us to find You when we are frightened, angry, or simply weary from our waiting. Renew our strength and help us to seek Your face, Your mercy, and the comfort that You bring. We give our struggles and our burdens to You, trusting that You will make them light. Grant us perseverance and faith in Jesus's name. Amen.

On The Lighter Side . . . from the Web



WELL, THAT WOULD CERTAINLY EXPLAIN WHY HE LET THREE OF US ON BOARD.



WE'LL WAIT FOR THE NEXT ONE

LVEDA Meeting

(Lucerne Valley Economic Development Association)

Monday, January 30th

Note Date: (No longer the first Monday of the month) 5:00 pm at the Moose Lodge

on Foothill Road, just west of Tradepost Road.

- Reports from our **County, State and Federal representatives** including County Supervisor Dawn Rowe, County Fire Chief Dan Munsey, Code Enforcement's Chief Ignacio Nunez, and Supervisor Curtis Stone.
- Agenda will include County Fire's budget and tax issues, Latest illegal marijuana grow busts, and Code Enforcement activity on food vendors, illegal residences, busted grows, etc.
- We'll possibly have updates from our new State Assembly representative.
- Will discuss what County/State/Federal services are most important for Lucerne Valley, how can we citizens help their efforts, what's happening around town, real estate report, what should be LVEDA's priorities for the year, and announcements
- **LOOK FOR IMPORTANT UPDATES TO THIS MEETING AT THE STORE!**