

## Symbols of Peace in the Flood

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For many, the record of Noah's ark and the flood are almost mythological. They fail to appreciate that this was a real event that has a great symbolic importance. It is referenced in the New Testament on a number of occasions (Matthew 24, Hebrews 11, 1 Peter 3, 2 Peter 3). Within this event there are a number of importance symbols that have become common use today (the rainbow, the dove, the olive branch) which represent peace. But what is lost on many is that this represents not the peace of man, but the peace of God. What is the peace of God?

First, let us consider the symbols. We are told that the water symbolizes baptism in 1 Peter 3:21. While the water destroyed the world, it saved Noah. In a like manner we are saved from the world by water. The Rainbow is God's bow; it is His weapon of war in the war against mankind. By placing it in the sky, it symbolizes the satisfaction of His wrath against us. The word used to describe the satisfaction of God's wrath is *propitiation*. Blood is the propitiation of wrath (Romans 3:25). The rainbow is blood. The dove represents the revelation of the peace of God. By bringing the branch, it revealed that there would be peace between God and man. In the New Testament, the Holy Spirit takes the form (like) of a dove in Matthew 3. This symbol represents the Spirit in revelation. Finally there is the ark. It symbolizes the place of salvation. For us today, this is the church. It is covered with pitch, which is like the blood of Christ.

The flood is the story of the great war between God and man. This war is still ongoing, for as long as man sins and chooses the world, he is an enemy of God (James 4:4). The greatest enemy man has ever had is God. This is the lesson taught in Romans 5:1-11. There we learn about God's plan to make peace through the blood of Jesus Christ (again, propitiation). It is a peace which requires our destruction (consider the peace of God in Leviticus 26:6). Jesus said that He was the Rock, the Stone rejected by men. Whoever fell on Him is broken (surrenders), but whomever He falls upon is pulverized (eternal death). The point is this: God is an enemy who demands a total surrender. This is the peace the prophets often pointed too in the Old Testament that the Messiah would bring (Isaiah 2:4, 9:7, etc). Not a peace between men (although this would come too, Ephesians 2:14), but a peace between man and our greatest enemy, God.

Christians have become emissaries of the great peace of God. We are to bring to men the terms of peace (total surrender), and proclaim the Gospel of Peace (Ephesians 6:15). Ultimately, this peace testifies to our salvation. Once more, consider the great symbols of the flood: the water (baptism), the rainbow (blood propitiation), and the dove (the Spirit of Revelation). Now consider the words of 1 John 5:7-9: *For there are three that testify: the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement. If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater; for the testimony of God is this, that He has testified concerning His Son.* Thus, these symbols are now the testimony of our salvation. The Blood of Christ which make propitiation; the Spirit of Revelation which brings us the message of God (and Faith), and the water of Baptism, our obedience of God's message.