

## THE DOVE

The mild, meek and endearing qualities of the dove made them a welcomed sight as they flocked abundantly among the people in the land of Israel. Not only were the doves plentiful and welcomed in the villages but the Bible speaks of "the doves in the valleys" and "rocky clefts" which filled the mountain gorges with the echoes of their cooing and the rustling of their wings, Ez. 7:16, Jer. 48:28. No wonder the "dove" is mentioned oftener in the Bible than any other bird.

David, as a young shepherd boy, day after day cared faithfully for his sheep in the verdant pastureland and lush green valleys surrounding Jerusalem. There he observed the gentle, patient nature and brilliant beauty of the dove and in the book of Psalms we can read of how they inspired him through his prose and poetry.

Guarding his flock day and night on the beautiful hillsides, many times, in the cool damp evenings David built a campfire for the warmth it would bring him as he prepared his food and warmed the cool spring water. Many times the new baby lambs also needed the warmth of the fire until they became stronger and were able to graze with the flock once again.

One day David returned to the campfire and from a distance he could see something nestled in the ashes and huddled close to the "pots" which were two-pronged hooks used for flaying animals. Hiding there in the dark were the doves absorbing the warmth of the metal as they waited for the heat of the rising sun.

David startled the doves as he approached the campfire; he found himself speechless as he stood in silence and watched the doves take flight in the sky out from the dust of the ashes. Up high they soared overhead as their wings stretched and swayed looking for a branch as another landing site.

How beautiful they looked David thought as he watched the sun on their bodies. The dove, though dusty and dirty from the ashes, could not conceal the shiny silver from the metallic luster of their wings and the brilliant golden streaks from their feathers as they glistened in the morning sky. Soon in the distance David heard their plaintive "cooing" and it reminded him it was time to get back to the care of his sheep.

Later that day, David wrote, "Though you have lodged among the pots, yet shall you be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold", Ps. 68:13. David was inspired to write and compare the dirtiness of the doves nestled in the ashes to sin in our lives. He said we too, before we were called of God, are dirty and soiled

when we "lodge" or "live" in a sinful way of life or contrary to God and His teachings. We too are cold and lonely for we are absent the warmth of the love of God in our lives.

But God is telling us through David, when we follow God and He gives us His spirit, the endearing nature of Christ, symbolized in the Bible by the endearing qualities of the dove, Mk. 1:10; we begin to emit the sweetness of His voice, His modesty, meekness and His gentleness in the midst of the darkness of the world. And more so, through His spirit, we are given strength and power to "soar up" out of all the filth, dirt and darkness of sin and shine forth as the "wings of a dove" for the "endearing" nature of Christ cannot be hidden when we become a "New creation in Christ"!

Is it any wonder Christ told us, "... be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves", Matt. 10:16.

MEMORY VERSE  
BE YE THEREFORE WISE AS SERPENTS,  
AND HARMLESS AS DOVES  
MATTHEW 10:16

