

### **Wednesday, January 4, 2017 - Day 3 – Genesis 7-9; Psalm 3; Matt 3**

We have no idea how many universes the Godhead created before the Trinity brought our planet earth into existence. What we do know is that the Creator made humankind in His own image and sought relationships with generations of his protégés. Covenants were important to the Lord-God. Within the Trinity, mutual agreements flowed in synchrony.

God created sentient persons capable of conscious reasoning, but not necessarily keen judgment. God saw that the lifestyles of humankind were corrupt, even antagonistic to God's purposes. Distraught, the Lord-God decided to blot out the existence of humanity. But later, He remembered in his mind's eye the potential of humanity.

The story continues. And yes, it is a story, not history. God recognizes Noah's goodness and capitalizes on the opportunity to reverse the negative flow, to turn the tide of creation into positive energy again. God wills to cleanse planet earth. He draws Noah into a covenant that restores the solemn compact with humanity from the beginning.

The terms of the initial covenant are that God employs Noah as his agent to build an ark and to gather all types of created beings. When all creatures are aboard, God seals the remnants of life into the ark. When the cleansing rains subside, all leave the ark to resume their lives. The Lord-God establishes a new covenant promising never again in future generations to destroy the earth. The rainbow becomes the seal of this new covenant.

Looking into Noah's immediate future, and even into the future that is today, this covenant with God requires a reckoning of the qualities of human life. The Lord entrusts humankind to protect the lives of all creatures by doing justice. Noah and his sons step up to the task.

What constitutes the viable reckoning of human life expands exponentially through the years. New meanings and interpretations unfold. Nevertheless, an inner core persists. Human beings are created in the image of God. The flow of our living, breathing Trinitarian Godhead promotes new perspectives. We now leave Genesis to approach Matthew.

John the Baptist is an evangelist who propounds a new avenue for the reckoning of human life. He introduces the notion of repentance. Repentance was not in the vocabulary of first century humans. Repentance requires inner awareness. In the early days of "The Baptist" and of "The Savior," the focus of the Jews was on purification rites and rituals. These were understood to be mandatory outward behaviors: outward and visible signs. That they might be united with inward and spiritual grace was a brand new revelation. The crowds came out of curiosity. Many were caught up in excitement. Others sought Baptism, confessing their sins.

Jesus came forward to be baptized. John wanted to prevent this. Jesus requested that he be baptized to fulfill all righteousness. When Jesus rose upright, coming up and out of His immersion, only He himself knew the Spirit of God had descended as a dove. Only He heard the voice saying, "This is my son and he pleases me." This was the flowing cooperation of the Godhead. It was by mutual agreement of the Godhead.

Let us briefly contemplate the juxtaposition of these expressions. I find myself once again in awe. I approach the universal Christ through the particularities of the Godhead. I notice the mutual flowing of the Trinity at work through the roles of water: the cleansing of Creation; the cleansing from sin through repentance; and the cleansing of Baptism. God remembers humanity and reminds us that we have many fresh starts.

By The Rev. Dr. J. Robin Robb