

Elder Vernon Johnson

Numbers

Abraham's Purchase of a Burial Site

When Sarah died, Abraham purchased from the children of Heth a place to bury Sarah: "Gen. 23:12 "And Abraham bowed down himself before the people of the land. 13 And he spake unto Ephron in the audience of the people of the land, saying, But if thou wilt give it, I pray thee, hear me: I will give thee money for the field; take it of me, and I will bury my dead there. 14 And Ephron answered Abraham, saying unto him, 15 My lord, hearken unto me: the land is worth four hundred shekels of silver; what is that betwixt me and thee? bury therefore thy dead. 16 And Abraham hearkened unto Ephron; and Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver, which he had named in the audience of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant. 17 And the field of Ephron, which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field, and the cave which was therein, and all the trees that were in the field, that were in all the borders round about, were made sure 18 Unto Abraham for a possession in the presence of the children of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of his city."

In the process of time, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, and Jacob and Leah were all buried in this possession of a burying site that Abraham purchased for four hundred shekels of silver.

Four hundred is closely associated in the scriptures with the subject of bondage. A part of the bondage that the elect come face to face with is death and the grave. Silver is associated in the scriptures with the subject of redemption. Thus, the deliverance from the bondage of death and the grave is found in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ.

In the history of humankind, the vast majority of people have never seen anyone delivered from death and the grave. From the viewpoint of what we see with our eyes, no one who goes down into the grave ever returns into the land of the living. This bondage of death and the grave strikes fear in the hearts of men. This fear of death torments the hearts of men (1 John 4:18). Not only does the grave hold its occupants, but also the fear of death subjects the living all of their lifetime to the bondage of death (Heb. 2:15). One only need visit a funeral service to see the fear that many who are present are expressing in their faces.

There is deliverance for the elect children of God both from the bondage of the grave and from the fear of death. Job expressed his belief in the resurrection from the grave: Job 19:23 "Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book! 24 That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever! 25 For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: 26 And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:" Thus, Job believed that the same flesh that the skin worms destroyed would one day see God!

Our deliverance from the bondage of the grave and from the fear of death is found in the covenant work of Jesus Christ. This covenant is stated in Rom. 8:29, 30: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." This covenant promise is such that it overcomes the wages of sin, which is death through the justifying blood of Christ. In addition, this covenant promise delivers us from the bondage of the grave in that we will one day stand glorified before God.

Therefore, through this covenant promise, we have hope that the end of this life is not to lie in the grave forever, but that the very flesh that goes to the grave Christ will resurrect from the grave and present to God in a glorified state. For this promise to be fulfilled Jesus came and delivered us from the curse of the law of sin and death. Heb. 2:14 "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

For those who understand this covenant promise death and the grave no longer hold the torment over them that they once had. Their hope in the resurrection is very precious unto them.