

Elder Vernon Johnson

Numbers

Bondage in Egypt

The number four hundred is closely associated with the subject of bondage. The first time it appears in the scriptures is in connection with a prophecy God gave to Abram in Gen. 15:13 "And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years." God had made a covenant with Abram to give to his seed the land of Canaan, but before they would be given the land, God told him that they would dwell in Egypt in bondage for four hundred years.

When Stephen made his defense before the High Priest and the Sanhedrin court and the Pharisees, Sadducees, and lawyers he recounted that prophecy: Acts 7:6 "And God spake on this wise, That his seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat them evil four hundred years."

For the sake of this essay, we will not recall all of the scriptures in connection with the children of Israel dwelling in Egypt for four hundred years in Egyptian captivity. We will limit our space to just a few that shows forth the manner of that bondage:

1. Ex. 1:8 "Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. 9 And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: 10 Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land. 11 Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses." The Pharaoh who arose and knew not Joseph used subtlety to enslave the children of Israel. Israel had not come down into Egypt as slaves, but were brought into slavery by subtlety. Pharaoh set taskmasters over Israel and afflicted them with burdens and forbid them to leave the land of Egypt.

2. Ex. 1:13 "And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour: 14 And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour." The lives of the children of Israel were so bitter because of the hard bondage they were placed under by Pharaoh and his minions. They were made to serve with rigour.

3. When the children of Israel had continued to grow in number, Pharaoh had tried to limit their growth by commanding that all the male children born be cast in the river. It was by this commandment of Pharaoh that God intervened and raised up a savior to eventually deliver the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage and destroy Pharaoh and his army. This individual was named Moses.

God appeared unto Moses when he was eighty years old and sent him to deliver the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt. God used Moses to send his ten sore judgments upon Egypt culminating in the death of the firstborn of all the houses of Egypt. At the end of the tenth judgment Pharaoh gave the commandment to drive out the children of Israel and then he soon repented and gathered his army together to march after the children of Israel to either destroy them or bring them back into bondage.

At the Red Sea God parted the waters of the Red Sea by a strong east wind and the children of Israel crossed on dry ground. When the Egyptian army under Pharaoh attempted to pursue after the children of Israel, God caused the waters to return and destroy both Pharaoh and his army. This, briefly written, is a summary of the manner in which God delivered the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage.

There are parallels in the delivering of the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage and God delivering his elect people out of the bondage of sin. Below we note some of these parallels:

1. a. Pharaoh was the king over Egypt and used subtlety to bring the children of Israel into captivity.

b. Pharaoh is also a type of Satan. Satan used subtlety to entice Eve and then used her to bring Adam and his posterity under the bondage of the curse of the law of sin and death.

2. a. Pharaoh made the children of Israel to serve with rigor and made their lives bitter with hard bondage.

b. The elect children of God were completely ensnared by the bondage of Satan and the flesh that they were made to serve with rigor the works of the flesh and their lives were bitter with the effects of sin.

3. a. Pharaoh had the children of Israel in a position that they could do nothing to deliver themselves from the bondage they were under.

b. Satan had the elect children of God under the bondage of sin and death and they could do nothing to deliver themselves out from under this bondage.

4. a. Pharaoh was not willing to let the children of Israel go.

b. Satan was not willing to let the elect children of God go.

5. a. God sent Moses so that He might show his power unto Pharaoh and through the hand of Moses deliver the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage. Pharaoh attempted to kill Moses and all the male children of Israel at the time of his birth.

b. God send his only begotten Son to save his elect people from the bondage of the law of sin and death. Satan through Herod attempted to kill the Lord at his birth and did kill the children under two years of age.

5. a. Pharaoh sought to bring back the children of Israel after agreeing to let them go.

b. Satan had no intentions of letting the children of God go.

7. a. God delivered the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage and destroyed their enemies (Pharaoh and his host) at the same place in the Red Sea.

b. God delivered the elect children of God from the bondage of the curse of the law of sin and death and destroyed their enemies (Satan and sin) at the same place at the cross and in his resurrection.

In the last point above, we read of the deliverance from sin and the destruction of sin and Satan in the following New Testament verses:

1. Heb. 1:3 "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;"

2. 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."

3. Rom. 8:33 "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

4. Heb. 10:11 "And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: 12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; 13 From henceforth

expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. 14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."