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W. O. Vaught

Ouachita Baptist University

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THE GOLDEN SARCOPHAGUS OF JOSEPH

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF HEBREWS
NUMBER 105
HEBREWS 11:22

Dr. W. O. Vaught
Immanuel Baptist Church
Little Rock, Arkansas

Death A Certainty

Every living person has a coming appointment with this thing we call death. We leave this earth and we go to God's eternal kingdom where we will live with him forever, provided we believed in Christ as Saviour.

The Objectives Of Salvation

In a moment of time, you put your faith in Christ and in a non-meritorious way, you are saved. This is what is said in Acts 4:12, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." At the moment of salvation, you entered into the plan of God, a plan that can be described with one word--GRACE. In one moment you were lost in sin and the very next moment you believed in Christ and were born again, and this means you were saved eternally. At that moment, God the Holy Spirit took you and entered you into union with Christ. You became a member of the royal family and you will live in the palace forever. You will occupy the Holy of Holies forever which was unoccupied all during Old Testament times. But once you believe in Christ, the Holy of Holies becomes your permanent home.

The Reason For Living

The Lord keeps you alive in time so he can shower blessings out upon you. We call this "Living Grace." We begin to take in doctrine as doctrine moves in we advance to super grace. This prepares us for the coming event we call death, when we cross over the golden drawbridge into eternity and then we are in surpassing grace. Dying grace cares for us as we cross that bridge.

Your Very Own Paragraph

In eternity past, God wrote a paragraph just for you, and if you don't claim it as your own, no one else will or can. It is made up both of spiritual and physical blessings. Promotion, prosperity, sexual prosperity, leadership dynamics, and all that you need so God can move you along and get you ready for dying grace. Then once we cross that golden drawbridge, we have blessings that will supply our needs for all eternity. Hebrews 11 gives a very fine outline of how all of these things happened for those who reached the high ground and held it

Verse 22 "By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones." If this man who wrote Hebrews had lived today, he would have been the finest newspaper reporter that ever lived. Without giving personal opinions, he simply tells it like it is, and sums all this truth up in definite and compact language. He presents what is going on but doesn't try to interpret it. He had the great ability to summarize a great life in one sentence.

Joseph, A Truly Great Man

Joseph was such a remarkable man, you would think that this reporter would have told us something about all those great things.

- a. The great dream of Joseph. (Genesis 37:5-11)
- b. Joseph is sold by his brothers. (Genesis 37:15-28)
- c. The sons betrayed Jacob and deceived him about death of Joseph. (Genesis 37:29-36)
- d. Joseph refused to sin with wife of Potiphar. (Genesis 40)
- e. Joseph put in prison. (Genesis 39:20)
- f. Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dream and is restored. (Genesis 41:37-45)

But please notice that the Holy Spirit passed over all this when he reported on the life of Joseph and never referred to one of these things. We have the word pistis and it is the instrumental of pistis and means "by Doctrine resident in the soul." Then we have the word "Joseph." Joseph was born in 1910 B.C., the oldest son of Jacob and Rachel, but one of the younger sons of that large family. It comes from the Hebrew word joseph with accent on last syllable, and it means to enlarge, to increase. It comes from the Hebrew verb jasaph and means to "enlarge, to multiply." Joseph, because of his great personality and ability aroused the jealousy of his brothers, but because of the information we have studied above, we learn that the Pharaoh of Egypt exalted him and gave him a name that means "Saviour Of The World." (Genesis 41:45) Rarely in history has any person ever risen to such great heights. But the reporter mentions none of these things but tells us how he died. His great promotion to Prime Minister of Egypt came about 1883 B.C. when he was about thirty years of age and he held the high ground for the next 83 years and died in 1800 B.C. at the age of 110. His dying is the thing the Holy Spirit picked out and tells us about in Hebrews 11:22. DYING IS GREATER THAN LIVING FOR A SUPER GRACE MAN. What we do in dying demonstrates the greatness and nobility in living. Death is a mirror that merely reflects what happened in life.

So, we have in this verse "when he died" and this is a present, active, participle of teleutao, and means to come to an end. It is a term to call attention to the process of dying. This is a temporal participle so we translate this "While he was in the process of dying." Next we have "He made mention" and this is the aorist, active, indicative of mnemoneuo and it means "to recall to mind." He recalled to mind something that was very important.

So, thus far in this sentence, we have this--"By means of doctrine resident in the soul, Joseph, while he was in the process of dying, recalled to mind."

The Death Of Joseph

The next word we have is "Of his departing" and this is from peri plus the genitive of exzodos, and it means "The Exodus, concerning the exodus of the children of Israel." Joseph knew the content of the Abrahamic Covenant and the fact that the children of Israel would be in Egypt only for 430 years. He remembered the dying words of his Father Jacob and Joseph put it all together. He remembered vividly the truth of Genesis 13:14-15. (Though Moses had not yet written all this in the Bible, they had this information in their family tradition.) He also remembered Genesis 26:3. He also remembered how his own father, the chiseler Jacob, had received the same promise. Genesis 35:12. As Joseph was dying, all these promises came into focus in his mind. He wanted to say something that would remind the Jews that they were the people of God, a chosen nation. So the dying words of Joseph anticipated the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant as well as the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt.

He Recognized The Principle Of The Resurrection

The next words we have are "Also he gave specific orders." He was accustomed to giving specific orders. This is an aorist, middle, indicative of entellomai. It means to give orders in a commanding voice. The result is that he will not be buried in Egypt. He wanted to be carried up out of Egypt, and this is a picture of how we will be carried up from the grave into God's eternal kingdom. Next we have the words peri ostcon autos and it means "concerning his very own bones."

So, this says, "Recalled to mind about the Exodus of the sons of Israel, also he gave specific orders concerning his own bones." This was anticipating how the nation of Israel would be born as a nation on the day of the Passover. That coffin of Joseph would be their Bible for 400 years. What that casket stood for was more important than anything he did in his lifetime. He kept some people from starvation during his lifetime, but the Holy Spirit says to us here that what he did as he was preparing to die was something far greater than being Prime Minister of Egypt. In this act, he was saying this--The Jews are to last forever and the Jews will become a nation and in the fulness of time, Christ will be born from them.

A Visual Teaching Aid

This coffin of Joseph became a teaching aid to the nation. Four generations would view that coffin--Levi--Kohath--Amram--Moses. Four hundred years and that coffin kept reminding them that they would one day leave Egypt.

Four Principles Of The Bones Of Joseph

1. When the children of Egypt were ready to leave Egypt 400 years later, Moses took the bones of Joseph with him. (Exodus 13:19) Also Genesis 50:22-26.
Moses was a man of doctrine and reminded them that the Sarcophagus of Joseph was to go with them. For forty years they would carry it. Their national standard was a coffin.
2. The bones of Joseph were 40 years in the desert, carried by reversionists. They didn't follow it spiritually but they had to follow it physically. Moses was the greatest Bible teacher of his day, in the same class with Paul and Isaiah and Jeremiah.
3. When Joshua crossed the Jordan, they carried that coffin over containing the bones of Joseph.
4. After 470 years, they buried the bones of Joseph in Shechem. (Joshua 24:32)
Abraham--Isaac--Jacob--Joseph will stand up together in the resurrection.

Summary Of This Verse

1. There are two areas of doctrine that were emphasized in the dying moments of Joseph.
 - a. The national future of Israel, under the Abrahamic and Palestinian Covenants.
 - b. The personal future of Joseph in resurrection body. He claimed the future and those promises of surpassing grace.

2. Joseph is a classical example of a believer who seized and held the high ground. He understood super grace, dying grace, and surpassing grace.
3. Joseph's super grace blessings included all those wonderful things we studied earlier in this period about him. He had fame and fortune and became one of the world's great men. His lack of bitterness lifted him into the realm far above his jealous brothers.
4. Joseph made the transition from time to eternity by means of dying grace. Very few deaths have influenced history for 400 years after that death. His did.
5. Not only did he anticipate his own resurrection, but he is included in the salute and embrace of the aorist, middle, participle of aspozomai in Hebrews 11:13.
6. In other words, Joseph has in the future a great surpassing grace paragraph written for him. Blessings and rewards forever and forever.

As we close this study of Joseph, look at the words of his dying father concerning him. (Genesis 49:22-26)