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What Happened to Abraham When He died?

Genesis 25:8, “Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was gathered to his people.”

When each of us are about to face something new in our lives, we often will talk to someone who has faced something similar to inform us of that which is unknown. But when we consider death, there simply isn't anyone, that I know, who has died and returned to this world to tell me the story. We have the scriptural record of Lazarus, Jairus' daughter, and the widow's son at Nain (others in Old Testament) who were raised from the dead by Jesus Christ our Lord. These people, undoubtedly, had a great experience to share, but I simply do not personally know anyone in this present world who could share this information with me. We do, however, have the Divinely Inspired Scripture to read and study to learn the answers to our questions.

In our study verse, we read about the death of the man Abraham. It has been debated by many Bible students concerning what happened to this faithful man of God when he died. Yet, when we meditate upon this verse of scripture and compare it with other verses in God's Holy Word, the answer to the question is quite simple. According to this verse, Abraham was “gathered to his people” when he closed his eyes in death. And you may ask, “What does that mean?” Let us consider other portions of scripture to answer this question:

(1) 2 Corinthians 5:8, “We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.” In this verse of scripture, The Apostle Paul makes it clear that a person who is separated from their body is present with the Lord. Paul is referring to the separation of the soul and spirit of the child of grace in death, which will immediately be with the Lord in glory. The Lord Jesus Christ told the thief in Luke 23:43, “To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” Notice Jesus did not say in 1000 years; next year; or even next week, but “To day”.

(2) Deuteronomy 32:50, “And die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people; as Aaron thy brother died in mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people.” If one were to reduce the “gathered to his people” to just merely mean to be buried in a family cemetery, how would this verse of scripture be explained? Aaron died in Numbers chapter 20 and his body was buried in mount Hor. When Moses died, his body was buried “in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day” (Deut 34:6). According to Jude vs. 9, the devil doesn’t even know where to find the body of Moses. The only explanation that could be used with Bible harmony is that these two men had their bodies buried in different places, but their soul and spirit was gathered up to the people of God in Glory.

(3) 1 Thessalonians 4:14, “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.” When reading this verse, the reader should pay close attention to the fact that the same which “sleep in Jesus” is who “God will bring with him.” In this glorious portion of scripture, we are taught about the Redeemer’s Return and how He will “bring” the soul and spirit of the saints of God, who have died, with Him. He will raise their bodies to reunite with the soul and spirit to go back to heaven with Him; soul, body and spirit. Oh, what a day that will be, when all the saints, without the loss of one, will gather around the Lord’s Throne.

What happened to Abraham when he died? The answer is simple. He was gathered to his people in heaven. Every child of grace will experience the same when they close their eyes in death. Every elect child of God has been made to be in the innumerable family of God by grace and grace alone. When one of those precious little sheep close their eyes in death, they immediately open their eyes in

the presence of the Lord and will see the family of God who are in glory with their Lord and Savior. There they will praise God in rest and peace, awaiting patiently the day when the Lord will return to claim all that He paid for on the Cross of Calvary. Amen!