

How old was Abraham when he died?

After the Lord called Abraham, he walked with God for a hundred years (Genesis 12:4) and was “called God’s friend” (James 2:23). When the Lord made His covenant with Abraham, He promised Abraham that he would die “in peace and be buried at a good old age” (Genesis 15:15). Both of those promises came to pass. According to Genesis 25:7-8, Abraham was 175 years old when he died: “Abraham lived a hundred and seventy-five years. Then Abraham breathed his last and died at a good old age, an old man and full of years; and he was gathered to his people.”

The average life span at that time in history was between 130 and 200 years. Terah, Abraham’s father, lived to be 205 (Genesis 11:32); Sarah died at 127 (Genesis 23:1); Ishmael lived to 137 (Genesis 25:17); and Isaac to 180 (Genesis 35:28). So, Abraham lived a good, long life.

Like Sarah, who passed away when Abraham was 138 (Genesis 23:1), Abraham lived and died in faith and obedience to God. He followed the Lord’s call, becoming a stranger in a foreign country and a pilgrim in search of a heavenly kingdom. The father of a family of descendants “as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore,” Abraham saw the fulfillment of God’s covenant (Hebrews 11:8-16).

The Bible describes Abraham as “full of years” when he died (Genesis 25:8). This phrase in Hebrew suggests not only longevity, but that Abraham lived a full—as in divinely blessed, happy, and satisfying—life. The phrase gathered to his people (verse 8) does not mean “buried with his family,” as it can sometimes imply. Sarah’s remains were the only ones buried in the family tomb (Genesis 23:17-19). Rather, it means “gone to the realm of the dead,” indicating the destiny of the soul and spirit, and not the body.

Just as all believers will be reunited with their saved loved ones in the afterlife (John 14:1-6), so Abraham's spirit was gathered to his people, the family of God, in death.

Abraham's burial in the cave of Machpelah near Mamre was attended by both of his sons—Isaac, the son of promise, and Ishmael, the firstborn son of birthright. The fact that the brothers were together at Abraham's burial suggests that a possible reconciliation had taken place between them, either at the time of Abraham's death or some earlier moment after Ishmael and Hagar had been sent away.

Before he died, Abraham gave all his property, possessions, and the blessings of the covenant to Isaac, the promised son of Abraham's union with Sarah. The sons of his concubines (Hagar and Keturah) were sent away with gifts from their father's house into the country east of Canaan (Genesis 25:5-11).

In the New Testament, the apostle Paul assures us that all who trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior share in the spiritual inheritance Abraham left to Isaac when he died: "Now you, brothers and sisters, like Isaac, are children of promise" (Galatians 4:28). In the same way Abraham was made righteous through his faith in God, we have been made right with God through faith in Jesus Christ (Romans 4:1-5).