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22 And the children of Israel, even the whole congregation, journeyed from Kadesh, and came unto mount Hor. 23 And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in mount Hor, by the coast of the land of Edom, saying, 24 Aaron shall be gathered unto his people: for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of Israel, because ye rebelled against my word at the water of Meribah. 25 Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them up unto mount Hor: 26 And strip Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son: and Aaron shall be gathered unto his people, and shall die there. 27 And Moses did as the LORD commanded: and they went up into mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation. 28 And Moses stripped Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son; and Aaron died there in the top of the mount: and Moses and Eleazar came down from the mount. (Num 20:22-28)

The text today offers a lesson of sorrow, and also of hope, in the passing of the first High Priest of Israel whose place was later fulfilled in that great High Priest – the Lord Jesus Christ who stands ever before the Father to intercede for us. Aaron, though the brother of Moses and later a High Priest, was very far from perfect in his ways. It was Aaron who had cast the golden earrings and other trinkets of the women of Israel into the fire and “*out came this Golden Calf!*” Because of Aaron’s (and Moses’) rebellion against God’s Word at Mount Horeb before the Waters of Meribah, Aaron will be denied the privilege of crossing Jordan Banks into the Land of Promise. So God has determined to end the earthly (but not the heavenly) life of Aaron on Mount Hor.

It is always a sad occasion when a man or woman, chosen by God, must lay down their “swords and shields”, their Godly “war books”, and their mantles, down by the riverside of the will of God; but we are yet in mortal bodies that must all, alike, come short of Jordan Banks ere crossing over. God allots a time for each of us to learn of Him, to share His Word with others, and finally, too, - a time of dying to this world. It will, by no means, be the end of joy or living for Aaron. In fact, death for God’s saints is always only the beginning of that joy and happiness which we can only hazily imagine in this mortal coil. ***I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?*** (John 11:25-26) It is most imperative that each of us who calls upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ believes the fullness of this counsel given by our Lord. Jesus tells us that all who “***Liveth and Believeth***” shall never die (even if he is dead in this life). The belief, however, must exist while springtime and harvest remain

for, after death, there is no repentance.

We see in Aaron a man who is subject to all of the tugs and pulls of temptation as all men and women are heir to, and he sometimes fell far below the righteousness expected of a servant of the Lord. If Aaron and Peter failed, and were yet restored, see what hope exists for lesser servants such as myself! But God will not abide sin and weakness of testimony. Even though He forgives and restores, there will always remain the scars of our sins and indiscretions.

Aaron died on Mount Hor just southeast of the Dead Sea in the Wilderness. Poor Aaron was not permitted, as was Moses, to see the Land of Promise beyond Jordan Waters. The scriptures tell us that Aaron was gathered to his people there on desolate Mount Hor. There should be cause for rejoicing in this fact because it tells us that we, too, shall be gathered to our loved ones at the moment of death in the paradise of God. We are not simply gathered to multitudes of the dead, but loved ones of the living who have known and believed the promise made unto Abraham of the Redeemer who would come in the fullness of time. It is interesting to observe that Moses, too, would be gathered to His people on Mount Pisgah at a later point in time. That means that Moses was gathered to Aaron and Miriam, among others, at that moment of his decease. Of course, Moses did not cease to exist as a living, vital man at the moment of God taking his life on Pisgah. The next time we see Moses in Holy Scripture, he was on yet another mountain, and a more blessed one: *1 And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, 2 And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. 3 And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. 4 Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. 5 While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.* (Matt 17:1-5)

Herein lies another subtly-clad truth for us: We are not to make our ministers into idols to worship them, but to hear their words and govern ourselves accordingly – but only insofar as they are the pure words of God without admixture of error. God buried Moses on a lonely mountain in Moab so that no man knows the place of his grave. Why do you suppose God did this? It was to prevent the people of Israel from making a shrine of his grave and an idol of his form to worship him.

Another beautiful fact is this: Aaron did not die on the mountain slope, but at the very peak of Mount Hor. It was the place closest to God in that wilderness area. So, is Aaron a man of past tense, or of the eternal present tense of the great I AM? He was a High Priest who served the Lord until the last though, as are all such servants, a mortal subject to the weakness and faults common to the entire race of men – even believers. He seems to have grown in sanctification from the moment of leaving Egypt and crafting the Golden Calf; but nevertheless capable of falling short of the standard God sets for His people. If you are honest with yourself, you will admit that you, too, fall far short of the righteousness of God. *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;* (Romans 3:23) Paul did not say that SOME of us fall short, but ALL of us. So what is the remedy? Is it not the forgiveness, mercy, and redemption made available to us through the sacrificial death of God's only Begotten Son? *Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.* (Romans 3:24-26)

It is a comfort to know we, being sons and daughters of Abraham, will be gathered to our people at the end. This INCLUDES our brother, Aaron! AMEN!