



World Christian Fellowship

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Burial or Cremation

As a Christian should we need to do burial or Cremation?

The Bible does not give specific directions for the disposal of the body following death.

Israelites did not normally cremate, except in most unusual cases of emergency, as in the case of Saul and his sons (**1 Samuel 31:11-13**).

Otherwise they usually buried the people.

Burial of Sarah (Genesis 23:1-20),

Rachel (Genesis 35:19-20), and

Rebekah's nurse (Genesis 35:8).

There are over 200 references in the Bible about burial and cremation.

Common misconceptions about cremation

Misconception: Cremation dishonours the body.

The Bible says that those who die return to the dust, which is what naturally happens to a corpse when it decomposes.

Genesis 3:19, *In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return.*”

Cremation speeds up the process by reducing the body to ashes, or dust.

Either buried or cremated eventually you will decompose.

Ecclesiastes 12:7, *Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, And the spirit will return to God who gave it.*

Babylonians burned their dead and deposited their ashes in ornate funerary urns, as did Greeks and Romans. Israelites in later time, indicated by the numerous records found in New Testament Palestine, also practiced cremation.

Peter says this is just a tent we are living in.

2 Peter 1:14,

Paul says to the letters to Corinth.

2 Corinthians 5:1, &4,

Misconception: Cremation prevents God from resurrecting a person.

At the resurrection it will not make any difference whether a person's body has been buried or cremated. God knows how to raise the body, either in the resurrection of life or the resurrection of condemnation.

John 5:28-29, *Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice²⁹ and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.*

Regarding resurrection of the dead, it does not matter to God whether a person's body was buried, cremated, lost at sea, or eaten by wild animals.

Revelation 20:13, *The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.*

The Almighty can easily re-create a new body for the person.

1 Corinthians 15:35, 38, 52-53

But someone will say, "How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?"

³⁸ *But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body.*

⁵² *in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.* ⁵³ *For this corruptible*

must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

Of course, God can resurrect a cremated Christian. He can also resurrect a Christian burned at the stake, or a Christian torn to pieces by lions in a Roman coliseum.

Whether the body buried, or cremated God will raise it to new life with glorious body.

Cremation is very cheap considering the burial at western countries its only 15% of the cost.

Christian tradition funerals aren't simply ways of disposing of dead bodies, nor are they about remembering the departed or expressing grief.

Rather, for believers, funerals ought to be Christ-centred events, testifying throughout to the message and hope of the gospel.

Cremation or Burial?

How to Decide?

When deciding how to dispose of a dead body, consider the following factors.

The wishes of the deceased:

The Bible records instances in which family members respected the instructions a person gave regarding treatment of his body after his death.

Genesis 50:4-5, *Now when the days of his mourning were past, Joseph spoke to the household of Pharaoh, saying, "If now I have found favour in your eyes, please speak in the hearing of Pharaoh, saying, ⁵ 'My father made me swear, saying, "Behold, I am dying; in my grave which I dug for myself in the land of Canaan, there you shall bury me." Now therefore, please let me go up and bury my father, and I will come back.' "*

Exodus 13:19, *And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had placed the children of Israel under solemn oath, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here with you."*

Local customs:

These often have a bearing on how dead bodies are treated.

John 19:40, *Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury.*

For instance, in Bible times, people customarily buried the dead. (**Genesis 49:31; 1 Samuel 28:3**)

Similarly, a person may choose to deal with the remains of the deceased according to local customs as long as such customs do not conflict with Bible principles.

Legal requirements:

The Bible encourages obedience to secular authorities.

Romans 13:1, *Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.*

In some areas, the authorities enact laws about the treatment of dead bodies. For instance, in the case of cremation, some authorities place restrictions on where the ashes may be disposed of.

The feelings of others:

The Scriptures encourage us to look out for the interests of others.

Philippians 2:4, *Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.*

When deciding how to deal with a dead person's remains, we might consider these questions.

How do other family members feel about cremation or burial of the deceased?

How does the local community view such customs?

Conclusion:

The new body of a Christian will be a radically changed and glorified body like the body of the exalted Christ. It will be an eternal, spiritual body never again to experience weakness, disease, suffering, or death.

1 Corinthians 15:35-54,

Philippians 3:20-21, *For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ,²¹ who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.*