
BIBLE TALK

This week the question is: **Should Christians choose cremation rather than burial? Does it even matter?**

Cremation is growing in popularity in the United States. The primary reason for the popularity of cremation revolves around money – pure and simple. People reason like this:

- *"What difference does it make?"*
- *"After all, when you're dead your body is going to turn back to dust anyway. Cremation simply speeds up the process that going to eventually happen anyway. So, what difference does it make?"*
- *"Furthermore, burial is so expensive. I would rather be cremated at a cheap price, and give the savings to a charity that would help poor people."*

I believe Christians are making a big mistake when they think like this.

First: Jesus defended a woman who spent much money on His upcoming burial.

Matthew 26:6-12

⁶ And when Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper,
⁷ a woman came to Him having an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil, and she poured it on His head as He sat at the table.

⁸ But when His disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, "Why this waste?"

⁹ For this fragrant oil might have been sold for much and given to the poor."

¹⁰ But when Jesus was aware of it, He said to them, "Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me.

¹¹ For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always.

¹² For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did it for My burial.

Jesus is here rebuking His disciples who wanted to save the money of a costly burial and give that money to the poor. Jesus defended this woman who was showing her love for the Lord.

Second: Cremation typically opposes the Biblical doctrine of a bodily resurrection.

The scriptures clearly teach that the physical bodies we have right now will die (Heb 9:27). But the scriptures also clearly teach that the physical bodies which die will be raised back to life – the very same bodies we have right now.

Romans 8:11

¹¹ But if **the Spirit** of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead **will also give life to your mortal bodies** through His Spirit who dwells in you.

This passage clearly teaches our physical, mortal bodies will be raised back to life when Jesus returns.

1 Corinthians 15:42-44

⁴² So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption.

⁴³ It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.

⁴⁴ It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

Again, this clearly teaches a bodily, physical resurrection from the dead. The very body which dies is the very body which shall be raised back to life.

Most Christians who support cremation reject the idea of a bodily resurrection. What I'm saying is that **cremation promotes the rejection of a bodily resurrection**. For that reason, I believe cremation should not be practiced by God's people.

NOTE: There are some exceptions to this statement. There are some who support cremation but also believe in a bodily resurrection. But I assure you, this is certainly the exception rather than the rule. As a general rule, the practice of cremation opposes and rejects the Biblical doctrine of a bodily resurrection.

Third: Cremation has historically been practiced only by pagans.

There is no biblical support for cremation among God's people.

- **Gen 23** – Abraham went to much expense and trouble to bury Sarah when she died.
- **Gen 25** – Abraham was buried by his sons Isaac and Ishmael.
- **Gen 35** – Rachael was buried near Bethlehem by Jacob.
- **Gen 47** – Jacob made Joseph swear to bury him in the same tomb that Abraham and Isaac were buried in.
- **Gen 50** – Joseph made the leaders of Israel swear to bury his body in the promised land.

Get a concordance and look up all the people of God who were buried in graves. They were buried because they believed in a bodily resurrection (Heb 11:35).

Pagans, however, do not believe in a resurrection (Acts 17:32). They believe the doctrine of Plato that being in a physical body is a curse and upon death the spirit is set free from the curse of the body.

- **Amos 6:10** – unbelievers were burning bodies in a time of pestilence.
- **Amos 2:1** – the leaders of Moab were judged for burning the bones of the king of Edom.
- **Josh 7:15** – burning bodies in fire was considered a judgment upon the evil.
- **Mt 10:28** – the ultimate cremation of physical bodies is when God will cast lost sinners – body and soul – into hell fire.

CONCLUSION

Does the Bible teach the bodies of men and women are worthless and it doesn't matter what happens to the body after death? It certainly does not teach this. Rather, pagans and unbelievers, who reject the teaching of a bodily resurrection, are the ones promoting the practice of cremation. God's people, historically in the scriptures, practiced burial of the body with a firm belief that God would one day raise that body back up to live again.

Let us close with the following passage:

Matthew 27:51-53

⁵¹ Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split,

⁵² and **the graves were opened**; and many **bodies of the saints** who had fallen asleep **were raised**;

⁵³ and **coming out of the graves** after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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