

# Biblical Guidance when Deciding for Burial or Cremation?



## Answer Key Part 1 Introduction

The Bible states in II Timothy 3:16 “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness;” So what does the Bible say concerning the care of a body after death?

The preacher in Ecclesiastes tells us in chapter 3 verse 2, “A time to be born, and a time to die;” He goes on to say in chapter 6 verse 3, “If a man beget an hundred children, and live many years, so that the days of his years be many, and his soul be not filled with good, and also that he have no burial; I say that an untimely birth is better than he.” And in chapter 12:7 “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.”

This lesson has to do with the care of the physical body after death. As was stated before, the body decomposes but the spirit is already gone, to be with the Lord if saved, or to hell if unsaved; you have God’s word on it! That decision was made by the person before his or her death, if the person was of age physically and mentally. David made this positive statement about his baby who died, II Samuel 12:23 “But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.”

The body must be cared for after death. What will be your decision for that? What would God have you to choose for you or your loved ones? **Let us look into the Holy Bible for direction.** {Much thanks goes to Way Of Life Literature and David Cloud for the information we used to build this lesson. }

### **Emotional and Financial Concerns**



If we don’t prepare our own funeral, that sad and very emotional time will be left to our closest loved ones. It will be very stressful, and many things may come into play; their emotional state and their financial concerns to name a couple.

The emotional strain can only be handled by the proper application of the Scriptures and the love of other godly people in and through the difficult time. We need to make sure of our salvation, be in fellowship with God, and do our best to see that our loved ones are saved and walking with God. This lesson can also equip you to handle the pressures of those who have little knowledge of God’s Word and may pressure you to go against your Bible based convictions.

The other thing is financial concern. This is one thing I wanted to talk with you about. Most people will consider cremation because it is less expensive in both the funeral and the disposal. But should we consider it? *What would God have us to do? What did our forefathers*

do? Why did they do it the way they did? To not consider God in this decision is to tell Him His will does not count. Are you willing to say that to Him?

Historically, Christians chose burial as a testimony of faith in the bodily resurrection. You find the body facing up (looking to Jesus for a resurrection) and often toward the east as Jesus will return from the east and will enter Jerusalem through the Eastern Gate.

In contrast, cremation has been practiced by Hindus and others who teach that there is no resurrection or that the spirit was to return in some other bodily form through reincarnation.



*Please refer to a King James Bible for the verses in this lesson and fill in the missing words. Reread the scriptures after filling in the blank areas. Pay attention to what those words are revealing.*

### The Bible and Burial:

God's people in the Bible practiced burial. We ought to follow their example. It is not directly commanded but, read Romans 15:4-6.

“For whatsoever **THINGS WERE WRITTEN AFOOTIME** were written **FOR OUR LEARNING** that we through patience and comfort **OF THE SCRIPTURES MIGHT HAVE HOPE.** Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be **LIKEMINDED** one toward another according to Christ Jesus **YE MAY WITH ONE MIND AND ONE MOUTH** even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” See I

Corinthians 10:11 “Now all these things **HAPPENED TO THEM FOR ENSAMPLES:** and **THEY WERE WRITTEN FOR OUR ADMONITION** upon whom the ends of the world are come.”

### We are to follow examples as well as direct instruction;

#### The following are some examples from the Old Testament times:

Genesis 23:1-4 And **SARAH** was an hundred and seven and twenty years old: these were the years of the life of Sarah. 2 And **SARAH DIED** in Kirjatharba; the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan: and **ABRAHAM CAME TO MOURN** for Sarah, and to weep for her. 3 And Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spake unto the sons of Heth, saying, 4 I am a stranger and a sojourner with you: give me a **POSSESSION OF A BURRYINGPLACE** with you, that **I MAY BURY MY DEAD** out of my sight.



Genesis 25:8-10 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. 9 And **HIS SONS** Isaac and Ishmael **BURRIED HIM** in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, which is before Mamre; 10 The field which Abraham

purchased of the sons of Heth: there **WAS ABRAHAM BURRIED** and Sarah his wife.

Genesis 35:19-20, 29 And **RACHEL DIED**, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem. 20 And **JACOB SET A PILLAR UPON HER GRAVE**: that is the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day. Ge 35:29 And **ISAAC** gave up the ghost, and died, and was gathered unto his people, being old and full of days: and **HIS SONS ESAU AND JACOB BURRIED HIM**.



Genesis 49:33 And when **JACOB** had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people. Please read Genesis 50:1-13 which is an amazing account of Joseph's care that Jacob gave him! Verse 5 says "My father made me swear, saying, Lo, I die: in my grave which I have digged for me in the land of Canaan, there shalt thou bury me. Now therefore let me go up, I pray thee, and bury my father, and I will come again."

Genesis 50:26 So **JOSEPH DIED**, being an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was **PUT IN A COFFIN IN EGYPT**.

*If inconvenience is a problem, patiently pray and work through the inconvenience to honor God by following godly, time-honored examples!*

Joshua 24:29-30, 33 And it came to pass after these things, that **JOSHUA** the son of Nun, the **SERVANT OF THE LORD DIED**, being an hundred and ten years old. 30 And **THEY BURRIED HIM** in the border of his inheritance in Timnathserah, which is in mount Ephraim, on the north side of the hill of Gaash. 33 And **ELEAZER** the son of Aaron died; and **THEY BURRIED HIM** in a hill that pertained to Phinehas his son, which was given him in mount Ephraim.

I Samuel 25:1 And **SAMUEL DIED**; and **ALL THE ISRAELITES** were gathered together, and lamented him, **AND BURRIED HIM** in his house at Ramah. And David arose, and went down to the wilderness of Paran.

I Kings 2:10 So **DAVID** slept with his fathers, and was **BURRIED** in the city of David.

**To be continued:**

Do you know someone who would like to receive Bible lessons?

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# Biblical Guidance when Deciding for Burial or Cremation



## Answer Key Part 2

### Continued:

The Bible states in II Timothy 3:16 “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness;” So what does the Bible say concerning the care of a body after death?

### Here are some examples from the New Testament time:

Matthew 14:10-12 And he sent, and **BEHEADED JOHN** in the prison. 11 And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought it to her mother. 12 And **HIS DISCIPLES** came, and **TOOK UP THE BODY**, and buried it, and went and told Jesus.



In Acts 5:5-10 and Acts 5:5, the time of the Church had begun. Two Church members died because of their sin against the Holy Ghost. Who were those people? **ANNANIAS** and **SAPHIRA**. They both were taken out and were **Burned** **Buried** *circle one*.

Acts 8:2 And **DEVOUT MEN** carried **STEPHEN TO HIS BURIAL**, and made great lamentation over him.

*Here are some examples of burial by God's people during difficult times:*

We can learn from Genesis 50:24-26, Exodus 13:19, and Joshua 24:32, Genesis 50:25 “And **JOSEPH TOOK AN OATH OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL**, saying, God will surely visit you and **YE SHALL CARRY UP MY BONES FROM HENCE**. So **JOSEPH DIED**, being an hundred and ten years old; and **EMBALMED HIM** and he was put **IN A COFFIN** in Egypt.

Exodus 13:19, “And Moses **TOOK THE BONES** of Joseph **WITH HIM**: for he had ...”

Joshua 24:32 And **THE BONES OF JOSEPH**, which the children of Israel **BROUGHT UP OUT OF EGYPT, BURIED** they in Shechem **IN THE PARCEL OF GROUND WHICH JACOB BOUGHT ...”**

*Joseph could have been cremated and his “ashes” carried in a small container. But this they refused to do. Joseph, who was a follower of the true God, was a man who looked forward to the bodily resurrection. He was placed in a coffin, a hope chest, that testified of His faith in God and in God's Word, God's promises!*

*He was given a proper and honorable burial about 350 years later! The Israelites rejected the economical and easy way to carry Joseph to the Promised Land. Cremation was the way of the heathen people, not of God's people!*



**Burial looks back to Christ's resurrection and forward to the resurrection of the saved in Christ:**

Romans 8:21-23 Because the creature itself also **SHALL BE DELIVERED** from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For **WE KNOW** that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for **THE ADOPTION**, to wit its redemption of our body.

I Corinthians 15:20-23 But now is **CHRIST RISEN FROM THE DEAD**, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. 21 For since by man came death, by man came also **THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD**. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so **IN CHRIST SHALL ALL BE MADE ALIVE**. 23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; **AFTERWARD THEY THAT ARE CHRIST'S AT HIS COMING**.

I Corinthians 15:51-57 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We **SHALL NOT ALL SLEEP**, but we **SHALL ALL BE CHANGED**. 52 In a moment, in in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the **DEAD SHALL BE RAISED INCORRUPTIBLE**, and we shall **BE CHANGED**. 53 For this **CORRUPTIBLE** must put on **INCORRUPTION**, and this **MORTAL** must put on **IMMORTALITY**. 54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 O death, where is thy sting? O **GRAVE**, where is thy victory? 56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, which **GIVETH US THE VICTORY THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST**.



The book of Job, thought to be the oldest book of the Bible, stated in chapter 19:26-27 "And though after my skin worms destroy this body, **YET IN MY FLESH SHALL I SEE GOD**: Whom **I SHALL SEE FOR MYSELF**, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another: though my reins be consumed within me."

I Thessalonians 4:15-17 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the



archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ **SHALL RISE FIRST** :  
17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be **CAUGHT UP TOGETHER**  
**WITH THEM** in the clouds, to **MEET THE LORD IN THE AIR** :  
and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

*Yes, the body decomposes. Yes, there are occasions when burial is impossible. But, when, at all possible, we bury. Why? Because it is an expression of our certain hope that the same individual will be raised in the same body, only changed. The physical body is called the seed of the resurrection body. When planted, a seed decomposes, and a new plant comes forth. I Corinthians 15:35-44.*

*The unsaved have no such hope or knowledge. Some cremate because they believe the individual will be reincarnated in another unrelated body, or unto a non-physical sphere of existence. Please take note that we need to help show others the way of life through Jesus and teach of the hope that lies within us.*

### **Cremation is a sign of God's Curse:**

Destruction of the human body by fire is used as a sign of divine wrath. Consider these examples: List the ones whom God destroyed by fire:

2 Peter 2:6 **SODDOM AND GOMORAH**

Leviticus 10:1-2 **NADAB AND ABIHU**

Numbers 16:35 **250 MEN THAT OFFERED INCENSE**

Joshua 7:19-25 **ACHAN**

Revelation 20:15 **WHOSOEVER WAS NOT FOUND IN THE BOOK OF LIFE**



### **God practices Burial:**

God buried Moses. Deuteronomy 34:5-6. “So **MOSES** the servant **OF THE LORD DIED THERE** in the land of Moab, according to the Word of the Lord. And he (God) **BURIED HIM** in a valley in the land of Moab...” **The**

### **Lack of burial is a dishonor:**

Read now I Kings 21:23-24 “And of Jezebel also spake the Lord, saying, ‘the **DOGS SHALL EAT JEZEBEL** by the wall of Jezreel. Him that dieth of Ahab in the city **THE DOGS SHALL EAT** ; and him that dieth in the field shall the **FOWLS OF THE AIR EAT** .’

Psalms 83:9-10. “Do unto them as unto the Midianites; as to Sisera, as to Jabin, at the brook of Kison: Which perished at Endor: they **BECAME AS DUNG FOR THE EARTH** .”

Amos 2:1 “Thus saith the Lord: For three transgressions of Moab, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof, **BECAUSE HE BURNED THE BONES OF THE KING OF EDOM** into lime.

*Shall we dishonor our loved ones by failing to give them a proper Christian burial? Do you love your savings more than your family members or the Lord?*

**The Christian's Body is Not His Own:**

I Corinthians 6:19-20 "What, know ye not that **YOUR BODY IS THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY GHOST** which is in you, which ye have of God, and **YE ARE NOT YOUR OWN** ? For ye are **BOUGHT WITH A PRICE** : therefore **GLORIFY GOD IN YOU BODY** , and in your spirit, which **ARE GOD'S** ."

Romans 14:8 " For whether we live, we live unto God: and wether we die, we die unto the Lord: **WE LIVE** therefore, or **DIE** , we are **THE LORDS.**"



*Some facts about cremation in the United States: In 1975 cremation was around 6%. In 2010 it was up to 40%. Only 14% of Americans believed that cremation was wrong, and it was noted that "social taboos" about cremation were fading. 2015 was the year cremation surpassed traditional casket burials for the first time in the U.S. In total, 47.9% of the deceased were cremated and 45.2% were buried.*

*This should not be the case for Christians. Unfortunately, America has moved away from God and is adapting to the pagan ways of the world! Christian, humans are not as an animal which has no soul. You are made in the image of God who breathed into man the breath of life.*



*You are not to be a respecter of man, but a follower of the ways of God..*

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