

### Christian Burial

The purpose of this document is to define Christian Burial. Have you ever wondered why it is all of a sudden OK for Christians to cremate? Have you wondered why Christians for 2,000 years up until now gone out of their way to bury their dead? Why was it important to them to even risk their lives to “properly” bury their enemies? So did I. From my calling to read the Bible so many times, I knew that cremation was the method used by the people who sinned against God. I also knew that bones were important, and we are created in the image of God. But, until I began to write this document I did not know why Christian Burial was so important that people would risk their lives and fortunes for it. It has always been expensive.

### God himself buried Moses' Body

Like planting a seed in consecrated ground (outside the Promised Land), for the resurrection of the body (a resurrection of Christ analogy), for respect for the Image of God, for respect for the Temple of the Holy Spirit, God himself buried Moses' body. For their evil sins against him, God also destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. After being burned, to this day the soil of that very large area cannot produce because the brimstone completely burnt the fertilizer.

### What Does The Bible Say About Burial?

#### *The burial of many important Biblical figures is described*

Abraham purchased and consecrated a burial place in his Promised Land, the land of his calling.

#### **Abraham**

Genesis 25:8-10 Abraham's Christian Burial

#### **Sarah**

Genesis 23:1-4 Sarah's Christian Burial

#### **Rachel**

Genesis 35:19-20 Rachael's Christian Burial

#### **Isaac**

Genesis 35:29 Isaac's Christian Burial

#### **Jacob and Joseph**

The Israelites went to great effort to bury Jacob and Joseph's bones in the Promised Land.

Genesis 49:33 and 50:1-13 Jacob's Christian Burial

## Christian Burial

Genesis 50:26 Joseph's Christian Burial

### Eleazar

Joshua 24:33, Eleazar's Christian Burial

### Samuel

1 Samuel 25:1, Samuel's Christian Burial

### David

1 Kings 2:10, David's Christian Burial

### John the Baptist

Matthew 14:10-12, John the Baptist's Christian Burial

### Ananias and Sapphira

Acts 5:5-10, Ananias and Sapphira's Christian Burial

### Stephen

Acts 8:2, Stephen's Christian Burial

To be not given a proper burial was considered to be a great tragedy and dishonor.

### ***Non Christian Burial a Curse***

1 Kings 13:22: A prophet disobeyed God by eating a meal in a forbidden location. God laid a curse on him: that his body would not be buried in the tomb of his fathers.

Shortly after, the prophet was attacked by a lion and his remains left on a road.

Jeremiah 16:6: God laid a horrible curse on the Israelites: that many would die of diseases, will not be mourned, and would be *"like refuse lying on the ground"* (NIV).

Their bodies were to be consumed by animals and birds.

Jeremiah 22:19: Because of his pride and disobedience, God laid a similar curse on Jehoiakim. Jeremiah said that he would be given the burial of a donkey: to be dragged away and thrown outside the city gates.

## What does The Bible say about Cremation?

The Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) has a few references to disposal by burning in fire. Burning of bodies and objects in ancient Israel were mostly reserved for idols, criminals or enemies.

### ***Burning reserved for idols, criminals and enemies***

#### **Criminals - Prostitution**

Genesis 38:24: Judah initially ordered his pregnant daughter-in-law to be burned to death because she was guilty of prostitution. This action would have caused the death of the woman and her twin fetuses.

#### **Israelite Idols**

Exodus 32:20: By burning it, Moses destroyed the golden calf.

#### **Criminals – Sins against God**

Leviticus 20:14: If a man marries both a woman and her mother, then all three *"must be burned in the fire"* (NIV).

#### **Criminals**

Leviticus 21:9: If the daughter of a priest becomes a prostitute, then she *"must be burned in the fire."* (NIV)

#### **Rebels or Enemies**

Numbers 16:35: God exterminated Korah and 250 Israelite men with fire because they opposed Moses.

#### **Idols of Pagan Gods**

Deuteronomy 7:25: God commanded that the idols of Pagan Gods be destroyed with fire.

#### **Criminals - Rebels**

Joshua 7:15-25: After Joshua and his army exterminated the men, women and innocent children of Jericho, a few soldiers disobeyed God's command and looted the city. As punishment for the theft, and to pay for Israel's disgrace, God ordered the thieves to be burned. They were stoned to death; their bodies were burned and buried in what was called the *Valley of Achor*.

#### ***Idols to Baal***

2 Kings 10:26: Jehu demolished a temple consecrated to the god Baal and burned its sacred stone.

#### **Curse of Cremation**

Jeremiah 29:22: This verse contains a curse which refers to the time that the Babylonians burned Zedekiah and Ahab by fire.

### **Curse of Cremation**

Amos 2:1: God proclaimed a death curse on Moab because he had reduced the bones of the king of Edom to lime through burning.

### ***New Testament Cremation***

### **Sorcerers Understood Burning**

Acts 19:19: Once converted to Christianity, Sorcerers brought their scrolls to be burned.

### **And Finally, the Lake of Fire**

Revelation 20:15: The fate of those whose names were not written in the Book of Life is to be thrown into the Lake of Fire.

## **A Public Profession of Materialism: Cremation**

For many, cremation is a public profession of irreligion or materialism. Materialists believe people are basically nothing more than that of which they are made: fertilizer. However since we are all created to worship, the materialist's natural idol (the only thing left to worship) is public opinion. So, cremation is a public profession for people who worship fertilizer.

## **Summary: Christian Burial**

The purpose of this document is to define Christian Burial. Have you ever wondered why it is all of a sudden OK for Christians to cremate? Have you wondered why Christians have (for 2,000 years until now) gone out of their way to bury their dead? Why was it important to them to even risk life to “properly” bury Christian enemies? I wondered the same, so I defined it. From my calling to read the Bible so many times, I knew that cremation was the method used by the people who sinned against God. I also knew that bones were important, and we are created in the image of God. But, until I began to define it, I did not know why Christian Burial was so important that people would risk their lives and fortunes. Christian burial is symbolic of planting a seed in a consecrated place. Requiring real estate, it has always been expensive. On the other hand, cremation is a symbol of the Lake of Fire, and a public profession of materialism. Both Christian Burial and Cremation reflect on the living, those who produce, direct and participate in the ceremony.