

Is cremation wrong?

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Cremation is not wrong, but burial is a better picture of the Christian hope of resurrection.

No rules about burial or cremation

God does not give us rules in the Bible about burial or cremation. There is no command to bury, and there is no prohibition to cremate. So Christians have some freedom in choosing between the two. However, all through history believers have preferred burial over cremation. While cremation was common among Romans and Greeks, Christians soon started to bury their dead, just like the Jews had always done .

The reasons for burial

We expect the resurrection of the body . The Bible says that this body is “ sown in dishonor ” and will be “ raised in glory” (1 Corinthians 15:43). Burial is a much more beautiful picture of that than cremation is.

The body is important. We were created in God's image ; God the Son came to this earth in human flesh; the Holy Spirit makes His dwelling within us. Therefore the body needs to be treated with respect. Destroying it, even after death, is not the best way to show that respect.

Jesus was buried and was raised again. He received an incorruptible body, and so will we if we believe in Him. The Bible says “ we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven ” (1 Corinthians 15:49). That is true whether we will be buried or cremated; but as Christians we love to follow the example of Christ, even in this.

Fire in the Bible often is a picture of God's wrath and judgment. The picture of fire is also connected to hell. So that is not the picture we want to evoke at the funeral of believers.

In some circumstances burial is difficult or even illegal. When that is the case, Christians may use cremation without worrying. It is not a sin. But when possible, burial is to be preferred. We await the Final Day, when Christ will

call us out of the grave. Then it will be true: “ Death is swallowed up in victory ” (1 Corinthians 15:54).

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