

ISSUE

21.10

BULLETIN OF
THE OLSEN
PARK CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Faithful Sayings

March 10,
2019

Services

Sunday: 9:00 AM

10:00 AM

11:00 AM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Pat Ledbetter
Brady McAlister
Jeff Nunn

Deacons:

Steve Dixon
Ryan Ferguson
Ben Hight
Blake McAlister
Walker McAnear
Ryan Matney
Sam Nunn
Lance Purcell
Justin Smiley
Kevin Wise
Trevor Yontz

Evangelist:

Kyle Pope



Is Cremation Wrong?

By Kyle Pope

This question was posed on our church website. Although it is not a common question, it is perhaps one that Christians have pondered from time to time. The Bible does not directly address whether cremation is acceptable or not, but there are some things it does address that may help us in making judgments regarding this very personal decision.



First, there are a few examples of cremation in the Bible. Achan, who took of the accursed things in the conquest of Jericho, was burned as a punishment for his disobedience (Josh. 7:25-26). Saul and his sons (including Jonathan) were cremated and then buried (1 Sam. 31:8-13; cf. 2 Sam. 21:12-14). Asa may have been cremated (2 Chron. 16:13-14), although

many commentators understand the account to refer to burning the spices not the body. In these examples the cremation of their bodies is simply offered as an record of what happened. The Holy Spirit offers no comment on whether it is acceptable or unacceptable, nor does the life of the one cremated tell us if it was proper or not. For Achan it was punishment, but Jonathan was faithful to the Lord and loyal to David.

Second, there are some accounts of the burning of the bones of the dead long after the bodies had died. Josiah, for example, burned bones and scattered the ashes on the pagan altar used for false worship in order to defile it (2 Kings 23:16). In a different example God condemned the king of Moab for burning the bones of the king of Edom (Amos 2:1). In these examples there is no absolute condemnation of cremation as a practice. In the case of Josiah, it was simply a gesture aimed at ending false worship that involved child sacrifice. In the case of the king of Moab it seems to be that God condemned this because of the disrespect it demonstrated.

From what we understand, the Jews typically practiced burial, not because it was required but because it made it eas-



ier to fulfill Mosaic requirements concerning defilement that came from touching a dead body. For example, priests could not touch the dead (Lev. 21:1, 11), nor Nazirites (Num. 6:6), and all Israelites who did were considered unclean for seven days (Num. 19:11, 18). This was part of why Josiah's burning of the bones and scattering them essentially made the entire area "off limits." If a Jew went where ashes of the dead had been scattered he might easily become unclean without even realizing it.

Some Christians have objected to the practice of cremation because they imagine that it somehow conflicts with the promise of a resurrection upon Christ's return. The fact is that all physical bodies will eventually return to the dust (and raw elements) from which they have been made (Gen. 3:19). Most souls who have lived and died since the creation of the world no longer have any remnant left of the host in which their spirit once resided. Yet, Jesus promised, **"Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live"** (John 5:25,

NKJV). He clarified this further by saying, **"all who are in the graves will hear His voice"** (John 5:28). To Daniel, the same resurrection was promised in this way, **"Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt"** (Dan. 12:2, NIV). The destruction of the body does not impede the promise of a resurrection body. Paul taught, **"For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens"** (2 Cor. 5:1, NKJV).



From these things I believe we can conclude that the treatment of the body after death is really a matter of little consequence as the Bible teaches it. While some measure of respect should be

observed, Mosaic principles of cleanness and uncleanness related to touching a dead body no longer apply in Christ. If the resurrection will come to all, even those who now **“sleep in the dust of the earth”** or whose earthly bodies have been **“destroyed,”** it makes no difference whether a person is buried or cremated. This is a personal choice that can be made by each individual and the families of a loved one who has passed away.



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Welcome Visitors

**We are so glad that you joined us today.
Please come again.**

● **Let us know if you have any questions.**