

Should Christians Be Cremated?

In a recent episode of THE BEAT by Allen Parr, the rising trend of cremation over traditional burial among Americans was examined, sparking a biblical exploration of whether Christians should consider this option when faced with end-of-life decisions.

Cremation on the Rise: A Changing Landscape

Parr, host of THE BEAT, reported on the shifting cultural landscape of burial practices, stating, "For the first time in history, a majority of Americans are choosing cremation over traditional burial at the time of death." He went on to cite experts predicting that this trend is likely to continue, with up to 70% of people favoring cremation within the next decade.

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With recent reports of inflation going up in the month of February and cost of living straining the wallets of many Americans, a more cost-effective financial option for those who have died is in the back of many people's mind these days.

Biblical Perspectives on Cremation

Parr delved into the biblical perspective on cremation, stating, "Nowhere in the Bible does it say that [traditional burial] should be the only way for a body to be disposed of." While citing Saul and his sons' bodies being burned as an example (1 Sam. 31:11-13), Parr pointed out that such instances don't directly address the concept of cremation.

Highlighting another biblical example: "Manasseh sacrificed his own son in the fire," (2 Kings 21). While this serves as a

historical reference to burning a body without explicitly discussing cremation, King Manasseh is not an example of what to do according to Scripture. He was a wicked king who sacrificed his children to foreign gods through fire, which is strictly prohibited by the Lord in Leviticus 18:21 and Deuteronomy 12:30-31, 18:10.

Resurrected Bodies: Theological Reassurance

Addressing concerns about the impact of cremation on the resurrected body, Parr referred to 1 Corinthians 15:42-44, stating, "Our bodies are buried in brokenness but they will be raised in glory... for just as there are natural bodies, there are also spiritual bodies." He reassured viewers that God, having initially used dust to create mankind, is not limited by the method of body disposal and is fully capable of recreating glorified bodies.

"So the concept here of cremation is this idea that 'God used dirt or dust to create our bodies' and so basically whenever you go through cremation you're essentially returning your body back to the original state God used to create mankind," Parr says.

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Considerations for Christians: Practical Insights

Parr offers a framework for Christians grappling with the decision between cremation and traditional burial. He advised considering personal preferences and practicalities, "What type of commemoration should I say do you want people to have when you die?" He further emphasized factors such as whether an open casket is preferred, convenience for loved ones and financial considerations.

Parr urged viewers to reflect on these considerations,

acknowledging that discussions about death may be uncomfortable, but they are crucial. He stated, "You might be at a place where you might be thinking about, what type of plans do I want to make as it relates to how I am disposed of whenever I die." {eo}

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