

7 Biblical Arguments Against 'Grave Soaking'

Have you heard of mantle grabbing? Also called grave sucking and grave soaking, I'm concerned about how it's sweeping through charismatic circles. The following are seven concerns I have about grave sucking:

1. It distracts from the true power source of our anointing.

The Word of God is clear that the true source of our anointing is from God (Acts 1:8). James 4:4 teaches that if we draw near to God He will draw near to us. Joshua 1:8, Psalm 1 and 119, and 2 Timothy 3:15-16 teach that meditation on the Word day and night is the key to our biblical success. Many charismatics want shortcuts to the anointing and desire results from an instant microwave experience or a one-time event. Instead of wasting their time traveling to "grave suck," they should discipline themselves to seek God, pour over His word and dig down deep in His presence.

2. We get equipped for the work of the ministry by the present-day fivefold ministry gifts.

Ephesians 4:7-12 teach us that the grace we need to minister comes from the ministry gifts of apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastor/teachers. Reading the context of the Bible clearly shows that the equipping and grace/impartation we need comes from those we are sitting under and trained by, not those who have already died. Hence, the spirit that was on Moses came upon 70 elders (Num. 12) and then upon Joshua (Num. 27) to help equip them to lead, but that experience was handed down personally to those who walked with Moses. We do not read about others in later generations getting Moses' spirit; the same when Elijah passed his mantle onto Elisha.

Regarding John the Baptist coming in the spirit and power of

Elijah (Luke 1:17-19): That was referring to God divinely placing an assignment upon John from birth, it did not come from John finding Elijah's grave and sucking out the anointing! Furthermore, John was carrying on the next phase of a ministry Elijah started and was perhaps the last in a line of prophets from the school of the prophets Elijah led at one time (which was started by the prophet Samuel).

Hence, the anointing, spiritual DNA and legacy of a person can be extended generationally via a divine assignment and/or training and impartation, but not through "grave sucking."

3. The only spirit of a departed person that is promised is the Holy Spirit sent by Jesus.

Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to His followers after He left the earth (John 14-16), which He said would empower us to be His witnesses (Acts 1:8). Consequently, the spirits of the departed saints are not sent down from heaven nor are they dispensed from the place where their bodies were buried.

4. It can make an experiential doctrine out of a mysterious, unique, biblical story.

As mentioned, 2 Kings 13 gives us a story of a person who came back to life after touching the bones of Elisha. Some have no doubt that the power of God was still in his grave and/or that the miracle-working anointing of Elisha was still residually present on his bones. We have to remember that this is a strange, unique, mysterious story, and that it is dangerous to formulate a doctrine and/or practice based on one obscure passage. This is how cults have started. We need to compare Scripture with Scripture, and if there is an isolated, obscure passage we encounter, then we should refrain from conjecture and not make a doctrine out of it until we can establish a clear biblical pattern. Also, it must be noted that the person in this passage was raised from the dead. The Bible does not indicate that he received Elisha's anointing, mantle or became

a prophet.

Furthermore, that may have been just one sovereign act of God to remind the Jews of their heritage and the unique prophetic calling Elijah handed down to Elisha.

5. The spirit, power and anointing of these saints is no longer in the ground.

The Bible teaches that when believers are absent from the body they are present with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8). This implies that our spirit leaves our body when we physically die. Hence, it is no longer on the earth and thus no longer in the grave.

6. It can lead to saint worship and necromancy.

One thing I greatly respect in the Christian Eastern Orthodox tradition is their love of the (spiritual) fathers and patriarchs. Unfortunately, some have taken their reverence too far and worship and pray to images of departed saints. There is a fine line between venerating the saints of old and worshipping them, especially to those who may be biblically ignorant among them. Also, many in this tradition have put the writings of the apostolic fathers (those leaders of the church who came after the first-century apostles) on the same level of Scripture, something I disagree with for many reasons too numerous to cite here.

In the Roman Catholic tradition we actually see the official practice of Mary worship and saint worship. Furthermore, it is common for a Roman Catholic to pray to one of the canonized departed saints. Whenever we go to a departed saint for something instead of directly to Jesus we violate Scriptures like 2 Timothy 2:5 and John 14:6, since we only have one designated mediator between God and man: Jesus Christ. Grave sucking comes perilously close to saint worship and, if not corrected, could also lead to communing (speaking) with departed saints. After all, if we can receive an anointing

from the grave of a departed saint, who is to say we cannot receive advice and/or life altering visions from that same saint?

Finally, this could eventually lead to necromancy, which is witchcraft and has to do with conjuring up the spirits of the dead. Scripture teaches this is wrong even if you are trying to contact a departed saint (1 Sam. 28).

7. This could further divide the body of Christ.

Grave sucking seems like lunacy, not just to nonbelievers but probably to most Bible-believing Christians. Why? Because there is no specific biblical pattern that demonstrates it and/or commands or encourages it. Consequently, it further perpetuates the belief many hold in the evangelical camp that charismatics emphasize subjective experience more than the authority of Scripture. Possibly the worst thing about grave sucking is that it could further divide the body of Christ at a time when we need true believers to unite more than ever before.

Joseph Mattera is an internationally known author, futurist, interpreter of culture and activist/theologian whose mission is to influence leaders who influence nations. He leads several organizations, including "The United States Coalition of Apostolic Leaders ()." He also has a blog on Charisma magazine called "The Pulse." To order one of his books or to subscribe to his weekly newsletter go to . You can connect with him via Facebook () or Twitter ().