

## Got Questions: How Should Christians be Buried?

**Short Answer:** There is no Biblically commanded way for Christians to bury their dead.

- There are many burial traditions, but remember...
  - Traditions that are *not commanded* in Scripture and which are *not in conflict* with Scripture may be *permissible*.
  - No one has the right to turn that which is *permissible* into that which is *obligatory*.

**1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11:16** If anyone is inclined to be contentious, we have no such practice, nor do the churches of God.

**Principle:** While You Can, Prepare to Ensure That Your Death and Burial Point to Your Christian Hope of Resurrection

**Philippians 1:20** as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death.

**Ecclesiastes 7:2** It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, for this is the end of all mankind, and the living will lay it to heart.

### The Hebrew Tradition of Keeping the Bones

**Genesis 50:24 - 25**

**24** And Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die, but God will visit you and bring you up out of this land to the land that he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob."

**25** Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here."

**Exodus 12:46 - 47**

**46** It shall be eaten in one house; you shall not take any of the flesh outside the house, and you shall not break any of its bones.

**47** All the congregation of Israel shall keep it.

**Exodus 13:19** Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for Joseph had made the sons of Israel solemnly swear, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones with you from here."

**John 19:35 - 36**

**35** He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth—that you also may believe.

**36** For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken."

**Psalms 22:16b - 17a** they have pierced my hands and feet— I can count all my bones



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### Second Principle: The Body of the Deceased Should be Honored

#### **Psalm 139:13 – 14**

**13** For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb.

**14** I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.

**Act 17:32** Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked. But others said, "We will hear you again about this."

- The greatest thing that can be said about the human body is that the Son of God came as the Word incarnate in a *human body*,
  - and now after his *resurrection*, he has a *glorious* one forever.

**John 1:14** And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

#### **Philippians 3:20 - 21**

**20** But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

**21** who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

#### **1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:37, 42b - 44**

**37** And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain.

**42b** What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable.

**43** It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power.

**44** It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.

### What About Cremation?

- Derived from the Latin - *cremātus*, the past participle of *cremāre* ("to burn"),
  - used to describe processing the bodies of the deceased by fire.
- Be sensitive, some Christians are *strongly* against it.
  - Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. **Romans 14:5b**

#### **1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 31:11 - 13**

**11** But when the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul,

**12** all the valiant men arose and went all night and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth-shan, and they came to Jabesh and burned them there.

**13** And they took their bones and buried them under the tamarisk tree in Jabesh and fasted seven days.

**1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 13:3** If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

**Genesis 3:19b** ...for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

