

**Beware
of
Cremation!**

Beware of Cremation!

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ISBN 978-3-947385-00-3

1. Auflage 2017

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Edition *LAU* – LEHRET ALLE VÖLKER

Printing:

druckerei **bothner**,

Heilbronner Straße 14-16, D-74348 Lauffen a. N.

www.druckerei-bothner.de,

info@druckerei-bothner.de

Printed in Germany

The ordering person - not the publisher - takes the responsibility for permitted distribution of this pamphlet.

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1. Warning About Cremation!

Because in the last thirty years the incidence of cremation has increased unmistakably and conspicuously, an increasing number of Christians also have said, “I want to be cremated after my death. Then, my relatives won’t need to expend any effort tending to my grave. Then, I won’t be eaten by worms. Then, I will save the high costs of burial, etc....”

But are these arguments in accordance with the Truth? Or are they one of the devil’s tricks, who has but a short time, to harm people, especially the saved children of God, to torment them and defile their bodies, that have been sanctified by belief, that is, dedicated to God (compare: **Romans 12:1-2; 6:12, 13, 19, 22; 1. Corinthians 6:19-20; 1. Thessalonians 5:23**)?! **Abraham**, the father of the believers, requested the “**cave of Machpelah...for a burial place**” for the body of his wife **Sarah (Genesis 23:8-9)** and bought it in Hebron. Also his grandson **Jacob** was

made to swear that his children would bury their father **Jacob** in this grave: **“Behold, I am dying; in my grave which I dug for myself in the land of Canaan, there you shall bury me.”** (Genesis 50:5). **Jacob’s** son **Joseph** likewise requested to be buried in Canaan: **“God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here.”** (Genesis 50:25; Acts of the Apostles 7:16).

God Himself decreed that a body should rest when spirit and soul have left it. To **Daniel**, the 90-year-old servant of God, He said: **“But you, go your way till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days.”** (Daniel 12:13). It is for this reason that burial is a divine and natural order. **“For dust you are, and to dust you shall return.”** (Genesis 3:19). **“Then the dust will return to the earth as it was,”** (Ecclesiastes 12:7a). **“You (will) turn me into dust again”** (Job 10:9).

It was considered a punishment, when a person was not buried. It was unnatural for a dead person to have no grave (**Leviticus 26:30; Deuteronomy 28:26; 1. Kings 14:11; Psalm**

79:1-3; Isaiah 5:25; 34:3; Jeremiah 7:33; 8:11-2; 9:21; 14:16; 16:4, 6; 19:7; 22:19 (*compare: Exodus 13:13; 34:20*); 25:33; 36:30; Ezekiel 6:5; Revelation 11:8-9). In Ecclesiastes 6:3, 5 we read: “If a man begets a hundred children and lives many years, so that the days of his years are many, but his soul is not satisfied with goodness, or indeed he has no burial, I say that a stillborn child is better than he...this has more rest than that man.”

The cremation process robs the ruined body of the rest that God intended. In **Isaiah 57:2**, we read: “**He shall enter into peace; They shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness.**” Whoever allows his body to be cremated and gives his body willingly to the fire, he himself begins the judgment of fire. It is near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned. (Hebrews 6:8).

We gravely warn you ahead of time in the name of the LORD! Because in the resurrection, the glorious, spiritual body will be raised from

the seed that in burial was “sown” as an earthly body. **(1. Corinthians 15:44).**

“I believe in the resurrection of the body.”

Christians acknowledge, in accordance with the teachings of the Holy Scripture in the Apostles’ Creed, for 1500 years: “I believe in the resurrection of the body!” – as the sorely afflicted patriarch Job cried out 4000 years ago in hope: **“For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God, Whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!” (Job 19:25-27).** Because, in the resurrection the glorious, spiritual body will be raised from the seed that in the burial was “sown” as an earthly body: **“So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised**

a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.” (1 Corinthians 15:42-44).

ADVANCE RESURRECTION

This happened the first time to the dead believers who, after the resurrection of JESUS CHRIST, rose from their graves, as **Matthew 27:52-53** documents: **“and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.”**

For this experience Paul, Apostle of the Nations, missionary of Europe, yearned: **“... to know Him the true Man with true wisdom, for Whom the Greeks kept a lookout with great longing, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to advance resurrection – exanastasis (mentioned only here) from the dead.” (Philippians 3:10-11).**

He sought sanctification and hoped, not to decay, but to receive the glorious body directly after his death like his Master, **“who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.”** (Philippians 3:21).

2. A Short History of Cremation

From 4000 BC to approx. 500 BC the history of internment consisted predominantly of burial of the corpse in the earth or in hollowed out caves and tombs. Even today the pyramid graves of the Pharaohs and a careful washing, anointing and handling of a corpse speak of man's respect for the body of the deceased and of the knowledge of a transcendent life of the body, the soul and the spirit.

In *Greece*, bodies were being buried in the time of Plato. But with the spread of the idea that the soul requires cleansing in order for it

to reach the holy place, the burning of corpses began to be the custom at the beginning of the 4th century BC.

In *Buddhism*, this concept is in general circulation.

Even the *Romans*, at the end of the Republic, engaged in corpse burning more and more, and columbaria (sepulchral vaults) were built to store the ashes. Only young children and people who were hit by lightning continued to be buried and not burned.

The only people who never burned their dead were the **Jews and Christians**. But not out of protest against heathenism, but rather **based on the word of God**. To this day, **the catacombs** in Rome stand as witness that Jews and Christians opposed the Roman-heathen custom of cremation. But, because the dead were not allowed to remain within city walls, a branched system of catacombs arose, where believers could lay their relatives *to their final rest* in recesses of earth.

Since the Age of *Enlightenment*, that is, in the 18th century, when God and His Word, the Bible, were replaced with sin-darkened reason, one began to see in Paul's European missionary in the Christian Occident and in Lutheran Germany that the dead were no longer being buried, but being burned. The initial momentum originated from the Freemasons in France in 1870. Optional cremation then followed in 1875 Milan, 1878 Gotha, 1884 London and 1888 Zurich. The emerging atheist movement wanted to, in this way, escape the judgment of God. In 1869, a religion of the urn was enacted and in 1877 it was dispensed.

Today, in the time that the Lord Jesus predicted an apostasy would come and there would be betrayal, trickery and temptation (**2 Thessalonians 2:3.10-12; Matthew 24:5.11.24; 13:33; Luke 13:20-21**) before His imminent return, the incidence of urn internment has increased so rapidly that over half the population is cremated – including Christians – even though, in the meantime, in response to the tremendous loss of revenue

to the community, the previously inexpensive urn graves now cost as much as that of a burial. There are many other objections to burial that we do not want to go into here. – Because people will always find enough reasons to follow the crowd and the spirit of the age and will always try to justify their own opinions, we want to encourage everyone, with this writing, to also treat the question of cremation in this manner, to mistrust oneself and wholeheartedly seek the LORD in His Word. **“For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.” (Galatians 6:8).** You will realize with horror how terrible it is to fall victim to a cruel deception by the ancient serpent, the murderer from the beginning, and the liar! (John 8:44)

3. The Medical Viewpoint

The noted surgeon Prof. Dr. Karl Ludwig Schleich wrote in his book: Vom Schaltwerk der Gedanken, “...the human body, as with

animals and plants, is composed of millions of microscopic individual cells. Each cell, to a certain extent, leads its own life and maintains this life even after the body dies and decomposes. For the cell nucleus there is no death, rather a spore-like persistence, until new life comes and the cells serve to build new life. The result is the “cycle of life.” Only fire and strong corrosive acid destroy the life of cells. Death by burning is the most unnatural thing that exists. It interferes in a destructive way with the cycle of life. Death disintegrates our body only to the point where the soul is held together with it, ending at the point of the immortal cell nucleus that only fire is capable of destroying.”

The burning of human bodies is then a violent and gruesome act of human destruction and therefore is subject to punishment according to the Holy Scripture. The man-made destruction of the human body through fire seems perhaps ceremonial and solemn when organ music and sermons are added. But, the process of burning of a corpse is horrifying. To achieve complete disintegration, the body must burn for 1 ½ hours

in a temperature of 1200 to 1500 degrees. The way eye witnesses describe it, the body bends and writhes in this heat in a horrible way. He who has even once attended this punishment of fire and has seen this happen never forgets this appalling sight.

There is a complete difference, however, between a person choosing to have his body cremated and a person who has been subjected to the flames due to circumstances beyond his control. For instance, if a person is a victim of Christian persecution. In that case, as God brings forth an entire stalk from a single grain of wheat, so too can He make a resurrected body from a single seed of an earthly body.

4. What God Says About the Burning of People

The cremation of a person only applies:

- as an *intensification of the death penalty* (**Numbers 16:35, Joshua 7:25**),

- for *fornication* (**Genesis 38:24, Leviticus 21:9**),
- for *incest* (**Leviticus 20:14**) and
- for *idolatry* (**2 Chronicles 34:5**).

God warns His people urgently against the burning of people, as was customary in the idolatry of the neighboring *paganism* (**Leviticus 18:21; Jeremiah 7:31, 19:5, 32:35; Ezeiel 32:37**).

God punishes *the Moabites* (Descendants of Lot, the nephew of Abraham; today, the Jordanians) with the burning of their palaces, **“Because he burned the bones of the king of Edom** (descendants of Esau, the brother of the patriarch Jacob, **Deuteronomy 2:4-5**: today, the Arabs) **to lime. (Amos 2:1-2)**.

God retaliated against cremation in terrible ways on those who practiced it, and all the more so because the Moabites and Edomites were both semites and therefore had a familial

relationship, albeit a distant one, to one another and His people.

In **1 Kings 13** we read that to the godless and superstitious *King Jeroboam I (931 – 910 BC)* of Israel, of the Ten Lost Tribes of the Northern Kingdom, a man of God comes and prophesies to him that in accordance with the poetic justice of God, on that same altar where Jeroboam was now making their burnt offerings to idolatry, the same would be done to the bones of those, who did this. After their deaths there would be another punishment, in the same way, that their bones would be taken from the grave and be burned.

God's Word was fulfilled 300 years later, when King *Josiah (640 – 608 BC)* of Judah, of the Two Tribes of the Southern Kingdom, in his eagerness, burned their bones on their own idolatry altar (**2 Kings 23:16 and 20**).

God reveals to us then in His Word, the Bible, that the burning of human bodies was always a judgment, a punishment or a disgrace.

Exactly for this reason, the man of God, who allowed himself to be misled (**1 Kings 13:9 and 18**), but still was a prophet, was protected from having his remains burned, like the prophet from Samaria, through whom he had allowed himself to be seduced (**2 Kings 23:17-18; 1 Kings 13:20-26-32**).

Cremation is, in God's eyes,
punishment and judgment!

The Disobedient

In the same way, the LORD reveals the retribution of the profligate in the future judgment. The divine retribution is burning in fire.

That is why He encourages the persecuted and warns the persecutors through the apostle Paul: **“which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer;**

since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you,

and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,

when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe” (2 Thessalonians 1:5-10a).

The Lord Jesus Himself warns the *impenitent* of the **“burn(ing) up the chaff with unquenchable fire” (Matthew 3:12)** and the children of malice, the tares, **“to burn them” in “the harvest” (Matthew 13:30 and 39).** **“Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather**

out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 13:40-42). But, not only the unbelievers, who rejected Jesus Christ, the One who endured in our place the judgment flames, that was poured out over Him on the cross of Calvary (compare Psalm 22:2; Song of Solomon 8:6b; Exodus 27:1-8, 38:1-7; Leviticus 1:9.13.17; Matthew 27:46), will be judged through the eternal lake of fire – because mercy and judgment are the flame of *one* light! The light of the love of God --, but also the trinity of Satan who mimic the living God.

The Antichrist and the False Prophet

First at the end of the battle of Armageddon – John sees and prophesies in the prophetic perfect tense – the beast, the ruler of the anti-Christ realm (**compare: Revelation 13:1-10**), together with his propaganda minister, the false prophet (**compare: Revelation 13:11-17**) are thrown into the eternal lake of fire.

“Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone” (Revelation 19:20).

The Dragon, the Serpent of Old, the Devil, Satan

After the thousand-year reign, in which the devil will be bound and cast into the bottomless pit (Revelation 20:1-3), and after a little while, in which once more he can seduce the nations of the earth, he will also –at the peak of his power –when he approaches with the seduced nations **“and surrounds the camp of the saints and the beloved city (=Jerusalem)” (Revelation 20:9),** experience God’s judgment of fire:

“And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. And the devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of

fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever” (Revelation 20:10). Finally, our earth itself will stand before the Judge on Judgment Day and will receive a judgment of fire.

The Earth

Because of unpunished blood guilt, countless murders of aborted babies, of children, of youths, of the old and the sick and of all other atrocities committed, *the earth* itself will also be destroyed by fire (Isaiah 24:5, 6, 19, 20; Jeremiah 3:1 and 9; Joel 1:19, 2:3, 3:3, 4:2, 19-20).

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up” (2 Peter 3:10).

“For all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of My jealousy” (Zephaniah 3:8b).

5. Every Person Will Be Resurrected!

Whether buried or cremated, whether in the sea or in outer space, whether believer or non-believer, every person will be resurrected! The believer on the day of their advance resurrection (**Philippians 3:11**) or in the Rapture (**John 14:3; 1 Corinthians 15:51-53; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 2 Corinthians 5:1-10**) the first resurrection (**Revelation 20:5-6**), and the unbeliever on Judgment Day before the great white throne. (**Revelation 20:11-15**).

The prophet of the nations, the Old Testament statesman Daniel (605-510 BC), to whom Christ explicitly refers (**Matthew 24:15**), reveals it through the Holy Spirit in his book **Daniel, Chapter 12, Verse 2**: “**And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt.**”

The Lord Jesus Himself confirmed this wonderful, divine truth: “**Do not marvel at this;**

for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good (compare the words of Jesus in John 15:5 “without Me you can do nothing”), to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil (without the Lord Jesus!), to the resurrection of condemnation” (John 5:28-29).

AS THE FIRSTFRUITS CHRIST

1 Corinthians 15:23

How important burial is to God, He shows us with His own beloved Son Jesus Christ, the true Man!

In the wonderful prophesy of Jesus’ atoning death in **Isaiah 53**, His grave is specifically mentioned in **Verse 9**. In the fulfillment of this prophesy it was the rock tomb of Joseph of Arimathia, which 700 years after the prophesy that esteemed man, a member of the high council, a secret disciple of Jesus, who sought the kingdom of God, gave Him for His burial

(Matthew 27:57-60; Mark 15:42-46; Luke 23:50-53; John 19:38-42).

“And they made His grave with the wicked— but with the rich at His death, because He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth” (Isaiah 53:9).

The “grave with the wicked” would be in the Valley of Hinnom, outside of the city of Jerusalem, in the “incinerators.” But, God allowed no more desecration, none at all. So it came to pass that the body of Jesus Christ was laid in the grave of the wealthy Joseph of Arimathia.

Jesus’ innocence during His lifetime is confirmed three times in apostolic testimony:

“Him who knew no sin” *Paul*
2 Corinthians 5:21

“Who committed no sin” *Peter*
1 Peter 2:22

“in Him there is no sin” *John*
1 John 3:5

This threefold testimony of men concerning the Lord Jesus Christ was the answer of the *witness of God* for His Son, in His life, especially in His atoning death, and—confirming it—in His resurrection (Acts 2:24)! *But also in His entombment! Even today His grave in Jerusalem is visited by many people.* The king of composers, Johann Sebastian Bach, the 5th evangelist, painted words in sound in his St. Matthew Passion. In the Bass Aria no. 75, it reads so compassionately:

Make thee clean, my heart, from sin.

Unto Jesus give thou welcome.

So within my cleansed breast Shall He *rest*,

Dwelling evermore within me,

World, depart; let Jesus in!

And in the Recitative no. 77, with his notes that always began with “Jesus, juva!” (=Jesus, help me!) and ended with “Soli Deo Gloria” (=To the glory of God alone) from the bass over the tenor and alto and ascending to the soprano, alternating with the choir, he underlines *the rest* of the dead Lord Jesus in the grave.

Bass-Solo:

And now the Lord to *rest* is laid.

Choir: Lord Jesus, fare Thee well!

Tenor-Solo:

His task is o`er; For all our sins He hath atoned.

Choir: Lord Jesus, fare Thee well!

Alto-Solo:

O weary, broken Body!

See, with repentant tears we would bedew it
Which our offence to such a death has brought.

Choir: Lord Jesus, fare Thee well!

Soprano-Solo:

While life shall last,

O let Thy suffering claim our love,

Since Thou for man salvation sure hast
wrought.

Choir: Lord Jesus, fare Thee well!

With the memorable final chorus no. 78 Bach ends his Passion in that he masterfully extols and executes through music the act of atonement at Calvary, the masterwork of God in the Lord Jesus Christ. He ends this work with the entombment of Jesus:

In tears of grief, dear Lord, we leave Thee.
Hearts cry to Thee, o Saviour dear.
Lie Thou softly, softly here.
Rest Thy worn and bruised Body.
Lie Thou softly, softly here,
At Thy grave, o Jesus blest.
May the sinner, worn with weeping,
Comfort find in Thy dear keeping,
And the wear soul find rest.
Sleep in peace, sleep Thou
In the Father`s breast.

How very much the Lord Jesus Himself rejoiced *about* and how much worth he placed *on* the entombment, he reveals to us in the prominent mention of Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus.

It was Mary who anointed Him for burial and received from the LORD Himself the highest praise:

“For she has done a good work for Me ... For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did it for My burial.

Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her” (Matthew 26:10b and 12-13; compare Mark 14:6 and 8-9; John 12:1-8).

“She has done what she could!” (Mark 14:8).

What wonderful, public, threefold praise the Lord Jesus gave Mary:

- 1. “For she has done a good work for Me!”**
- 2. “She has done what she could!”**
- 3. “Wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.”**

May we, in all areas of our lives, be fulfilled in the same way from our first love. May we, like Mary:

1. sit at His feet and hear His word (Luke 10:39)
2. arise and go to the Teacher when he calls, follow (John 11:28-29)
3. give Him our adoration through our entire life!

“Lord Jesus, I thank You that You died for my sins. Please forgive me ... and come into my heart through the Holy Spirit! You shall be from this moment on my LORD and Redeemer. I thank you for this. Amen.” Then, the echo of eternity will lie over us, at the end of our time on earth, in death and in eternal life! For this purpose, God’s Son gave His holy life, through His blood spilled on the cross, for our sins!!!

The unbelieving Apostle Thomas recognized the resurrected LORD by his stigmata, that his resurrected body still had (The Gospel of John 20:28; compare Revelation 5:6; 13:8b)! God considers the body, that He created, of vital importance. That is why He will resurrect it, in the same way that He resurrected the body of Lord Jesus, Whose **“bones, not one of them is broken”** (Psalm 34:21; John 19:33 and 36).

Yet from Him as Representative of men David writes of His time in the grave—that is, between His death and His resurrection—the words of the ambassador of the people, David, are written: **“My flesh also will rest in hope”** (Psalm 16:9b;

Acts 2:26; 13:35). If we, unlike the Son of God, also must experience decomposition as King David did (Acts 13:36-37), then this is actually His intention for *our* dead body, *our* corpse: **“My flesh also will rest in hope” (Psalm 16:9b)** and not be burned; perhaps even, hopefully, like the bodies of the sacred children of God, be transformed *before* decomposition!

Finally, we refer to the letter, that reflects the complete apostasy before the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thessalonians 2), before the seven seals-, seven trumpets- and seven bowls judgments from Revelations 6-19 will happen to the world and Israel (Daniel 9:27). It is the letter of the apostle Jude, the half-brother of the LORD. Through him the Holy Spirit refers one last time in the Holy Scripture to the importance of burial.

There, the Holy Spirit describes, in short, the dispute over the body of Moses: **“Yet Michael the archangel, (compare: Daniel 10:13 and 12:1; Revelation 12:7), in contending with the devil, when he *disputed* about the *body of***

Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, “The LORD rebuke you!” (Jude 9).

The devil, the troublemaker, absolutely wanted the body of Moses for himself. But, we read in **Deuteronomy 34:6: “And He – God – buried him in a valley in the land of Moab (Jordan), opposite Beth Peor; but no one knows his grave to this day.”** God Himself buried His servant, so that 1600 years later on the Mount of Transfiguration in Israel, the lawgiver of Israel, Moses, together with the reformer of Israel, Elijah, -- both in their glorified bodies – with the glorified JESUS of Nazareth, in front of still-living disciples in their earthly bodies, would speak of His triumphant outcome over the last enemy, death (Matthew 17:1-8; Mark 9:1-8; Luke 9:27-36).

The dispute over the body of Moses, the man of God, makes us aware in our time of decay, that we should not give the enemy of our soul a handle through unbelief, disobedience or uncleansed sins and – if not enraptured – then be *buried* according to the will of God!

**“(Grace),
has now been revealed
by the appearing
of our Savior Jesus Christ,
who has abolished death
and brought life
and immortality
to light
through the gospel.”**

2 Timothy 1:10

**“Most assuredly, I say to you,
unless
a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies,
it remains alone;
but if it dies,
it produces much grain.”**

John 12:24

**“Do not be deceived,
God is not mocked;
for whatever a man sows,
that he will also reap.
For he who sows to his flesh
will of the flesh
reap corruption,
but he who sows to the Spirit
will of the Spirit
reap everlasting life.”**

**Galatians
Chapter 6, Verses 7 and 8**

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ISBN 978-3-947385-00-3