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Andrew M. Davis

Sermon Notes

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Grieving in Hope: Abraham Buries Sarah

Genesis 23

Introduction: Elaborate Tomb versus Faith-filled Testimony

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, India was ruled by Muslim emperors named Moguls. In 1612, a beautiful young woman Arjumand Banu Begam was married to Shah Jehan (then Prince Khurram), the fifth mogul emperor. This marriage was truly a love-match, and Mumtaz (as she was called) was her husband's inseparable companion on all his journeys and military expeditions. She was his comrade and his counselor, inspiring him to acts of charity and benevolence towards the weak and the needy. Sadly, however, she died in childbirth in 1630 only three years after his accession to the throne. Overpowered by grief, Shah Jehan was determined to perpetuate her memory for immortality and decided to build his beloved wife the finest sepulcher ever - a monument of eternal love. The sad circumstances which attended the early death of the empress who had endeared herself to the people inspired all his subjects to join in the emperor's pious intentions. After twenty-two laborious years, and the combined effort of over twenty thousand workmen and master craftsmen culled from all over India as well as Asia and Europe, the complex was finally completed in 1648 on the banks on the river Yamuna in Agra, the capital of Mogul monarchs.

The graceful structure was built as a perfect fusion of Muslim and Hindu styles, with four minarets and a tranquil reflecting pool. It glistened in the sunlight since it was built mostly of white marble from Markrana, over 250 miles away. The army of skilled craftsmen intricately inlaid the walls with all the most precious gems in the world; one flower, carved in its walls and only one inch square, was inlaid with sixty different materials, so perfectly meshed that they feel smooth to the touch like glass.

This incredible building he called the "Taj Mahal", and it stands today as an enduring testimony of the love of one man for his wife, perhaps the most spectacular tomb in the world

About 19 miles south southwest of Jerusalem there is, in the vicinity of Hebron, a cave. Like the Taj Mahal, it was provided for the burial of a beloved wife by a grieving husband. Like the Taj Mahal, it stands as an eloquent and lasting testimony to the nature of their relationship. Unlike the Taj Mahal, however, it is humble, natural, and unshaped by human hands. There is nothing physically attractive about the cave, but its purchase for four hundred silver pieces four thousand years ago speaks volumes about the faith of a grieving husband... more eloquent than the luxurious mausoleum in India visited by over 2 million tourists every year.

Sarah's tomb, bought by grieving Abraham, was specifically purchased in the Promised Land. And despite the grief of death and its separation, Abraham's purchase demonstrated his faith in a simple fact:

God's promises are not exhausted in this life!

For every believer, the best is yet to come! And not even death can quench faith and hope in the future promises of God.

Genesis 23 contains a purely secular account of a business transaction that occurred four thousand years ago between a wandering, tent-dwelling old man and a small, now-extinct tribe of people. There is not a single overt mention of God, but Abraham's faith in God's promises are the central theme and lesson of this account.

I. Sarah's Death Mentioned, Burial Emphasized

A. The Structure of the Account

1. verses 1-2: Sarah's Death and Abraham's Mourning
2. verses 19-20: Sarah's Burial
3. verses 3-18: [the bulk of the narrative] Abraham's Purchase of the Burial Place

Questions: Why did Moses include this account at all? Why did he emphasize so prominently the negotiations over the burial place for Sarah?

B. Sarah's Death: A Cause for Mourning (vs. 1-2)

(vs. 1-2) Sarah lived to be a hundred and twenty-seven years old. 2 She died at Kiriath Arba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan, and Abraham went to mourn for Sarah and to weep over her.

1. Sarah a great woman of God

- a. the only wife of a patriarch whose age at death is reported
- b. a godly woman whose godly submission to her husband was the pattern for all godly wives who followed her

1 Peter 3:3-6 Wives, Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. ⁴ Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. ⁵ For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful. They were submissive to their own husbands, ⁶ like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.

- c. Sarah never murmured against his following God's invisible call
 - d. her life was made very difficult by Abraham's faith-filled obedience
 - e. she served her husband and shared his bed, his table, and his life
 - f. they suffered the pain of childlessness together
2. She was his partner in sin as they both lied to Pharaoh and to Abimelech
 3. But more, she was his partner in faith and in the promises
 - a. her faith grew as his did
 - b. her barrenness was the stark tablet on which God painted a masterpiece of supernatural power
 - c. her trust in the Lord was essential to the fulfillment of God's promises to them

Hebrews 11:11 By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised.

C. Universal Death Penalty from Adam

1. Abraham called "God's friend"
2. But God won't spare anyone from the death penalty under Adam
3. This is the curse of the entire human race... it links the godly with the ungodly, it links the rich and the poor, it links males and females, it links Americans with Lithuanians and Aborigines

NO ONE IS EXEMPT!!!

4. This is the final enemy that Christ will destroy only at the end of the world

1 Corinthians 15:26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

D. Pain in the Final Details

1. Abraham “went to mourn for her”
 - a. two Hebrew terms used
 - b. implies a whole ritual of grief (such as tearing clothes, putting dust on his head, lamenting, weeping)
 - c. faith in the resurrection does not mean that we can’t mourn for our loved ones

Jesus wept at Lazarus’s tomb

Job mourned for his dead children who would never be replaced

2. Quite possibly absent from her when she died

KJV: Genesis 23:2 And Sarah died in Kirjatharba; the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan: and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her.

- a. the Hebrew implies that Abraham was away from Sarah when she died
 - b. thus her death was probably a shock to him
 - c. if she had been gravely ill, he would not have left her side
3. Therefore the death was unexpected... this is part of the great pain of death

E. Pain in the Permanent Separation

1. Abraham will never see Sarah again in this world
2. Their time together on earth has come to an end

F. Pain in the Physical Preparation

1. Busyness of those left behind
2. Multiple errands and actions
 - a. dealing with the funeral director
 - b. dealing with family and friends
 - c. dealing with travel arrangements

- d. dealing with financial matters... life insurance, official notification to the state, etc.
- e. part of the cruelty of the mourning process for a spouse

3. Abraham's painful negotiation with the Hittites

Genesis 23:3-4 Then Abraham rose from beside his dead wife and spoke to the Hittites. He said, ⁴ *"I am an alien and a stranger among you. Sell me some property for a burial site here so I can bury my dead."*

II. Negotiating for a Present Piece of the Future Inheritance

A. God's Repeated Promises Concerning the Land

Genesis 12:7 *The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the LORD, who had appeared to him.*

Genesis 13:14-15 *The LORD said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, "Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west." ¹⁵ All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever.*

Genesis 15:7-9 *He also said to him, "I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to take possession of it." ⁸ But Abram said, "O Sovereign LORD, how can I know that I will gain possession of it?" ⁹ So the LORD said to him, "Bring me a heifer, a goat and a ram, each three years old, along with a dove and a young pigeon."*

Genesis 15:18-21 *On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram and said, "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates-- ¹⁹ the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, ²⁰ Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, ²¹ Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites."*

Genesis 17:8 *The whole land of Canaan, where you are now an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God."*

KEY: Notice that God promised the land to ABRHAMA and to his descendents... not just to his descendents

BUT NOT YET: As God spoke clearly in Genesis 15, the beginning of the taken possession would not occur for another five hundred years, after his descendents had been enslaved by another people for four centuries.

B. Abraham's Humble Acceptance of Present Limitations

1. "Alien and stranger"

Genesis 23:3-4 *Then Abraham rose from beside his dead wife and spoke to the Hittites. He said, ⁴ "I am an alien and a stranger among you.*

Hebrews 11:9 *By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise.*

2. God gave him not a foot of ground

[Stephen's speech] **Acts 7:5** *God gave Abraham no inheritance here, not even a foot of ground. But God promised him that he and his descendants after him would possess the land, even though at that time Abraham had no child.*

3. "Now and not yet"

- a. this is the nature of the promises of God
- b. most of them are unfulfilled at death
- c. we breathe our last breath still trusting in the promises for the future

4. The Hittites: Present owners, future enemies

- a. sons of Heth, descendants of Canaan (Genesis 10)
- b. listed among the future enemies of the people of God in Genesis 15... God would drive them out in Joshua's day

Exodus 23:23 *My angel will go ahead of you and bring you into the land of the Amorites, **Hittites**, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hivites and Jebusites, and I will wipe them out.*

- c. in Abraham's day, however, they were courteous and respectful

C. The Stages of the Negotiation

Stage 1: vs. 3-4 Abraham requests to buy some land for a tomb

Genesis 23:3-4 *Then Abraham rose from beside his dead wife and spoke to the Hittites. He said, ⁴ "I am an alien and a stranger among you. Sell me some property for a burial site here so I can bury my dead."*

Stage 2: vs. 5-6 Hittite response

Genesis 23:5-6 *The Hittites replied to Abraham, ⁶ "Sir, listen to us. You are a mighty prince among us. Bury your dead in the choicest of our tombs. None of us will refuse you his tomb for burying your dead."*

Notice how gracious they are to Abraham. They compliment him, call him literally “A prince of God among us” and offer him any burial place he would choose as a gift.

BUT Notice also that they do not accept his actual request... a SALE of land so he can bury his wife. Abraham wants to OWN the burial place, not accept a loaner or be permanently beholden to Hittite landlords.

Stage 3: vs. 7-9 Abraham’s urgent request: ownership of a piece of the Promised Land

Genesis 23:7-9 Then Abraham rose and bowed down before the people of the land, the Hittites. ⁸ He said to them, "If you are willing to let me bury my dead, then listen to me and intercede with Ephron son of Zohar on my behalf ⁹ so he will sell me the cave of Machpelah, which belongs to him and is at the end of his field. Ask him to sell it to me for the full price as a burial site among you."

Abraham already has a specific place picked out, and he wants the people around him to intercede on his behalf with Ephron, son of Zohar. The word “Machpelah” comes from the Hebrew root which means “to double”, and many commentators believe it was a double cave. It was in Hebron, near Mamre, the place where Abraham and Sarah had received most of the promises from the mouth of God.

These proceedings are very formal and fit a certain pattern concerning the way ancient Near Eastern peoples negotiated and bought and sold land.

Again, Abraham has in mind to be full owner of the cave, not a recipient of human generosity. In many cases, this kind of a lavish gift comes with strings attached. Abraham wanted no part of being under the authority of some future Hittite tribal chieftain with whom there might not be such favorable relationships.

Abraham wants to pay the full price in a legally witnessed transaction. He humbles himself in the extreme, since business was usually conducted in a seated position. When he prostrated himself before the people of the land, he was acknowledging that the time of his full inheritance had not yet come.

Stage 4: vs. 10-11 Ephron’s reply:

Genesis 23:10-11 Ephron the Hittite was sitting among his people and he replied to Abraham in the hearing of all the Hittites who had come to the gate of his city. ¹¹ "No, my lord," he said. "Listen to me; I give you the field, and I give you the cave that is in it. I give it to you in the presence of my people. Bury your dead."

Again, Ephron offers to GIVE the land to Abraham as a gift. Perhaps this was a genuine offer, but more likely it was a bargaining strategy, not meant to be taken seriously. This type of bargaining is still common in the Mid-East

If you were negotiating for something in a Middle-Eastern bazaar and you offered a price lower than the owner could accept, he might smile broadly and say, “What! Is it a matter of money between us? Take it for nothing, my friend, as a present from me! Don’t feel under any kind of constraint!” [But both would know it was not a genuine offer]

Dieterici, a traveler in that part of the world, related a similar experience:

“In our excursions, we had noticed a fine grey horse belonging to the Quarantine inspector. Mr. Blaine, my fellow traveler, had appeared to wish to buy the animal. It now made its appearance at our tents. We inquired the price, and our astonishment may be conceived when the Turk offered us the animal as a present. Mr. Blaine declared that he by no means intended to take it as a present, when the Turk replied: ‘What then are five purses (£25 sterling) to thee?’ Similar experiences take place every day in Egypt.”

Stage 5: vs. 12-13 Abraham’s persistent request for a price

Genesis 23:12-13 Again Abraham bowed down before the people of the land ¹³ and he said to Ephron in their hearing, "Listen to me, if you will. I will pay the price of the field. Accept it from me so I can bury my dead there."

Abraham simply will not accept this burial place as a gift. The time has come for Ephron to make a genuine offer. Which he does.

Stage 6: vs. 14-15 Ephron Names His Price

Genesis 23:14-15 Ephron answered Abraham, ¹⁵ "Listen to me, my lord; the land is worth four hundred shekels of silver, but what is that between me and you? Bury your dead."

The Middle-Eastern negotiation continues as a price is finally named. Again, the Hittite is extremely respectful, and probably named too high a price, expecting Abraham to bargain it down. But immediately the dickering ends:

Stage 7: vs. 16-18 Abraham Immediately Accepts Ephron’s Price, and the Transaction is Formally Made

Genesis 23:16-18 Abraham agreed to Ephron's terms and weighed out for him the price he had named in the hearing of the Hittites: four hundred shekels of silver, according to the weight current among the merchants. ¹⁷ So Ephron's field in Machpelah near Mamre-- both the field and the cave in it, and all the trees within the borders of the field-- was deeded ¹⁸ to Abraham as his property in the presence of all the Hittites who had come to the gate of the city.

Abraham had the silver with him, and in the manner of the merchants of the day, he weighed out the named weight in silver. Since there was no standard currency in those days, transactions were done by weight of gold or silver, and scales were used.

Verses 17-18 show the solemn formalities that went with this sale. It was a legal transaction by the laws of the day, and the boundaries were clearly delineated. The transaction was witnessed in the gate of the city, the standard place for the conducting of all such business.

The double cave, the field, and all the trees within the borders of the field were now legally Abraham’s.

D. The Burial Completed

Genesis 23:19 *Afterward Abraham buried his wife Sarah in the cave in the field of Machpelah near Mamre (which is at Hebron) in the land of Canaan.*

1. Abraham laid his wife's body in that cave
2. He did it in future hope of resurrection, as we shall see
3. The summary of the entire encounter shows that the legal acquisition of this small part of the Promised Land was the point of the account being included

Vs. 20 *So the field and the cave in it were deeded to Abraham by the Hittites as a burial site.*

E. Future Burials

1. Abraham

Genesis 25:7-10 *These are the days of the years of Abraham's life, 175 years. ⁸ Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people. ⁹ Isaac and Ishmael his sons buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, east of Mamre, ¹⁰ the field that Abraham purchased from the Hittites. There Abraham was buried, with Sarah his wife.*

2. Isaac

Genesis 35:27-29 *And Jacob came to his father Isaac at Mamre, or Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac had sojourned. ²⁸ Now the days of Isaac were 180 years. ²⁹ And Isaac breathed his last, and he died and was gathered to his people, old and full of days. And his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.*

3. Rebecca
4. Leah
5. Jacob

Genesis 49:29-33 *Then he commanded them and said to them, "I am to be gathered to my people; bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, ³⁰ in the cave that is in the field at Machpelah, to the east of Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field from Ephron the Hittite to possess as a burying place. ³¹ There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife. There they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife, and there I buried Leah- ³² the field and the cave that is in it were bought from the Hittites." ³³ When Jacob finished commanding his sons, he drew up his feet into the bed and breathed his last and was gathered to his people.*

Genesis 50:12-13 *Thus his sons did for him as he had commanded them, ¹³ for his sons carried him to the land of Canaan and buried him in the cave of the field at Machpelah, to the east of Mamre, which Abraham bought with the field from Ephron the Hittite to possess as a burying place.*

III. New Testament Commentary on this Burial: Hebrews 11:13-16

Hebrews 11:13-16 *These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. ¹⁴ For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. ¹⁵ If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶ But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.*

A. Abraham Had Opportunity to Return East

1. Genesis 22:20 Reminder of the branch of the family still back east

Genesis 22:20 *Now after these things it was told to Abraham, "Behold, Milcah also has borne children to your brother Nahor*

2. Abraham could have brought Sarah back there as if that were their true home
3. But Abraham's true home was in the center of God's will, in the center of his promises
4. Sarah would be buried in their future inheritance, the land God had promised to give them
5. Abraham and Isaac would be buried there as well...
6. Even Jacob would command that the journey be made back from Egypt

B. These All "Died in Faith"

1. Promises begun, but still unfulfilled
 - a. to Abraham himself and to his offspring the land had been promised
 - b. that promise was not yet fulfilled
2. YET Faith shines most brightly at the grave!
3. Burial significant testimony of faith

By this intense purchase and heart-felt burial... by the repeated significance of the Cave of Machpelah, we can see this small chunk of land as a mustard seed of faith in the future promises of God

Abraham's intensity about purchasing the cave was rooted in his faith in the unfulfilled promises of God

Someday, all this will be mine!!! Abraham believed the Lord, and it was credited to him as righteousness

4. Like Jeremiah's purchase of another field: Immediate Disaster Does Not Nullify God's Word

Illus. Similar to God's command to Jeremiah to buy some land as Nebuchadnezzar was about to break through the walls and crush besieged Jerusalem. At that desperate moment in Israel's history, God commanded Jeremiah to buy a field that his cousin was trying to sell him

God told him to buy the field, get the title deed, have it witnesses and sealed, and have the title deed put in a ceramic container and sealed so that it would last a long time

This land transaction was a clear testimony to Jeremiah and to all God's people that someday they would return to the land

When Jeremiah obeyed this strange command, he did it JOYFULLY by faith, understanding the significance!

Jeremiah 32:16-17 "After I had given the deed of purchase to Baruch the son of Neriah, I prayed to the LORD, saying: ¹⁷ 'Ah, Lord GOD! It is you who has made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you.

...24-27 Behold, the siege mounds have come up to the city to take it, and because of sword and famine and pestilence the city is given into the hands of the Chaldeans who are fighting against it. What you spoke has come to pass, and behold, you see it. ²⁵ Yet you, O Lord GOD, have said to me, "Buy the field for money and get witnesses"- though the city is given into the hands of the Chaldeans."

²⁶ The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: ²⁷ "Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is anything too hard for me?

5. SO ALSO the immediate disaster of death cannot dim faith... faith conquers death, because God's word is stronger than the grave

Job 13:15 Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him

This makes NO SENSE WHATSOEVER if the grave is all there is

But the grave is NOT all there is

C. Faith Knows the Promises Will ALL Be Fulfilled

1. Aliens and strangers on earth have NO LASTING POSSESSIONS here
2. Permanent physical possession is meaningless when you realize that all this world is temporary anyway... for God will remake the world

Hebrews 1:10-12 He also says, "In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. ¹¹ They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. ¹² You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed. But you remain the same, and your years will never end."

2 Peter 3:10-13 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. ¹¹ Since

everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives ¹² as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. ¹³ But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

D. Central Lesson: This Life is Not All There Is

Hebrews 11:16 But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.

1. Abraham's actions at the burial place show his faith in resurrection
2. The purchase of the land was symbolic of promises God had made that were unfulfilled
3. Abraham's faith was pointing ahead to a heavenly fulfillment... and he would certainly have it

IV. Why Did Moses Include This Account?

A. "Purely Secular" Business Transaction?

1. God not mentioned overtly
2. Only mentioned in verse 6, and probably not even a mention of God

Genesis 23:6 "Hear us, my lord; you are a prince of God among us.

NASB *Genesis 23:6 "Hear us, my lord, you are a mighty prince among us*

Seems like just a secular business transaction... so why mention it at all?

B. Moses' Immediate Audience

1. Moses wrote this account for the Jewish nation about to fulfill God's promise
2. They would enter the Promised Land and make it their own by the edge of the sword
3. ALL EXCEPT ONE THING: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob would not get the land, for they were dead
4. The total fulfillment waits the perfection of the New Heavens and the New Earth

C. Moses' Distant Audience

1. Written for us who would come later

2. We also have many promises that will only be fulfilled beyond death
3. We also are “aliens and strangers on earth”, holding nothing as a permanent possession

V. Lesson and Application

A. Central Lesson: God’s Promises are Not Exhausted in this Life!!

1. More things are promised to us than we will ever receive in this world
2. Nothing in this world is permanent
3. Even precious relationships like a godly spouse are temporary in this world
4. For every believer, the best is yet to come!!

Matthew 5:5 Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

John 11:25-26 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; ²⁶ and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.

Matthew 8:11 I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.

Revelation 21:1-4 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

B. Applications

1. Do not grieve like the hopeless

*1 Thessalonians 4:13-14 Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to **grieve** like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.*

2. Bury loved ones in faith
3. Prefer burial to cremation

there is no command in scripture forbidding cremation for Christians

neither should we think that God cannot raise the body of one who's been cremated
 some Christian people die in fiery accidents (like the jet planes that crashed into the
 World Trade Center on September 11th... no one should say they cannot be raised

HOWEVER: the Bible has a lot to say about the way believing people have cared for
 the corpses of loved ones...

The Cave of Machpelah is a big theme in the Genesis account from this point
 forward... especially when Jacob makes Joseph promise to carry his body back
 there

Moses went up on Mount Nebo to die, so there was no human person to bury him.
 Jude tells us the Archangel Michael had to dispute with the devil over the body of
 Moses... perhaps the devil would have used the dead body of Moses to defile his
 memory in some way... maybe have an animal drag him back into the camp

Jesus' own body was carefully wrapped, and the grave clothes gave strong indication
 that He'd risen from the dead

fire in death is usually associated with God's wrath... the body of Achan, the man
 who'd violated God's command in Jericho was burned as a testimony of God's
 wrath; Leviticus 20:14 calls for the burning of a man who marries a woman and her
 mother. The same was true for any priest's daughter who became a prostitute (Lev.
 21:9). There are other examples, but you get the picture. Burning of human
 remains spoke of judgment on sin, which also will be, the Bible says, by fire.

The only incentive cremation offers Christian people is the saving of money

Therefore, Christians should show proper care for the burial of loved ones... their
 behavior in dealing with death should give evidence to their faith in resurrection

4. Die well: when your time comes, look on death as a joyful passageway into the presence of
 God
5. Do not hold on to earthly things

let the Hittites be more "worldly wise" than us... remember that God's promises will not all be fulfilled in this
 world

1 Corinthians 15:19 If only **for this life** we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.

6. Rejoice in the future glory of all believers and of all creation

***Romans 8:18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be
 revealed in us.***

7. Restore your faith by seeing how faithful God was to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

8. Make the most of your married life

Ecclesiastes 9:7-9 Go, eat your food with gladness, and drink your wine with a joyful heart, for it is now that God favors what you do. ⁸ Always be clothed in white, and always anoint your head with oil. ⁹ Enjoy life with your wife, whom you love, all the days of this meaningless life that God has given you under the sun-- all your meaningless days. For this is your lot in life and in your toilsome labor under the sun.