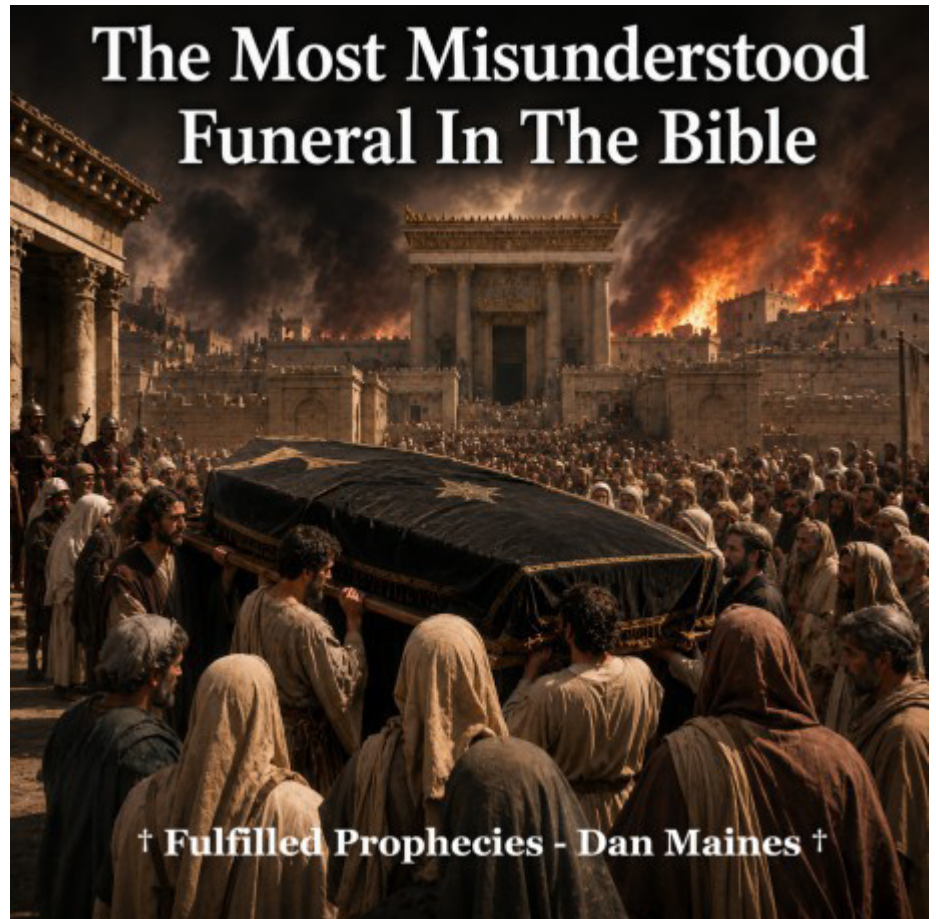


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The Most Misunderstood Funeral In The Bible (Part 3 of 5)



By Dan Maines

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Introduction

† When most people hear the word funeral, they think of the death and burial of a person.

† Yet the New Testament speaks of something much larger that was passing away.

† The apostles lived during the final days of an old covenant world that was growing old and ready to disappear.

† What died in the first century was not the physical planet. What died was the covenant order that had governed Israel for centuries.

† AD 70 was the public funeral of a covenant world that had already received its death sentence.

Romans 7:4

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you also were put to death in regard to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might belong to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.

† Paul describes a covenant death.

† Believers were made dead to the Law through the body of Christ.

† A covenant relationship cannot continue once death has occurred.

† The purpose was not merely separation from the old covenant but union with Christ.

† One covenant relationship ended so another covenant relationship could begin. (Galatians 3:24-25)

Romans 7:6

But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

† Paul contrasts two covenant realities.

† The oldness of the letter belonged to the Mosaic covenant system.

† The newness of the Spirit belongs to the covenant established by Christ.

† The old covenant was not being improved. It was passing away.

† A funeral marks the end of what once existed.

2 Corinthians 3:7

But if the ministry of death, engraved in letters on stones, came with glory so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, fading as it was,

† Paul calls the Mosaic administration the ministration of death.

† The covenant given through Moses possessed glory.

† Yet that glory was already passing away during the apostolic age.

† Something that is passing away is moving toward an ending.

† Paul was describing a transition already underway.

2 Corinthians 3:11

For if that which fades away was with glory, much more that which remains is in glory.

† One covenant was passing away.

† Another covenant was remaining.

† The contrast is not between two groups of people.

† The contrast is between two covenant systems.

† The old was temporary. The new remains.

Hebrews 8:13

When He said, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is about to disappear.

† The writer of Hebrews said the first covenant was becoming old.

† He said it was aging.

† He said it was near to vanishing away.

† Those words only make sense before AD 70 while the temple still stood.

† The old covenant was approaching its final disappearance.

Hebrews 12:26-28

And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, "YET ONCE MORE I WILL SHAKE NOT ONLY THE EARTH,

BUT ALSO THE HEAVEN." This expression, "Yet once more," denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let's show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe;

† The shaking was about covenant removal.

† Things associated with the old covenant order were being removed.

† The kingdom of Christ would remain after the shaking ended.

† The focus is covenant transition, not the destruction of the physical universe.

† The funeral was for the old covenant world.

Historical References

† Josephus recorded the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in AD 70, bringing an end to the sacrificial system.

† Eusebius viewed Jerusalem's fall as a fulfillment of Christ's warnings concerning the end of the old order.

† Early Christian writers repeatedly spoke of the transition from the old covenant system to the new covenant established by Christ.

† The historical record confirms that the temple, priesthood, sacrifices, and genealogical system all disappeared in the first century.

How It Applies To Us Today

† We are not living under a covenant that is passing away.

† We belong to the covenant that remains.

† Our confidence is not in temple rituals, sacrifices, or earthly priesthods.

† Our confidence rests entirely in Christ and His finished work.

† We live in the kingdom that cannot be shaken.

Q&A Appendix

Q: What was being buried at this funeral?

A: The old covenant order centered in the Law, temple, sacrifices, and priesthood. (Hebrews 8:13)

Q: Was the Law evil?

A: No. The Law was holy and served God's purpose, but it was temporary and pointed forward to Christ. (Romans 7:12)

Q: When did the funeral reach its public conclusion?

A: In AD 70 when Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed and the old covenant system came to its end. (Hebrews 8:13)

Q: What remains today?

A: The unshakable kingdom of Christ and the new covenant established through His blood. (Hebrews 12:28)

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Romans 7:4; Romans 7:6; 2 Corinthians 3:7; 2 Corinthians 3:11; Hebrews 8:13; Hebrews 12:26-28

† Josephus, Wars of the Jews; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History

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