

Protestant Christians

Views on Death:

- After death the body will stay in the grave, but the soul will go straight to God
- “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise” (Luke)
- Jesus tells the thief he will be in heaven that day
- There is a difference of opinion about what will happen to those who do not go to heaven: some state they go to hell, others argue it doesn't exist or just without God
- “My father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you?” (John)
- Believe in the immortality of the soul, heaven is a spiritual place, not physical
- Aquinas - the soul ‘anima’ animates the body into life so cannot continue in death

Funerals:

- Held for the family and friends to mourn and give thanks for the person. Burial or cremation

Roman Catholic

Views on Death:

- Believe in both the resurrection of the body and the immortality of the soul due to Jesus’ resurrection
- If you have not sinned since your last confession you will go straight to heaven (teachings of catechism)
- The souls that do not believe in God or who have committed unforgivable sin will go to Hell
- “Jesus is seated at the right hand of the father and he will judge the living and the dead (Sheep & Goat)
- Hell is seen as purgatory - a place of suffering, paying for the sins committed
- Day of judgement - all resurrected, soul reunited, new heaven and earth “body will be raised for another life”
- Plato - ‘world of forms’, soul continues after death to reach the perfect life

Funerals:

- Celebration of the church and a communion with the dead
- Burial to ensure physical resurrection

Islam

Views on Death:

- Ideally they will die uttering the shahadah (testimony of death) or hearing it from loved ones gathered around them
- The soul lives on after death and waits to be judged (based on actions etc)
- The eternal human soul is God given and that after physical death there is an eventual resurrection and day of judgement
- Between death and judgement, the soul remains as a state reflecting the life the person lived
- “Good deeds are heavy on the scale will have a pleasant life, but the one whose good deeds are light will have the bottomless pit for his home” (Qur’an)

Funerals:

- Must bury as fast as possible and certainly within 3 days, body is washed and wrapped in cloth
- Disapprove of cremation due to belief in physical resurrection

Views on Death and Funerals

Hinduism

Views on Death:

- Believe in reincarnation, cyclical religion
- Believe in samsara - the process of reincarnation, a continuous cycle in which the atman is reborn over and over again
- Atman - spirit or soul, indicates our true self or essence which underlies our existence
- Aim to reach Moksha (liberation), death enables you to get closer to Moksha
- Moksha achieved through: path of knowledge, mediation, devotion and good work
- Death gives them a chance for a better reincarnation
- Death should come at a natural time, not prolonged
- Death is the only certainty, it temporary allows the soul to re-energise before the next phase of life

Funerals:

- The body remains at home until the funeral
- White is worn by mourners, open casket is held
- Ashes scattered at sacred water (cremation)

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Views on Death:

- Materialism - mind and body perish after death
- Polkinghorne - God holds an image of the soul in his divine memory ready to be recreated
- Atheists - physical body dies, person ceases to exist —> no evidence for afterlife
- Ryle - ‘the concept of the mind’ = ghost in the machine - idea of a soul is creating a category that doesn't exist
- Hick - replica theory = a person can be recreated by God, replica of someone who has already been
- Our genes and memes will continue long past our physical death, physical bodies will disperse
- Dawkins - we are genes machines, purpose of DNA is survival (death is death)
- Marxist - ideas of heaven used to control the masses

Secular

Views on Death:

- Humanists - no life beyond physical death
- After death the molecules that make up our bodies still exist in the natural world
- “From my rotting body flowers shall grow and I am them, and that is eternity” (Munch)
- Marxism - reject afterlife, should consider the world we are in —> make the world a perfect place for all
- From the moment we are born, we begin to die, death and replacement of cells allow development and thus allows one to continue living

Funerals:

- Humanist - express sadness at the loss but celebrate life, pay tribute to them
- A civil funeral ceremony - emphasise the life of the deceased, not the beliefs of the person officiating
- Capture the essence of the deceased, putting into words what needs to be said at a very difficult time