

Ask The Pastor – Cremation Versus Burial April 16, 2026

The following text is a message from Corner Fringe Ministries that was presented by Pastor Daniel Joseph. The original presentation can be viewed at

<https://cornerfringe.com/media/y7cth5m/cremation-versus-burial>

*Portions of this document have been edited from the video message to better present a comprehensive, written document. Special attention was given to preserve the original context, but this document is not verbatim. Scripture verses are in the red text with other quotes in blue. Therefore, it is recommended that this document be printed in color. The Hebrew words are generally accompanied by the transliteration into the English alphabet. In most cases, the Hebrew is to be read from right to left.

The Biblical Case for Burial over Cremation

This transcript features a message from **Pastor Daniel Joseph** of **Corner Fringe Ministries** regarding the biblical debate between **cremation and traditional burial**. While Daniel clarifies that the method of body disposal does not impact one's **salvation or future resurrection**, he argues that the Scriptures establish a clear **normative practice of burial**. By examining the lives of the **patriarchs** and various legal codes in the **Torah**, he suggests that burial is an act of honor and rest for the righteous. Conversely, Daniel highlights that **incineration or non-burial** is consistently linked to **divine judgment, disgrace, and the wicked** throughout the Old and New Testaments. He also critiques modern alternatives like **cryomation and alkaline hydrolysis**, urging believers to prioritize **biblical principles** over financial or environmental convenience. Ultimately, Daniel encourages followers to imitate the **scriptural precedents** set by holy men and women when making end-of-life decisions.

[Daniel Joseph]

Welcome everyone. I'm Daniel Joseph with Corner Fringe Ministries. I've been asked to put out a message, a video, dealing with the discussion of what we do with our loved ones after they have passed, specifically regarding whether we cremate them. Is it okay to cremate them? Or do we follow the traditional burial method? There are many people who not only want to honor their loved ones but also want to honor the LORD. And so, I want to take up this discussion today.



I do want to let you know that the Bible has a very clear normative line of orthopraxy. And I mean all the way from Genesis into Revelation, if you will, throughout the Scriptures, we see a particular practice being exhibited, and that is traditional burial. Over and over again, we see these things. And you know,

for us as believers, I think it's always important that we are to be governed, we're to be influenced, and we're to imitate all these righteous men and women that we read about in the Bible.

You know, Paul says in 1 Corinthians 11:1, "**Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.**" And of course, you have the great Latin phrase "*imitatio Dei*," or "imitation of God." And so, you know, as it pertains to questions regarding life's choices, the Bible is the ultimate resource. And it really has a great display, if you will, in regard to answering this question. Biblically, what should we do as believers? And so, I want to take you to the Bible and show you several examples.

Before I do that, I think I want to say something. This video, let's be clear, is not an indictment of anyone who is a believer and yet chose to cremate Mom or Dad or cremate their spouse or grandma or grandpa, whatever the case may be. That's not what this video is. This is a video simply meant to educate, to help you understand that the Bible does have something to say about this.

But I want to be clear, whether you cremated your loved one or you buried them, it is not going to make any difference when the last trumpet sounds. Is it going to be any harder for God to raise the dead if they had been cremated or if they had been traditionally buried? You know, obviously, that thought is absurd. God is going to raise the dead, period, and so that's not going to matter. And certainly, it doesn't impact your loved one whatsoever. Your loved one is going to be judged upon whether they had faith in Jesus, faith in Yeshua, in their life and if they followed Him. So, I want to lay out that disclaimer before we look at what the Bible has to say.

With that said, I want to begin by taking you to Genesis Chapter 49, and this is a moment where Jacob knows he's about to die. And so, he calls his children to him and gives them some last instructions as it pertains to him.

In Genesis 49:29, we read this: "**Then he, Jacob, charged 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'** (emphasis added). —Genesis 49:31—**There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife, there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife, and there I buried Leah** (emphasis added).

I thought this was an appropriate place to start, with the great patriarchs, right? I mean, even now we're called children of Abraham because we have faith in Yeshua. And what is the practice? The practice is what we would call traditional burial. Now, understanding the historical context here will be quite helpful. And I say that because cremation existed in Jacob's day, it existed in Isaac's day, it existed in Abraham's day, and long before Abraham.

One thing that we need to appreciate is that throughout history, cremation has been practiced, where they incinerated the body, where they put the body through fire. This was a thing. We have archaeological evidence to show this. We have ashes and urns. This practice has been used all over the world. Cremation existed in the day, and we should duly note what the patriarchs chose to do. These are men who are connected with God. They chose burial. I think that's very, very significant.

That said, when we look at non-burial methods, such as cremation, you'll notice that Scripture does not speak highly of that situation. In fact, non-burials are associated with judgment, with disgrace, with dishonor. And so, I'll just give you a few examples. Going to Jeremiah 16:4, we read this: "**They shall die gruesome deaths; they shall not be lamented.**" This is talking about God pouring out judgment, "**Nor shall they be buried, but they shall be like refuse on the face of the earth...**" (Emphasis added). You see

this non-burial specifically tied to God's divine judgment. This is not a good situation. This is not painting a pleasant picture, if you will.

Jumping ahead to Jeremiah 25:33, we read this: **“And at that day the slain of the LORD, again talking about the judgment of God, shall be from one end of the earth even to the other end of the earth. They shall not be lamented, or gathered, or buried; they shall become refuse on the ground.”** (Emphasis added). And so here again, this is a non-burial situation for those who are being judged—for the wicked. This is an act of disgrace, if you will, to not have that burial.

And so, we see that biblically speaking, there is an honor that comes with this burial as you lay to rest the bones of your loved ones. And the idea is that they're going to await; they're resting, they're sleeping, and they're awaiting the resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah. They're waiting for that last trumpet. But to the wicked, it's a very different picture.

You can see this even in the curse that God placed upon the house of Jeroboam; their descendants would not be buried. It talks about how the birds of the air would literally devour them, and for that to happen, you would have to be scattered on the earth and not have that place of honor in burial. The same thing with Ahab, wicked Ahab, and Jezebel, who died horrific deaths. With no burial, the beasts of the field were to consume them. And so, this is not a good picture.

Furthermore, when we talk about the aspect of incineration, we're talking about the bodies being burned; this is not a good picture either. I'll take you back to the Torah in Leviticus 20:14, where we read this: **“If a man marries a woman and her mother, it is wickedness. They shall be burned with fire, both he and they, that there may be no wickedness among you.”** (Emphasis added).

Jumping to Leviticus 21:9—**The daughter of any priest, if she profanes herself by playing the harlot, she profanes her father. She shall be burned with fire** (emphasis added). This idea of sending our loved ones, even upon death, to be burned with fire—that's not painted in a healthy light scripturally. That is something that is performed for the wicked. That is a judgment, if you will.

And we can even see this practically playing out in the life of Judah when he knew his daughter-in-law, whom he didn't know. She disguised herself as a harlot. She ends up getting pregnant, and it comes back to Judah: "Hey, your daughter-in-law has played the harlot, and she is with child," and his response is—Genesis 38:24b—**“Bring her out and let her be burned!”** (Emphasis added). Now, the way that went down is that they would be stoned first, and then their dead bodies would be burned.

This is exactly what we see unfolding in Achan's life, who did something forbidden. God warned his people when they went into Jericho that, as you go into the battle, do not take the accursed things. Don't covet the accursed things. And a man by the name of Achan coveted those, and he took those things, so now the judgment of God is going to be pronounced on him.

And look at what happens in Joshua 7:15. This is what we read: **“Then it shall be that he who is taken with the accursed thing shall be burned with fire, he and all that he has, because he has transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he has done a disgraceful thing in Israel.”** (Emphasis added). And this is the key part in Joshua 7:25—**And Joshua said, “Why have you troubled us? The Lord will trouble you this day.” So all Israel stoned him with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones** (emphasis added).

And so this aspect of incineration, of being burned with fire, happened. They were wicked; this was a judgment of God, so they were put to death and then put through the fire. And that's what modern-day cremation is. Modern-day cremation is, in essence, being incinerated.

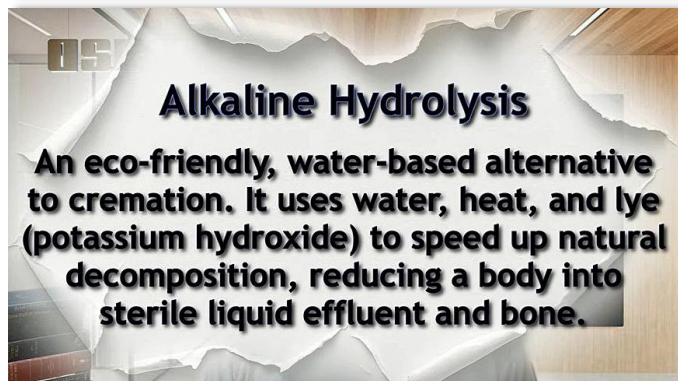
Now granted, we're getting quite inventive with the art of cremation today. They have this thing called cryomation, where they literally put the body in whatever they call that stuff. I don't even remember the name, but they put their body in it, freeze it, then vibrate it and turn it into ash.

More experimental, obviously, right now, but then we also have alkaline hydrolysis, which is well known. This is a chemical or water cremation where you're liquefied and then, quite literally, put down the local drain and recycled at the local municipal water treatment plant. And so, we're getting inventive, but even still, for all of those things, there's no burial. Biblically speaking, there's no honor in that. But throughout the world, we still have traditional cremation or incineration.

And so, when you look at this biblically, there is a lot to say, or there's a lot to glean from regarding what I call "normative orthopraxy." This is just the practice biblically being carried out throughout the Bible.

That said, I want to pull this thread a little further and take you to 2 Kings 23:15. We read this: **"Moreover the altar that was at Bethel, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he, meaning Josiah, broke down; and he burned the high place and crushed it to powder, and burned the wooden image."** (Emphasis added). Isn't that interesting? The things that are to be destroyed and judged, coming in with the righteous judgment of God, are burned and crushed to powder.

Now, get this, it doesn't stop there. As you go to 2 Kings 23:16—**As Josiah turned, he saw the tombs that were there on the mountain.** And the tombs that he's looking at were of the pagan priests that Jeroboam installed in his kingdom to serve at these altars that he built so that nobody would go to Jerusalem. So, these are pagan priests. **And he sent and took the bones out of the tombs,** and what does he do? **And burned them on the altar,** and defiled it according to the word of the LORD which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words (emphasis added). In other words, they went from burial to unburial. He takes their bones out to defile them, to defile these pagan altars. There was one in Dan and one in Bethel, and he burned the bones of these pagan priests. I mean, he's incinerating their bones. You can't paint this into a good picture regarding what we should do.



Today, I hear the argument that cremation, while it's cleaner, greener, and eco-friendly, and in fact, one of the primary draws is because of its affordability. So much cheaper to cremate our loved ones than to actually bury them. And certainly, I would counsel you that while we were called to be fiscally responsible, that shouldn't come at the expense of employing good biblical principles. And I think—I hope—most of you would agree with me on that.

Now, continuing to 2 Kings 23:17, I want to finish this out a little bit: **Then he said, “What gravestone is this that I see?” So the men of the city told him, “It is the tomb of the man of God who came from Judah and proclaimed these things which you have done against the altar of Bethel.”** In other words, almost 300 years earlier, a prophet of God prophesied that the very thing Josiah is doing right now would be accomplished.

But this is what I want to show you. —2 Kings 23:17—**And he said, “Let him alone; let no one move his bones.” So they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet who came from Samaria** (emphasis added). Then they left his bones alone. And so, you see, he's not going to disturb the righteous; there's honor there. Don't disturb his bones, but to the wicked, he drew them out of the burial for incineration. And so, all this to say is we do have good biblical insight as to what we as believers, if we're looking for the Bible to govern our decisions, our life decisions, which include what we do with our loved ones; there's a lot here.

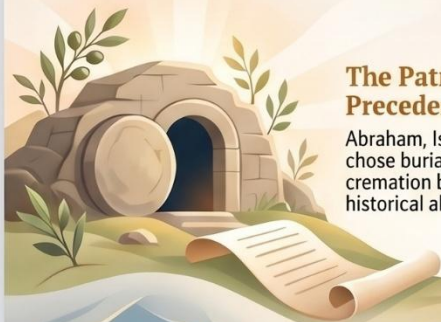
And I'll leave you with this, and this is just an interesting side note, but when you go to Revelation Chapter 11, you have the rise of the two prophets. When they are killed, the world, interestingly enough, disgraces them; their hatred for them is so great that they do not allow them to be buried.

Revelation 11:7-9—**When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them. ⁸ And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. ⁹ Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three-and-a-half days, and not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves** (emphasis added).

Isn't that fascinating? I mean, that part has always fascinated me. But be that as it may, that's what I have for you today. If you have any follow-up questions or thoughts, you're welcome to email us through our website. With that said, God bless you.

Burial vs. Cremation: A Biblical Perspective

The Honor of Traditional Burial



The Patriarchal Precedent

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob chose burial despite cremation being a known historical alternative.



Awaiting the Resurrection

Burial is scripturally portrayed as 'resting' or 'sleeping' while awaiting the return of the Messiah.



Imitatio Dei (Imitation of God)

Believers are encouraged to imitate the life choices and practices of righteous biblical figures.

Modern Non-Burial Alternatives



Cryomation

Process: Freezing and vibrating the body into powder



Alkaline Hydrolysis

Process: Liquefying the body using water, heat, and lye



Traditional Cremation

Process: Reducing the body to ash through fire

Scriptural Views on Incineration & Non-Burial

Associated with Divine Judgment

Prophets like Jeremiah link non-burial to disgrace and the judgment of the wicked.



Incineration as Punishment

Biblical accounts, such as the story of Achan, associate being burned with fire with severe transgression.



Financial vs. Biblical Principles

While cremation is often chosen for financial reasons, it lacks the 'normative' biblical honor of burial.

