

CUSTOMS IN THE BIBLE

1. https://biblehub.com/topical/c/customs_israel_had_introduced.htm

The customs introduced by Israel, as recorded in the Bible, reflect a unique blend of religious, social, and cultural practices that were divinely instituted and shaped by the covenant relationship between God and His chosen people. These customs served to set Israel apart from surrounding nations and to maintain their identity as a people dedicated to the worship of Yahweh.

Sabbath Observance

One of the most significant customs introduced by Israel is the observance of the Sabbath. Instituted by God at creation and codified in the Ten Commandments, the Sabbath is a day of rest on the seventh day of the week. Exodus 20:8-10 states, "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God." This practice not only provided physical rest but also served as a sign of the covenant between God and Israel (Exodus 31:16-17).

Circumcision

Circumcision was introduced as a physical sign of the covenant between God and Abraham, and it became a defining custom for the Israelites. Genesis 17:10-11 records God's command: "This is My covenant with you and your descendants after you, which you are to keep: Every male among you must be circumcised. You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between Me and you." This rite was performed on the eighth day after birth and symbolized the people's dedication to God.

Festivals and Feasts

Israel introduced several religious festivals and feasts that were central to their worship and community life. These included Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles. Each of these feasts commemorated significant events in Israel's history and reinforced their relationship with God. For example, Passover celebrated the Israelites' deliverance from Egypt, as described in Exodus 12:14: "This day is to be a memorial for you, and you are to celebrate it as a feast to the LORD; as a lasting ordinance for the generations to come."

Dietary Laws

The dietary laws given to Israel, as outlined in Leviticus 11, were another distinctive custom. These laws distinguished between clean and unclean animals and were intended to promote holiness and separation from pagan practices. Leviticus 11:44-45 emphasizes this purpose: "For I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, because I am holy. You shall not defile yourselves with any creature that moves along the ground."

Tithing and Offerings

The practice of tithing and offerings was introduced as a means of supporting the Levitical priesthood and the work of the Tabernacle, and later the Temple. Leviticus 27:30 states, "Thus any tithe of the land, whether from the seed of the land or the fruit of the trees, belongs to the LORD; it is holy to the LORD." This custom underscored the principle of stewardship and the acknowledgment of God's provision.

Purity Laws

Purity laws, including those related to ceremonial cleanliness, were integral to Israel's customs. These laws, found in Leviticus and Numbers, addressed issues such as skin diseases, bodily discharges, and contact with

dead bodies. They served to maintain the community's ritual purity and to teach the Israelites about the holiness required to approach God.

Judicial and Social Customs

Israel's judicial and social customs, as outlined in the Mosaic Law, provided a framework for justice and community relations. These included laws on property rights, marriage, and social justice. Deuteronomy 16:18-20 instructs, "Appoint judges and officials for each of your tribes in every town the LORD your God is giving you, and they shall judge the people fairly. Do not pervert justice or show partiality. Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous."

These customs, among others, were integral to the identity and religious life of Israel, reflecting their covenant relationship with God and their role as a light to the nations.

2. <https://biblehub.com/topical/b/burial.htm>

Topical Encyclopedia

Definition and Cultural Context:

Burial, in biblical times, was the customary practice of placing the deceased in the ground, often in a tomb or cave. This act was deeply rooted in the cultural and religious practices of the Israelites and surrounding nations. It was considered a sign of respect and honor for the dead, reflecting the belief in the sanctity of the human body as created by God.

Old Testament Practices:

The Old Testament provides numerous accounts of burial practices. The patriarchs, such as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were buried in the cave of Machpelah (Genesis 23:19; 25:9; 49:29-31). This site was purchased by Abraham as a family burial place, indicating the importance of having a designated resting place for one's ancestors.

The burial of Moses is unique, as God Himself buried him in an undisclosed location in Moab (Deuteronomy 34:5-6). This reflects the special relationship Moses had with God and the divine care over his final resting place.

New Testament Practices:

In the New Testament, burial practices continued to hold significant importance. The burial of Jesus Christ is a central event, as it fulfills the prophecy of His death and resurrection. Joseph of Arimathea, a wealthy disciple, provided his own new tomb for Jesus' burial (Matthew 27:57-60). This act of devotion highlights the respect and honor given to Jesus even in death.

The burial of believers is also mentioned, as seen in the account of Ananias and Sapphira, who were buried after their sudden deaths (Acts 5:6, 10). This indicates the continuation of burial customs within the early Christian community.

Theological Significance:

Burial in the Bible is not merely a cultural practice but carries theological significance. It symbolizes the hope of resurrection and eternal life. The burial of Jesus is particularly significant, as it precedes His resurrection, which is the cornerstone of Christian faith. As Paul writes, "For what I received I passed on to you as of first

importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures" ([1 Corinthians 15:3-4](#)).

Symbolism and Eschatology:

Burial is often seen as a symbol of the believer's hope in the resurrection. The act of placing the body in the ground is likened to planting a seed, with the expectation that it will rise again in a glorified form ([1 Corinthians 15:42-44](#)). This eschatological hope is a central tenet of Christian belief, affirming that death is not the end but a transition to eternal life with God.

Conclusion:

While the Bible does not prescribe specific burial rites, the consistent practice of burial throughout Scripture underscores its importance as a respectful and hopeful act. It reflects the belief in the dignity of the human body and the assurance of resurrection through Jesus Christ.

Topical Bible Verses

[Romans 6:4](#)

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

[Topicalbible.org](#)

[Colossians 2:12](#)

[Genesis 49:29](#)

[Matthew 27:60](#)

ATS Bible Dictionary

Burial

The Hebrews were at all times very careful in the burial of their dead, [Genesis 25:9](#) [35:29](#). To be deprived of burial was thought one of the greatest marks of dishonor, or cause of unhappiness, [Ecclesiastes 6:3](#) [Jeremiah 22:18,19](#); it being denied to none, not even to enemies. Good men made it a part of their piety to inter the dead. Indeed, how shocking must the sight of unburied corpses have been to the Jews, when their land was thought to be polluted if the dead were in any manner exposed to view, [2 Samuel 21:14](#); and when the very touch of a dead body, or of any thing that had touched a dead body, was esteemed a defilement, and required a ceremonial ablution, [Nu 19:11-22](#).

Only two cases of burning the bodies of the dead occur in Scripture: the mangled remains of Saul and his sons, [1 Samuel 31:12](#), and the victims of some plague, [Am 6:10](#). It was customary for the nearest relatives to close the eyes of the dying and give them the parting kiss, and then to commence the wailing for the dead, [Jeremiah 46:4](#) [50:1](#); in this wailing, which continued at intervals until after the burial, they were joined by other relatives and friends, [John 11:19](#), whose loud and shrill lamentations are referred to in [Mark 5:38](#). It is also a custom still prevailing in the East to hire wailing women, [Jeremiah 9:17](#) [Am 5:16](#), who praised the deceased, [Acts 9:39](#), and by doleful cries and frantic gestures, aided at times by melancholy tones of music, [Matthew 9:23](#), strove to express the deepest grief, [Ezekiel 24:17,18](#).

Immediately after death the body was washed, and laid out in a convenient room, [Acts 9:39](#); it was wrapped in many folds of linen, with spices, and the head bound about with a napkin, [Matthew 27:59](#) [John 11:44](#). Unless the body was to be embalmed, the burial took place very soon, both on account of the heat of the climate and the ceremonial uncleanness incurred. Rarely did twenty-four hours elapse between death and burial, [Acts 5:6,10](#). The body being shrouded, was placed upon a bier—a board resting on a simple handbarrow, borne by men—to be conveyed to the tomb, [2 Samuel 3:31](#) [Luke 7:14](#). Sometimes a more costly bier or bed was used, [2 Chronicles 16:14](#): and the bodies of kings and some others may have been laid in coffins of wood, or stone

sarcophagi. The relatives attended the bier to the tomb, which was usually without the city. A banquet sometimes followed the funeral, [Jeremiah 16:7,8](#); and during subsequent days the bereaved friends were wont to go to the grave from time to time, to weep and to adorn the place with fresh flowers, [John 11:31](#), a custom observed even at this day. See [EMBALMING](#), [SEPULCHRE](#).

Easton's Bible Dictionary

The first burial we have an account of is that of Sarah ([Genesis 23](#)). The first commercial transaction recorded is that of the purchase of a burial-place, for which Abraham weighed to Ephron "four hundred shekels of silver current money with the merchants." Thus the patriarch became the owner of a part of the land of Canaan, the only part he ever possessed. When he himself died, "his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah," beside Sarah his wife ([Genesis 25:9](#)).

Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, was buried under Allon-bachuth, "the oak of weeping" ([Genesis 35:8](#)), near to Bethel. Rachel died, and was buried near Ephrath; "and Jacob set a pillar upon her grave" ([16-20](#)). Isaac was buried at Hebron, where he had died ([27, 29](#)). Jacob, when charging his sons to bury him in the cave of Machpelah, said, "There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah" ([49:31](#)). In compliance with the oath which he made him swear unto him ([47:29-31](#)), Joseph, assisted by his brethren, buried Jacob in the cave of Machpelah ([50:2, 13](#)). At the Exodus, Moses "took the bones of Joseph with him," and they were buried in the "parcel of ground" which Jacob had bought of the sons of Hamor ([Joshua 24:32](#)), which became Joseph's inheritance ([Genesis 48:22](#); [1 Chronicles 5:1](#); [John 4:5](#)). Two burials are mentioned as having taken place in the wilderness. That of Miriam ([Numbers 20:1](#)), and that of Moses, "in the land of Moab" ([Deuteronomy 34:5, 6, 8](#)). There is no account of the actual burial of Aaron, which probably, however, took place on the summit of Mount Hor ([Numbers 20:28, 29](#)).

Joshua was buried "in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-serah" ([Joshua 24:30](#)).

In Job we find a reference to burying-places, which were probably the Pyramids ([3:14, 15](#)). The Hebrew word for "waste places" here resembles in sound the Egyptian word for "pyramids."

Samuel, like Moses, was honoured with a national burial ([1 Samuel 25:1](#)). Joab ([1 Kings 2:34](#)) "was buried in his own house in the wilderness."

In connection with the burial of Saul and his three sons we meet for the first time with the practice of burning the dead ([1 Samuel 31:11-13](#)). The same practice is again referred to by Amos ([6:10](#)).

Absalom was buried "in the wood" where he was slain ([2 Samuel 18:17, 18](#)). The raising of the heap of stones over his grave was intended to mark abhorrence of the person buried (Comp. [Joshua 7:26](#) and [Joshua 8:29](#)). There was no fixed royal burying-place for the Hebrew kings. We find several royal burials taking place, however, "in the city of David" ([1 Kings 2:10](#); [11:43](#); [15:8](#); [2 Kings 14:19, 20](#); [15:38](#); [1 Kings 14:31](#); [22:50](#); [2 Chronicles 21:19, 20](#); [2 Chronicles 24:25](#), etc.). Hezekiah was buried in the mount of the sepulchres of the sons of David; "and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem did him honour at his death" ([2 Chronicles 32:33](#)).

Little is said regarding the burial of the kings of Israel. Some of them were buried in Samaria, the capital of their kingdom ([2 Kings 10:35](#); [13:9](#); [14:16](#)).

Our Lord was buried in a new tomb, hewn out of the rock, which Joseph of Arimathea had prepared for himself ([Matthew 27:57-60](#); [Mark 15:46](#); [John 19:41, 42](#)).

The grave of Lazarus was "a cave, and a stone lay on it" ([John 11:38](#)). Graves were frequently either natural caverns or artificial excavations formed in the sides of rocks ([Genesis 23:9](#); [Matthew 27:60](#)); and coffins were seldom used, unless when the body was brought from a distance.

Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary

1. (*n.*) A grave; a tomb; a place of sepulture.
2. (*n.*) The act of burying; depositing a dead body in the earth, in a tomb or vault, or in the water, usually with attendant ceremonies; sepulture; interment.

International Standard Bible Encyclopedia <https://biblehub.com/topical/b/burial.htm>

BURIAL

ber'-i-al (qebhurah; compare New Testament to entaphidsai):

I. IMMEDIATE BURIAL CONSIDERED URGENT

1. Reasons for This
2. The Burial of Jesus
3. The Usual Time
4. Duties of Next of Kin

II. PREPARATIONS FOR BURIAL

1. Often Informal and Hasty
2. Usually with More Ceremony
3. Contrasts between Jewish Customs and Other Peoples'

(1) Cremation

(2) Embalming

III. ON THE WAY TO THE GRAVE

1. Coffins Unknown
2. Professional Mourners

IV. AT THE GRAVE

1. Graves Dug in the Earth
2. Family Tombs. Later Customs
3. Sealed Stones
4. Stated Times of Mourning
5. Excessive Mourning
6. Dirge-Songs

V. FAILURE TO RECEIVE BURIAL A CALAMITY OR JUDGMENT

VI. PLACES OF BURIAL: HOW MARKED

LITERATURE

It is well to recall at the outset that there are points of likeness and of marked contrast between oriental and

occidental burial customs in general, as well as between the burial customs of ancient Israel and those of other ancient peoples. These will be brought out, or suggested later in this article. I. Immediate Burial Considered Urgent.

1. Reasons for This:

The burial of the dead in the East in general was and is often effected in such a way as to suggest to the westerner indecent haste. Dr. Post says that burial among the people of Syria today seldom takes place later than ten hours after death, often earlier; but, he adds, "the rapidity of decomposition, the excessive violence of grief, the reluctance of Orientals to allow the dead to remain long in the houses of the living, explain what seems to us the indecency of haste." This still requires the survivors, as in the case of Abraham on the death of Sarah, to bury their dead out of their sight ([Genesis 23:1-4](#)); and it in part explains the quickness with which the bodies of Nadab and Abihu were Carried out of the camp ([Leviticus 10:4](#)), and those of Ananias and Sapphira were hastened off to burial ([Acts 5:1-11](#)). Then, of course, the defilement to which contact with a dead body gave occasion, and the judgment that might come upon a house for harboring the body of one dying under a Divine judgment, further explain such urgency and haste.

2. The Burial of Jesus:

It was in strict accordance with such customs and the provision of the Mosaic law ([Deuteronomy 21:23](#); compare [Galatians 3:13](#)), as well as in compliance with the impulses of true humanity, that Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus for burial on the very day of the crucifixion ([Matthew 27:39](#)).

3. The Usual Time:

The dead are often in their graves, according to present custom, within two or three hours after death. Among oriental Jews burial takes place, if possible, within twenty-four hours after death, and frequently on the day of death. Likewise Mohammedans bury their dead on the day of death, if death takes place in the morning; but if in the afternoon or at night, not until the following day.

4. Duties of Next of Kin:

As soon as the breath is gone the oldest son, or failing him, the nearest of kin present, closes the eyes of the dead (compare [Genesis 46:4](#), "and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes"). The mouth, too, is closed and the jaws are bound up (compare [John 11:44](#), "and his face was bound about with a napkin"). The death is announced, as it was of old, by a tumult of lamentation preceded by a shrill cry, and the weeping and wailing of professional mourners (compare [Mark 5:38](#)).