

In 20 Minutes?

by Linville Dunaway, Corinth Christian Church

"And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight. And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together. And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead. And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him. When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed," Acts 20:7-11.

One of the things that some people complain about going to church is the length of the sermon. If the preacher goes past 12 O'clock on Sunday morning they feel like an injustice has been done. One person even told me once that if you couldn't say it in twenty minutes then it was not worth saying. Really? I have

trouble believing that a Christian could be that ignorant. Still, there are some church goers who feel that way.

Jesus said, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also," Luke 12:34. The Lord lived in this world, walking in the flesh, but He thought more of heaven and doing the Father's will than of the things of this world. Did the Sermon on the Mount take more than twenty minutes? I believe it did. How about the time that the people stayed with Jesus three days in the wilderness? He said that they had been there three days without food so he fed them with the loaves and the fish. They were more interested in what he had to say than in the food.

When Martha asked Jesus to make Mary stop listening to him teach and come help her cook, He refused saying, "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her" Luke 10:41-42. He didn't worry about the food as much as Martha did. He was pleased that Mary saw what was important in life. There was a time to eat and a time to learn. They could eat at most any time, but the opportunities to hear Jesus was very limited.

It is sad to see those who grumble about the length of a sermon rejoice when a ball game goes into overtime. The longer it goes the more interesting it becomes and no one complains of being tired of watching it. Folks will say that it was a great game and hope to see another like it soon. It kind of makes you wonder where their treasure is, don't it?

Paul preached all night long and told of the glory of God. Nobody seemed to mind for they were interested to hear of heaven and the Savior. Few today would be that interested to hear God's Word. Today's churches have cut back and cut out some services that used to be well attended. Why has this happened? Did it have to happen, or is there another reason?

We, the church, have cut back in church attendance because we have cut back in our walk with God. People don't seem to take time to read their bibles as much as people used to. The result is that the believers are weaker and less committed to the Lord. The lost sinners don't come to the house of God because they don't see Christ in the lives of Church goers like they used to. We can't show the world that we have something that they need if we live like they do. You can't lift a person out of the mire of sin if you're in it with him.

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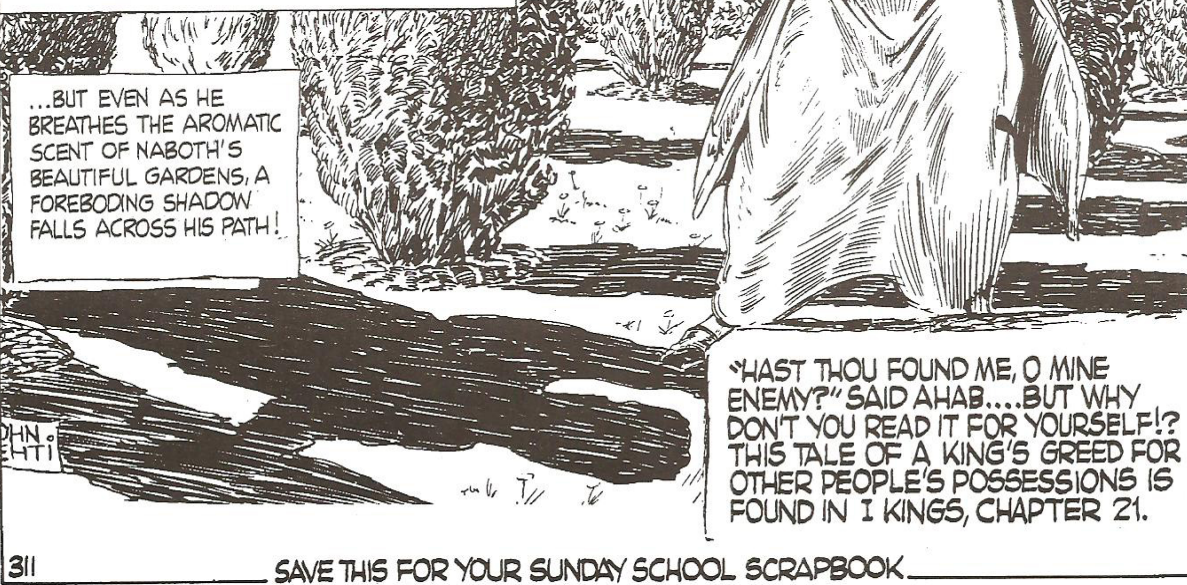
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GARDENS AND VINEYARDS IN BIBLICAL TIMES!

GARDENS WERE, AS THE HEBREW WORD (GEDERAH) INDICATES, ENCLOSURES, USUALLY ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF TOWNS PLANTED WITH VARIOUS TREES AND SHRUBS. FROM ALLUSIONS IN THE BIBLE, WE LEARN THAT THEY WERE SURROUNDED BY THORN HEDGES (IS. 5:5,6) OR STONE WALLS (PROV. 24:31). SOME LANDOWNERS BUILT WATCHTOWERS THAT WERE USED BY WATCHMEN SO THEY COULD DRIVE AWAY WILD ANIMALS OR PEOPLE WHO WOULD DESTROY OR EAT THE FRUIT GROWING IN THE GARDENS. THE GARDENS OF THE HEBREWS WERE PLANTED WITH FLOWERS AND AROMATIC SHRUBS BESIDES OLIVE TREES, WALNUT TREES, FIG TREES AND OTHERS FOR DOMESTIC USE (EX. 23:11, JER. 29:5). GARDENS OF HERBS OR KITCHEN-GARDENS ARE MENTIONED BOTH IN DEUTERONOMY AND FIRST KINGS (DEUT. 11:10, I KINGS 21:2) CUCUMBERS WERE GROWN IN THEM (IS. 1:8) AND PROBABLY ALSO MELONS, LEEKS, ONIONS AND GARLIC WHICH ARE SPOKEN OF (NUM. 11:5) AS THE PRODUCE OF A NEIGHBORING COUNTRY. THE CLIMATE WAS IDEAL FOR GROWING GRAPES AND ALL GARDENS HAD THEM. IN THE SECLUSION AND COOLNESS OF THEIR GARDENS, PEOPLE SPENT THEIR LEISURE TIME OFTEN SPREADING REPASTS FOR JOYOUS FEASTING. NO ONE, WHO HAD A GARDEN, WOULD EVER CONSENT TO GIVING IT UP--SOMETIMES TO THE POINT OF DEATH! WHICH HAPPENED TO A MAN NAMED NABOTH, WHOSE GARDEN A KING WISHED TO POSSESS! ALTHOUGH NABOTH WAS KILLED FOR HIS GARDEN, KING AHAB NEVER DID ENJOY THE COMPLETE POSSESSION OF IT, FOR ON THE DAY THAT AHAB STEPPED INTO NABOTH'S GARDEN TO ACQUIRE ITS OWNERSHIP...



...BUT EVEN AS HE BREATHES THE AROMATIC SCENT OF NABOTH'S BEAUTIFUL GARDENS, A FOREBODING SHADOW FALLS ACROSS HIS PATH!

"HAST THOU FOUND ME, O MINE ENEMY?" SAID AHAB....BUT WHY DON'T YOU READ IT FOR YOURSELF!? THIS TALE OF A KING'S GREED FOR OTHER PEOPLE'S POSSESSIONS IS FOUND IN I KINGS, CHAPTER 21.

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