

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

1 SAMUEL 27-31

Jesus closes His “*Sermon on the Mount*” with a parable. A wise man builds his house on *the rock*. A foolish man on *the sand*. On the surface there’s not much difference between the two houses. They may’ve shared the same blueprints... the same siding and trim... It wasn’t until the storm hit that a difference in the houses became apparent. The house on the sand collapsed. And Jesus said, “**Great was its fall.**” While, the house on the rock never budged. It endured.

And Jesus explains the parable, “**whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock.**” The foolish man who built on the sand, is “**everyone who hears (His sayings) and does not do them.**” But it was the **foundation** of the house that decided its **future**.

Jesus’ parable was addressed to His disciples, but it could’ve described the first two kings of Israel. David feared and obeyed the Lord. He refused to harm Saul, God’s anointed, even when it was within his power to do so... While, Saul had no fear of God. He acted on impulse, not conviction. Saul usually did what was best for Saul... And as a result, when the storms came Saul folded like a cardboard box in a thunderstorm. Today, we’ll look at *the tragic fall of a once tall Saul*. And the words of Jesus are appropriate, “**Great was (his) fall.**”

1 Samuel 27 begins, “**And David said in his heart, "Now I shall perish someday by the hand of Saul."** *Wait a minute!* What he said “*in his heart*” is not what he’d just said with his mouth. In 26:24, after sparing Saul, David cried out, “**As your life was valued much this day in my eyes, so let my life be valued much in the eyes of the LORD, and let Him deliver me out of all tribulation.**” David made the right confession, but now he struggles to back it up with faith. *Has this ever been you?*

Twice now David had Saul in his sites, yet refused to pull the trigger. Of the 600 men in David’s posse, 599 assume God had delivered Saul into David’s hands, so he could kill him. Only David figured God had turned Saul over to him to see if he would bless him.

This was huge test... would David fear the Lord and honor God’s anointed... would he trust in God’s timing or take matters into his own hands? David passes the test, but nothing in his circumstances immediately change... *Do the right thing and aren’t you instantly rewarded? Don’t stories of obedience have a happy ending? Put God first and don’t you win the game?*

In his book, “**A Tale of Three Kings,**” Gene Edwards writes of this time in David’s life,

“These were David’s darkest hours. You know them as his pre-king days, but he didn’t. He assumed this was his lot forever.” And as a result, David sunk into a deep, dark depression.

David becomes desperate, “There is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape to the land of the Philistines; and Saul will despair of me, to seek me anymore in any part of Israel. So I shall escape out of his hand.” He’ll be safer with the enemy. Saul won’t chase him into Philistine country. It’s his only option.

So “David arose and went over with the 600 men who were with him to Achish the son of Maach, king of Gath. So David dwelt with Achish at Gath, he and his men, each man with his household, and David with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the Carmelitess, Nabal's widow.” Recall 1 Samuel 21, this is David’s second try at hiding out in Gath. *And this is still a mystery to me, why David kept choosing this city of all places?* This was Goliath’s hometown. He would face personal and family vendettas in the city of Gath.

“And it was told Saul that David had fled to Gath; so he sought him no more.” At least it ended Saul’s quest.

“Then David said to Achish...” Recall on his first visit to Gath, he got scared and pretended to be mad. Achish had all the crazy people he could handle and sent him away. This time though, David asks to coexist. “If I have now found favor in your eyes, let them give me a place in some town in the country, that I may dwell there. For why should your servant dwell in the royal city with you?” In essence, “*You may not have a city big enough for us both.*” “So Achish gave him Ziklag that day (a suburb of Gath). Therefore Ziklag has belonged to the kings of Judah to this day. Now the time that David dwelt in the country of the Philistines was one full year and four months. And David and his men went up and raided the Geshurites, the Girzites, and the Amalekites.” All Israel’s enemies.

Verse 9, “Whenever David attacked the land, he left neither man nor woman alive, but took away the sheep, the oxen, the donkeys, the camels, and the apparel, and returned and came to Achish.” David’s men were warriors and warriors need to war, so he attacked these pro-Philistine nations and eliminates the eyewitnesses. He doesn’t want it to get back to Achish that he’s been fighting people friendly to the Philistines.

“Then Achish would say, “Where have you made a raid today?” And David would say, “Against the southern area of Judah, or against the southern area of the Jerahmeelites (a family in Judah), or against the southern area of the Kenites (who were Jewish allies).”

David had the king of Gath believing he'd changed teams. *He was now a Philistine ally picking on Israeli towns...* He was probably splitting the spoils with Achish, so he wouldn't ask any questions. To Achish David had become a desert pirate. Hey, note this, *David is no longer in Israel, but Israel is still in David.*

In Ziklag David went undercover - he made friends with the Philistines, while fighting for God and Israel. **And in a sense this is the Christian's role in the world today.** We live behind enemy lines. We should live peaceably for our own survival, but shrewdly fight, and win battles for Jesus to further His future kingdom.

Chapter 28 tells us, "Now it happened in those days that the Philistines gathered their armies together for war, to fight with Israel. And Achish said to David, "You assuredly know that you will go out with me to battle, you and your men." And David said to Achish, "Surely you know what your servant can do." *David is playing along.* "And Achish said to David, "Therefore I will make you one of my chief guardians forever." David had convinced Achish that he was now truly his ally.

Meanwhile back in Israel's court, King Saul reaches new heights of madness. Verse 3, "Now Samuel had died, and all Israel had lamented for him and buried him in Ramah, in his own city." Samuel had been God's prophet. For decades whenever God wanted to deliver a message he sent Samuel. But now Saul is about to need divine guidance and Samuel is no longer there...

Verse 3, "And Saul had put the mediums and the spiritists out of the land." This was a noble act from Saul's earlier years. Saul had started out sincerely wanting to serve God - *he just wanted to serve himself more.* And in a stand for righteousness Saul excommunicated witches, and channelers, and palm readers, and fortune tellers, and astrologers - everyone who dabbled in the occult... Be careful of any method that promises supernatural power or guidance, while side-stepping God. We're forbidden to exclude Him.

But again - *a trait indicative of Saul* - the king fails to obey God fully. Leviticus 20:27 had commanded, "A man or a woman who is a medium, or who has familiar spirits, shall surely be put to death; they shall stone them with stones. Their blood shall be upon them." If Saul had fully obeyed God, eliminating the occultists, this sad chapter would've never been written. But again Saul falls into **the trap of partial obedience.**

Verse 4, "Then the Philistines gathered together, and came and encamped at Shunem." They had invaded the Jezreel Valley in northern Israel. "So Saul gathered all Israel together, and they encamped at Gilboa." The two armies are squaring off. "When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly. And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD did not answer him, either by dreams or

by Urim or by the prophets.” Saul’s downfall began thirty years earlier when he failed to obey the Lord at Gilgal. He refused to execute judgment on Amalek. Afterwards we’re told, “the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul.”

Now Saul is in desperate need of divine guidance. And he tries to pray, but the heavens are brass. The Prophet Samuel is no longer around to bail him out.

God isn’t trying to be cruel by not answering Saul, *but why do we expect God to continue to speak when we don’t obey what He’s already told us?* Saul had already shown he would obey, only if it served him. Saul can **pray** all he wants, but God refuses to **play!**

And here the king of Israel sinks to his lowest depths. “Then Saul said to his servants, “Find me a woman who is a medium, that I may go to her and inquire of her.” And his servants said to him, “In fact, there is a woman who is a medium at En Dor.”

En Dor was a village near Mount Gilboa in the Jezreel Valley - *in Philistine territory*. There’s actually a tradition that this witch was the mother of Abner, Saul’s General. They didn’t have to search far for a medium.

Another reason Saul met the witch of En Dor - he knew he was committing an abomination, and was too ashamed to do it *outside*, so he met her *indoors!* Laugh

“So Saul disguised himself and put on other clothes, and he went, and two men with him; and they came to the woman by night.” The king is so ashamed of his abomination, of visiting a witch, he shows up incognito.

Earlier, after Saul rebelled at Gilgal, Samuel had warned him, “rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.” At the time Saul was offended by the statement. He would never think of turning from God to a witch. *How can partial obedience be the same as the evil of witchcraft?*

Yet years later, because of his underlying rebellion, he eventually turns to witchcraft. Be careful, ***persistent compromises ultimately lead to abominable acts.***

There’s a little known Jewish tradition that says when Saul walked up to the witch of En Dor she had this silly grin of her face. Saul told her, “Lady, wipe that smile off your face, right now.” She refused, so Saul slapped the woman. Later, he was arrested and charged with “striking a happy medium...” *Where’s the laugh track!*

In reality, Saul asked the woman, “Please conduct a seance for me, and bring up for me the one I shall name to you.” Saul wants to talk to a dead person - *a practice that was specifically forbidden by God.*

“Then the woman said to him, “Look, you know what Saul has done, how he has cut off the mediums and the spiritists from the land. Why then do you lay a snare for my

life, to cause me to die?" The witch knew of Saul's former opposition. She has no idea he's now her customer... "And Saul swore to her by the LORD, saying, "As the LORD lives, no punishment shall come upon you for this thing." Then the woman said, "Whom shall I bring up for you?" And he said, "Bring up Samuel for me." *And what happens next is a surprise.*

The witch doesn't even have time to speak her incantation or muster up a spell. Suddenly, she's shocked by what she sees... "When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice. And the woman spoke to Saul, saying, "Why have you deceived me? For you are Saul!" She thinks this is a *sting* - that she's about to get busted. It's all a set-up.

But notice here, when the witch saw Samuel she "cried out with a loud voice." A real person frightened her. Commentator Phillip Keller writes of this incident, "In terror she screamed... This was not the usual weird apparition that came to her otherwise beclouded mind and deluded spirit. This was an act of the living Lord." This was the one time such a thing truly happened.

I believe this medium was shocked by the reality of the phenomena. Normally a séance is either a farce, *or a demon impersonates a person*. But on this occasion it must've actually happened. It was the rare exception. God allowed Saul a brief communication with Samuel.

The only other time a man actually gets brought back from the dead is on the Mount of Transfiguration. Moses appeared and talked to Jesus... Apparently, the spirit world obeys God's boundaries, like it or not.

Luke 16 also reveals the travel rules for the dead. When the rich man in hell wants to return, and warn his lost brothers of the horrors awaiting them, God forbids him. Once you're assigned to heaven or hell there are no passes or furloughs. *I believe what happens in 1 Samuel 28 is an exception to the normal rules of death.*

In verse 13 the witch tells Saul, "I saw a spirit ascending out of the earth." He asks, "What is his form?" And she said, "An old man is coming up, and he is covered with a mantle." And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground and bowed down." Now Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?" *Hey bud, you pulled me from a party around God's throne!*

"And Saul answered, "I am deeply distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God has departed from me and does not answer me anymore, neither by prophets nor by dreams. Therefore I have called you, that you may reveal to me what I should do." Then Samuel said: "Why then do you ask me, seeing the LORD has departed from you and has become your enemy? And the LORD has done for Himself

as He spoke by me. For the LORD has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor, David. Because you did not obey the voice of the LORD nor execute His fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore the LORD has done this thing to you this day.

Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel with you into the hand of the Philistines. And tomorrow you and your sons will be with me.” Not Paradise per se, *but in the afterlife*. In short, “Saul, tomorrow you’ll die.” “Then immediately Saul fell full length on the ground, and was dreadfully afraid because of the words of Samuel.”

What follows is the witch of En Dor notices Saul is weak. He’s famished. She offers him food. And at first he refuses, but she kills a fatted calf and bakes fresh bread. Eventually Saul sits down and eats what turns out to be his final meal. He’ll be judged the next day. The king’s last meal is a fatted calf, after being judged by Samuel, at a witch’s table. *It was a BBQ sam-witch!*

Chapter 29, “Then the Philistines gathered together all their armies at Aphek, and the Israelites encamped by a fountain which is in Jezreel. And the lords of the Philistines passed in review by hundreds and by thousands, but David and his men passed in review at the rear with Achish.” The Philistine city-states send their combined armies as a show of force - a military parade. They march in front of a packed grandstand.

Imagine, banners flapping in the breeze, war horses snorting, combat sandals polished, uniforms pressed. And at the end of the line is Achish... but wait, after Achish a strange-looking battalion pulls up the rear...

“Then the princes of the Philistines said, “What are these Hebrews doing here?” Even the heathen Philistines knew that David was out of place. It was odd to see David on the Philistine side of the ball.

I wonder how many Christians have been asked this question. *In a bar - at a raunchy movie - at a party - in a liquor store...* Has anyone ever approached you and said, “You’re a Christian, what are you doing here?”

“And Achish said to the princes of the Philistines...” He defends David. He tells them David has been loyal to him for years. But the other Philistine princes are not as trusting, and probably smarter than Achish. They see David as a liability, a potential traitor who could turn on them to court favor with Saul. And they recall the song his countrymen use to sing of how David had slain his ten thousands... *those were 10k Philistines!*

Maybe this is why David went to the city of Gath in the first place. David knew King Achish was gullible.

In verse 6 Achish has to apologize to David and sends him home. *The lords of the Philistines have spoken - David is not to fight.* And he complains, verse 8, "But what have I done? To this day what have you found in your servant as long as I have been with you, that I may not go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king?" I'm sure David had planned to sabotage the Philistine effort. Here he feigns disappointment.

Yet despite David's pleas, the next morning he heads home to Ziklag; while Achish and the Philistines march north into battle to the Valley of Jezreel. By the way, that valley is also *known as Armageddon*. It's a famous battlefield. The site of some of history's most important battles. It's also where the future, final battle between a returning Christ and Antichrist will be fought.

Chapter 30, "Now it happened, when David and his men came to Ziklag, on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the South and Ziklag, attacked Ziklag and burned it with fire, and had taken captive the women and those who were there, from small to great; they did not kill anyone, but carried them away and went their way." While David was off being rejected by the Philistines, the Amalekites took revenge of David's looting. They retaliated against David with an attack of their own. They burn his city and its homes, and took their Hebrew wives and kids captive.

Verse 4, "Then David and the people who were with him lifted up their voices and wept, until they had no more power to weep." Obviously, they grieved deeply.

"And David's two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite, had been taken captive. Now David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and his daughters." David is mourning the loss of his own family, which would've been heartbreak enough. But a mutiny breaks out. Angry men blame David for the actions of the Amalekites and want to kill him. Can you imagine a more depressing – downtrodden - heart-rending situation? David reaches a new low. As the old saying goes, "He's lower than a snake's belly."

In High School I played quarterback, and there's a quote about QBs, "When a team wins the quarterback gets too much of the credit. And when it loses he takes too much of the blame." That's also true of pastors!

Once upon a time, an older pastor turned his church over to a younger man. Along with the keys to the church he handed the young pastor three envelopes. Each was numbered 1, 2, 3. The old guy told the new pastor, "When the honeymoon is over and the criticism becomes vocal open these envelopes in order 1,2,3."

Well, it didn't take long for the young man to feel the heat of criticism, so he opened the first envelope. It said, "Blame everything on the former pastor." He followed the

advice and it worked well... for a while.

But soon his opposition found another reason to attack, so the pastor opened up envelope #2. It read, “Blame everything on the denomination.” Again he followed the advice, and it staved off the vultures.

Finally, the criticism and attacks grew more frequent and bitter, so this time he opened the third envelope, which read, “Start preparing three envelopes.” Here, David feels like it’s time *to prepare three envelopes*.

But I love how he overcomes. “David strengthened himself in the LORD his God.” On previous occasions, when David was downtrodden, God sent people to encourage him. The Prophet Gad, his pal Jonathan, even the woman, Abigail... *but no one comes to encourage David at Ziklag...* There are times when God cuts us off from the support of friends and family.

This forces us to depend on Him wholly and solely. And it’s through **the discipline of loneliness** that God teaches us *He* alone is faithful to meet all our needs.

This is why we need to *read the Bible ourselves - develop our own personal prayer life - practice God’s presence daily - personalize God’s promises...* so when the day comes when you’re abandoned and all alone, you too can “**strengthen yourself in the Lord.**”

Verse 7, “Then David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, “Please bring the ephod here to me.” And Abiathar brought the ephod to David.” Again, the ephod was the sacred smock worn by the High Priest. The breastplate was attached to the ephod. It was adorned with twelve jewels representing Israel’s twelve tribes. Inside the pouch of the breastplate were two stones called the Urim and Thummin – which were somehow used by the priest to seek God’s guidance.

Imagine, needing to know God’s will, and reaching your hand into a supernatural pouch, and presto! No seeking, or walking in the Spirit, just instant answers.

But the pouch was only available to the priest. That’s why David kept sending for Abiathar... But for anyone not the king this created quite a dilemma. The Hebrews loved God and wanted to serve Him, but they lacked the persistent, indwelling presence of His Holy Spirit that is now given to all New Covenant believers.

David knew enough of God to strengthen himself, but he felt enough separation from God that he tried to make up for it through mechanical means, *this ephod*. Thus, he’s constantly calling for the priest. The Old Covenant produced an inferior, incomplete relationship with God. In Christ, we have a far better covenant.

So David inquired of the LORD (using the ephod), **saying, “Shall I pursue this troop?”**

Shall I overtake them?" And He answered him, "Pursue, for you shall surely overtake them and without fail recover all."

So David went, he and the 600 men who were with him, and came to the Brook Besor, where those stayed who were left behind." David's troops are moving south from Ziklag in hot pursuit of the Amalekites who lived in the deserts of the Sinai. David comes to a brook, where he realizes some of his men are slowing him down. Desert warfare calls for a lean, mean, fighting machine... So he splits his men in two groups - 400 men remain with David and pursue the Amalekites. While the other 200 worn out men stay by the supplies.

In verse 11 the Israelites find a dying man. He's had nothing to eat or drink for three days. He's a possible informant, so David's men nurture him back to health.

Verse 13, "Then David said to him, "To whom do you belong, and where are you from?" The man tells David he's an Egyptian servant of an Amalekite who participated in the raid on Ziklag. David asks him if he knows the whereabouts of the Amalekites. He says he'll take David to them if he promises him protection.

Verse 16, "And when he had brought him down, there they were, spread out over all the land, eating and drinking and dancing, because of all the great spoil which they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from the land of Judah." It's a party. The arrogant Amalekites are enjoying the spoils of a burned down Ziklag. And here's David's battle strategy - attack them while their hungover! He waits, and attacks at twilight.

And "Not a man of them escaped, except 400 young men who rode on camels and fled. So David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away, and David rescued his two wives. And nothing of theirs was lacking, either small or great, sons or daughters, spoil or anything which they had taken from them; David recovered all... and said, "This is David's spoil."

But what about the 200 weary men they left behind at the Brook Besor? Those who had fought with David resented their lack of participation in the battle. They said, "*Give them back their wives and get rid of them.*"

But David disagrees. God gave them the victory and they need to share it with everyone. Verse 24, "As his part is who goes down to the battle, so shall his part be who stays by the supplies; they shall share alike."

Recall, the original cause of this whole episode. When David went out to the Philistines with Achish, no one had stayed behind to protect Ziklag. David had learned the hard way those who protect the supplies are just as important as those who lead the charge.

“So it was, from that day forward; (David) made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel to this day.” David established a principle. Folks who *step out and obtain* and those who *stay back and maintain* are equally important - *a principle that also applies to the Church.*

Some of us are called to fight on the front lines. We teach, and lead, and interact publicly. Other members of the Body have supportive roles. They run the sound board, move tables and chairs, cook BBQ. In essence, *they guard the stuff.* But both types of work are vital, and deserve a similar cut of the spiritual spoils!

Verse 26, “Now when David (returned) to Ziklag, he sent some of the spoil to the elders of Judah, to his friends, saying, “Here is a present for you from the spoil of the enemies of the LORD...” *And the beneficiaries of his generosity are listed...* These are all cities in southern Judah who knew of David’s defection to the Philistines. This is a diplomatic move. David does this to let his fellow Jews know he’s still loyal to them and to Israel. One day he’ll be their king.

Chapter 31 recounts the Battle of Gilboa and *the fall of King Saul.* In Hosea 13:11 God sums up the reign of Saul. He says to Israel, “I gave you a king in My anger, and took him away in My wrath.” And in 1 Samuel 31 we’ll see God’s wrath at work in His judgment of Saul.

“Now the Philistines fought against Israel; and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell slain on Mount Gilboa.” Saul had allowed his army to turn to shambles. They were poorly prepared for battle.

“Then the Philistines followed hard after Saul and his sons. And the Philistines killed Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua, Saul's sons.” Jonathan, David’s best friend, dies before David takes the throne. “The battle became fierce against Saul. The archers hit him, and he was severely wounded by the archers.” Ancient armies often had a *hit squad of sharpshooters* who’s sole purpose was to take out the opposition’s king. For when the leader fell it totally demoralized his troops.

And Saul has been hit! He knows if captured he’ll be tortured, so he orders his armor bearer to finish him off. “Draw your sword, and thrust me through with it, lest these uncircumcised men come and thrust me through and abuse me.” But his armorbearer would not, for he was greatly afraid.” Tradition says his armor bearer was Doeg - that ruthless tattletale who had no problem using his sword to slay the priestly family of Ahimelech at Nob. But now he refuses to kill Saul.

“Therefore Saul took a sword and fell on it.” And when someone deliberately tries to commit suicide he or she is saying they’re more afraid of *people’s judgment* than they

are of *God's judgment*. So “when his armorbearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on his sword, and died with him. So Saul, his three sons, his armorbearer, and all his men died together that same day.” This was a catastrophic loss for Israel.

And after this defeat, the Philistines took over a large chunk of the west bank. Even some cities east of the Jordan were evacuated. This is the deepest intrusion into Israeli territory every launched by the Philistines.

“So it happened the next day, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his three sons fallen on Mount Gilboa. And they cut off his head and stripped off his armor, and sent word throughout the land of the Philistines, to proclaim it in the temple of their idols and among the people.” They made the defeat of Saul and Israel a national holiday.

“Then they put (Saul's) armor in the temple of the Ashtoreths...” This too was a common ancient custom. Trophies of war were displayed in the temples of conquering nations as a tribute to their gods. Remember earlier, when the Ark was taken in battle, the Philistines placed it in the Temple of Dagon. Even David followed this practice when he placed Goliath's sword next to the ephod in the Tabernacle at Nob.

Later God refuses to allow David to build the Temple since he is “a man of war.” Perhaps the idea behind that phrase was that God didn't want David to fill the Temple with trophies from his military campaigns. Thus, He refused to allow David to build the Temple.

The Philistines also “fastened (Saul's) body to the wall of Beth Shan.” On our tours of Israel we always go to Beth Shan. It'll was later turned into a Roman city, one of the cities of the Decapolis that Jesus visited.

But the Philistines nailed Saul's wounded, bloated body to the city wall. They're rubbing salt in the wound. This brought further shame on Israel. Actually, King Saul's headless body is now a metaphor for the nation. Israel is now without a king - it's a *headless body*.

Verse 11, “Now when the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, all the valiant men arose and traveled all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth Shan; and they came to Jabesh and burned them there. Then they took their bones and buried them under the tamarisk tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days.” The men of Jabesh couldn't bear the humiliation, so they came at night to take *Saul* off the *wall*... Hey, Saul had been “*off the wall*” for some time. It's an fitting ending. The king who protected his image at all costs ends up a public spectacle of shame.

Notice too, the residents of Jabesh desire to give Saul's body a decent burial, so they cremate his remains and bury his bones... Which brings up the question, "What does the Bible say about cremation?" And the answer, "The Bible is silent on the subject."

Yet, the result of cremation and natural decay are the same. It takes cremation twenty minutes to do what nature does in twenty years. In my opinion, there's nothing wrong with cremation as long as it's not done in a way that denies the resurrection of those ashes. *For one day, everybody's body - burned or buried - will be resurrected to redemption or to condemnation.*