

The Gospel Unashamed

"From the cowardice that shrinks from new truth, from the laziness that is content with half-truths, from the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth, O, God of Truth, deliver us."

A Controversial Newsletter "The Printed Voice of Summit Theological Seminary"

~ All articles are written by Terry Carter unless otherwise stated ~

Vol. 37 No. 3

July 2024

Terry Carter, Editor

The Death of James



"1 Now about that time Herod the king stretched out his hand to harass some from the church. 2 Then **he killed James the brother of John with the sword.** 3 And because he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to seize Peter also. Now it was during the Days of Unleavened Bread. 4 So when he had arrested him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four squads of soldiers to keep him, intending to bring him before the people after Passover." **Acts 12:1-4 (NKJV)**

These four short verses are a tragic passage of Scripture. They record the first death of an apostle, specifically the apostle James. Later in this same chapter, we see another

apostle (Peter) miraculously spared the same fate. Before this chapter ends, the king (Herod) who was attacking the Church dies a gruesome death.

Let's take some time to consider some of the lessons that we can learn from the death of James.

First, we see that Christianity's gain is not in this life. The death of James occurred not much more than ten years after the Church began on Pentecost. That means that any gain or benefit that James received in this life by being a Christian was short-lived. Even if you add in the time James spent with Jesus during His ministry, any earthly benefit lasted less than fifteen years. It is interesting that James died shortly before the "Days of Unleavened Bread" or Passover. That means that he died just before the anniversary of Jesus' death and resurrection.

Obviously, Jesus Himself was far more interested in our salvation for eternity than He was in either His or our lives on this earth. Paul shared this

same attitude when comparing this life to the life to come.

"For to me, to live is Christ, and **to die is gain.**" **Philippians 1:21 (NKJV)**

"**If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.**" **1 Corinthians 15:19 (NKJV)**

All the apostles except for John are thought to have died for their faith. They were certainly not about "living their best life now". Their hope was not in this world or this life. Their hope was in Christ and the life to come in Him.

Second, nobody is indispensable to the Church. We need to remember that, even among the apostles, James was someone of note:

- He was one of the "Sons of Thunder", along with his brother John.

"**James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James, to whom He gave the name Boanerges, that is, 'Sons of Thunder';**" **Mark 3:17 (NKJV)**

He and John evidently had fiery personalities. At one time, they wanted those who rejected Jesus to be consumed by fire from heaven.

“52 and sent messengers before His face. And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him. 53 **But they did not receive Him**, because His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem. 54 And when His disciples **James and John saw this, they said, ‘Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?’** 55 But He turned and rebuked them, and said, ‘You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. 56 ‘For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them.’ And they went to another village.” **Luke 9:52-56 (NKJV)**

It might be worth noting that James had wanted others to die and later became the first apostle to die as a martyr. On the other hand, his brother John is thought to be the only apostle who did not die as a martyr. Nevertheless, we ought to be careful what we wish on others, lest it come back on us later.

- He was there at the transfiguration of Christ.

“1 Now after six days **Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves;** 2 and **He was**

transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.” **Matthew 17:1-2 (NKJV)**

- He was there at the Garden of Gethsemane.

“36 Then Jesus came with them **to a place called Gethsemane**, and said to the disciples, ‘Sit here while I go and pray over there.’ 37 And **He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee**, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed.” **Matthew 26:36-37 (NKJV)**

I wonder whether people in the Church worried about how the Church could survive without a leader like James. It is only natural to worry when a great leader among God's people dies.

However, we must remember that God is who we worship, and He is more than able to raise up new leaders for His people. When Moses died, there was Joshua ready to lead Israel into the Promised Land. Before Elijah was translated, Elisha was already “waiting in the wings”. Before Paul faced his death, Timothy had been trained as an evangelist in the Lord's Church. God has not left Himself without witness in the past, and He will not do so in the future.

The Church did not begin until Jesus had ascended into heaven. Who could have possibly been a better leader

than the Lord Himself? The very fact that the Church began and grew without the bodily presence of Jesus as a leader is evidence of its Divine nature. Clearly, God is working with and through the Church regardless of who is there leading bodily and who has left life on this earth. We would do well to remember that the Church was here long before any of us were here, and if the Lord tarries, it will be here long after we are gone from this earth.

However, whether your local congregation survives after you are gone depends, in part, on what you do now. It is possible to defile (or destroy as some translations render it) the temple of God if we are not faithful. The penalty for doing so is quite serious.

“If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.” I Corinthians 3:17 (NKJV)

In the context here, the temple is the Church. We should not get the idea that it does not matter what we do. Your own salvation and that of those in your community is at stake. But the Lord's Church will survive even without you. This is essentially what Mordecai said to Esther when she was considering whether to approach the king for her people.

“13 And Mordecai told them to answer Esther: ‘Do not think in

your heart that you will escape in the king's palace any more than all the other Jews. 14 **'For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?'** Esther 4:13-14 (NKJV)

Third, sometimes it takes great trouble to get the Church to pray. We sometimes forget that we need to pray for one another. We are commanded to consider one another.

"Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way." I Samuel 12:23 (NKJV)

"And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works," Hebrews 10:24 (NKJV)

Why is it that we so often wait for tragedy to strike before we pray for one another? Why not pray for one another before tragedy strikes? There is nothing recorded about the Church praying before James was killed. However, after his death, we do see them praying for Peter.

"Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church." Acts 12:5 (NKJV)

Peter was rescued from death, but James was not. Perhaps prayer, or the lack of it, is what made the difference between the two.

Fourth, some people have a twisted idea of religion and honor. Herod killed James and intended to kill Peter, both apostles of the Lord. He moved from James to Peter because he saw that killing James pleased the people. Yet, he keeps Peter in prison till after Passover. He has no qualms about killing apostles to improve his "poll numbers", but he will not do it until after Passover. He would not want to tarnish the holy celebration with an execution. This is blatant and wicked hypocrisy. He is straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel, just like the Pharisees.

"Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!" Matthew 23:24 (NKJV)

This reminds us of the Jews at the trial of Jesus. They were plotting to put an innocent man to death with false charges and a mock trial, but they were careful not to defile themselves by entering the Praetorium so that they could eat the Passover.

"Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, and it was early morning. But they themselves did not go into the Praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover." John 18:28 (NKJV)

This Herod is much like his father who would rather kill a prophet of God than to break his impetuous promise or look foolish to those who were watching him.

"8 So she, having been prompted by her mother, said, 'Give me John the Baptist's head here on a platter.' 9 And the king was sorry; nevertheless, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he commanded it to be given to her." Matthew 14:8-9 (NKJV)

The Scriptures are full of examples of "leaders" who fear the people or are trying to please them rather than fearing God and trying to please Him. We see such things even today and not just among our leaders.

Fifth, God is still there, even when we face death. God is there when we face the death of a loved one. The death of Lazarus is a clear example of this. Jesus wept at his tomb. We see His compassion to the sisters when they confront Him over His absence when Lazarus died. We see His grief when He hears of John's death.

"When Jesus heard it, He departed from there by boat to a deserted place by Himself. But when the multitudes heard it, they followed Him on foot from the cities." Matthew 14:13 (NKJV)

The death of a loved one can be a very lonesome time, but we know that God is still there.

“Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, **“I will never leave you nor forsake you.”** Hebrews 13:5 (NKJV)

Isaiah saw a vision of the Lord in the temple the same year that king Uzziah died. Kings may come and go, but God is still on His throne.

“In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple.” Isaiah 6:1 (NKJV)

God is there when we face our own death. He was there at the death of Stephen.

“55 But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and **saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God,** 56 and said, “Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!”” Acts 7:55-56 (NKJV)

The angels carried Lazarus the beggar to Abraham’s bosom when he died.

“So it was that **the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom.** The rich man also died and was buried.” Luke 16:22 (NKJV)

The death of His saints is precious to Him.

“Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints.” Psalms 116:15 (NKJV)

Paul said that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.

“We are confident, yes, well pleased rather **to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.**” II Corinthians 5:8 (NKJV)

We can count on the Lord keeping what we have committed to Him.

“For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that **He is able to keep what I have committed to Him** until that Day.” II Timothy 1:12 (NKJV)

At the start of this article, I mentioned that before chapter 12 of Acts ends, the king who attacked the Church is dead. He was eaten of worms and died a horrible death because he accepted worship as a god. The true God then showed everyone that Herod was no god at all, just a mortal man who died.

“21 So on a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat on his throne and gave an oration to them. 22 And **the people kept shouting, “The voice of a god and not of a man!”** 23

Then immediately an angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not give glory to God. And he was eaten by worms and died.” Acts 12:21-23 (NKJV)

In contrast to Herod’s inglorious ending, the Church grew and multiplied.

“But the word of God grew and multiplied.” Acts 12:24 (NKJV)

Kings come and go, but God’s Word endures. That is important for us to remember in this, and every election year. Persecution may kill and imprison some saints, but the Church continues. Kings may kill the body, but God will reward the soul.

“20 Daniel answered and said: ‘Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, For wisdom and might are His. 21 And He changes the times and the seasons; **He removes kings and raises up kings;** He gives wisdom to the wise And knowledge to those who have understanding.” Daniel 2:20-21 (NKJV)

Three people faced death in this chapter. James died for the Lord. Peter was spared by the Lord, for a time, to live for Him. Herod was struck dead by the Lord. None of us wants to end up like Herod. However, whether we live for the Lord like Peter or die for the Lord like James, never forget that God is there, and He is in control.

“Come Lilly, Come on Girl, Up!”

By Dr. Shane Capps



Do you ever wish the last day could be the first day? I sure do.

On Tuesday April 23, 2024, that is exactly how I felt. That was the day we had to put down our 120lbs Saint Bernard Lilly. The vet had called me at 8:50 a.m. at my office. She said, “I heard you all are having a hard time with Lilly.” I told her that Lilly had been licking and chewing her paws constantly, had been throwing up, and many other problems. She just could not settle down because she was feeling so bad. The vet and I agreed that she needed to be put down, and it was determined that Vicki and I would bring her in at 4:45 p.m. that day.

I left the office after 9 a.m.; I wanted to spend the rest of the day with Lilly. As I was driving home that morning, I was thinking about the first day we saw her. She was at a pet store in Kokomo, IN. She was two months old and only weighed thirteen pounds. I had never seen a Saint Bernard puppy before. I picked her up and gave her a hug. Then, I looked at Vicki and said those famous words that changed our lives, “Do you think we can do this?”

The next day, January 7, 2020, I paid for her and brought her home. We had no clue what we were getting into.

That evening, I called and told my great friend Rad Warder that I had gotten a Saint Bernard. He laughed for fifteen minutes. When I told him that we may breed her, he laughed even harder. To this day, I have never heard anyone laugh that long in my life.

All joking aside, it was a lot of work. Lilly was nipping at us, digging in the yard, and she was not potty trained.

Lilly did not stay thirteen pounds for very long! We played with her all the time. I took her for walks which we called “walkies.” We let her run throughout the whole church building. Don’t tell the church people, but she peed twice on the floor as a puppy. Yes, we cleaned it up. We also played a lot in her fenced in yard. She loved playing ball. If the ball squeaked, she loved it more. She grew quickly! But no matter how big she grew, I always looked at Lilly as that little thirteen-pound puppy.

Like her dad, Lilly earned her degrees. She went to Petco for her Basic dog training. It was there that she learned to come, sit, focus, lay down, stay, leave it, loose leash walking, hide and seek, touch, and wait. After that, we took her to PetSmart for her Intermediate and Advanced classes. It was there that she worked on heel, stay,

sit, drop it, leave it, and stay with distractions.

Did the training work? She was stubborn no doubt, but Lilly knew her commands. She was a great dog. She also knew phrases like, “you want to play”, “you want to go for a walkie”, “you want to go bye bye” and “go night night”.

The problem was that Lilly was a sick dog. We brought her home with giardia from the pet store. As she was getting bigger, we had to deal with urinary tract infections. She always had a bad stomach. She always wanted to eat grass and get sick. One day, she could have good BM, and the next day, it was diarrhea. Other times, she would shake her ears so that we had to put drops in them.

For the last four months, she had been licking and biting her paws all the time. It grew worse and worse. She would chew on her paws for three hours in the morning. My son and his wife told me that, while we were gone, she would just sit in her crate and chew herself to death. It was getting to where her paws were bleeding and swollen, and she was limping all the time.

In February, we took Lilly to her vet for her four-year checkup. We told the vet about the licking and biting, and the vet said that she was just grooming. Really? No, try again! The vet told us that our real problem was going to be over the next two years

because Lilly was developing hip and joint problems. She was already having a hard time getting up.

Over the next two months, the licking and biting worsened. Lilly was struggling to stand up. I would say to her, "You want to play", and she would not get up. Before we went to bed, she did not want to get up to go to the bathroom one last time.

On April 16, we took Lilly to a different vet. She reviewed Lilly's records and noticed that Lilly had had a lot of problems. The vet really did not know what to do. She also told us that Lilly was developing hip and joint problems and arthritis. Again, over the next two years, we were going to have a problem.

Yes, I understood Lilly was going to have additional problems over the next two years, but what about the problem today?

I arrived home shortly after 9:00 a.m. I took Lilly outside, gave her a drink of water, and gave her a bone. Then, I took her for a short walk, and she had to sit down to rest twice. It seemed that she was having trouble breathing the last two days. Vicki and I spent the whole day, talking to Lilly, petting her, and loving on her. At 3:30 p.m., I took her outside one last time, gave her a drink of water, and gave her half of a bone. It was raining.

On the way to the vet's, Lilly just laid on Vicki's lap. Ever

since she was a puppy, whenever we took Lilly anywhere, Vicki always sat in the back with her. When we parked in the parking lot, she started crying. She never did that before. As we waited in the waiting room, she barked at anyone who came near to us. She never did that before. Vicki and I just kept loving on her.

When we walked into the room, Lilly wanted to leave, but I told her we needed to stay. We just kept loving on her. The vet gave Lilly a shot to calm her down. Finally, Lilly lay down like the picture at the top of this article and just kept looking up at me.

We continued telling Lilly we loved her, and it was time to go night night. I always said that to her every night when we came in before bed. It was not long until Lilly was sleeping and snoring like she always did every night next to our bed. After ten minutes, the vet came in and gave her one last shot. *Lilly died.* My giant girl was gone just like that. As she lay there, we kept petting her and crying. I just kept thinking, no, it cannot be true. No, it cannot be over. No, this cannot be it. It was just like that. In a moment our life changed again.

To be honest, over the four and half years we had her, Lilly was a lot of work. At times, she was a lot of stress. At times, she was more than I could handle. There were days when I did not know how I could live with her, and now, I do not know how to live without her. It was not a

hate/love relationship. She was my girl. She was just a lot, but I loved her just the same. Never once did I think about giving her up. Vicki and I loved her and enjoyed her. Lilly taught me a lot about what love looks like.

The day after her death, I reached out to a friend, and the words he gave me are simple and deep. Shane... **"So sorry to hear about your loss. It's so deep and painful. It hurts. It's supposed to hurt. Much love to you."**

Love is hard. Love is a lot of work. Love can bring a lot of stress. Love brings loss. Love is deep. Love is painful. Love hurts. At times, love is hard to handle. Love is supposed to hurt.

Winnie the Pooh said, "How lucky am I to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard."

Our Lord showed us that He loves us.

John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

Jesus gave us the best example of love. He did not merely say "I love you"; He showed us that He loved us by dying on the cross in our place.

John 12:32 says, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself."

In pain and agony on the cross, Jesus could say "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." Luke 23:34a

The Lord loves us. Love brought Him pain, stress, and it cut deep. Was it worth it? Was it worth loving us? Were the pain and stress worth it?

Romans 5:6 says, "For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly."

Romans 5:8 says, "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Love hurts! Love is a funny thing! Lilly reminded me that we only have so much time to love. We only have so much time with our husband or wife. We only have so much time with our parents or grandparents. We only have so much time with our kids and grandkids. We only have so much time with Saint Bernard's.

How do you say goodbye to a wife after thirty, forty, or fifty years of spending every day together? How do you say goodbye to a child who was in a car accident and died? How do you say goodbye to a good friend who lost their fight with cancer?

If they were a Christian, then knowing where they are can make it is easier. However, losing someone you love is hard, and it hurts. It cuts deep.

We need to focus on our relationships and love those that God has given us like today could be the last. Sadly, it just may be!

God loved us enough that He was willing to send His Son down to this earth. He was willing to allow His Son to die on the cross. He is the one who raised Jesus from the dead on the third day. That is love. The Father loved His Son! He also loves you and me. That is why salvation is now offered to everyone.

That is why today is the day of salvation. That is why today you can have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. What do you say? In fact, you do not even have to get drool on you. I would not mind!

Do you ever wish the last day could be the first day? I sure do.



Lilly Capps

October 20, 2019- April 23, 2024

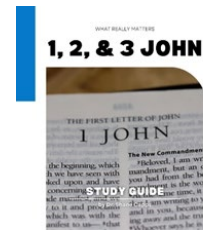
Daddy and Mommy love you girl!

Dr. Shane Capps is the preacher of First Church of Christ and professor of Summit Theological Seminary Peru, IN.

You may contact Shane at... shanecapps34@gmail.com

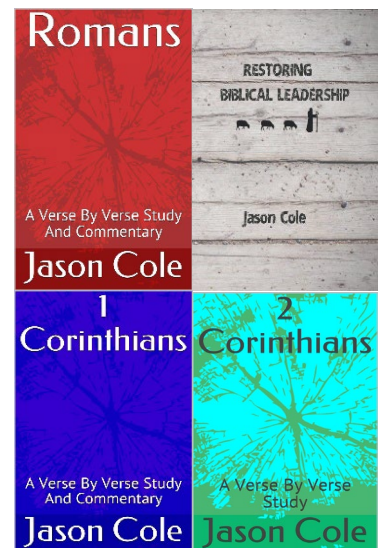
Available on Amazon!

Dr. Shane Capps's New Book



How do love and truth go together? Some Christians think that holding to the truth of God's word gets in the way of loving people. Other Christians think that all that matters is holding to the truth and loving people has nothing to do with it. In this study of 1-3 John, we will address how a Christian can love people while holding firmly to the truth of God's word, what truth is, and how we can know it for ourselves. Pilate said to Jesus, "What is truth?" John 18:38 Come let's find out what truth is, so we can be the Christians we are called to be, in love.

Books by Jason Cole:



Jason Cole is the evangelist at Lake Mount Church of Christ in New Waterford, OH. Jason is also a professor at Summit Theological Seminary, Peru, IN.

Birthday Reflections

By Kerry Allen

Now that I am officially in my 70's, I cannot be held responsible for anything.

Now, I must say that I love being old. People do not expect much from you. You have a real excuse for just about anything. Sometimes, you get some perks that others do not.

But there are some disappointments as well. Aches and pains are usual. Forgetfulness is real. You constantly hear that someone you know has died.

But please listen as I pass along one more disappointment to you.

At my age, I really do look back and remember "the good old days". Not only do I remember those days, but I truly mourn what our culture has become. I am grieved that my grandchildren do not know what it is to feel safe. I am disappointed that my children no longer even feel free to discipline their children without the threat of losing them.

However, I am most brokenhearted that I have seen our society reject God and set themselves up as god. I am not making it up or romanticizing the past. I have lived it. I have seen it with my own eyes. I deal with the brokenness of people whose lives are the fruit of it. I see Christ and Christianity blasphemed and mocked to the point that no longer is

Christianity just considered socially inappropriate, but it is becoming illegal. And, as a result, I have seen the church become weaker and weaker. My heart is breaking from the worldliness, half-heartedness, and the ignorance that is posing as Christianity today. I am struggling to not keep going on and on about this.

So, please give me a chance to wrap it up before you quit reading.

Ever since the Civil War, there has been a dedicated effort to remember those soldiers who gave their all in their service. Today, let us also remember that we are the soldiers in the Lord's Army. Our commander is Christ. Nothing short of total sacrifice is expected of us. We have no weapon but the sword of the Spirit. THEREFORE, be different. DO NOT be like the people of this world, BUT, "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. 13:14a)

Kerry Allen is the president of Louisville Bible College.

Fall 2024

Semester Begins

August 20th

LEAP Program

September 27th-28th

Kerry Allen



Important Notice!

Soon you will be able to sign-up for a Gospel Unashamed Subscription or renew your existing Gospel Unashamed Subscription on our webstore at www.summitstore.org. We hope to have this feature available this fall. You will still be able to renew your subscription by mailing your payment or calling to make a payment.

Starting in 2025, we will change the way that we send Gospel Unashamed Subscription reminders. Instead of mailing out invoices every quarter, the date your subscription expires will be listed with your address on the last page of your copy of the Gospel Unashamed. To continue receiving your Gospel Unashamed Subscription uninterrupted, you will need to renew your subscription before that date. Otherwise, you will be removed from our mailing list.

"Sow a thought and you reap an action; sow an act and you reap a habit; sow a habit and you reap a character; sow a character and you reap a destiny."

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life."

—Galatians 6:7-8