

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 written by Terry Carter unless otherwise stated ~

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Terry Carter, Editor

Dandelions



During the last week or two, I have noticed two things that are sure signs of spring. The first is dandelions popping up in yards everywhere. The second is commercials advertising products to kill dandelions in your yard.

Most people do not like dandelions in their yard. Some people spend hours trying to get rid of them. Others will spend a great deal of money each year to kill them and prevent more from growing. They spray them, cut them, dig them up, etc.

It may not come as a surprise to some of my readers that I am kind of an oddball when it comes to dandelions. I have always liked them. When they are in full bloom, I love their yellow color. When I see them in the yard, I know that spring has sprung. When I was very young, my sister and I used to pick them for our mother. She never complained about this

although I doubt that she thought much of the dandelions themselves. When I see them as an adult, it brings back happy memories of my childhood to me.

But dandelions mean more to me than just springtime and childhood memories. For me, they are a metaphor for life. They spring up quickly and are pleasant to the eye. But before you know it, their heads turn white and begin to blow away. Not long after that, they more or less disappear. But when springtime comes again, they raise up once again.

You can probably see already where I am going with this. Our lives are short. We grow up quickly and our physical appearance is pleasant in our youth. But all too soon, our heads turn white and our hair seems to blow away with the passing wind. Before we know it, our bodies wither and disappear under the earth. But the good news for the Christian is that someday we will be raised again to meet the Lord in the air.

When I see the dandelions, I do not think about useless and troublesome weeds. I do not think

about how much it will cost me to get rid of them or prevent them in the first place. I do not think about how much time it will take me to eliminate them. Instead, I think about how short our years on this earth are. I think about how quickly we pass through the seasons of our lives. I am reminded that after we are hidden in the ground, we will live again with the Lord. I think about the words of Peter and James.

"24...All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away, 25 But the word of the LORD endures forever..." **I Peter 1:24-25**

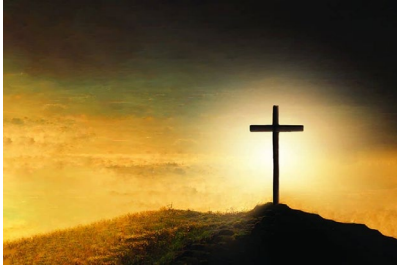
"...For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away..." **James 4:14**

You may not fall in love with dandelions after reading this short article. But I do hope that the next time you see one, you see more than just an unwanted weed. I hope you take a moment to reflect on your life and eternity.

Note: The previous article was written in April 2017 and was published in the local church newsletter.

Did God Forsake Christ?

Matthew 27:46



“And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?’ that is, ‘**My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?**’” **Matthew 27:46 (NKJV)**

Most of us have been taught that God forsook Jesus on the cross. We are told that that is why Jesus said, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” I do not believe that God forsook Christ on the cross. I have always had a problem with this idea. It is the purpose of this article to show that God did not forsake Christ on the cross.

If God forsook Jesus in His death, how can I be assured that He will not forsake me in mine? Furthermore, it is the very death and resurrection that is supposed to assure me of salvation. What assurance is there if Christ was actually forsaken during the very death that is to give me assurance?

Jesus had stated that God, even while referring to the cross, would not forsake Him. Jesus said that the Father was with Him and had not left Him alone.

“28 Then Jesus said to them, ‘**When you lift up the Son of Man**, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself;

but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things. 29 **And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone**, for I always do those things that please Him.” **John 8:28-29 (NKJV)**

This is in reference to when He would be lifted up, clearly a reference to the cross. He also stated that His disciples would scatter and leave Him, but the Father would still be with Him.

“31 Jesus answered them, ‘Do you now believe? 32 Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that **you will be scattered**, each to his own, **and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.**” **John 16:31-32 (NKJV)**

Again, this is a clear reference to the cross. Not only did Jesus believe that God would be with Him, but He believed that God would be with Him at the cross. If God did forsake Him, then Jesus was either mistaken or He lied. If either is the case, He could not be the Christ. Isaiah prophesied that God would see the crucifixion.

“10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand. 11 **He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied.** By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities.” **Isaiah 53:10-11 (NKJV)**

Notice that it is God who bruised Him. Notice also that He shall see the labor of His soul. There is no

doubt that Isaiah is saying that God would see Christ's death on the cross. If He saw it, He did not turn His back on it and forsake Christ. Also, Jesus committed His spirit to the Father.

“And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, ‘**Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.**’ Having said this, He breathed His last.” **Luke 23:46 (NKJV)**

Why would Jesus say this if He had just been forsaken? The fact is that He knew that He had not been forsaken. If Jesus was forsaken by God, wouldn't He have known the reason for it?

On the cross He said, “...why have You forsaken Me?” Why would the Christ not know why He was being forsaken? The fact is that He was not forsaken at all. He was quoting an Old Testament Scripture.

“**My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?** Why are You so far from helping Me, And from the words of My groaning?” **Psalms 22:1 (NKJV)**

A look at the passage that Jesus was quoting shows that He was not forsaken. At the beginning of **Psalms 22**, the Psalmist feels as though he has been forsaken by God. As you continue to read, however, you see that he was not actually forsaken at all.

“**For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; Nor has He hidden His face from Him; But when He cried to Him, He heard.**” **Psalms 22:24 (NKJV)**

This psalm is prophetic of the crucifixion. Jesus, like the

Psalmist, may have felt forsaken. But the fact is neither the Psalmist nor Christ was actually forsaken by God. Do not forget that Christ had a human side. It may be that His human side felt forsaken just as the Psalmist had.

Remember that the Psalms were put to music. Starting the first line of a song would certainly bring to remembrance the rest of it. Those who were familiar with **Psalms 22** would immediately recognize the statement. They would also certainly remember the rest of the song. They would certainly remember how it ends in victory, not defeat.

The song, "Love Lifted Me", begins with the words, "I was sinking deep in sin, far from the peaceful shore." But we remember how the song ends with such a shout of victory. If a man spoke the first line on his deathbed, who would say that he had despaired of salvation?

Consider this quote concerning **Psalms 22** from *The Broadman Bible Commentary*:

"The psalm found recurrent use, both in private worship and in open worship of the community for which it was originally composed. Whenever the psalm was used, however, reference to one part of it would inevitably call forth the memory of the rest of it. (Note: We might quote only "The Lord is my shepherd," for example, but the rest of Psalms 23 would immediately come to our minds.)...It is against such a tradition that our Lord's use of the psalm from the cross must be viewed...Our Lord was therefore speaking of the terror of His suffering, and also, since the disciples and His mother would certainly have known the full

psalm, of the victory which was to follow."

Note that this is a victory psalm in the midst of other victory psalms. Halley summarizes it as follows:

- **Psalms 20** – A song of trust
- **Psalms 21** – Thanks for victory
- **Psalms 22** – A Psalm of the Crucifixion
- **Psalms 23** – The Shepherd Psalm
- **Psalm 24** – The King's Arrival in Zion

Morgan summarizes it somewhat differently, but still recognizes the victorious nature of these psalms:

- **Psalms 20** – Jehovah appealed to for help on behalf of the king.
- **Psalms 21** – Jehovah praised as the Strength of the King.
- **Psalms 22** – Jehovah as the Succorer of the afflicted one.
- **Psalms 23** – Jehovah the Shepherd of His own.
- **Psalms 24** – Jehovah conquering through His king.

There is the possibility that Christ was telling the crowd that they were fulfilling the prophecy of Psalms 22. Immediately prior to Christ making the statement in question, many of the prophecies of this psalm had been fulfilled.

For example:

- They cast lots for His garments.
- They had pierced His hands and feet.
- They mocked Him and shook their heads at Him.

- They encircled Him and stared at Him.
- They said, "He trusts in the Lord, let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him."
- He thirsted.

Jesus may have quoted the first verse of this psalm to tell the people that they were fulfilling the prophecy right then and there. It is only recorded in Mark and Matthew. Matthew is the Gospel to the Jews. They would be familiar with **Psalms 22**. Read **Psalms 22** and **Matthew 27** together sometime and see if this is not plausible.

Notice that Jesus spoke these words in Aramaic. Why? Because He was quoting from the Old Testament. It is like when we quote in Latin, "*et to Brute*". We are saying that someone is doing to us what Brutus did to Julius Caesar. They were doing to Jesus what the Psalmist prophesied.

God has promised many times not to forsake His people. The writer of Hebrews quotes from **Deuteronomy 31:6** and **Psalms 118:6-7** to assure us that God will never forsake us.

"5 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.'** 6 **So we may boldly say: 'The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?'**" **Hebrews 13:5-6 (NKJV)**

Isaiah gives us God's promises to always be with His people.

"Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with

My righteous right hand.” **Isaiah 41:10 (NKJV)**

“**When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;** And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, Nor shall the flame scorch you.” **Isaiah 43:2 (NKJV)**

Before He ascended, Christ promised to be with us always, until the end of the world.

“teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; **and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.**’ Amen.” **Matthew 28:20 (NKJV)**

Notice that the psalmist's enemies said that God had forsaken him, but he will always have hope.

“10 For **my enemies speak against me;** And those who lie in wait for my life take counsel together, 11 **Saying, ‘God has forsaken him;** Pursue and take him, for there is none to deliver him.’ 12 O God, do not be far from me; O my God, make haste to help me! 13 Let them be confounded and consumed Who are adversaries of my life; Let them be covered with reproach and dishonor Who seek my hurt. 14 **But I will hope continually,** And will praise You yet more and more. 15 My mouth shall tell of Your righteousness And Your salvation all the day, For I do not know their limits. 16 I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD; I will make mention of Your righteousness, of Yours only. 17 O God, You have taught me from my youth; And to this day I declare Your wondrous works. 18 Now also when I am old and

grayheaded, **O God, do not forsake me,** Until I declare Your strength to this generation, Your power to everyone who is to come.” **Psalms 71:10-18 (NKJV)**

Despite the fact that others thought God had forsaken him, the Psalmist did not believe it.

ANSWERS TO OBJECTIONS:

Some may object that Jesus was bearing the sins of the world and that God cannot look on iniquity.

They cite “**You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, And cannot look on wickedness.** Why do You look on those who deal treacherously, And hold Your tongue when the wicked devours A person more righteous than he?” **Habakkuk 1:13 (NKJV)**

But the end of the verse says that He does look on those that deal treacherously. Keep in mind that Habakkuk is complaining to God here. He cannot understand why God has looked on those who deal treacherously. He is saying, “I thought that you could not do that, why have you done so?” God later answers that the end for the wicked will come.

“For the vision is yet for an appointed time; But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; Because it will surely come, It will not tarry.” **Habakkuk 2:3 (NKJV)**

The point of the passage is that God cannot look on iniquity and not do something about it. Furthermore, we know from other passages that God does look on iniquity and acts because of it. The Lord went down to Sodom specifically to see the sin of it.

“20 And the LORD said, ‘Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grave, 21 **I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry against it** that has come to Me; and if not, I will know.” **Genesis 18:20-21 (NKJV)**

God saw the affliction of His people in Egypt.

“7 And the LORD said: ‘**I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows.** 8 So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites.” **Exodus 3:7-8 (NKJV)**

Notice in both cases that God did something about the iniquity that He beheld. Some argue that Isaiah prophesied that He would be forsaken of God.

They cite, “1 Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? 2 For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him. 3 **He is despised and rejected** by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.” **Isaiah 53:1-3 (NKJV)**

But this text says nothing about Him being forsaken by God. It says He would be despised and rejected “of men”, “we hid...our faces from Him”, and “we did not esteem Him.” The prophecy here is about man’s rejection of Him, not God’s.

We have already seen that Jesus predicted the same in **John 16:31-32**. Yet, in the same text, He said He was not alone, for the Father was with Him. Also, we have already shown that Isaiah himself said in verse 11 of this very chapter that God would see the labor of His soul.

Some argue that if God did not forsake Jesus, He did not pay the penalty for our sin and hence, we have no salvation.

One man said, “To be totally cut off from the Giver of Life; to be abandoned to the darkness of death; to have the Father turn away from you, leaving you to suffer and die...this is the penalty for one’s sin!”

I would first point out that he offers no Scripture to support this assertion. This is his conclusion about what the Scriptures say, not what they actually do say. The basic assumption here, among others, is that Jesus had to suffer the exact same penalty as the unrepentant will for their sin in order to be a valid substitute for those who do repent. I simply do not see this in Scripture. This equates the penalty for sin and the consequences of it. This concept leads some to deny the existence of an eternal hell. Others argue that Jesus had to spend time in hell in order to pay our penalty.

Both ideas are extreme and have their problems. If we assume that their basic premise is correct, we

still have problems. How can three hours of separation pay the penalty for an eternity of separation? If Jesus must suffer what the unrepentant sinner suffers, three hours is not sufficient.

But I think the root problem is equating the penalty for sin with the consequences. Jesus did not have to suffer the liver disease of the alcoholic. He did not suffer from the venereal disease of the immoral. He did not suffer the withdrawal of the drug addict. The list could go on and on. These are the consequences of sin, not the penalty for sin. It is my contention that separation from God is the ultimate consequence of sin, not the penalty. Moses and David both suffered the consequences of their sin even after they were forgiven. Why stop at the consequence of separation? Why not insist on all consequences of sin?

The same man, who made the statement quoted above, goes on to say the following. “The *only* [emphasis his] difference, and it is significant, is that Jesus was also previously given a promise: Because He was sinless, and because, out of love, He took our place, He would not be *abandoned* [emphasis his] to the grave. He would be raised to LIFE [emphasis his]. No such promise is given to the wicked.”

What needs to be noted here is that he admits Jesus was exempt from eternal separation from the Father. If He is exempt from permanent separation, why suppose He is subject to temporary separation. Also note that the promise he refers to contain a promise that Jesus would not be abandoned in the grave.

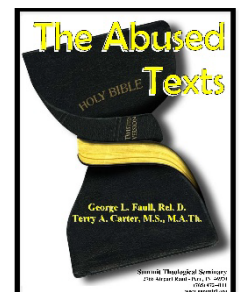
The actual Greek word used in Acts 2:27 is “*hades*” meaning “the abode of the dead.” My question is this, “since Jesus was promised that He would not be abandoned in death, why would we assume He was abandoned in life?”

Suppose I embezzled \$20,000 from my employer. I may be prosecuted and go to jail. But what if I have a rich uncle who agrees to pay back the money I stole on the condition that I am not prosecuted. Who would argue that he could not pay the penalty without going to jail in my stead? It is common for a fine to be paid in lieu of jail. If the fine is paid by one other than the defendant, the penalty is still paid, and nobody goes to jail.

It is up to the offended party to determine what penalty is sufficient for forgiveness. In our case, the offended party is God. I find nowhere in Scripture where He requires separation as a condition for our forgiveness. What He requires is death. The constant claim of Scripture is not that Jesus was separated from God for our sins. It is that Jesus died for our sins. He was our sacrifice. To require something that God doesn’t simply leads to difficulties.

Thanks be to God that He will not leave or forsake us. The fact is that man often forsakes God, but God will never forsake His people. If He had forsaken His own sinless Son, how could we trust Him to not forsake us?

Note: The previous article is an excerpt from *The Abused Texts* by George Faull and Terry Carter.



Solomon and Savage Wolves



In **I Kings 3:16-28**, we read about an event that demonstrated the amazing wisdom that God had granted to King Solomon. Two harlots who lived together came to him with one son. They both claimed that the other had smothered her own son while sleeping and switched the babies while the other slept. There was nobody else in the house but the two women and their sons. How could Solomon possibly decide who was telling the truth and who was lying? Of course, Solomon said the child should be cut in half so that both would receive their half of the living child. The one who was lying thought this was a good plan, but the real mother pleaded that the child be given to the other woman rather than killing him.

This event surely shows just how wonderful the wisdom of Solomon was. I can remember learning about it as a small child myself. I remember being on the edge of my seat waiting to hear how he was going to decide such an impossible case. But there is much more to learn about here than just the extent of Solomon's wisdom.

It is clear to me that the woman who was lying was not interested in having the other woman's son

for herself. She was perfectly content to let the child die. Obviously, she just could not bear to see the other woman with a son while she had none herself. In other words, she thought, "If I can't have my son; she can't have hers". But the true mother was passionate in her desire that the boy be allowed to live even if it meant that she was deprived of him as a son. That is, she was willing to sacrifice her own pleasure and satisfaction for the life and wellbeing of the child.

Solomon knew how a true parent acts. They are not willing to use their child as a tool or a pawn to inflict pain or punishment on another. What is best for the child is the most important thing to them. They do not use their child as a means of manipulating others. Briefly, I would like to make two applications here:

1. When politicians are willing to divide the country rather than see their political opponents enjoy success, they are not the true guardians of our nation. Their own interests are more important to them than the good of the nation. We should never elect or reelect such people to office.
2. When people are willing to split the Church rather than see it have success without them being in control, they are not the true guardians of the Lord's body. They are self-willed and are more concerned about their own reputation, power, and position than the good of God's people. We should

never follow such people. We should flee from them.

Let's look at this second point in more detail as it is a greater concern to us. Paul warned the Ephesian elders that men would rise up even from among themselves who would draw disciples away after themselves. He said that such men are savage wolves who do not spare the flock. It was such an important issue to Paul that he warned them for three years with tears about this danger.

"28 Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God **which He purchased with His own blood.** 29 For I know this, that **after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.** 30 Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. 31 Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears." **Acts 20:29-31 (NKJV)**

Why was Paul so concerned about this problem? For one thing, he knew that it would happen. It was not a question of if it would happen, just when. Was he certain of this because of special revelation from God? Maybe, but it seems likely to me that he simply realized that where there are sheep there will always be wolves. It is just a fact of life. It is as certain as saying where there is a carcass there will be vultures.

Secondly, he was concerned because of when it would happen.

He said it would be after his departure. Remember that Paul never expected to see these men again, verse 38. He was headed to Jerusalem not knowing what would happen to him there. He only knew that chains and tribulations awaited him, verses 22-23. This might be the last time he could warn them of these things. On top of that, he would not be there to give them any aid when it happened. They would have to handle it without him. He probably felt a bit like a parent who is sending their child off to college. They know their child will face troubles and that they will not be there to help them.

Thirdly, these wolves would not spare the flock. They would be savage. They would be out to destroy the sheep. These were sheep that Paul cared about. But more importantly they were sheep that God cared about. He cared so much about these sheep that He shed His own blood to purchase them, verse 28.

Fourthly, these wolves would speak perverse things. This means that they would twist or distort the truth. This might be doctrinal truth but it might also be truth that does not involve doctrine. It might be anything that aids their program. Their purpose is to draw disciples away after themselves. They are looking after their own interests, not those of the Lord or His sheep.

Finally, these wolves would come from two different sources. They would come in among them, evidently from without. But they would also rise up from within. Did Paul mean within the church or the

eldership? He may have had both in mind. Anybody who draws disciples after themselves is a savage wolf. They are not interested in the good of the flock or the Lord. They are out for themselves trying to satisfy their own appetites. Be warned that such men (or women) still come in among us and still rise up among us. They will distort the truth to draw disciples after themselves. They will not spare the flock. Be warned and be careful. Keep your eyes and ears open. Do not become one of their victims.

People like this do not care how many sheep they kill, as long as they have their own flock. They are not building the Lord's Kingdom, but their own. When men draw sheep away from the flock, they do not care about the sheep or the flock. These are men who ought to be marked and avoided, not followed.

"17 Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. 18 For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple." Romans 16:17-18 (NKJV)

Too often when a person, or group of people, leave one congregation for another, they are not content with that. They actively seek to convince others to do the same. They go around doing everything they can to draw disciples after themselves and try to destroy the congregation they left. These are savage wolves. They are like the

woman whose son was dead, but she wanted the other woman's son to be cut in half. They are like Jonah sitting down to watch the destruction of "those sinners". If God does not destroy "those sinners", they become angry with God. It turns out that the people of Ninevah repented quicker than Jonah. Maybe Jonah was the worse sinner. We sure do not want to follow his example.

Solomon warned us about such people.

"24 Make no friendship with an angry man, And with a furious man do not go, 25 Lest you learn his ways And set a snare for your soul." Prov. 22:24-25 (NKJV)

Remember Paul's warning about destroying the temple of God, which is the Church in that context.

"16 Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? 17 If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are." I Corinthians 3:16-17 (NKJV)

In politics we need to ask whether our leaders are more interested in the wellbeing of the country or their party. In the church we need to ask whether the men we listen to and follow are more interested in the wellbeing of the flock or are they satisfied to see it divided and destroyed. Good and honest politicians want the country to prosper even if it means sacrifice for them or their party. True leaders in the church want to see

the body united and prospering even if it means personal sacrifice for them.

Beware of savage wolves who draw disciples away after themselves. Beware of those who are willing to cut the Church in half and destroy it just to get what they want. Solomon showed us how to discover the true leaders and the savage wolves. Benefit from his wisdom.



Important Notice

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