

# Did The Father Abandon Jesus On The Cross?

“my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Psalm 22: 1, Matthew 27:46

by Maurice Barnett

A long-time theological position of denominations, and even some brethren, is that God had to withdraw from Jesus while He was on the Cross, or some variation of that idea. The imputation theory of Calvinism is the foundation of this position, i.e., all the sins, guilt and punishment for the sins of all men of all time were imputed, transferred, to Jesus. To show what that means, here are three such author's view of Jesus on the cross—

"He was guilty of disobedience and rebellion, and He suffered physically, emotionally, and spiritually. This pitiful sight of an emaciated, deformed, and tormented Jesus, shriveled and twisted by sin, disgusted the Father, who then turned upon Him with the wrath of eternal vengeance!"

"Because He was 'made sin,' impregnated with sin, and became the very essence of sin, on the cross He was banished from God's presence as a loathsome thing. He and sin were may synonymous."

"But God made Him sin: that is to say that God the Father made His innocent, incarnate Son the object of His wrath and judgment, for our sakes, with the result that in Christ on the cross the sin of the world is judged and taken away. In this truth resides the whole logic of reconciliation."

This is a terrible image of the sinless Jesus. Such doctrinal theories pervert Bible teaching. Some of the theories are as much attacks on the person of Christ as they are on the events of the crucifixion. These theories lead us into error by twisting scripture and, at the same time, causing us to miss vital truths that we must understand. That is a double tragedy. The focal point of the theories about His "abandonment," is Matthew 27:46—

"And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

The claim, for whatever purpose, is that God had forsaken Jesus and the Lord was crying out to the Father, asking Why! We must test this theory and we will begin our investigation with some questions and then let the scriptures give the answers.

**First**, such a theory makes Jesus ignorant of what is happening to Him and He has to cry out WHY. But, doesn't He know why? Jesus said at the time He was taken by the mob the night before his crucifixion—

"Jesus therefore, knowing all the things that were coming upon him, went forth, and saith unto them, Whom seek ye?" John 18:4

It could not be said more plainly that Jesus knew ALL things that were coming upon Him, which included His death the following afternoon. We can add to that passage, John 12:27, "*for this cause came I unto this hour;*" and John 13:3, "*Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he came forth from God.....*" So, He knew all that was going to happen to Him and why it would happen. Not only the Old Testament, but also Jesus, foretold His crucifixion and details of what would be done to Him. Such a "vital, necessary," item for man's salvation as a withdrawal of the Father would have been known by Him and He would not have to ask why!

**Second**, why did Jesus quote the first verse of Psalm 22 in "asking" His question of the Father? By doing that, regardless of the position one takes on the statement itself, He was obviously calling attention to the entire Psalm which gave specific details of what was going on at that time. This is the point we will examine shortly.

**Third**, is it not obvious that He was calling attention to Psalm 22, as seen in the manner of His quoting that opening verse? The Bible says that He cried out. The verb here means He "shouted." The Holy Spirit then adds to that the fact that it was with "a loud voice." So He shouted with a loud voice. That would be as loud as He could shout it. If this were only a question directed to the Father, there was no need for Him to shout loudly. He could have mumbled it under His breath softly so no one could hear it. The Father could

have heard that, just as He heard Hannah who spoke her prayer in her heart and only her lips moved; she made no noise at all. Yet, God heard her and granted her request. There was only one other thing Jesus shouted out on the cross, “*Into thy hands I commend my spirit,*” Luke 24:46. This shouted statement almost immediately followed the other. These facts were very important for the great multitude to know or He wouldn’t have made the effort of shouting them so all could hear. But, why would it be so very important that the great multitude know that God had forsaken Him? His second shouted statement clearly indicated that the Father was with Him. It negated any idea of abandonment by the Father. Both were shouted loudly for a purpose.

**Fourth**, why would He make such a loud display of telling everyone present that God had forsaken Him when it only confirmed to His enemies what they thought all along, that God was not with Him because He was an imposter? That gave great comfort to his His enemies. But, it was directly counter to what He said in John 8:28-29 would happen at the crucifixion. This we will see below. The evidence is clear on this point.

**Fifth**, would not a position of abandonment require that Jesus either was guilty of personal sins that would alienate Him from the Father, or the Calvinists are right that all of the sins of the world were transferred to Him; He became so blackened with sin that the Father could not stand to look upon Him. Or, the Father just arbitrarily accounted Him to be a sinner so He could turn His back on Jesus with no reason at all for doing so. But, Jesus knew no sin, II Corinthians 5:21. He was not made a sinner but a sin sacrifice, as the word “sin” in that verse means, when it says that He was made to be sin on our behalf. The emphasis of scripture, Old and New Testaments, is that He was a sinless, perfect sacrifice unto God on our behalf. So, we will now proceed to explore the subject from the foundation up.

### **John 8:28**

“Jesus therefore said, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself, but as the Father taught me, I speak these things.

(1) “Lifted up.” This phrase is from a single Greek word, *hupsōo*. The word is used in thirteen verses in the NT as a metaphor for exalt, and five times literally meaning, lift up. Numerous commentaries state that the phrase refers specifically to the crucifixion and then they take off on flights of fancy with what they imagine it possibly may be beyond that. Here are a couple of “authorities” who make the following comments—

“...to lift or raise up (akin to hupsos, height), is rendered by the verb to lift up in John 3:14, of the brazen serpent; of Christ in crucifixion (id.), and 8:28; 12:32, 34; metaphorically, to exalt lift up, e.g., Jas. 4:10, A.V., “shall lift . . . up,” R.V. “Shall exalt.” W.E.Vine.

““When you shall have lifted up,’ sc. on the Cross ‘the Son of Man.’ See on 3:11 for hupsoun in Jn., and cf. 12:32. In the present passage hupsoun must relate to the lifting up on the Cross, and not to the ‘lifting up’ of the Ascension, for the latter was not in any sense the act of the Jews, as the Crucifixion was (cf. Acts 3:14).” The International Critical Commentary, vol. 2, by Bernard, Page 303.

(2) So, there are only two applications of the word, *hupsōo*, “lifted up.” First, there is a direct reference to the literal crucifixion. Second, it refers to exaltation, either to a position of authority/honor or to one’s self-importance.

A basic fact of understanding language is that a word or phrase is to be taken in its literal meaning unless there is an overriding reason for it to be figurative. A word may have different meanings but the meanings are not a matter of choice on our part that we can just pick any one that we want. In all of the five places the word is found in the book of John, it refers to the crucifixion, not His resurrection, ascension nor gospel preaching, as some have supposed, but to the crucifixion; it is not a figure of speech. All other places in the New Testament it means exalt. It is obvious from the context in those verses that exalt is correct. Here are the thirteen places where it is found and translated exalt so you can check for yourselves: Matthew 11:23, 23:12, Luke 1:52, 10:15, 14:11, 18:14, Acts 2:33, 5:31, 13:17, II Corinthians 11:7, James 4:10, I Peter 5:6 and Philippians 2:9 where it is compounded with *hyper*, a preposition, and indicates a special honor. However, to say that it is a synonym for the gospel, anywhere in the New Testament, is pure imagination.

The five places it appears in John it is uniformly translated as lift(ed) up, the only places in the NT where *hupsoo* means that, and there it is so translated. The Jews did not exalt Jesus to a position of authority or honor. Should we translate John 8:28 as “when ye have exalted the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I Am he?” Why should the Jews exalt Him when they believed He was just a man?

Other than John 8:28, here are the four places where the word, *hupsoo*, is found, and twice in each of those places—

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up.”  
John 3:14.

We are well aware that the serpent was put on a pole by Moses and literally raised up above the people so that there was a public viewing, hence, lifted up. “As the serpent....even so the Son.” The phrase “lifted up” means the same in both instances of the serpent and Jesus and thus specifically to His crucifixion. The crucifixion was no more metaphorical here than was the lifting up of the serpent in the wilderness.

“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself. But this he said, signifying by what manner of death he should die. The multitude therefore answered him, We have heard out of the law that the Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?” John 12:32-34.

“From the earth” does not mean “out of the earth” so that it refers to His resurrection, as some have supposed. That could not possibly be so, seeing that the text specifically says that it referred to the manner of His death, not His resurrection nor ascension. The Holy Spirit was quite specific as to its meaning.

(3) The fact is that God was the one who exalted Jesus and that was to heaven, Acts 2:33, 5:31, Philippians 2:9. God exalted Him to His own right hand to a position of authority.

(4) “When...then.” The word “when,” *hotan/hoti*, in John 8:28, is a subordinate conjunction, a temporal particle. It means “*a point of time which is roughly simultaneous to or overlaps with, another point of time,*” Louw & Nida Lexicon, 67.30. The other point in time is the “then shall ye know” phrase. Here are other verses in John to illustrate this same fact—

“From henceforth I tell you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he.” John 13:19.

Notice that the time of “ye may believe that I am he” takes place at the same time as “when (*hotan*) it is come to pass.” These are overlapping events, a fulfillment of the foretelling by Jesus.

“And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe.”  
John 14:29.

This is another like instance of language; “ye may believe” takes place at the same time of “when (*hotan*) it is come to pass. So, here again is John 8:28—

“Jesus therefore said, When (*hotan*) ye have lifted up the Son of man, then (*tote*) shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself, but as the Father taught me, I speak these things.”

“Then,” in this verse is *tote* and means “at that time.” *Tote* is found 160 times in the New Testament. If it means “after that time” or “from that time on,” it must be combined with the preposition *apo*. We find that form only four times in the entire New Testament—Matthew 4:17, 16:21, 26:16 and Luke 16:16, and correctly translated “from that time.” However, even in those places, there is a point in time from which the action begins. Even if it meant “from that time on” in John 8:28, the phrase “lifted up” would still refer specifically to the crucifixion. But, *tote* by itself does not mean “from that time on.” “*Tote*” is found nine times in the book of John other than 8:28 and in each instance it means “at that time,” referring to a specific event designated by a stated point in time, an event which is specifically identified. Here are the nine verses other than John 8:28—

“But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret.” John 7:10

The point in time “when” He “then” went up was “when” His brethren had gone up. A point in time that overlapped another point in time.—

“And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter.” John 10:22

*Tote* is not translated into English in this verse. It should read, “*And at that time at Jerusalem was the feast of dedication.*” It was a specific point in time—

“When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.” John 11:6

“*Tote*” is not translated into English here, either, but appears in the Greek text before “he abode two days.” So, it should be translated, “then he abode.” The exact time that it occurred was “when” he heard that Lazarus was sick—

“Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.” John 11:14

“When” the disciples remarked that, if Lazarus was asleep, he would recover, “then”... vs. 12. So, *when* the disciples said that, *then* Jesus said that Lazarus was dead. Check the context.

“These things understood not his disciples at the first: but *when* Jesus was glorified, *then* remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him.” John 12:16

This is a different event and a different point in time, but the construction is the same as in John 8:28. It is “when...then,” “*hote...tote*,” just as in 8:28. WHEN Jesus was glorified, THEN the disciples remembered. Just so, WHEN ye have lifted up the Son of Man, THEN shall ye know that I Am. Here is another verse—

“And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, What thou doest, do quickly.” John 13:2

When Satan entered into Judas, at that point, Jesus told him to do what he had planned and Judas left to lead the soldiers to capture Jesus according to the deal he had made with the priests. Later, when the Jews chose Barabbas over Jesus—

“then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him.” John 19:1.

At that particular point in the proceedings, Pilate began the torture of Jesus. When the Jews acclaimed that they had only one king, and that was Caesar—

“Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away.” John 19:16

When the Jews insisted that Pilate crucify Him, “then,” at that point in time, Pilate did so. So, the language of Jesus in John 8:28 is specific and clear. Something happened in the things that were done at the crucifixion that would convince them that He was who He claimed to be. Two other verses directed to His disciples, which we saw before, have the same “when” in the same Greek form as John 8:28. These verses are as follows—

“Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he. John 13:19

“And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe. John 14:29

*Tote*, “then,” is not in these verses but the meaning is the same. It is at the time that His prophecies come to pass when, “then,” they would understand and believe. And, there should be no problem with our understanding those statements. They are not figurative and do not extend beyond the promise of their fulfillment. Whatever else the disciples learned in the following years is beyond the scope of these promises and their fulfillment.

(5) “*Ye shall know that I Am.*” Notice that in John 13:19 and 14:29 that it would be the fulfillment of prophecy that would be the evidence to convince the disciples. The thought is the same regarding the Jews in John 8:28. Notice—

John 13:19, “when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he.”

John 14:29, “when it is come to pass, ye may believe.”

John 8:28, “when ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am He.”

It would be the evidence of the fulfillment of promise and prophecy, at the cross, that would convince any Jew who was present, at least those who respected the scriptures, that Jesus was who He claimed to be.

There were those present who would not believe even after the burial, resurrection and the preaching of the gospel; their hearts were so hardened. But, there were others, some of whom Jesus spoke to in John 8, who would make the connection during the crucifixion.

But, where are the instances of Jews, at the crucifixion, coming to know who Jesus was? Where do we find these individuals identified in the Bible record? Well, in the first place, if Jesus, or an inspired man, said that something would come to pass, then it would come to pass and we don't have to have a description of its fulfillment to understand that it happened. However, we do have the record of the fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy. Notice that right after Jesus died, Luke 23:48 says—

"And all the multitudes that came together to this sight, when they beheld the things that were done, returned smiting their breasts." Luke 23:48.

This was a very large number of people indicated by the word, "all," and the plural noun, *multitudes*. Not just a multitude but multitudes, *plural*, which emphasizes the great number. They had come there "to this sight." The word, sight, *theoria*, is a feminine noun that means "the spectacle." That word is found only here in the New Testament but in other Greek texts means a theatrical performance. They were there to see "a show," but left with a different attitude. The word "beheld" is from *theoreo*, a masculine verb, that means, "to come to understand as the result of perception," Louw & Nida Lexicon, 32:11. (See Acts 17:22, perceive, Hebrews 7:4, consider). They understood the things that were done from what they saw happening, putting those things together with other facts to reach a conclusion. This great crowd left the scene "smiting their breasts," a sign of distress and dismay, Isaiah 32:12, Nahum 2:7 NASV. Their reaction was a fulfillment of prophecy, Zechariah 12:10-11—

"And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon."

It wasn't the earthquake or darkness that caused this reaction, though these were impressive. Such phenomena could be explained as natural happenings. It wasn't the tearing of the veil in the temple for they could not see nor know of that at the time, it was removed from their possible vision because of confines of the temple where they were forbidden access. It wasn't the resurrection of saints who appeared to many because that did not occur until after the resurrection of Jesus, Matthew 27:52. It wasn't the two thieves crucified at the same time as Jesus because the focus was on Him and not the thieves. And, it wasn't the cruelty of a crucifixion that would affect the huge crowd in the manner described. That was the most common, official, death penalty for criminals in the Roman Empire at the time both before and after that of Jesus and was a regular public occurrence. Something in what they saw done at that time of crucifixion brought the reaction stated for us. Notice that the verse says the reaction came "when they beheld the things that were done." What made this so different that it would affect so many people in the way it did? It could only be because they realized who it was on that cross. And, they could only realize that by an awakening to His true identity. And, they could only know that by revelation and that was by putting Psalm 22 together with what they saw happening. After all, faith comes from hearing the word of God. They could see in this spectacle the fulfillment of prophecy just as Jesus said would happen in John 8:28. Can you understand now why Jesus shouted Psalm 22:1 so all could hear Him?

But, what about the Roman Centurion who exclaimed, "this was the Son of God" after being impressed with the darkness and earthquake? However, the actual meaning of this is missed because it is not translated correctly. It leaves the impression that the Centurion had come to accept Jesus as "I Am," the Son of God. This is not so. The Greek text explains it. Neither the word for "God" nor "son" in that verse has a definite article before it. The Centurion, a pagan, was impressed by the earthquake and darkness and concluded that Jesus was a son of a god, a supernatural being, but not the Son of the God. *Notice*—The same phrase is in Mark 15:39 but Luke records the statement of the Centurion as "*certainly this was a righteous man*" 23:47. Obviously, he knew nothing of scripture prophecy and fulfillment nor the Messiah but was only impressed

by out-of-the-ordinary happenings and that Jesus was not guilty of anything that would call for death on the cross. The effect on the large body of Jews present at the crucifixion was far different from, and more intense than, that of the Centurion.

The prophecy of Jesus in John 8:28 came to pass as He said it would. But, what was the evidence in “the things that were done” that would convince so many Jews that Jesus was “I Am?” Well, it is illustrated first in that loud shout of Jesus, “*My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me.*”

It was the ninth hour: the time for Jesus to die. That was the point at which He shouted out this quotation from Psalm 22:1 loudly enough that all in that great multitude of people could hear Him. The purpose was to direct their attention to the entire Psalm, a Psalm familiar to all of the Jews. That Psalm gives specific details of the things which the multitude could see being done that were a fulfillment of prophecy that could not be denied. It proved that Jesus was who He claimed to be, just as He said would happen. They would thus realize what was happening and the effect of mourning would follow that as Matthew records and Zechariah prophesied. Let’s explore that further.

**First**, some questions. Seeing that the shout of Jesus was the first verse of Psalm 22, was David quoting Jesus in Psalm 22, or was Jesus quoting David? It should be obvious that Jesus was quoting David. The fact is that prophecies in Psalms that were about Jesus are spread through a Psalm with a great deal of the Psalm applying to the author of the Psalm. A few Psalms in their entirety will apply to Jesus and New Testament times, such as Psalm 2 and 110. But, those are the very minor exceptions. Psalm 22 has a mixture of prophecies of the crucifixion along with David’s own feelings. Here are some examples where a mixture occurs in other places. Read the entirety of these Psalms to get the context where the prophecy is dropped in with the rest of the authors feelings—

“I have set Jehovah always before me: Because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth; My flesh also shall dwell in safety. For thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol; Neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption.” Psalm 16:8-10 – Acts 2:25-27

“He keepeth all his bones: Not one of them is broken.” Psalm 34:20 - John 19:36

“Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, Who did eat of my bread, Hath lifted up his heel against me.” Psalm 41:9 – John 13:18.

“Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led away captives; Thou hast received gifts among men, Yea, among the rebellious also, that Jehovah God might dwell with them.” Psalm 68:18 – Ephesians 4:8.

**Second**, did Jesus really cry out to God for help day and night, Psalm 22:1-5? This was certainly true of David. He was on the run from his enemies and we have here, as in other places, a reflection of exactly how he felt under those circumstances. But did this describe Jesus on the cross? Following are some statements from David that are NOT prophetic of Jesus but are speaking from David’s own feelings, remember, fairly common in the Psalms. They are from Psalm 71:9-13 but they sound like, especially, the first six verses of Psalm 22—

“Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth. For mine enemies speak against me; and they that lay wait for my soul take counsel together, Saying, God hath forsaken him: persecute and take him; for there is none to deliver him. O God, be not far from me: O my God, make haste for my help. Let them be confounded and consumed that are adversaries to my soul; let them be covered with reproach and dishonor that seek my hurt.”

**Third**, was Jesus a Worm? Was He a nothing, Psalm 22:6? Of course not. But, David thought of himself that way. The first six verses of Psalm 22, including verse 1, reflect David’s feelings about himself. Secondly, they also reflect the attitude of the Jews toward Jesus as they thought that He was someone of no account and that God had forsaken Him. This is seen by comparing verses in Psalm 22:7ff with Matthew 27.

Here are statements in Psalm 22 of things that appear at the cross that the people could see happening—They laughed Him to scorn, shot out the lip, shook their heads, mocked and challenged Him, gaped on Him with their mouths, they looked and stared, parted His garments and cast lots for them, pierced His hands and feet, etc. There were other things from other prophecies that they could also see, such as giving

Him vinegar to drink. In addition there were effects on the body of Jesus that are stated. All they had to do to see what was really unfolding before their eyes was to recall that it was prophesied in Psalm 22. To this Jesus drew their attention by loudly shouting the first verse of the Psalm.

**Fourth**, actually, David says that God does not forsake his people. He felt burdened by his trials but then said, Psalm 22:24—

“For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard.”

God heard him when he cried because God had never left him to begin with. In Deuteronomy 31:6, Moses told the people that God will “not fail thee nor forsake thee.” That is echoed in Joshua 1:5, Hebrews 13:5. In Psalm 37:25, David said that he was old but had “*never seen the righteous forsaken.*” Predicated on one’s continued faithfulness, God would never forsake anyone. Jesus said the Father would always be with Him because He ALWAYS did what was pleasing to the Father. Jesus was always righteous. That would include His time on the cross. We have assurances there was never any abandonment. If He had been abandoned, it would mean that He was a sinner, but He was not.

The shout of Jesus on the Cross was not a statement that the Father had forsaken Him but rather a shout to get the attention of the great multitude to recall the prophecies unfolding before them. They were so stricken with “the things that were done” that they left in mourning, beating their breasts. This was just what Jesus said would happen - “WHEN ye have lifted up the Son of Man, THEN shall ye know that I Am.” It was the fulfillment of prophecy that convinced them, just like Jesus also said in John 13:19 and 14:29. Faith does come from hearing the word of God.

Here is a quotation from Oliver Buswell in his *Systematic Theology*, page 68. At least on this point, which is strange for a theologian, he is correct—

“On the affirmative side we can definitely point out that in New Testament times for one to cite the opening words of an Old Testament passage such as Psalm 22 was equivalent to citing the entire passage. We can be sure that these words of Jesus would have been understood by His disciples as equivalent to His saying, ‘Remember the 22nd Psalm.’ Christ’s enemies had just quoted another saying from this Psalm in taunting Him, ‘He trusted in God, let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, ‘I am the Son of God’” (Matthew 27:43; quoting Psalm 22:8). This fact would give added weight to Jesus’ citing this Psalm.”

But, there is more evidence to view as there are other verses that inform us that the Father did not abandon Jesus on the Cross.

### **John 8:29**

Immediately after his statement about His crucifixion in verse 28, Jesus continues with the following assurance—

“And he that sent me is with me; he hath not left me alone; for I do always the things that are pleasing to him.”

“Is with me.” The term, “with” (*meta*), means “*a marker of an associative relation, usually with the implication of being in the company of...*” Louw & Nida Lexicon, 89.108. That is simple and understandable enough. The verb, “is” (*eimi*), is a present, active, indicative verb. The present tense tells us it means continuous action in present time; i.e., from the present and following. “*He that sent me is with me*” states the continual association between Jesus and the Father. He follows this with the negative of the same statement, “*He has not left me alone.*” The verb, *aphiemi*, “left,” is an aorist, active indicative verb. It indicates action over the past time. It means that the Father had never one time departed from Jesus. Thus, both positively and negatively, Jesus declares that the Father has always been with Him and will be with him from that moment on. This is emphasized by His saying, “*For I do always the things that are pleasing to Him.*” This would include the entire time of the crucifixion, Verse 29 is thus related to verse 28, in a statement about what would happen when He would be lifted up. There is no indication of any break in the Father’s presence with Jesus.

### ***John 16:32***

“Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.”

It is clear that He speaks of the time of His capture and crucifixion. There is no other time in the New Testament record where it could apply. Notice, He says “*Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is come.*” This was all said on the night He was taken captive to be crucified the next day. The disciples scattered, as Jesus said they would, that very night. He was alone as far as His disciples and others were concerned. The word “leave” is the same *aphiemi* as in 8:29, saying that the Father “has not left (*aphiemi*) me alone.” “Alone” is the same word also as in 8:29. “Is with me” is also the same phrase as in 8:29. It is *Present tense*, continuous action. *All the while that the disciples would be parted from him during His crucifixion, the Father would still be with Him.* John 8:28-29 and 16:32 affirm that during the time of the crucifixion, it would be no different from the way it had always been—the Father would never depart from Him but would always be with Him. Jesus said it both ways, positive and negative, to emphasize the fact. Others would leave Him alone, but the Father would not. Thus, Jesus denies beforehand that there would be any desertion by the Father while He was on the cross.

### ***Other Doctrinal Positions***

(1) Calvinism’s Response: They claim that all of the sins of mankind were placed on Him at the cross so that He became so laden with sin that God could not look upon Him. All of the sins of mankind were “imputed” to Jesus and His righteousness then transferred to us. Jesus had to experience man’s being cut off from God in order to be the perfect saviour of man, it is claimed. Jesus experienced the punishment for sin that man will have in Hell, they say. Their reasoning on this is circular. They try to prove the imputation of sins is true from the cry of Jesus on the Cross, “why hast thou forsaken me.” They then claim that this is the meaning of the cry because our sins were imputed to Christ. They attempt to prove one thing by asserting the other.

Some other variations of this are held by other people, even brethren. In some sense, it is said, Jesus had to become a sinner, II Corinthians 5:21, in order to save us from sin. None of this is true! Jesus was a sin sacrifice, which is the meaning of II Corinthians 5:21, but was not “sin” in any sense. A footnote in the ASV gives this reading and it is understood in other NT passages. Over two dozen places in Leviticus, the Hebrew word for “sin” actually means “sin sacrifice.” If Jesus was our substitute on the cross, taking all of our sins, literally, upon Himself, then *we have no sins*. If the punishment for our sins were placed on Jesus while on the cross, then we will not be punished for sins because Jesus already did that in our place, as our substitute. That is gross ignorance of the meaning of what Jesus did on our behalf. It cheapens His sacrifice.

A misuse of Isaiah 53 is also involved in statements about Jesus “bearing” our sins meaning He had to literally take our sins upon Himself. The term “bear,” however, means to remove. In bearing our sins, our sins were not transferred to Him but rather He did that which removed our sins. He provided a way that God could forgive us of our sins. Here are a couple of well-known commentators on the subject—

“Nor, (3) Can it mean that He was, in any proper sense of the word, guilty, for no one is truly guilty who is not personally a transgressor of the Law; and if He was, in any proper sense, guilty, then He deserved to die, and His death could have no more merit than that of any other guilty being; and if He was properly guilty it would make no difference in this respect whether it was by His own fault or by imputation: a guilty being deserves to be punished; and where there is deserving of punishment there can be no merit in sufferings. But all such views as go to make the Holy Redeemer a sinner, or guilty, or deserving of the sufferings which He endured, border on blasphemy, and are abhorrent to the whole strain of the Scriptures. In no form, in no sense possible, is it to be maintained that the Lord Jesus was sinful or guilty. It is a corner stone of the whole system of religion, that in all conceivable senses of the expression He was holy, and pure, and the object of the divine approbation. And every view which fairly leads to the statement that He was in any sense guilty, or which implies that He deserved to die, is ‘prima facie’ a false view, and should be at once abandoned.

"But, (4) If the declaration that He was made 'sin' *hamartian* does not mean that He was sin itself, or a sinner, or guilty, then it must mean that He was a sin-offering-an offering or a sacrifice for sin; and this is the interpretation which is now generally adopted by expositors; ...There are many passages in the Old Testament where the word 'sin' *hamartia* is used in the sense of sin-offering, or a sacrifice for sin. Thus, Hosea 4:8, 'They eat up the sin of my people;' that is, the sin-offerings; see Ezekiel 43:22, 25; 44:29; 45:22-23, 25." (from Barnes' Notes by Albert Barnes)

II Corinthians 5:21 "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. He made him who knew no sin (who was innocent), a sin-offering for us. . . It signifies a sin-offering, or sacrifice for sin. . .Had our translators attended to their own method of translating the word (*hamartia*) in other places where it means the same as here, they would not have given this false view of a passage which has been made the foundation of a most blasphemous doctrine; namely, that our sins were imputed to Christ, and that He was a proper object of the indignation of Divine justice, because He was blackened with imputed sin." (from Adam Clarke Commentary)

(2) The Two Spirit position: Several years ago, an ages old error, primarily Gnostic, was revived that said there were two spirits in the body of Jesus, a human spirit like ours and the divine Spirit, the Word. They cohabited the same body with separate minds, wills, etc. At times the human spirit spoke and at times it was the Divine Spirit. The argument was that in order for the Word to function in a human body there had to be a human spirit in that body, which made Him both human and divine; it was the human spirit that shouted out, "why hast thou forsaken me" referring to the Divine spirit that cohabited the body. Likewise, when Jesus said, "into thy hands I commend my spirit" it was the Divine Spirit that said that of the human spirit in the body with Him. This is all in spite of the fact that there is no evidence at all that there were two spirits and there are several things against it. I will deal with that position separately.

(3) Jesus gave up His Deity: For the past three decades, we have had a battle over this very point. The insistence was that Jesus came as a man, just a man, only a man and nothing more than a man. He had to give up His Deity to function as a human. He was very afraid of death because He didn't know what was on the other side of death and thus His appeal in the garden and shout on the cross. It was also contended that in being just human, He had to experience what every human does, including being separated from God. Only in that way could He be the perfect savior, the bridge between man and God. The doctrine is a result of perversion of scripture and fanciful imagination and has long ago been refuted.

The fact is that the Father did not abandon Jesus while He was on the cross. Neither was it necessary in order that Jesus be a sacrifice for sins.