

WHEN GOD WAS SILENT

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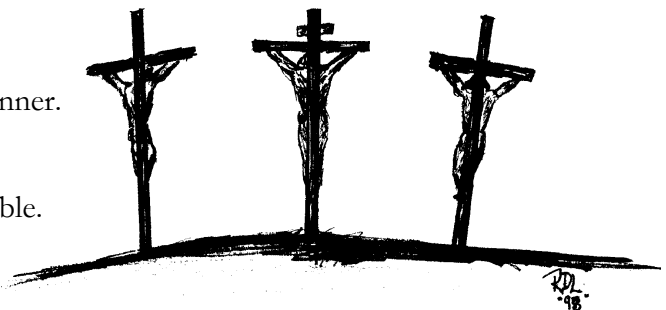
The throne room was tense.
Unusual pressure dampened the mood of usual praise and worship.
All discussion had ceased.
Not a foot was astir.
Not a voice was loosed in the air.
Heaven was silent,
And all eyes were on Him.

Through time and space,
Through the skies and through the clouds,
The events of earth opened before them all,
As they watched with focused eye Him who was to be...
Crucified.

God moved to the edge of His throne,
Leaning quietly to get a closer look.
He watched every moment with the greatest of interest.
Each second seemed to unfold a newer, more painful agony.
The hosts of heaven stood beside Him in magnificent, vibrant light,
Waiting in anticipation to act in full force,
Ready to give their lives to rescue the Son of the Most High.
But God gave no command,
And no one moved.

Below, men on earth beat the Son with their fists,
And God clenched His with every blow.
As soldiers slapped the face of His only child,
He and the thousands with Him winced in sympathy.
Then, a crown of thorns was shoved into His brow
As they spit in His face.
The hosts of heaven stirred in anger,
Excited to leap into action at a single word,
But God threw out His arms
And grabbed those whom He could
And said, "No! He must bear it alone."

Perplexed indeed were the holy ones of God,
For He had lately acted in the most unusual manner.
Just before His Son's trial and sentencing,
He had called the messengers to Himself,
Called them to leave His Son alone and vulnerable.
And on that very night,



After they had given Him one last fiber of strength,
They were unable to minister to Him.
He begged His Father to change His mind,
And in His plea, He shed great drops of blood.

Oh how the hosts of heaven
Hated to see their master like this --
Beaten and bruised, alone and in agony.
They looked at God with grave concern,
And He returned their gaze with a stare of inner purpose,
As if some great design was unfolding in these moments.

Back to earth...
The beloved Son was stripped
And made to bear a rugged cross to a lonely hill.
The heavenly hosts peered at one another in unbelief,
Unwilling to believe that God would allow such a tragedy to take place.
With every step towards His death,
The angels grew more edgy.
Wings began to flutter,
Expressions of inner turmoil,
Commanded to step aside and look on helplessly.

Soon, the soldiers strapped the Son to the cross,
Held His arms down,
And pounded a stake in each wrist.
Every ping of that mallet pierced the streets of heaven
And resounded on the walls of the throne room itself,
Unnerving those who stood and watched.

Cries and laments echoed after each swing of that unholy hammer,
As the hosts were unable to control themselves
And they loosed their emotions.
Heaven was astir once more with jittery wings.
The heart of every seraphim burned with a fire
That seemed audible to the Lord,
As if to say "God, please, let us go!
Let us save Your Son!"
The Most High stood to His feet
And shook the heavens with His voice,
"Silence!
Please, be still."
Then, He paused and closed His eyes.
"He must bear it alone."

Angels longed to look into this plan
And know the mystery behind His words.
Why must He bear it alone?

What was the purpose?
What was happening to their God
Who had so soon before dispatched a throng to usher in the birth of His Son,
But now was still at the scene of His death?
They did not know.
They had no answer,
But they surrendered their thoughts to the Sovereignty of the King;
They released their anger
And watched again... in silence.

The Son was now fastened to the cross.
His blood sprayed in the wind and dotted the dust below.
Every gasp of breath was a struggle.
Every heartbeat drained His strength.
All the eyes of heaven were fixed.
No one blinked.
No one breathed.
Some began to bounce their view from the Son to the King and from the King to the Son.
What was happening?
He was dying.

For the first time in heaven,
Time itself was introduced,
And it tarried there for a painful moment.
Those who had only known eternity
Now felt the dismal drip of ticking seconds.
Not one angel moved,
Nor did God, who was sitting again.
The only sound in those hallowed halls
Was the wheeze of the Son's waning breath.
It seemed to echo in the mind of each spectator,
Wrenching the soul and wounding the spirit.

Soldiers stood in the foreground
And cursed His name.
Commoners stood in the background,
Taunting and testing His resolve.
Even a guilty thief cast abusive words at the innocent Son.

Every word stole another breath.
Every cry drained another drop of blood.
“He saved others, but He cannot save Himself.”
A gasp... a drop.

“If You're the Messiah, then come down from that cross!”
Another gasp, another drop.
“If You're the Son of God,
Then command the angels to save You!”

The host in heaven was now alive, ready for the signal,
But God did not give it.
He held up His hands to restore the calm,
And silence ensued again.
A gasp and a drop.

Then, from the Son, in the midst of a gasp and before the next drop,
There was weeping.
He ushered forth a final cry for help.
“Father. Father!”
All eyes were on the Son.
“Why have You forsaken Me?”
There it was, the big question,
And all of heaven wanted to know the answer.
Yes, God. Why? Tell us why!

Eyes were fixed and focused.
Ears tuned and ready for what the Father might say,
Yet His words revealed a purpose they had not heard before.
The mystery was explained as He spoke,
“O Son, I am still here,
But You must bear this alone.
For the sins of the world are upon You,
The foul stench of their depravity,
And the filthy stain of their wickedness
Are present in You now,
And I cannot bear to look.”

At that moment, God the Father turned His head
And averted His eyes.
It is certain that no vagabond amid midnight desert dunes
Ever felt as alone as did the Son at that moment.
One final gasp, then one last drop,
And, “Father, into Your hands I yield My spirit.”

Seraphim who once crowded near the throne
Stood at a distance with heads bowed
And with chests that bore the mystery with resistance --
Torn, wrenched, and softened.
Then, in the still of the hall,
The Son was heard no more.
He was dead.

The Father slowly turned to face His Son again,
To receive His spirit from the hell of that hill.
His body hung lifeless in the wind.
God the Father looked upon His Son with a heavy heart.



Heaven's hosts echoed the Father's love
As their tears so timely graced the hill of that cross.
Then, whispered from the throne,
A praise that few overheard.
The Father, with deepest respect,
Was heard saying, "Well done, My Son.
You bore it alone.
Well done."

Not one of the messengers understood these things.
Not one of them knew God's mind,
But they knew that they were willing and able
To unleash such a force of might and majesty
As never before witnessed in the stead of their King and His Son,
But God was silent...
And they knew not but to grieve.

To be continued...