

Watch with Creation at the Cross

Son Abandoned by the Sun

- ⚡ **Light giving bodies of the Son**
- ☠ **Painful toil under the sun**
- ✝ **The sun hides its face from God's Son.**
- ⚡ **God's glory beyond the sun...**

In the Name of God's own Son Jesus Christ, dear children of the heavenly Father:

During the Spanish Inquisition (1478-1834) it was not enough to confess Jesus as your Lord and Savior. New converts were required somehow to prove they were no longer Jewish or Muslim. The Roman Catholic monarchs of Spain were so loyal to Rome that many God fearing Christians, unable to prove the negative, were thrown into dungeons and forgotten. Remains were discovered years after one had turned to dust. Nothing but his bones were left chained to the wall. But there above his head, scratched in the stone, was a simple cross with the words: *“wide, long, high, deep.”* It was a powerful reminder of Paul's simple petition: *“I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.”* (Ephesians 3:17-19 NIV)

This evening as we continue to *Watch with Creation at the Cross*, the sight compels our deepest awe and respect in worship. This indeed has led countless Christians to give up everything, even life itself, rather than yield the saving Name of Jesus and His fully sufficient merit for salvation. Tonight we see God's **Son Abandoned by the Sun**. How strange since that created light was one of the...

⚡ **Light giving bodies of the Son**

It makes no sense to modern science. Human logic cannot grasp this. But God's eyewitness account places the creation of the light giving bodies on Day Four of Creation, whereas God created light on Day One. The Hebrew language clearly distinguishes between “light” itself and “light givers,” much as we speak of *light* from a *yard light*. Likewise the Hebrew verb forms simply tell us, *“And God said, ‘Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years, and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth.’ And it was so.”* We dare not try to explain in today's terms how God created then. Otherwise, we fall into the same trap as scholars in Luther's day who debated why it took God so long to create everything in six days. Instead of billions of years of evolution, they tried to split seconds since God almighty could create instantly if He so desired. Finally Martin Luther made his classic comment that we really ought to let God speak as He desires and humbly confess that He is smarter than we are.

Unless we let God's Word stand, we miss the awesome wonder as we *Watch with Creation at the Cross*. Those **Light giving bodies** were created by God's **Son**, the Word, the extension of God's power to make *“two great lights – the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars.”* Was it because His creatures would abandon their Creator by worshiping these lights that God left them unnamed? We do not know. But this is sure: *“God saw that it was good”* – the way He created these lights *“to give light on the earth, to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness.”* The Word marked off seasons, days, years with **Light giving bodies of the Son**.

☠ Painful toil under the sun

Following that first creation week as the sun was setting into the cool of the day the Creator enjoyed a special time with our first parents, walking and talking in the garden paradise which He lovingly provided for their first home. The man created first lived entirely for the woman God created from him and for him to love and cherish more than any other living being in God's world. But when Adam followed her instead of leading according to God's Word, that time of day came with terror that tried to hide from the ever present Creator. In the curse that followed their sin, Adam and Eve discovered there would be no happy rule under God's created sun. Adam's selfishness would constantly collide with that of Eve in a heartbreaking relationship so different from what God created in nature:

“To the woman [the LORD God] said, ‘I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.’ To Adam he said, ‘Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.” (Genesis 3:16-19 NIV adapted)

Dust swallowed the blood of their second son Abel, murdered by their first son Cain. Unbelief drove Cain away from God's warning that sin was trying to rule him. And such was the case for the succeeding generations that died one after the other until the world was so violent that God destroyed His creation in the worldwide Flood. There would have been no hope for anyone except that God preserved one family of believers who trusted the promise God gave to Adam and Eve in Eden. Eve would have an Offspring who would crush their enemy tempter's head. To that hope Noah's family would cling as they suffered centuries of **Painful toil under the sun**. But none would be so painful as when...

† The sun hides its face from God's Son.

Where else can you find goodness so clear and gentle as His? To women who followed Him weeping Jesus turned and said, ***“Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children. For the time will come when you will say, ‘Blessed are the barren women, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!’ Then they will say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us!’ and to the hills, ‘Cover us!’ For if men do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?”*** (Luke 23:28-31 NIV adapted)

Criminals from God's justice nailed Him between two criminals suffering under man's justice. And still Jesus said of His cruel captors: ***“Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.”*** And when one convict finally corrected the other for their mockery, he turned to his Lord and said, ***“Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”*** And do you remember what Jesus replied? ***“I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.”*** (Luke 23:34,43 TPA)

That was the last of the light for three hours. From about noon to three in the afternoon ***“darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour, for the sun stopped shining.”*** The created **sun** was hiding **its face from God's Son** who created it. ***“Well might the sun in darkness hide And shut its glories in When God, the mighty Maker, died For his own creatures' sin.”*** (CW 129:3)

“Was it for crimes that I had done He groaned upon the tree?” Was it for my impatience, my worldliness? Was it for every Adam and Eve who keep blaming God and each other instead of repenting of their own sin and thanking God for the blessings of marriage? Is it for all the times we take for granted our marriage to God's Son by faith in His blood? Yes, and for all the times we ***“exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised.”*** (Romans 1:25 NIV) ***“Amazing pity, grace unknown, And love beyond degree!”*** (CW 129:3)

During those three hours when God's **Son** was **Abandoned by the Sun**, there was no comfort for Jesus' soul. About three in the afternoon He cried out: **"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"** (Matthew 27:46 NIV) He was fulfilling that thousand-year-old prophecy: **"You have put me in the lowest pit, in the darkest depths. Your wrath lies heavily upon me; you have overwhelmed me with all your waves....You have taken from me my closest friends and have made me repulsive to them. I am confined and cannot escape; my eyes are dim with grief. I call to you, O Lord, every day; I spread out my hands to you....¹² Are your wonders known in the place of darkness, or your righteous deeds in the land of oblivion?...¹⁸ You have taken my companions and loved ones from me; the darkness is my closest friend.** (Psalm 88:6-9,12,18 NIV) Watch in wonder God's **Son Abandoned by the Sun**.

✠ God's glory beyond the sun...

But thanks to God's mercy there, never shall it be for you and me, for **"the curtain in the temple was torn in two from top to bottom."** (Matthew 27:51) By that massive tear Jesus teaches us why He said, **"It is finished,"** and what to do when it seems God is far away, when our foolish hearts keep telling us God has abandoned us, when we feel so alone and forsaken. For the final word of Jesus before He breathed His last for us was this: **"Father, into your hands I commit my spirit."** (Luke 23:46)

"Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water." (Hebrews 10:19-22 NIV) Or as the Lord says through Peter, **"Baptism doth also now save us."** (1 Peter 3:21 KJV)

In wonder we *Watch with Creation at the Cross* as God's **Son** is **Abandoned by the Sun** He created. But the best is yet to be when the last trumpet sounds the beginning of God's eternal day at home in heaven with the great Three-in-One. Thanks to God's work through Word and sacraments, we will stand **"in white robes"** with all those **"who have come out of the great tribulation; [who] have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them. Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."** (Revelation 7:13-17 NIV)

Abandoned never, living ever with our great God and Savior! His saving plan fulfilled at last.

*Forever with the Lord! Amen! So let it be. Life from the dead is in that word,
My immortality.*

*While time on earth is spent, Absent from him I roam, Yet nightly pitch my moving tent
A day's march nearer home.*

*Lord, be at my right hand, Then can I never fail. If you uphold me, I shall stand;
With you I shall prevail.*

*So when my dying breath Shall rend the veil in two, By death I shall escape from death
To endless life with you.*

*I'll know as I am known; How shall I love that word And oft repeat before the throne,
"Forever with the Lord!"* (Text, Tune, Setting: public domain.)

In Jesus saving Name! Amen.