

When God Is Silent



Psalms 109:1-5 NLT O God, whom I praise, don't stand silent and aloof ² while the wicked slander me and tell lies about me. ³ They surround me with hateful words and fight against me for no reason. ⁴ I love them, but they try to destroy me with accusations even as I am praying for them! ⁵ They repay evil for good, and hatred for my love.

- Aloof = not friendly or forthcoming; cool and distant, Conspicuously uninvolved and uninterested

- Chuck Swindoll, “God’s presence is not as intriguing as His absence. His voice is not as eloquent as His silence. Who of us has not longed for a word from God, searched for a glimpse of His power or yearned for the reassurance of His presence, only to feel that He seems absent from the moment? Distant. Preoccupied. Maybe even unconcerned. Yet later we realize how very present He was all along.”

Matthew 27:45-46 NLT 5 At noon, darkness fell across the whole land until three o'clock. 46 At about three o'clock, Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" which means "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?"

- God the Father's silence speaks volumes in hindsight
- Though HE is invisible to us, He is always invincible

We are beginning a study of the Old Testament book of Esther

- God's name is never mentioned, no praise service
- The appearance is He is missing, but when you look back you see He orchestrated the events behind the scenes to protect the nation of Israel
- He proves Himself Lord of His people, the Jews

Before we delve into the story of Esther, we need to gain a deeper understanding of God

- **Romans 11:33 NAS** Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!
 - God has a mind (unsearchable judgements)
 - It's not like ours which is finite

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- God's mind is infinite and beyond our ability to fully comprehend
- We can plumb the depths of another's mind, but we cannot begin to scratch the surface of the judgements of God

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- **Isaiah 55:8-9 NLT** 8 “My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts,” says the Lord. “And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. 9 For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.
- **Romans 11:34 NLT** For who can know the Lord’s thoughts? Who knows enough to give him advice?

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- God has a will (unfathomable His ways)
- No human can predict or plumb the depths of God's will, try as we may
- We will never be able to unravel the tapestry of His plan as long as we are earthbound

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- Yet wonder of wonders, God can be known deeply by the hearts of those created in His image
- A.W. Tozer, “That God can be know by the soul in tender personal experience while remaining infinitely aloof from the curious eyes of reason constitutes a paradox.”

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- If we come toward God with sheer reason, we will find ourselves resisted, kept at a distance, at loss to understand.
- But if we come with an open heart, in faith, we will find that He is waiting with open arms, ready to accept, to receive and to fill us with power.

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- God is in sovereign control
- Not only in the events in Paul's days but ours as well
- God never knows frustration or guessing what he will do next

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Daniel 4:30 NLT As he looked out across the city, he said, ‘Look at this great city of Babylon! By my own mighty power, I have built this beautiful city as my royal residence to display my majestic splendor.’

Daniel 4:34 NLT “After this time had passed, I, Nebuchadnezzar, looked up to heaven. My sanity returned, and I praised and worshiped the Most High and honored the one who lives forever.

Before we delve into the story of Esther, we need to gain a deeper understanding of God

- God works among the hosts of heaven, in people like you and me in every generation
- We live our lives under the careful, loving, gracious, albeit sovereign hand of God
- Francis Schaeffer, “He is there and He is not silent. Never doubt the presence of God.”

Before we delve into the story of Esther, we need to gain a deeper understanding of God

- He is there with you on your own personal pilgrimage...His unsearchable mind working in concert with His unfathomable will, carrying things out under His sovereign control.
- Matthew Henry, “Though the name of God be not in it [Esther], the finger of God is directing many minute events for the bringing about of his people’s deliverance.”

God's power and presence are at work through the lives of five main characters in Esther

- A King Named Xerxes (Ahasuerus)
 - **Esther 1:1-2 NLT** 1 These events happened in the days of King Xerxes, who reigned over 127 provinces stretching from India to Ethiopia. 2 At that time Xerxes ruled his empire from his royal throne at the fortress of Susa.

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God's power and presence are at work through the lives of five main characters in Esther

- A King Named Xerxes (Ahasuerus)
 - He was in his third year of his twenty-one-year reign
 - There was no more powerful man on earth at that time

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- A Queen Named Vashti
 - **Esther 1:9 NLT** At the same time, Queen Vashti gave a banquet for the women in the royal palace of King Xerxes.
 - She was a strong-minded, independent-thinking woman who was not afraid to go against the wishes of her husband

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- A Wicked Officer Named Haman
 - **Esther 3:1-2 NLT** Some time later King Xerxes promoted Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite over all the other nobles, making him the most powerful official in the empire. 2 All the king's officials would bow down before Haman to show him respect whenever he passed by, for so the king had commanded.

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- A Wicked Officer Named Haman
 - He was a deceitful, prideful, conceited, anti-Semitic villain of the story

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- A Godly Jew Named Mordecai
- **Esther 2:5-6 NLT** 5 At that time there was a Jewish man in the fortress of Susa whose name was Mordecai son of Jair. He was from the tribe of Benjamin and was a descendant of Kish and Shimei. 6 His family had been among those who, with King Jehoiachin of Judah, had been exiled from Jerusalem to Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar.

God's power and presence are at work through the lives of five main characters in Esther

- A Godly Jew Named Mordecai
 - He was a godly man and believed the promises of God's protection over his people, even in Babylon/Persia
 - He entertained no doubts that the Jews would survive this banishing

God's power and presence are at work through the lives of five main characters in Esther

- A Godly Jew Named Mordecai
 - He was convinced that God would not let His people be wiped out from the face of the earth
 - He also could not imagine he would have a role in it
 - His most significant role was his relationship to the last main character

God's power and presence are at work through the lives of five main characters in Esther

- A Woman of Inner and Outer Beauty Named Esther
 - **Esther 2:7 NLT** This man had a very beautiful and lovely young cousin, Hadassah, who was also called Esther. When her father and mother died, Mordecai adopted her into his family and raised her as his own daughter.

God's power and presence are at work through the lives of five main characters in Esther

- A Woman of Inner and Outer Beauty Named Esther
 - Only a gracious and all-knowing Being would have His hand on some forgotten orphan, a little girl who had lost her mother and father
 - Only promise keeping God would be at work in the life of a lowly Jew living in exile where everything is stacked against her

God's power and presence are at work through the lives of five main characters in Esther

- There is a beautiful message here for anyone who has ever experience brokenness, crushed by life
 - Felt their past is so discolored, so disjointed, so fractured that there is no way in the world God can make reason and meaning out of it.
 - God and God alone can do such things, working silently and invisibly behind the events of history

Respond to the quiet prompting of God

- **2 Corinthians 5:7 NLT** For we live by believing and not by seeing.
 - This tells me that seeing can be deceiving
 - But believing is liberating
 - Believing what – God’s character, promises, Word, will

Respond to the quiet prompting of God

- What appeared to be hopelessness in the book of Esther, God turned it into good
- What might your hopeless be
 - Some horrible pain, threat of sickness or surgery
 - Some emotional stress, fractured relationship
 - An uncertainty in your career, financial catastrophe
 - Or worst of all, a spiritual vacuum that threatens your soul

Respond to the quiet prompting of God

- Good news – God is available, How?
 - Be still...deliberately pause and discover that God is God
 - ❖ Stop reaching back into your own treasure of security
 - ❖ Stop trying to pull the strings yourself
 - ❖ Stop manipulating people and situations
 - ❖ Stop rationalizing your way through life

Respond to the quiet prompting of God

- How?
 - Initially – be quiet, the immortal, invisible, all-wise God, hid from your eyes, is at work
 - ❖ Be very still and, for a change, listen
 - Ultimately – be convinced

Respond to the quiet prompting of God

- Church Swindoll, “Say to the Lord God, I am convinced that you are at work amid the gallows of my life. I will not ignore the reality of them, but I know you are at work. I know I cannot change the events, but I know You are in the midst of them. Rescue me. I come to You through Christ. I come to You alone. I am quiet, and, finally, I am convinced.”

Respond to the quiet prompting of God

- William Casper hymn, “Light Shining out of Darkness”

God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.

Respond to the quiet prompting of God

- William Casper hymn, “Light Shining out of Darkness”

Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never failing skill,
He treasures up His bright designs,
And works His sovereign will.

Respond to the quiet prompting of God

- William Casper hymn, “Light Shining out of Darkness”

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace,
Behind a frowning providence,
He hides a smiling face.

- We will observe that “smiling face” through every twist and turn of Esther’s life

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