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The Death of Jesus Christ

An Eight-Year-Old
Autobiography
Sara

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My parents wouldn't let me go. They said it would be too dangerous, all kinds of people would be there - thieves, murderers. But I knew what they really thought. I knew what they thought of Jesus, what they thought of death. Jesus could overturn death, illness and pain, but now they were staring him in the face, and my parents wouldn't let me go.

It all started when I first saw him. That was three years ago now, when I was the mere age of five, but even then I knew he was something special. I met him when I travelled far, to the coast of Israel, with my father who is a cattle dealer. I saw Jesus there, being followed around closely by twelve men. A number of children ran towards Jesus, but his disciples brushed them away. However, Jesus said something to the disciples (I wasn't close enough to hear what), and then went over to the children and gave them a hug. I ran forward, much to my father's anger, but there was nothing he could do. I sat on Jesus' knee and looked into his eyes. We kept eye contact for about thirty seconds. They were the best thirty seconds of my life. His eyes smiled out at me and I felt warm inside.

Ever since then I had followed Jesus with my heart, soul and mind. I regularly dragged my father off to hear Jesus' preaching.

Yet now it was all over.

I was so exciting to hear that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, my home town! I, like many others, felt so honoured. I saw all the people lining the streets, waving palm leaves and crying "Hosanna!" I was shopping with my mother at the time, and as soon as I saw them I ran down to join them. "No Sara, don't go!" my mother shouted after me, but after a while she came down to join me and together we watched the King of Kings ride into Jerusalem on a donkey.

But that was then.

The first time I heard of Jesus' death penalty was just after the Passover. I had a lovely meal with my family, and I came out of our house to find Jesus the next morning. I scanned the horizon for Jesus, or the crowd that always hung around him, but I couldn't see him anywhere. Just then, I heard the cockerel crow and I turned to the direction that I thought it had come from. And there knelt Peter, one of Jesus' twelve disciples. He was crying. I was stunned. I had never seen a grown man cry before. Everyone else was certainly keeping their distance. Cautiously, I walked up to him.

"What's the matter? What's happened and where is Jesus?"

He looked up at me as if I had sprouted wings, but then, as though he had kept the secret for his whole life, he told me everything, right from when he met Jesus. He told me about all the miracles that Jesus had performed, and used great detail in describing the Last Supper - the Passover meal that Jesus had with the disciples. When Peter told me about Judas betraying Jesus, I felt the fury well up inside me.

“Judas...” I whispered, seething with anger. My feelings must have shown on my face because Peter said, “Jesus said it was fine, almost as though it was meant to happen.”

But I still felt upset. Jesus had trusted Judas with his life, but Judas was ready to betray him just for a few pieces of silver.

Peter continued telling me what had happened up until I had found him crying. He finished by saying, “...and now Jesus’ life rests with Pilate.”

I had to do something, at least witness Jesus’ questioning if nothing else. I had to see Him again.

I thanked Peter and ran over to the Governor’s Palace. I knew I wouldn’t be allowed in, so I ran around to the window where Pilate was questioning Jesus and climbed a tree so I could see everything that was going on through the window.

A strange scene met my eyes. Pilate was sitting in a huge throne-like chair and was surrounded by Chief Priests. Jesus was in chains and was standing in front of Pilate. How could they do this to Jesus? He’d done nothing wrong, and yet they had him in chains like he was a prisoner. I was outraged, but Jesus had a calm look on his face, like nothing was wrong.

I reached the branch of the tree just in time to hear Pilate ask Jesus, “Are you the King of the Jews?”

“It is as you say,” said Jesus calmly.

Pilate asked him again, “Aren’t you going to answer? Listen to all their accusations!”

Jesus remained silent, and Pilate had a look of amazement on his face.

A crowd was beginning to form outside, so Pilate stepped out.

I had known for ages that Pilate would free one person from prison at Passover every year, and a man named Barabbas was in prison with murderers. The crowd that had gathered began to ask Pilate for his usual favour, so he asked them, “Do you want me to free the King of the Jews?” but they asked him to set Barabbas free. So Pilate asked them, “Then what do you want me to do with the King of the Jews?”

“Crucify him!” they shouted.

“But what crime has he committed?” Pilate queried.

“Crucify him!” they shouted even louder.

How could they? This was the same man that performed healing miracles, and were these not the same people who had hung on to his every teaching?

I could tell that Pilate wanted to please the crowd because he set Barabbas free and told his soldiers to whip Jesus and then crucify him.

As soon as I heard these words, my heart ripped in two. Crucify Jesus? Tears trickled down my face, but I hardly noticed. I looked at Jesus and

he caught my eye. My silent tears said more than words ever could. He looked at me sadly and then his gaze dropped.

The soldiers took Jesus to the courtyard of the Governor's Palace. I wanted to see what was happening, so I climbed up to the top of the tree. I could just see over the top of the roof, but I almost wished I couldn't, for the scene I now saw nearly made me gasp - though I stopped myself just in time.

Both Jesus and the soldiers were there. The soldiers were placing a crown of thorns on his head and purple robes on his shoulders. "Long live the King of the Jews!" they laughed mockingly. Then, they hit him. I couldn't stand it. The sight made me sick. I hadn't stopped crying yet, but this made me cry even harder. Almost blinded by my tears, I hurriedly climbed down the tree, and ran all the way home. My father and mother were still there. They didn't want to get involved. I ran to them and told them the whole story. They kept grave faces the whole way through, and when I had finished they just took me by the hand and led me to my room.

I couldn't believe it.

They wouldn't let me go.

But they weren't going to stop me.

I went over to the window, and there was a tree there, with its branches just reaching my window.

Since I was quite experienced at tree climbing now, I climbed down and ran to Golgotha, where they were crucifying Jesus.

When I got there, they were just setting up the cross. They messed around until nine o'clock. Then they did it.

One of the soldiers held down Jesus' arm while the other one put the nail through it.

As the hammer hit the nail, it went straight through his arm. Mary Magdalene screamed. I couldn't make a sound. Blood spurted everywhere.

I covered up my eyes as they put through the other two nails and hoisted him upright.

When I dared to look I saw that they had put two bandits either side of him. How could they treat him like he was some kind of criminal?

And then I realised. He was human. He was the Son of God, human, and he was dying for their sins, our sins, *my* sins. I decided there and then that I was going to apologise to my parents for disobeying them, but I had to stay with Jesus.

I looked at His face.

His beautiful face.

I threw myself down near the bottom of the cross. How could they do this to my Jesus?

My Jesus.

The notice about him read 'the King of the Jews', and people all around him mocked and insulted him.

I cried and cried. I have no idea how long I was there for, but suddenly, the sky went black.

"My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" he shouted, and with a loud cry, he died.

I felt awful, as though there was a big hole where my stomach should have been, I sobbed so hard I made myself ill. But he was gone.

And I knew one thing. I would never be happy again.

Or would I?

I remembered when I had been talking to Peter. He had said that Jesus told the disciples that he was coming back, and everyone would be happy again. So maybe there was one thing left.

HOPE.