

## Silent Nights

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**Scripture:** *Matthew 1:23; Malachi 1:2; Galatians 4:4-5*

### Ideas:

- Never confuse God's silence with his absence.
- Christmas shows us an important truth: If God can be trusted with over 400 years of silent nights, he can be trusted with your silent night as well. When you hear God's silence and feel his absence, trust his *presence*.

### Introduction

1. I love Christmas—Christmas lights, movies, food, etc. And I especially love Christmas music. To get us all in the Christmas spirit, I've invited the band to play a few of the top Christmas songs of all time. *[Band plays a portion of "The Christmas Song" and then "Grandma Got Run Over By a Reindeer," followed by the first portion of "Silent Night." Cello will keep playing after song is sung.]*
2. I love "Silent Night." Franz Guber wrote the melody in 1818, and a young Austrian priest named Father Joseph Mohr wrote the lyrics. They had no idea this little song would weave its way into the fabric of our Christmas traditions.
3. When you think about it, "Silent Night" is a rather ironic song. It's ironic because Christmas isn't as much about a silent night as it is the interruption of 400 years of silent nights.
4. The Bible, as you may know, isn't a book. It's a collection of 66 books that tell one overarching story. These books are divided into two primary sections: the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament ends with a book written by a prophet named Malachi. At the conclusion of his book, we turn the page and go to the New Testament.
5. This one page between the book of Malachi and the book of Matthew (the first book in the New Testament) represents over 400 years of silent nights. This is quite puzzling. What we're left with is this: As Malachi finishes his book and as the curtain closes on the Old Testament, **God goes silent.** *[Cello stops.]*
6. No voice of God. No prophets from God. No Scriptures by God. *Silence.* Where did God go?
7. Here's why this is important. You've probably had your share of silent nights. In fact, if you can answer yes to any of the following questions, then it's probably not a coincidence that you're here today:
  - Has God ever seemed silent to you?
  - Has it ever seemed like it took God 400 years to answer your prayers?