



Part 1: When God is Silent

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God spoke through the prophets...

730 years before Jesus: “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.” – Micah 5:2

700 years before Jesus: Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. – Isaiah 7:14

500 years before Jesus: Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. – Zechariah 9:9

433 years before Jesus: “See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. ⁶He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse.” – Malachi 4:5-6

...and then God was silent for 400 years.

Why is God sometimes silent?

- 1) Because silence can be deafening
- 2) To teach us to trust in Him
- 3) To help us discern His voice from other competing voices
- 4) To slow us down and quiet our hearts
- 5) To make us aware of unconfessed sin

Common Responses to God's Silence

1) Frustration

O God, do not keep silent be not quiet, O God, be not still. – Psalm 83:1

2) Impatience

My soul is in anguish, How long, O Lord, how long? – Psalm 6:3

3) Guilt

Save me from bloodguilt, O God, the God who saves me, and my tongue will sing of your righteousness. – Psalm 51:14

4) Discouragement

Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? – Psalm 42:5a

(Continues on back)

How should we respond to God's silence?

- 1) Ask God the reason for his silence (Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:34)
- 2) Remember that silence does not mean absence (Deuteronomy 31:6)
- 3) Remember that silence does not mean inactivity (Psalm 138:8)
- 4) Respect God's right to be silent and respond the same way (Psalm 46:10, Habakkuk 2:20)

Small Group Questions

- 1) How do you normally respond to silence? Does it make you uncomfortable or do you enjoy it?
- 2) Have you ever used "the silent treatment" or been on the receiving end of it? Did it work? Who broke the silence?
- 3) Review the reasons that God is sometimes silent from the front of the outline. What would you add to the list from your experience?
- 4) How do you normally respond when God gets quiet?
- 5) Which of the 4 biblical responses will you use to discern the message of God's silence?
- 6) How can we pray for you today?