

Series: Jesus, At Night #1665

Title: Matthew 1, 2, 4

In the Nighttime

Thank you for joining me today from wherever you are and by however you listen as we meet together coast-to-coast here in the United States and all the way around the world. It's always good to be with you and I want to thank you for taking time out of your morning, afternoon, or evening to be with us. Beginning this day and for the next several days I want to direct our attention to the Lord Jesus Christ. Specifically, I invite you to come along with me in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John so we can meet Jesus *at night*.

For those of us who believe in Him as our Lord and Savior and as the One True Messiah, we will again look on Him with eyes of faith. For those of you listening who have yet to invest your faith in Christ as *your* Lord and Savior, I hope that as you look upon Him in the days ahead, you will also believe *in* Him for your salvation from sin! The invitation of Christ for you still stands. As He said in Matthew chapter 11, verse 28, **"Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."** This is rest from your sin. This is rest for your soul. Are you weary by your sin that separates you from God? Dear friend, come to Jesus and He *will* give you rest. Full and complete forgiveness from all your sins is yours if you will put your faith in Jesus the Christ, the Messiah! This is my prayer for you as we begin.

As we read the Gospels, we quickly learn that Jesus is a 24/7 Savior. Much of His ministry took place in the early morning, middle and late morning, at noon time, in middle and late afternoon and evening, as well as through all the hours of the night. Our focus will be on our Lord at night. Because Jesus was truly human, He did very human things in the dark. Because Jesus was truly God He did very godly things in the dark. And we have a lot to choose from. We only have time to focus on some of the things He did as the sun was going down or after it was long gone from the sky. I hope you will be with us for this. And invite someone you know to join us.

Here is just a sampling: Jesus was tempted by the Devil in the wilderness at night, Jesus healed the demon possessed and sick at night, Jesus slept at night, He camped out at night, He calmed the storm and walked on the water at night, the Lord performed miracles at night, like feeding the 5,000, He certainly prayed at night (Luke says He "spent the whole night in prayer to God"), Jesus ate food at night, He had crucial conversations at night, like with Nicodemus, He relaxed and reclined with friends at night, He was grieved and distressed on some nights, the Lord washed the disciples feet at night, He was betrayed at night, Jesus was seized and arrested at night, He endured false trials at night, and His dead body was put in the tomb at night. A lot happened in the evening and at night. Read the Gospels through and you'll find this to be true.

I do not know what nights are like for you. I can tell you with one-hundred percent certainty that I am *not* a night owl. I go to bed so early that if I told you the time you'd think it ridiculous. *Unless*, like me, you are a "morning person." I *love, love, love* the morning, especially the dawn before the busyness of the day riles me. So, I go to bed early. But I am sure some of you are true night owls. You may do your best work at night. Sometimes this is cultural. When I am in Hong Kong I regularly disappoint friends and people in our church, because I maintain my early bedtime. But Hong Kong people, in general, *love* the night! Although they sure do *hate* the morning. Friends over there think nothing of gathering together *for dinner* at 8PM and then talking well past midnight. Bed times average 1AM. I don't know how they do it.

I will say I remember, fondly, all-nighters when I was in High School and College (University), but that was a *long* time ago. When I am Stateside I will say I do enjoy the sounds of crickets on warm summer nights with the windows open, especially if there is a light rain. I find that peaceful. Speaking of which, for some people nighttime is peaceful and restful. You sleep soundly through the night. For others, you endure rest-*less* nights. Insomnia is common. You may fear the night (being afraid of the dark is not just something children struggle with). Maybe you are abused at night (less so during the daylight)?

Some of you work all night. Those are your hours. I remember when I was a child there was a stretch of time, maybe a year, when my father worked the overnight shift at the Post Office in Boston. This was a terrible time, because he came home (in the morning), exhausted, and rightfully wanted to sleep all day.

But that meant my brother and I had to be quiet. Well, you try convincing two young boys to whisper and pitter-patter around in the daytime. This did not work out well. Thankfully, he quit and returned to working the day shift. But I know some of you start your work when most of us are finished with ours. You may even be listening to this podcast as you work the night away. This series may have special significance to you.

As we continue with this introduction and get moving in the Bible, I want to draw your attention to the early chapters of the Gospel of Matthew. Before Jesus is born, and just afterwards when He is an infant, I want you to hear Matthew tell us some things that happened at night. I am reading Matthew chapter 1, verses 18-21 and 24, **“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. ²⁰ But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.’ (Verse 24) ²⁴ And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him...”** An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream *at night*.

And then Matthew chapter 2. I will read verses 1 and 2, **“Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, ² ‘Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.’”** The magi saw the star *at night*.

Then drop down in the text to verse 13. This is Matthew chapter 2 and verse 13, **“Now when they had gone, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, ‘Get up! Take the Child and His mother and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is going to search for the Child to destroy Him.’”** An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream again *at night*. And listen to the very next verse, verse 14 of Matthew 2, **“So Joseph got up and took the Child and His mother while it was still night, and left for Egypt.”** This is nighttime travel for the baby Jesus and His mother and earthly, human father. Jesus traveled *at night*.

And then verses 19 and 20, after a period of time, this is Matthew 2.19 and 20, **“But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, and said, ²⁰ ‘Get up, take the Child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel; for those who sought the Child’s life are dead.’ ²¹ So Joseph got up, took the Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel.”** Again, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream *at night*. Joseph got up, took Mary and Jesus, and left Egypt bound for the land of Israel. Jesus again traveled *at night*.

And then, at the beginning of His earthly ministry, after His baptism by John the Baptist in the Jordan River, listen to Matthew chapter 4, verses 1 and 2 and part of verse 3. This is Matthew 4, beginning in verse 1, **“Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ² And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. ³ And the tempter came...”** You heard it, “Jesus fasted forty days and forty *nights*...” And then Satan, the Devil, the tempter came. Jesus fasted and was tempted *at night*.

Well, by now I hope you can see where we are going with this. Welcome to our series *Jesus, At Night*. I have a recommendation for you as we close. Get a hold of your Bible, or if you do not own a Bible, search for one online and read all four of the Gospels at the beginning of the New Testament. Attentively read about the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. If you honestly do not have time to read all four, choose one. (I recommend Mark. It is fast moving and full of action.) Read along with us in the Bible these episodes and scenes from the life of Jesus. I believe you will be richly rewarded by doing so. And perhaps you will do your reading *at night*? Begin reading and join us next time because God Is.

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