



Part 5 - "When God Left" | Scripture: 1 Samuel 4 | December 07, 2025

1. Advent begins in darkness — longing for God's presence.

- "Shades of night" → symbol of death, absence, and spiritual darkness
- *O Come O Come Immanuel* is a prayer for God to return

2. 1 Samuel 4 shows what happens when God's presence is withdrawn.

→ 1 Samuel 4:1–11

- Israel moves forward without seeking the Lord
- They assume God is with them because they carry the ark
- They try to *use* God instead of *seeking* God [ritual manipulation: see Gen 11:4]
- Result: defeat, despair, death — *a moment when God left*

3. Ichabod: "No glory." Israel treated God lightly.

→ 1 Samuel 4:12–22

- Fulfillment of 1 Sam 2:30 - honor (*kavod*) vs. treating God lightly (*yeqallu*)
- The weight (*kavod*) of God's presence has departed
- Israel is left in spiritual darkness

4. Immanuel: God returns to us in our darkness.

- Immanuel means *God with us* (Matthew 1:23)
- Immanuel is the opposite of Ichabod
- God *with* us → God *near* us → God's *peace* given to us
- **Advent is the story of the God who came back**

5. Where God is present, peace is present.

- Peace is not simply the absence of chaos
- God's peace is the supernatural ability to endure *in* chaos
- When we feel His peace, it is a sign of His *presence*
- When we don't feel it, He is *still* near

6. The warning and the invitation

- Israel lost peace because they stopped seeking God
- We lose true peace when we look for it in anything other than Jesus
- When we seek Jesus, the Prince of Peace meets us in the darkness
- **Immanuel is God's answer to every "Ichabod" moment**

7. Discussion Questions — Use these Scriptures and questions to continue reflecting on Advent peace this week.

- READ Psalm 46. What part of your week, your relationships, or your thoughts feels like "shades of night"? Where do you need Jesus to speak: "I am with you"?
- READ Philippians 4:6-7. What do these verses teach about God's peace? If you've felt God's peace before, what was it like? Strength? Calm? Clarity? The ability to endure?
- READ Psalm 139:23-24. Is there a part of your life where you've been treating God "lightly"? READ James 4:6-10. Where might God be inviting you to return to Him with a renewed desire to seek Him?
- READ 1 Samuel 3:10 & John 15:3-4. What is one practice you can take into this week that helps you stay aware of God's presence and ready to respond when He speaks? [examples: honest conversation with Jesus; read scripture; watch for God's presence in everyday moments; notice when He strengthens you]