

Week Four: Out of Egypt

TEXT: MATTHEW 2:13-23

The final week of Advent turns our hearts toward peace—the deep, abiding kind that comes from knowing God is present and at work, even in the midst of uncertainty. Matthew’s Gospel shows us how Jesus entered the very rhythms of Israel’s story. When danger arose, God led His Son into Egypt to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Hosea: “*Out of Egypt I called my son*” (Hosea 11:1). Just as God delivered His people from bondage long ago, He now sends His Son to walk the same path—so that all humanity might one day be free.

In these passages, we see more than historical events; we see a divine pattern of redemption. The flight into Egypt, the sorrow of Rachel’s weeping, and the family’s return all echo Israel’s own journey through exile and homecoming. Through it all, God’s protective hand never wavered. In Jesus, the promise of peace finds its fullest expression—the peace that restores what is broken and fulfills every ancient hope.

True peace is not found in the absence of trouble but in the presence of Christ. The child once carried into Egypt would grow to carry the cross, leading us in a new Exodus—from sin to salvation, from fear to freedom. As we wait for His return, we rest in the assurance that the Prince of Peace reigns, and His kingdom will have no end.

Week Four Activity Suggestions:

- **Peace Candle:** As you light the fourth candle on your Advent wreath, take a moment of silence together. Reflect on where you've seen God's peace this season. Invite each person to share one way they've experienced His presence in a moment of fear or uncertainty.
- **Peace Path:** Take a quiet family walk and notice the sounds of nature around you—birds, wind, footsteps, even silence. Talk about how God's peace often comes when we slow down enough to listen. End your walk by praying together for peace in your home, church, and community.
- **Refuge Reminder:** Build a small “tent” or “fort” using blankets or chairs. Read Psalm 46:1 aloud inside your family refuge: *“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.”* Talk about how God shelters us in times of need and how we can help others feel safe and cared for.
- **Acts of Peace:** Choose one way to bring peace to someone else this week—write a kind note, reconcile a relationship, or do something helpful without being asked. As a family, pray that your actions will reflect the heart of the Prince of Peace.
- **Prayer for the World:** Print a simple world map or globe outline. As a family, pray for peace in different parts of the world each night. Ask God to comfort those who live in fear and to raise up peacemakers who reflect His love.
- **Peace Letters:** Write a short letter or card to someone who might be struggling this season—offering encouragement, Scripture, or simply words of love. Seal it with a prayer for peace over their life.
- **Music Moment:** Listen to “*My Deliverer*” by Rick Elias together. Talk about why God had Joseph and Mary flee to Egypt with Jesus, instead of somewhere else.

Week 4 Advent Reading: Our Refuge and Peace

Reader: When danger came, God spoke to Joseph in a dream: “Rise, take the child and His mother, and flee to Egypt.” Even in uncertainty, God was leading the way.

All: The Lord is our refuge and our peace.

Reader: Through the prophet Hosea, God declared, “*Out of Egypt I called my son.*” Jesus retraced Israel’s story to bring salvation to all.

All: The Lord is our refuge and our peace.

Reader: Rachel wept for her children, yet God promised hope—that one day her tears would be wiped away. In Christ, sorrow gives way to peace.

All: The Lord is our refuge and our peace.

Reader: When the time was right, God called His Son home again. The One who fled to Egypt would one day lead us out of bondage into freedom, forgiveness, and life.

All: The Lord is our refuge and our peace.

Reader: As we light the fourth candle of Advent, we remember that peace is not the absence of trouble, but the presence of the Prince of Peace, who reigns forever.

All: The Lord is our refuge and our peace.

Day 1 – The Refuge

Read: Matthew 2:13–15; Hosea 11:1

Focus: God led His Son into Egypt to fulfill prophecy, protecting Him from danger. Jesus relives Israel’s story to bring salvation.

Devotional:

When danger arose, God led Joseph, Mary, and the young Jesus to safety in Egypt. This journey wasn’t a detour—it was the fulfillment of prophecy. Hosea had written, “*Out of Egypt I called my son.*” Just as God once led the nation of Israel out of slavery, He now protected His Son to bring about a greater salvation.

Even in uncertainty, God’s hand was guiding every step. His protection didn’t mean an absence of hardship, but the assurance of His presence through it. In seasons when we cannot see the way forward, God remains our refuge—steady, watchful, and near.

Reflect: Can you think of a time when God protected or guided your family through something difficult? How did His peace show up along the way?

Prayer Prompt: Thank God for being your refuge and strength in every season.

Day 2 – God’s Protection

Read: Matthew 2:16–18; Jeremiah 31:15–17

Focus: Even in tragedy, God’s plan moves forward. His compassion will one day wipe away every tear.

Devotional:

The tragedy that unfolded in Bethlehem is one of the darkest moments in the Christmas story. Yet even here, God’s compassion shines through. Jeremiah had spoken of Rachel weeping for her children, but he also promised that hope would return: *“They will come back from the land of the enemy... there is hope for your future.”* (Jeremiah 31:16–17)

God’s peace is not the absence of sorrow—it’s His presence within it. Even in pain, His plan moves forward. He is the God who weeps with those who mourn and who promises that one day He will wipe away every tear.

Reflect: How does remembering God’s compassion help bring peace when life feels hard or unfair?

Prayer Prompt: Pray for those who are suffering and need to know God’s comforting presence.

Day 3 – The Return

Read: Matthew 2:19–21; Exodus 14:13–31

Focus: Just as God led Israel out of Egypt, He calls His Son back to fulfill a greater Exodus—freedom from sin and death.

Devotional:

When the time was right, God called His Son out of Egypt and back to Israel—echoing the great deliverance He once gave His people through Moses. Just as God parted the Red Sea to bring freedom from Pharaoh, He would one day open the way through the cross to bring freedom from sin and death.

Jesus is the true and greater Exodus—the One who leads us out of bondage and into the peace of new life. When we follow Him, we walk not in fear, but in freedom. His presence turns every wilderness into a pathway of peace.

Reflect: How has Jesus led you out of fear, guilt, or sin into a place of peace and freedom?

Prayer Prompt: Thank God for delivering you from darkness into His marvelous light.

Day 4 – Light in the Darkness

Read: Isaiah 9:1–2; 52:7

Focus: Jesus brings light to those in darkness and healing to the broken.

Devotional:

Isaiah saw a vision of light breaking into deep darkness—good news that would bring peace to all who believed. “*The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.*” That light is Jesus. Wherever He shines, despair gives way to hope, and fear gives way to peace.

We all carry places of shadow in our hearts—worries, regrets, or pain we wish would fade. Yet Advent reminds us that the light of Christ is stronger than any darkness. His peace doesn’t simply cover our brokenness; it transforms it into beauty.

Reflect: What areas of your life or world need Christ’s healing light right now? How can you let His light shine through you to others?

Prayer Prompt: Ask Jesus to shine His light into your fears and renew your peace.

Day 5 – The Prince of Peace

Read: Isaiah 9:6–7; John 14:27

Focus: Jesus, the Prince of Peace, offers a kingdom not of war but of wholeness and restoration.

Devotional:

Isaiah’s prophecy calls Jesus the *Prince of Peace*—a ruler unlike any the world has known. His kingdom is not built on force or fear, but on righteousness, mercy, and love. On His shoulders rests the government of peace that will never end. Jesus later told His disciples, “*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you.*”

This peace is more than calm—it’s wholeness. It mends what is broken and brings unity where there is division. When we live under Christ’s reign, His peace becomes our calling—to be peacemakers in our homes, churches, and communities.

Reflect: How can your family bring peace to others—through forgiveness, kindness, or listening well?

Prayer Prompt: Pray for peace in your heart and for God’s kingdom of peace to come on earth.

Summary: The Peace of Christ

As Advent draws to a close, we see how every part of Jesus' story fulfills God's larger story of redemption. From the flight into Egypt to the family's return, Matthew shows that nothing in God's plan is wasted. Even in danger, sorrow, or waiting, His peace endures. The child who once fled to safety would one day bring salvation to the world. Through Him, the old story of exile and deliverance is transformed into a new story of grace—one that leads us out of bondage and into freedom.

God's peace is not fragile or fleeting; it is steady and strong, born of His presence with us. The same God who guided Israel through the sea and sheltered His Son in Egypt now watches over us. When life feels uncertain, we can rest in the truth that His purposes are sure and His promises stand firm.

As your family lights the final candle of Advent, remember: peace is not found in perfect circumstances, but in the perfect Savior who reigns over all. The Prince of Peace has come—and He will come again to make all things new. Until that day, may His peace dwell richly in your hearts and in your homes.

Go Deeper Discussion Questions

- What situations or relationships in your life most need the peace of Christ?
- How does experiencing God's peace empower us to become peacemakers?
- What helps you quiet your heart and make space for God's presence during a busy season?
- How can your home or your church become a place of peace for others?

Christmas Eve Devotional – The Announcement of Grace

READ: LUKE 1:26–38

When the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary, he brought the greatest news the world had ever heard: “*You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus.*” In that moment, all of heaven’s promises met human obedience. Mary’s humble response—“*May it be to me according to your word*”—opened the door for God’s redemption plan to unfold.

On this quiet night, we remember that God’s grace often enters in the stillness. Mary was not powerful or famous; she was simply willing. Her “yes” to God changed the course of history. Through her, the Word became flesh, and the world was forever changed. As we wait on the edge of Christmas morning, we are invited to that same posture of trust—ready to receive whatever God desires to birth in our lives through His Spirit.

Family Reflection: What might it look like for your family to respond to God with the same faith and willingness as Mary? How can you make room in your hearts and home for Jesus tonight?

Family Activity: “Lighting the Way”

Light all four Advent candles and then add a fifth white candle in the center to represent Christ. Read John 1:9–14 aloud, and talk about how Jesus is the true Light who shines in the darkness. Dim the lights and sit together quietly for a moment, reflecting on God’s presence.

Prayer Prompt: Thank God for His gift of grace and for choosing to draw near through Jesus. Ask Him to give you hearts that say “yes” to His will.

Christmas Eve Hymn: *“O Holy Night” (Lyrics by Placide Cappeau, translated by John Sullivan Dwight)*

Verse 1

O holy night! The stars are brightly shining,
It is the night of our dear Savior’s birth.
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth.
A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices,
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn!

Chorus

Fall on your knees, O hear the angel voices!
O night divine,
O night when Christ was born;
O night divine,
O night, O night divine!

Verse 2

Led by the light of faith serenely beaming,
With glowing hearts by His cradle we stand.
So led by light of a star sweetly gleaming,
Here come the wise men from Orient land.
The King of kings lay thus in lowly manger;
In all our trials born to be our friend.

Chorus

He knows our need,
To our weakness is no stranger,
Behold your King!
Before Him lowly bend!
O night divine,
O night, O night divine!

Christmas Day Devotional – The Savior Is Born

READ: LUKE 2:1–20

On the first Christmas morning, the promise was fulfilled: the Savior was born in Bethlehem. The announcement didn't come to kings or scholars but to shepherds keeping watch in the fields. Heaven's glory filled the night sky as angels declared, *"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to those on whom His favor rests."* The shepherds hurried to see what God had made known to them—and their hearts overflowed with joy.

This is the heart of Christmas: God has come. The long-awaited Redeemer has entered the world, not in grandeur but in gentleness. The Prince of Peace was wrapped in cloths and laid in a manger so that we might know that no place—and no person—is beyond His reach. The story that began in a stable continues in every heart that welcomes Him still.

Family Reflection: How can your family carry the good news of Jesus' birth into the world around you today? Who can you share His joy and peace with this Christmas?

Family Activity – "Good News to Share"

Before opening gifts, take a moment to write one short note or card together to deliver (or text/email) to someone—a neighbor, friend, or relative—wishing them the peace and joy of Christ. You might include Luke 2:11 or John 3:16 as part of your message.

Prayer Prompt: Thank God for sending Jesus, the Savior of the world. Pray that His joy and peace would fill your home and overflow to others.

Christmas Hymn: *“Joy to the World”* By Isaac Watts (1719), music by George Frideric Handel (arr. by Lowell Mason, 1839)

Verse 1

Joy to the world! the Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And Heaven and nature sing,
And Heaven and nature sing,
And Heaven, and Heaven, and nature sing.

Verse 2

Joy to the world! the Savior reigns;
Let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

Verse 3

No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found,
Far as, far as, the curse is found.

Closing Reflection – Living the Story of Emmanuel

As the candles of Advent grow dim and Christmas Day fades into memory, the message of Emmanuel still burns bright: *God is with us*. The journey we've walked—through hope, faith, joy, and peace—has been more than a countdown to a holiday. It's been an awakening to a reality that continues far beyond December 25.

The story of Jesus doesn't end in the manger; it begins there. The same God who spoke light into darkness, who led His people through the wilderness, and who came to dwell among us in flesh and blood now makes His home within our hearts. His presence is our daily invitation—to listen, to trust, to rejoice, and to rest in His peace. Each new day offers a chance to carry the light of Christ into the ordinary places of life: around our tables, in our workplaces, through acts of kindness, and in moments of quiet prayer.

As you move from Advent into a new season, may you continue to live the story you've celebrated—the story of a faithful God who still draws near. May His hope anchor you, His joy sustain you, His peace surround you, and His love overflow through you. For Emmanuel is not just the name of a baby born long ago—it is the promise of a Savior who is with us still.

