

## Bible Challenge February 26 – March 4, 2017

Advent's weekly Bible Challenge is based upon the readings assigned for each Sunday. The Basic challenge is to re-read the texts that were read on Sunday morning and included in the Sunday bulletin. The Adventure and Explorer challenges are suggestions of different ways to deepen your knowledge of the Bible. The challenge is organized as one reading for each of five days, but find a pace or style that fits your schedule.

### INTRODUCTION

*The Festival of the Transfiguration is a bridge between the Advent-Christmas-Epiphany cycle (that came to a close on Sunday) and the Lent-Easter cycle that begins March 1. On the mount of transfiguration Jesus is revealed as God's beloved Son, echoing the words at his baptism. This vision of glory sustains us as Jesus faces his impending death in Jerusalem.*

### DAY ONE: Exodus 24:12-18

*At Mount Sinai, Moses experienced the presence of God for forty days and forty nights. The "glory of the Lord" settled on the mountain, and on the seventh day God called out to Moses. On the mountain God gave Moses the stone tablets inscribed with the ten commandments.*

<sup>12</sup>The LORD said to Moses, "Come up to me on the mountain, and wait there; and I will give you the tablets of stone, with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their instruction." <sup>13</sup>So Moses set out with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up into the mountain of God. <sup>14</sup>To the elders he had said, "Wait here for us, until we come to you again; for Aaron and Hur are with you; whoever has a dispute may go to them." <sup>15</sup>Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. <sup>16</sup>The glory of the LORD settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days; on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the cloud. <sup>17</sup>Now the appearance of the glory of the LORD was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel. <sup>18</sup>Moses entered the cloud, and went up on the mountain. Moses was on the mountain for forty days and forty nights.

**Adventure Challenge:** Exodus 24.

**Explorer Challenge:** Research any name you don't recognize (Joshua, Aaron, or Hur), what is known about the location and geography of Mount Sinai, or what is meant by *glory* or *the glory of the Lord*.

### DAY TWO: Psalm 99

*Let everyone recognize it is the LORD who is in control; know that God rules with justice!*

<sup>1</sup>The LORD is king; let the people tremble.

The LORD is enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth shake.

<sup>2</sup>The LORD, great in Zion,

is high above all peoples.

<sup>3</sup>Let them confess God's name, which is great and awesome;

God is the Holy One.

<sup>4</sup>O mighty king, lover of justice, you have established equity;

you have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob.

<sup>5</sup>Proclaim the greatness of the LORD

and fall down before God's footstool;

God is the Holy One.

<sup>6</sup>Moses and Aaron among your priests,

and Samuel among those who call upon your name, O LORD,

they called upon you, and you answered them,

<sup>7</sup>you spoke to them out of the pillar of cloud;

they kept your testimonies and the decree that you gave them.

<sup>8</sup>O LORD our God, you answered them indeed;

you were a God who forgave them,

yet punished them for their evil deeds.

<sup>9</sup>Proclaim the greatness of the LORD and worship upon God's holy hill;  
for the LORD our God is the Holy One.

**Adventure Challenge:** Psalm 99. (If you have time, compare it to Psalm 93.)

**Explorer Challenge:** *Option A.* Research *enthronement psalm*.

*Option B.* Research any word or phrase that you aren't sure of (examples: *cherubim; Zion; pillar of cloud*).

### **DAY THREE: 2 Peter 1:16-21**

*At the transfiguration, God's voice was heard, declaring Jesus to be the beloved Son. By the activity of the Holy Spirit, God's voice continues to be heard through the word of scripture.*

<sup>16</sup>We did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty. <sup>17</sup>For he received honor and glory from God the Father when that voice was conveyed to him by the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, my Beloved, with whom I am well pleased." <sup>18</sup>We ourselves heard this voice come from heaven, while we were with him on the holy mountain. <sup>19</sup>So we have the prophetic message more fully confirmed. You will do well to be attentive to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. <sup>20</sup>First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, <sup>21</sup>because no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

**Adventure Challenge:** 2 Peter 1.

**Explorer Challenge:** *Option A.* Research *glory* or *the glory of the Lord* (or review what you learned for the Day One Reading and apply it to this passage).

*Option B.* Read an introduction to 2 Peter.

### **DAY FOUR: Matthew 17:1-9**

*Shortly before he enters Jerusalem, where he will be crucified, Jesus is revealed to his disciples in a mountaintop experience of divine glory called the transfiguration.*

<sup>1</sup>Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. <sup>2</sup>And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. <sup>3</sup>Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. <sup>4</sup>Then Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." <sup>5</sup>While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!" <sup>6</sup>When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. <sup>7</sup>But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Get up and do not be afraid." <sup>8</sup>And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone. <sup>9</sup>As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, "Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

**Adventure Challenge:** Matthew 17.

**Explorer Challenge:** *Option A.* Explore the parallels between this reading and the reading for Day one.

*Option B.* Research *transfiguration*.

*Option C.* Compare this reading with Luke's description of the transfiguration Luke 9-36.

### **DAY FIVE:**

#### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

O God, in the transfiguration of your Son you confirmed the mysteries of the faith by the witness of Moses and Elijah, and in the voice from the bright cloud declaring Jesus your beloved Son, you foreshadowed our adoption as your children. Make us heirs with Christ of your glory, and bring us to enjoy its fullness, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

## **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

This is my Son, my Chosen, listen to him! (*Luke 9:35*)

**Adventure Challenge:** The Prayer of the Day connects Jesus' transfiguration with our adoption as God's children and asks that we be made heirs of God's glory. Pray to accept and understand this mystery of faith as a balance to the somberness we usually associate with Lent.