

**Day One: Deuteronomy 6:4-9**

- What proclamation begins this text (4-5)? This is the Shema, perhaps the most important prayer of Judaism both then and now. It was and is recited by Jews multiple times per day. What sort of impact do you think this makes? How would it impact you?
- What should be “on the heart” (6)? This Advent, what is on your heart? What is God nudging you to do? What promises is he speaking to you? And how is he fulfilling them in Jesus?
- How should the commands be talked about and memorialized (7-9)? Pre-smart phones, pre-printing press, if you needed to know something, never could you “just look it up.” In order to retain any information, you had to talk about it; you had to accurately pass it on from one person to another. Without this oral tradition, we wouldn’t have the Bible. Give thanks to God for this process.

**Day Two: Psalm 103**

- What is David telling to praise the Lord (1-2)? What do you think about speaking to your own soul like this? Take a moment and give it a try. Why is God worthy of praise (3-7, 19)? What role does Jesus play in all of these promises and accomplishments?
- What happens when, in our sin, we encounter the Lord’s compassion and grace (8-12)? Tell Jesus what it feels like to be forgiven and cleansed by him. Praise him for fulfilling this promise.
- Describe the God-fearer’s experience of the Lord’s compassion (13-18). Meditate on verse 17. This Advent, what does God’s love being from “everlasting to everlasting” mean to you?
- Besides his soul, what else does David tell to praise the Lord (20-22)? This is what happened the day Jesus was born (Luke 2:13-14) – everything praised the Lord. Join “the great company” by adding your own voice. Give glory to God for the gift of Jesus.

**Day Three: Isaiah 9:2-7**

- What has changed for those living in darkness (2)? The light of Jesus’ love can illuminate anything. What was once dark in your life but is now light? Thank God for the light of his love.
- How does this new light change things for God’s people (3-5)? Visualize these scenes in your mind’s eye. What do you see? Hear? Feel? Where do you see Jesus in these scenes?
- Exactly how will all of this goodness invade the earth (6)? Summarize Isaiah’s description of this child (6-7). Sit with the truth that Jesus, just one person, is the source of *all* light and goodness. He is the Messiah; he is the savior of the world! Rest in his loving presence; fling your arms open and say, “Lord, love me!” Respond in praise: tell God how thankful you are for everything Jesus has done, is doing and will do.

**Day Four: Mark 1:9-13**

- Set the scene of this text (9). Why do you think Jesus wanted to be baptized? And why did it happen in the Jordan River – where the Israelites crossed to escape slavery? Imagine what it must’ve been like for John to baptize Jesus, to see the fulfillment of God’s promises regarding Israel. Was he excited? Nervous? Humbled?

- Describe what happened as Jesus came out of the water (10-11). What do you think it looked like for heaven to be torn open? And why did the Holy Spirit appear as a dove? Reflect on the words God spoke to Jesus. Why did he express love and pleasure?
- What happened next (12)? Describe Jesus' time in the wilderness (13). Entering the desert immediately after coming out of the Jordan River is another way Jesus' life tracks with the story of God's people in the Old Testament. The story arc of the Bible is truly amazing – everything points to Jesus as the fulfiller of God's promises. Speak to the Lord about this.

#### **Day Five: Luke 4:1-13**

- While Mark 1:12-13 gives the CliffsNotes version of Jesus' time in the wilderness, Luke provides a more detailed account. Set the scene (1-2). Note that he was both full of the Holy Spirit *and* led by the Spirit into a trial. What do you make of this? What is significant about both the forty days and Jesus' decision to fast?
- Summarize the three ways the devil failed to tempt Jesus (3-12). How did their time in the desert conclude (13)? Jesus, diminished by fasting, successfully resisted Satan. Notice the pattern in his responses to the devil: all quotations came from Deuteronomy – a book full of commands repeatedly violated by God's people. What does it say about Jesus that he was able to perfectly obey them?
- With Advent in mind, re-read the passage. This perfect human, perfectly able to resist evil, was born to us. Such a long-awaited gift! How is Jesus like a gift to you? This Advent, what are some ways you can anticipate him as such?