

Weekly Study Guide

The Week of January 6, 2013

Daily Readings

Monday	Matthew 2:1-12	Tuesday	Matthew 2:13-18	Wednesday	Matthew 2:19-23
Thursday	Isaiah 2:1-4	Friday	Isaiah 60:1-6	Saturday	Matthew 8:5-13

My notes on this week's readings...

Next Week in Worship

Next week's message: *Called, Claimed, Commissioned*

Next week's readings: Luke 3:21-22

Jesus was born quietly and few people took note. But God's intention was not for Jesus to be kept secret! Next week we'll read about Jesus' baptism in the Jordan River and God's public declaration that "This is my beloved Son." Join us next week as our *Shine* series continues and we see how the light of Jesus shined for more and more people to see.



www.flcwb.org • info@flcwb.org

4000 Linden Street • White Bear Lake, MN 55110 • 651.429.5349

Group Discussion

Connect	Did you usually make New Year's Resolutions? Did you make any this year that you're willing to share with your group?
Learn	<p>First, read Matthew 2:1-12 to get familiar with the story of the Magi or "the wise men" as they come to visit the infant Jesus. As you read, try to forget the other images you already have of the Christmas story. Focus only on the description offered here.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How does Matthew describe these mysterious visitors?• What things do you find striking or interesting about this passage?• What questions does this story raise for you? <p>Next, a little background. Sources outside the Bible tell us that the Magi were a class of priestly rulers from Persia. They are the ancestors of modern day Kurds or Iranians. People thought they could interpret dreams and probably also movements of stars or planets. The ancient Jews had been exiled among these people hundreds of years earlier and probably left behind their hopes of a future Messiah-King. Here are some Old Testament passages that provide some context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• (optional) If you'd like to read a story about the forerunners of these eastern Magi, you can read Daniel 4-5 and see how God used his prophet Daniel (also called Belteshazar) to speak to a foreign people.• Read Isaiah 2:1-4 and Isaiah 60:1-6. What do these passages tell us about God's vision for nations other than Israel?• Having read these Old Testament prophecies, what do you think Matthew might want us to see when he includes the story of the Magi in his story of Jesus' birth? <p>Now reread Matthew 2:1-12 and think again about this story.</p> <p>Herod, king of the Jews, is described as deceitful, ignorant of the Scriptures, and violent. The pagan Magi are seeking, humble, worshipful, and responsive to God. What do you make of this contrast?</p> <p>In this passage God speaks to people both through dreams and through the Bible. How would you describe the relationship between these things?</p>
Apply	Can you identify with any of the characters or events in this passage? What do you think God wants you to learn or do in response to this story?
Pray	Pray today for God's work in the lives of those who do not yet know Jesus the Savior. Pray that they will come to know and worship him.