

Study Guide for the Week of December 23, 2007

This study guide is designed to help you to become more familiar with the Bible. For 2007 the study guide will help you read through the New Testament in a year. Study these passages on your own, with a friend, or with a group. If you or someone you know needs a Bible, please take one from under a chair in the Worship Center. They are there for you to take home and use! Sermon manuscripts are available at www.spwired.com.

Monday, December 24. Read Luke 1:57-80. This passage is about the birth of John, known as John the Baptist. He would be one who prepared the way for Jesus to do his ministry. John's role would be to call people to life-change and to point out who Jesus was. How did John's father's words relate to what he would become? Why is John's story woven in the story of Jesus' birth?

Don't forget to invite someone to one of the candle light Christmas Eve services at 4, 6, 8, and 11 p.m. at the main campus, and 10:45 p.m. at The Salvage Yard. It will be a truly awesome night as we celebrate the birth of Jesus!

Tuesday, December 25. Read Luke 2:1-20. Christ is born! The journey to Bethlehem would have been a difficult and painful one for Mary. Rather than giving birth at home, with familiar people and in familiar surroundings, she would ride 90 miles on a donkey to an unfamiliar town and have to give birth in a stable. What might she have been experiencing and feeling during those difficult days? Notice that the first people to hear the good news were the night shift shepherds. Shepherds were a low class of people, and the night shift shepherds would have been the lowest of the low. Why would the angels go to them first with the news of Jesus' birth? What does this say about God? Have a very merry Christmas!

Wednesday, December 26. Read Luke 2:21-52. The sacrifice that Mary and Joseph brought was that of a poor family. What does it mean that Jesus was brought up in a very poor home? How might that have affected how he saw people? What do Simeon's words reveal about Jesus' future? The verses about Jesus as a boy are our only glimpse of him between his birth and the start of his ministry at age 30. What do you notice about him from this incident? What is the author, Luke, trying to teach us?

Thursday, December 27. Read Luke 3:1-20. Here we see the ministry of John the Baptist. Why do you think people flocked to hear him, especially when his message was so direct, so confrontational? What was that message? How do think it prepared the way for Jesus?

Friday, December 28. Read Luke 3:21-38. Jesus is baptized, not for repentance of sin, but to signify his connection to God. This was a pivotal moment when all the prior years, and the stories of his birth and life, all came together. The voice from heaven is the final seal for Jesus and indicates his connection to God, the Father. It is also the point when he becomes aware of his ultimate mission, to die for the sins of humanity, to bridge the gap between humanity's sin, and God's holiness.

Saturday, December 29. Read Luke 4:1-30. Jesus begins his public ministry with a time in the wilderness. He is tempted by the devil with things similar to what all humanity is tempted by: bodily need, compromise, and power. How have you been tempted by these things? How does Jesus respond? How might you use a similar tactic in facing your temptations? In verses 18-19, what does Jesus say his ministry is about?

Sunday, December 30. Read Luke 4:31 to 5:32. The miracles of Jesus always point to the heart of God. What do you learn about God by looking at these miracles? In calling disciples, Jesus chose very unlikely people. Typically a rabbi would go to a school to choose his disciples and find the best and the brightest. Jesus, instead, goes to those who were common laborers, even tax collectors, who were considered unclean. What does this tell you about God? Why is it important?