

# Study Guide for the Week of December 04, 2005

## *The Characters Surrounding Christmas--King Herod and the Astrologers*

*This study guide is designed to help you to become more familiar with the Bible. 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.saintpauls-umc.com](http://www.saintpauls-umc.com).*

### **Monday**

Read **Colossians 3:1-5** in the New Testament. This passage gives us a way to keep from giving in to the “spirit” of Herod. It speaks about setting our minds on things that are above as opposed to earthly things. What is the difference? Give examples of how you might set your mind on things that are above. What are some ways we maintain that higher thinking while we live in a world where we’re bombarded with earthly things?

### **Tuesday**

Read **Matthew 2:1-8** in the New Testament. Why was Herod “frightened” to hear about the birth of the king of the Jews? Why were all the people of the city of Jerusalem afraid with him? Refer back to the sermon outline. Spend some time and look within yourself. Do you see any of Herod’s characteristics in you? Do you see any jealousy, suspicion or brutality in yourself? If you do, ask God to help you eliminate these things. Refer back to Monday’s passage for help.

### **Wednesday**

Read **Romans 12:2** in the New Testament. This is another “tool” we can use to protect ourselves against the “spirit” of Herod. What parts of your mind need to be “transformed”? Notice that it’s in the transformation of our minds that we are able to know God’s will. Transforming of our minds is an ongoing process as we mature in our spiritual lives. Don’t be afraid, as you grow closer to Jesus, if he asks you to leave some things behind. It will be difficult, but he will give you everything you need to begin anew. Ask God to help you trust him as you are transformed. Reread the passage until you have it memorized.

### **Thursday**

Read **Matthew 2:9-12** in the New Testament. Refresh your memory of the meaning of the gifts of the Magi by referring back to the sermon outline. The Magi gave what was precious to them. What “gift” do you think Jesus wants from you today? There are many things Jesus asks from us, our time, our talents, our finances. But ultimately he wants something more than these...our hearts. What does it mean to give Jesus your heart?

### **Friday**

Read **John 3:16-17** in the New Testament. This passage shows us **why** God sent Jesus into the world. Not to condemn us, even if we’ve been living like Herod, but to save us! This time of year should remind us of God’s incredible love for us, even when we are rebellious, sinful and imperfect. Spend a few moments thinking about why God became one of us. What does this passage teach us about God’s intentions? Find a nativity scene sometime today and look at Jesus for who he really is...God in the form of a human baby who came to give us freedom **from** many things and freedom **for** many things.