

We Have Seen His Star

“Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.”

—Matthew 2:1,2

AS WE LOOK TO THE HEAV-

ens at this time of the year when the Christian world celebrates the birth of the Savior, what comes to mind? Observing the stars on a clear night is a wonderful way to reflect upon the beauty of God's Creation, and of his great power. Perhaps we ponder as David did, “When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? Oh LORD, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth.”—Ps. 8:3,4,9

During the fourth creative day, “God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven; . . . and it was so.” (Gen. 1:14,15) Stars have always been important to every culture. They have been

used in religious practices and for celestial navigation and orientation. The sheer grandeur of the stars may be found in the definition of a star—‘A self-luminous body visible in the sky whose shape is usually a sphere and whose size may vary. A star may be as small as the earth or as large as 650 times greater in diameter than the Sun.’ (*Wikipedia*) Truly the verse, “One star differeth from another star in glory” (I Cor. 15:41), applies here although we have come to understand that there is also a spiritual application to these words. When we realize from recent discoveries that the countless stars may each be a solar system, we should be amazed and feel our own insignificance.

LIGHT BRINGS HOPE

The sun is our most important star, it brings us warmth, light, and life and it is a fitting comparison to the Son of God who also is responsible for light and life coming to the world. Life as we know it would not be able to exist without the sun. Since the penalty of sin and death was pronounced (Gen. 2:17), all have been born in sin and “shapen in iniquity.” (Ps. 51:5) It would take the seed of the woman to end the reign of sin and death. So we see that without the sun, representing God’s beloved only begotten Son, all would be lost, mankind would be condemned to death, and have no hope of life in the future. “Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold.” (Eccl. 11:7) “The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.” (Hab. 2:14; Num. 14:21) Looking at the promises of God gives us hope and joy that everything is working out

according to his wonderful Divine plan of the ages. As a result, “every knee” shall bow and “every tongue” confess to the glory of God.—Phil. 2:10,11

WHAT CHILD IS THIS?

Looking at the scripture, “As the people were in expectation, . . . all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ.” (Luke 3:15) Even the Gentile world was in expectation of the coming Messiah. The question is also posed “What manner of child shall this be!” (chap. 1:66) God had promised centuries before that a holy child would be born. (Dan. 9:24) The question would be answered by John, when he said, “One mightier than I cometh.” (Luke 3:16) It was proclaimed in the promise to Mary, Thou shalt “bring forth a son.” (chap. 1:31) It was then fulfilled in the words, “Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” (chap. 2:11) According to the flesh, our Lord Jesus was born through his mother, and therefore was the son of the man David. (Luke 3:23-38) It is of importance to note that the Saviour of the world be born through the kingly line of the Jews in fulfillment of prophecy.

We further read “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head.” (Gen. 3:15) These verses had no immediate application at the time they were delivered, but would be fulfilled in God’s due time. We would then not apply these verses to the Lord’s First Advent, but to the worldwide blessings that follow the Second Coming of our Lord, and the subsequent establishment of his glorious kingdom.

VISIT OF THE WISE MEN

The Gentile world was in expectation of a coming Messiah as demonstrated by the visit of the wise men who came from the east. (Matt. 2:1) The term originally belonged to a class of priests among the Medes and Persians, who constituted the king's council and who practiced astrology. Ancient writers make frequent references to them, and the term was later applied to all eastern philosophers. Nations of the Far East had for a long time cherished a tradition that God would descend to earth in a visible form.

The Prophet Daniel associated with some of these wise men. He was once a prince in Persia, and was well known to the disciples of Zoroaster. (Dan. 2:48) His prophecies were made known to them, as probably were the calculations by which he pointed to the time of the birth of the Messiah.

The further belief was that this child from heaven would be born in Judea, gain dominion over the whole world and establish a golden age. The miraculous star in the east which some of the Gentile wise men had been taught to look for, had finally made its appearance, and would guide them to the wonderful light of the world. "There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel."—Num. 24:17

They had now come to Jerusalem, having traveled a far distance to observe firsthand what they thought was to be the culmination of their beliefs. They explained, when they arrived, that they had come to see "he that is born King of the Jews, for we have seen his star, and are come to worship him." (Matt. 2:2) When they met with King Herod, they quoted the

words of the prophet, “Thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, . . . out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.” (vs. 6) As we know, Herod was troubled by the news, and sent them away under the guise of wanting to know more about the child so that he could “worship him also.”—vs. 8

When departing for Bethlehem, they again saw the star and rejoiced, because it would lead them to the place “where the young child was.” (vss. 9,10) Upon reaching the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary and “fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.” (vs. 11) Gold represents obedience and consecration; frankincense represents praise, devotion, and gratitude; and myrrh represents submission, and a willingness to do service. These gifts also have special significance, and point out to us how we should present our hearts to him.—Luke 12:34

They showed their reverence to the mighty God of Israel, their faith in the divinely inspired prophecies, their zeal as truth seekers, and their humility to inquire of the God of another nation. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, and praise be to God, the true source “of every good and every perfect gift.” (James 1:17) We have the assurance that there was a truth associated with this special peculiar star, thankful that we have the “more sure word of prophecy.”—II Pet. 1:19

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

We have now seen the humble beginning and earliest manifestation of the great light. Jesus is indeed the light of the world, and the “Sun of righteousness.”

(Mal. 4:2) "In him was life; and the life was the light of men. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." (John 1:4,9) Light here is used figuratively signifying hope, instruction, and knowledge. Everywhere throughout the Scriptures light is used to represent God, his Truth, servants and their messages. To know God, one must first gain a knowledge of him. No one can commune with God without becoming acquainted in some measure with his Truth. With this comes an enlightened mind through the Holy Spirit that leads to an understanding of his plans and purposes. If they are in harmony and fellowship with him, his plans and purposes become theirs.

When the clouds and darkness of error pass away, and the clear light of Truth shines brightly, the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all will see it. (Isa. 40:5; 11:9) So Jesus came not only to redeem man's life, but also to enlighten him, and to restore as many as are willing to accept sonship.

Darkness represents error, superstition, and sin. The people that walk in darkness now are to see the great light one day when all of mankind will have eyes to see and ears to hear. At the present time, "gross darkness" covers the people. (Isa. 60:2) The exception to this is a very small group, the "church" (Heb. 12:23), who as our Lord declared, are "not of this world." (John 17:16) The whole world is the land "of the shadow of death." (Jer. 2:6) "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together, until now" waiting "for the manifestation of the sons of God." (Rom. 8:19-22) The world needs this great light of peace and joy. The light of the true knowledge of the glory of God, as it did shine in the

face of Jesus Christ our Lord, will, in God's due time, be revealed. John tells us concerning Jesus, "I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." (Rev. 22:16) He will shine forth for the blessing of mankind, to bring order out of the present confusion by dispelling the darkness, and cause the knowledge of the glory of God to fill the whole earth. This scripture shows the fulfillment of the promises made by God concerning his Son, who is now the glorified Jesus.

BEING LIGHT BEARERS

The true light is now shining in the hearts of the faithful footstep followers of the Lord. These have their paths illuminated by the Heavenly Father through his dear Son. We have an assurance of this—"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Ps. 119:105) Concerning God's leadings of his own, we read, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see." (Matt. 13:16) This is a reference to having eyes of faith, and understanding. This is the blessing of present Truth, that he might show us the way in which the believer should go. Is this light of God's Truth now shining in your heart? If it is there, it should shine out upon those who we come in contact with during the daily experiences of life. "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 5:16) This light that comes to us from the Heavenly Father is not directly seen, but should be more of a reflective type. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. . . . Walk in the light, as he is in the light." (I John 1:5,7) Light stands for truth and righteousness.

Divine Truth comes by the words of Truth that the Holy Spirit operates upon. Jesus has assured his followers that they should be confident, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."—John 16:33

His church is invited to become associated with him as light bearers; and if faithful in permitting their light to shine now, they will be joined with him to shine forth as the Sun in the kingdom. The foot-step followers should be in the world, not of the world. (James 4:4) "Now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light." (Eph. 5:8) This refers to a transfer from darkness to light. It is a gradual process which involves the mind, and which leads finally to perfection in the first resurrection. It involves an active service and effort on the part of the believer, "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." (Rom. 12:2) Be guided by God's Word, and trust totally in him. In this way, we can lift up the light of truth so that "old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (II Cor. 5:17) How thankful we should be that we are able to walk in the light of understanding, and in harmony with his plans and purposes through "a new and living way." (Heb. 10:20) This new way of life, or narrow way, leads to everlasting life for the "called, and chosen, and faithful."—Rev. 17:14; Matt. 7:14

PROMISED GLORY

The glory of a star is beautiful, yet different and less than the glory of the sun. The nearest star to the Earth and the most important one is the sun.

The Scriptures tell us that the church as a whole shall “shine forth as the sun.” (Matt. 13:43) Our Lord Jesus is the true center of the Sun of Righteousness, and his bride will be with him in the morning when righteousness is established in the earth, shining forth and sharing in his glory. “They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.” (Dan. 12:3) This can only be true through Christ and the example of the Father’s power in the resurrection of our dear Redeemer—“Christ the firstfruits.” (I Cor. 15:20,23) He was the first to experience a resurrection in the full sense, to perfection and everlasting life. We have the promise of a future life through Christ and a reward in heaven. “Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels.”—Heb. 1:3,4

Since our Lord Jesus was the direct creation of God, it is fitting that he has the character likeness of the Heavenly Father, being “full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14) Each one, in proportion as he receives the Spirit of the Lord, gradually becomes a copy of God’s dear Son, and a copy of the Father, when we shall awake in his “likeness.” (Ps. 17:15) “It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him.” (I John 3:2) The reward of the faithful ones will be a glorious one, for they will receive “glory and honour and immortality, eternal life.” (Rom. 2:7) Joint-heirship with the Lord in his heavenly

kingdom is the hope set before the church class. They seek to do only the will of the Heavenly Father, and set their affections on heavenly things by lifting their affections away from earthly things. The Apostle Paul said, "Let this mind be in you." (Phil. 2:5) This is why the Lord tells his followers to "lay up . . . treasures in heaven." (Matt. 6:20) A treasure is something that we take special pleasure in. It is in our thoughts, plans, and hopes. How much more precious should the treasure of a future heavenly reward be to those who are "called according to his purpose."—Rom. 8:28

THE GREAT HEAVENLY KING

No treasure is more important to the world of mankind than the promise made to them concerning the process by which the blessing and release of all people from the curse of sin and death would be accomplished. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end."—Isa. 9:6,7

We see how the change in the old order of things would come, and how the world would be prepared for the coming kingdom of God. We read, "Thou hast multiplied the nation, made great their joy." (vs. 2, *Leeser Translation*) This 'nation' is the world of mankind under the new administration of the Millennial Kingdom. At that time, the kingdoms of this world will have passed away, and will have become the kingdom of our Lord. The people shall say, "Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of

the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, . . . for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.”—Isa. 2:3; Rev. 11:15

These provisions began with the birth of our Lord as the babe born in Bethlehem. He is then presented as God’s Son, given on our behalf. His sacrifice began at Jordan, and culminated at Calvary. Because of his obedience unto death, “God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.” (Phil. 2:9,10) In God’s wisdom, this includes those who sleep in death, and who will be raised up to a restored perfect life on earth.

‘The government shall be upon his shoulder,’ is figurative of authority, glory, and honor that shall be upon the Lord. It is given to him from the Father through his great law of love. The change in dispensation will be ushered in through the Father’s “times of restitution.” (Acts 3:19-21) This will be the time for Christ to receive the honor, glory, and dominion that was exclusively promised to him. He shall then fulfill all of the things predicted by God through his holy prophets.

When he assumes the control of earth’s affairs his character of love and justice will be evident, and all power in heaven and earth will be given to him. It insures to all of the faithful that his reign will be a time of blessing, of peace and joy to all who love righteousness and truth. His name and titles, representing the gracious things of which he is, are then brought to the attention of all mankind. He is

‘Wonderful,’ beyond the power of human comprehension. Yet as the express image of the Father’s person, he will be a leader and instructor of his people, to all who want to be “taught of God.” (John 6:45) He will be the ‘Counsellor,’ whose instructions in righteousness will be satisfactory and respected by the world of mankind who will be seeking a return to Divine favor and a full restoration of what was lost.

He shall be called, ‘The mighty God’ or mighty one, and on him shall rest all of the power and authority of God his Father. He is called the ‘everlasting Father’—a father forever—because he will be the life-giver to all who will accept life under the terms of the New Covenant, which was sealed by his own precious blood, and will be established after all of the faithful members of the body of Christ have passed beyond the veil.—Heb. 12:24

He shall be known as the ‘Prince of Peace.’ Although his empire will be established by a smiting of the nations with a rod of iron, everything is being done in the interest of bringing peace to the world. His entire reign will further insure the complete establishment of everlasting peace to all. The increase of his government will spread and be so successful that it will extend over all nations and families of the earth.—Isa. 65:20; Rev. 20:9,14,15

According to God’s plan, this kingdom will be established upon the throne of David. As David sat upon the throne of the kingdom of the LORD, the greater than David, the Messiah, will reign because he has the right to do so. (Luke 2:14) The peace that he brings will be without end, “from henceforth even for ever” (Isa. 9:7), for God “hath appointed

[him] heir of all things.” (Heb. 1:2) This is not given to the man Christ Jesus, but to the New Creature, the glorified Lord. As the ‘heir of all things’ he will be the representative of the Father for all eternity and the heir of all of the gracious promises of God’s Word. “The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.” This is truly a wonderful expression of the love of God, for it was love that motivated the Father to give his only begotten Son. It will bring great joy to the Father to restore man to his original condition of perfection.—Gen. 1:27-31

Recall to mind the blessed words that the Sun of righteousness will come to bless the world. (Mal. 4:2) God created a “greater light to rule the day,” and a “lesser light.” (Gen. 1:16) This ‘greater light’ is a type of Christ, who comes to dispel all darkness in the morning of the grand Millennial Day. The church class will then be in place as the ‘lesser light’ reflecting the light from the true source of purest light, the Heavenly Father and his dear Son. Only those who have accepted Christ, who truly believe on him and who have entered into a covenant relationship with him as his future bride and joint-heirs can say, ‘we have seen his star.’ They desire to “press toward the mark.” (Phil. 3:14) They remember the wise admonition to “study” to see that their life is in harmony with the will of God. (II Tim. 2:15) One of the most important things for a child of God to do is to remember all of the Lord’s blessings to him.—Ps. 103:2

May the light of Divine truth illuminate your paths, and lead you in the path of righteousness, until one day, if faithful to him, you shall behold the glories of the LORD. ■