

DECEMBER

25

---

CHRISTMAS DAY

---

*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.*

ISAIAH 9:6-7

*Read* Isaiah 7:14 and 9:1-7

*Celebrate* Jesus' birth with joy.











## Light of the World, Hope of the Nations

RASOOL BERRY

**T**hroughout history, humans have looked up to the night sky to search for signs from above. That proclivity has led many to worship the stars and celestial bodies. In Genesis 1, the terms *sun* and *moon* are not used; they are instead described as the greater and lesser lights (v. 16), likely to avoid the names commonly evoked in idol worship in the ancient Near East.

Yet God would soon use that same human search for signs in the stars to reveal his covenant: He commanded Abraham to look up and witness the

*When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child . . . and they bowed down and worshiped him.*

MATTHEW 2:10–11

innumerable stars, foreshadowing the blessing of his progeny to the nations. Hundreds of years later, however, when the children of Abraham were exiled to Babylon, it appeared that the darkness of the nations had devoured the light. Hope appeared to be lost.

But in Matthew 2, we find an unexpected redemptive reversal! We meet the Magi—from an elite class known for astrology (and idolatry) and likely from the same region where God’s people had been exiled—whose study of the skies led them to faith in the promise of Abraham. *Had the stories passed down from Daniel and the exiles in Babylon finally come to pass?* Likely venturing on the same 900-mile journey from ancient Babylon to Jerusalem that the returning exiles had made so many years before, the Magi sought an answer to a single question: “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews?”

Their inquiry revealed a deep spiritual yearning: “We saw his star . . . and have come to worship him.” Their journey was a fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophetic vision and a foretaste of

what was to come: “I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth” (49:6, ESV). The “lesser light” of the star pointed the Magi to the “greater light” in the little town of Bethlehem, bright enough to enlighten the nations. The light came into the world, and the darkness did not conquer it.

The light of the Epiphany—the appearance of God in the arrival of Jesus—continues to offer hope to all nations groping in the dark for divine truth. And as the Magi show us, this is news too good to keep to ourselves! These wise men from the East continue to teach us that we too must travel far and wide to share the news that Jesus is the Light of the World and the hope of the nations. As Scripture tells us: “You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light” (1 Pet. 2:9).

*Reflect on Matthew 2:1–12 and Isaiah 49:6; 60:3.*

---

What does the visit of the Magi reveal about Jesus’ identity and purpose? How is the Spirit prompting you to respond to Jesus, the Light of the World?