

THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM

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It is Christmas! The song of the angelic host is floating out on the midnight air of the Judean hills! Although we are not star-gazers, we feel constrained to look up, and, behold! a new star—the star of Bethlehem—appears on the horizon of the East. As we follow “the wise men from the east” as they follow the star, we find ourselves in the “city of David,” which is called Bethlehem and “find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.”

Whoever will gaze upon the Star of Bethlehem may discover that each of the five points of the star is tipped with a “P,” which explains in part, why the angel song was “good tidings of great joy,”—at least to this writer—and the messenger said, it “shall be to all people.” (Luke 2:10).

The “P” on the first point of the star gives the promise of “PARDON,” assuring us that the babe lying in yonder manger, “is a Savior,” and came to “save his people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21); that His particular mission to earth was, not “to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” (Matt. 9:13); “to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). My childhood impressions were that He had come to this world looking for good people; and my fear was that, perhaps, I was not good enough to be included. However, I hoped to improve myself, and make myself better; but found in the midst of my effort at self-improvement that I was constantly growing worse, and sinking deeper in sin. And when I had well-nigh despaired, I caught the strain from the angel choir: “Unto YOU is born . . . A SAVIOR.” And when it finally dawned upon me that He had come to this country looking for bad folks—for sinners—in order that He might make good folks out of them, hope took the place of despair, and when I fell at His feet and confessed my sins, I found that He had “power on earth to forgive sins” (Mark 2:10) and change a rebel sinner’s heart, so that “old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor. 5:17). “He will abundantly pardon.” (Isa. 55:7).

And anyone who has come to a realization of the meaning of the “P” on the first point of the star, will at once discover that the “P” on the second point of the star of Bethlehem, is the promise “PEACE;” just as the angel choir sang: “On earth PEACE, good will toward men.” The prophet Isaiah had said concerning the “babe lying in a manger,” nearly 800 years before, that He was “The Prince of peace.” (Isaiah 9:6) While “there is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked” (Isaiah 48:22) so long as he continues in sin.” “He (Christ) shall speak peace” (Psa. 85:8) to all who will accept Him as Savior. He ever speaks to the troubled heart, saying, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” (John 14:27). There need no longer be the accusing conscience, because of sins committed, for, “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Rom. 5:1). “He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us.” (Eph. 2:14). Of the increase of HIS government and peace there shall be no end.” (Isa. 9:7).

The King's Highway

The “P” on the third point of the star of Bethlehem spells “Purity.” Though “Pardon” and “Peace” have come to the heart, the regenerated believer will soon discover that there are still some country elements, and some unholy propensities in his nature; that “when he would do good, evil is present with him.” (Rom. 7:21). It was to this that Paul had reference, when he said, “The flesh against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other.” (Gal. 5:17). While this “flesh” may not be pardoned, he tells us in the twenty-fourth verse, it may be “crucified,” and thus the soul be delivered from the inbeing of sin. While Zacharias was shouting about this first Christmas Day, he said among other things, “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath VISITED and REDEEMED his people,” and then he said that the measure of this redemption, was to be the fulfillment of “the oath which he swore unto our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the land of our enemies might serve him without fear, IN HOLINESS and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.” (Luke 1:68, 73-75). He came not only to pardon the sins of the guilty past, but to purge and purify our natures from the dross and defilement of inbred sin, for the prophet Malachi said: “He is like a refiner’s fire, and like fuller’s soap: and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver.” (Mal. 3:2-3). The very fact that Jesus said, “Blessed are the pure in heart” (Matt. 5:8) suggests the possibility of having a pure heart; for surely He would not pronounce a blessing upon a class of people who do not exist. Since “the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin (I John 1:7) in answer to obedience and faith (I Peter 1:22; Acts 15:9) our hearts may be purified “even as he is pure.” (I John 3:3).

The “P” on the fourth point of the star of Bethlehem gives the promise of “POWER.” “As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.” (John 1:12). The “horn of salvation” spoken of by Zacharias, in Luke 1:69, is the symbol of strength and power. Jesus does not simply pardon the sinner, and purify the heart of the believer, but he provides the necessary strength and power by which the least of His disciples may overcome all temptation, and triumph “over all the power of the enemy;” (Luke 10:19) so that henceforth we may be “more than conquerors through him that loved us” (Rom. 8:37) and “walk with him in white.” (Rev. 3:4). “Sin shall not have dominion over you” (Rom. 6:14) “because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.” (I John 4:4). “He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.” (Isa. 40:29) Hence we are not dependent upon our own resources of wisdom, skill, and strength—in the conflict with the powers of darkness, but have the assurance that as our need, so shall our strength be. The Divine promise is, “My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor. 12:9) and “As thy days, so shall thy strength be.” (Deut. 33:25).

The “P” on the fifth point of the star of Bethlehem brings us to PARADISE. We may not know exactly where Paradise is located, but we do know Paradise is where Jesus is; for He said to the penitent thief on the cross, “Today shalt thou be WITH ME in paradise;” (Luke 23:43) and where Jesus is ‘tis Heaven. Not only was this promise given to the thief on the cross, but to all who will be true and faithful to the end the promise is, “To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.” (Rev. 2:7).

What a glorious prospect, what a rich inheritance awaits those who have followed the star of Bethlehem until they found the “Savior” whose birth we are celebrating; and whose coming has filled our hearts with light and gladness.

Truly, He is “the bright and morning star” (Rev. 22:16); “the dayspring (sunrising), from on high;” (Luke 1:78) “the day star;” (2 Peter 1:9) “the Son of righteousness;” (Mal. 4:2) “the desire of all nations.” (Haggai 2:7) He who was the Son of God became the son of man, in order that he who are the sons of men might become the sons of God. He who was in Heaven came to earth, in order that we who are on earth might come to Heaven. If He had not come, there would be no Pardon, no Peace, no Purity, no Power, no Paradise, no Christmas.

“Who Is He?” For 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. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 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.

Isaiah 9:6, John 1:1, Hebrews 1:3

“Why Did He Come?” I came not to call the righteousness, but sinners to repentance. To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.

Luke 5:32, Acts 10:43, 4:12, John 14:6

“Where Is He Now?” Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Wherefore 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 on earth, and things under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Romans 8:34, Philippians 2:9-11

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