



The General's Christmas Message 2022

When I consider the star that was a significant part of the first Christmas story, I'm reminded that scientists view the stars in the sky very differently than I do. For instance, they use light years to measure the distance of the stars from us on earth. A light year is the distance light travels in one earth year, so about 5.88 trillion miles (or 9.46 trillion kilometres).

The sun is our closest star and is some 93 million miles away. So, the sun's light takes about 8 minutes and 20 seconds to reach us, meaning we see the sun as it was more than 8 minutes ago. The next closest star to us – Alpha Centauri – is some 4.3 light years away, so when we view this star today, we see it as it was 4.3 years ago. It's as if we are looking back in time.

This means that the Magi written about in Matthew 2:1-2 would have seen a star whose light was beaming before they could even see it. And yet, God used that star to lead them to Jesus: 'Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose, and we have come to worship him' (Matthew 2:2 *New Living Translation*).

Jesus came to be the Light of the World. He came to shine his light in darkness – our darkness, the darkness of this world. We read in Isaiah 9:2 (*New International Version*): 'The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.' This was prophesied long before Jesus was born.

Are we talking about light years when it comes to Jesus? No, I don't think so, because the Bible tells us he is the alpha and omega – the beginning and the end. He is as much a bright light today as he was at the beginning of time, or when he came to the earth to take up residence and 'move into the neighborhood' (John 1:14 *The Message*).

Jesus is not constrained by time. He is the 'light of the world' (John 8:12) and shines light into the darkest places of our troubled world, bringing change. The Light has come! There are no light years that can separate us from this Light. He is here, he knows us, and we can walk and talk with him now. His purpose in coming was to be with us, but he has been, and always will be, with us.

If you do not know him already, you too can know this Light of the World. His name is Jesus, and he came to the world to bring about transformation. If you are seeking change, seek Jesus. If you are living in a dark place in life, seek him who is the Light of the World.

For those who already know Jesus, he reminds us that we are light *in* the world. In Matthew 5:14 (*The Message*) we read: 'You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill.'

May you be a source of light in your corner of the world this Christmas, as you bring the Light of the World to others!

May God richly bless you throughout this Christmas season!

Brian Peddle
General