

## THE CHRISTMAS STAR

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*Lesson: Numbers 24:17; Matthew 2*

Have you ever looked up at the starry sky on a clear night? Doesn't the great universe above us give us a strange feeling of wonder and delight at such a time?

There are so many stars we get dizzy trying to count them. And when we think how far away they are, we feel very little and insignificant. The space out there is so very large. We learn of a star being hundreds or thousands of light years away, and our minds cannot even imagine such a great distance. But still, we love to look at the stars. Especially at Christmas we think of the Lord and how stars have always been especially connected to His birth on earth.

Over a thousand years before the Lord was born, the prophet Balaam spoke of how there would come a Star out of Jacob and a Scepter would rise out of Israel (Numbers 24:17). Only a few wise men knew that this was a prophecy that the Lord would someday be born into the world. And, as we know, it was such wise men who saw the star the night the Lord was born, and followed it.

One of the amazing things the Writings tell us about stars is that there are stars in heaven and that they are even brighter and more wonderful than here. Whole societies of angels, especially those who like to think about the Lord, are often seen in that world at a distance like a beautiful star (*Apocalypse Revealed* 65; *Heaven and Hell* 69). Sometimes an angel or a good spirit actually sparkles and shines like a bright star when he is in a special state of charity and faith (*Arcana Coelestia* 1527).

And there are many more amazing things told us about stars in heaven. For example, sometimes the Word that is in a heavenly church, on the altar, will suddenly shine like a great star (*True Christian Religion* 209). Or, sometimes angels, when they are writing or doing their work with newcomers to the spiritual world, will seem to have a band of little stars about their heads (*True Christian Religion* 666).

Angels love stars because they know that stars represent truths that are filled with love. They know, too, that the most important truths are about the Lord. So, when they see a star, they think of the Lord. Some of the angels, for this reason, love to paint stars on the ceilings of their homes, and others embroider them even into their clothes (*Conjugal Love* 15; *Arcana Coelestia* 8379).

In the last few verses of the Sacred Scriptures, the Lord calls Himself the bright and morning Star. He does this because He is speaking of how He will give to His New Church a new and wonderful idea of God—a new knowledge filled with light and wisdom. And the new knowledge is that there is one God, who is the Lord Jesus Christ, and that He reveals Himself to us as a God of love and mercy, In human form. The human form, the Divine Human, is the gift that the Lord gave to us by His birth and His life on earth. This is the morning Star: the one great truth through which we can see all truth, the star that was promised from ancient times, and burst from heaven as a light to lead the wise men.

When we look at the starry sky this Christmas, or when we put a star on our Christmas tree, or hang a star in our window, or make a star for our representation to lead the wise men and to show where the baby Lord is, let us pray that the starlight about us is matched by the starlight within us. And it is, whenever we invite the Lord into our minds and our hearts. This is the Lord's whole desire for us, when we remember His birthday, and why Christmas, and His Christmas star, will be with us forever to light the way to heaven. *Amen.*