THE STAR OF HOPE
by Lester J. Start
Undated

Text: Matthew 2: 16 - 2 … “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.”

The wonder of Christmas is that wonder of the Incarnation. That God should appear on earth in the form of a humble baby, born of a lowly mother, in the obscure fringes of a vast Empire. How differently the Christmas story would appear if we had written it. Blare of trumpets, fanfare, role of drums, marching legions. Enter the King! But God judged otherwise. He could bring Himself to be known and loved by men, only by becoming like the humblest, like a little babe. What wonder that few recognized the Son of God. Most were like that innkeeper of long ago, shutting out the simple carpenter and his wife, reserving room for more honored guests. And we must confess, most today are like that same innkeeper, opening the inns of our hearts to the more important guests of power, wealth, influence.

There were those however, on that birthday of the King who recognized His true importance. The shepherds of course. And the wise men who followed a star in the heavens through the darkness of earth till they came to where something new lay. This was the mark of wisdom - in the world of Caesar Augustus, - . . . , to follow the star of hope in heaven, until they found something revealed by God. This the mark of wisdom - in a world of force and power to realize that: “yet in thy dark streets shineth, the everlasting Light: the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.”. This is the mark of wisdom, to kneel with the wise men before the infant Jesus, to turn to the purity, and love, and gentleness reflected there, and find the very power of the living God. This is the mark of wisdom to join in the Christmas song - “O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us we pray; cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today”.

Such are the marks of the wise men of any age. Let us now try to see the important parts of this wisdom, and apply it to our lives on this Christmas season 1951. First of all, they were wise in that they found the star of hope in God’s heaven when the world was filled with hopelessness.

The wise men believed in a baby - not Herod, not the noisy - they believed in a newborn thing. This is a parable of all true wisdom. All great ideas begin small. The wise man sees this. The greatest began with a babe in a manger in a world darkened by sin. The hope of Christmas is the hope of the star and what it portends. For us in this Christmas season, it means if we are wise, that we will see the star shining above the darkness of the earth, follow it to the babe in the manger, and with the wise men, believe in this small thing, this baby, as the power of goodness. Hopelessness turns to hope when we realize that great things begin small, and that here is the beginning of light and power for us, if we believe in the baby of Bethlehem. If we can catch the wonder of the Incarnation, and realize the power of God in the gentle forces of love and service, - in short, if we can believe in the importance of the babe of Bethlehem.

Moses - Lincoln - Columbus
The forces of power and evil, impress us. 1809 - Lincoln, Darwin, Mendelssohn, Oliver W. Holmes, Tennyson, Poe, McCormick were born.

2. Our strength and responsibility.

“Fullness of time” “make straight the highway”

“Though Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem be born

If he’s not born in thee, thy soul is still forlorn”.