

Message Ten

Christ as the Star out of Jacob

Scripture Reading: Num. 24:17; Gen. 1:14-19; Dan. 12:3; Matt. 2:1-12;
Rev. 1:16, 20; 2:1, 28; 3:1; 22:16; 2 Pet. 1:19; Gen. 22:17; Jude 12-13

I. Numbers 24:17 says, “There shall come forth a Star out of Jacob”; this Star refers to Christ:

- A. The fulfillment of this type of Christ is found in the word of the magi, learned men from the east, recorded in Matthew 2:2: “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star at its rising and have come to worship Him”:
 1. The magi did not say, “We saw *a* star,” or “We saw *the* star,” but “We saw *His* star.”
 2. This is certainly the fulfillment of Numbers 24:17; the star spoken of in this verse was shown to these learned men; it did not appear to any of the people of Israel.
 3. Whereas the Jews had the Scriptures concerning Christ and knew where He would be born (Matt. 2:4-6), the magi saw the star of Christ.
 4. The Jews had the knowledge in letters concerning where Christ was to be born (Micah 5:2), but these learned men from the east received a living vision of Him; eventually, the star led them to the place where Christ was (Matt. 2:9-10).
 5. Christ is the real Sun (Mal. 4:2), but strictly speaking, He does not appear as the Sun during the age of night; rather, He shines as a star; a star shines at night, but it indicates that day is coming.
 6. When Christ came the first time, He appeared openly as a star, but when He comes the second time, He will be the morning star (Rev. 2:28; 22:16) to His overcomers, who watch for His coming; to all others Christ will later appear as the sun.
- B. Matthew 2:1-12 reveals that to find Christ is a living matter; it is not a matter of mere doctrinal knowledge of the Bible:
 1. The star appeared far away from the genuine religion, far away from the temple in the Holy Land, far away from the Jewish religious center, far away from the priests, the scribes, the Pharisees, and all the religious people; instead, there was a star showing something of Christ in a heathen land.
 2. Merely to hold the Bible in our hand and read Micah 5:2, saying that Christ will be born in Bethlehem, does not work; we may have the Bible, but we may miss the heavenly star.
 3. The star is the living revelation, the living vision, not the old and dead doctrinal knowledge of the Scriptures, not the dead knowledge of Micah 5:2; what we need today is not merely Bible knowledge but the heavenly vision, the up-to-date, instant vision, the living vision, the vision that human concepts can never teach.
 4. Even if we have the knowledge of the Scriptures, we still need the instant, up-to-date, living star to lead us to the very street and the very house where Jesus is.
 5. After receiving the living vision, the magi were misled by their human concept and went to Jerusalem, the capital of the Jewish nation, where its king was presumed to be; their being misled caused many young boys to be killed (Matt. 2:16).
 6. When they arrived in Jerusalem and inquired concerning where the King of the Jews was to be born, we read that “when Herod the king heard this, he was troubled and all Jerusalem with him”—v. 3:
 - a. When they heard this news, they should have rejoiced; instead, they were troubled.
 - b. A Christian who expects the Lord to come or who expects to be raptured should take this as a warning—2 Tim. 4:8; cf. Acts 26:16.

7. After the magi were corrected by the Scriptures (Matt. 2:4-6), they went to Bethlehem (vv. 8-9), and the star appeared to them again and led them to the place where Christ was, “and when they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy” (v. 10).
8. When the magi were corrected by the Scriptures and restored to the right track, the star appeared to them again; living vision always accompanies the Scriptures.
9. The priests were those who taught people the law (Mal. 2:7), and the scribes were those who knew the Scriptures (Ezra 7:6); both the priests and the scribes had knowledge concerning the birth of Christ (Matt. 2:5-6), but, unlike the magi from the east, they did not see the vision, nor did they have the heart to seek after Christ.
10. Regardless of how “scriptural” we are, if we lose the presence of the Lord, we are absolutely wrong; the New Testament way to find and follow the Lord is to continually stay in His hidden presence—John 5:39-40; Isa. 45:15; Exo. 33:11, 14; cf. 2 Cor. 5:16.
11. It is easy to accumulate scriptural knowledge, but if we would have living guidance, we must live in an intimate relationship with the Lord; we must be one with Him—2:10-14.
12. The magi saw Christ, and they worshipped Him; then they were warned by God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, so they departed into their own country “by another way” (Matt. 2:12); once we have seen Christ, we never take the same way, the way of religion apart from Christ, but we will always take another way.

II. Christ’s faithful followers are shining and living stars, those who follow Christ as the shining and living Star to be His duplication—Dan. 12:3; cf. Gen. 22:17:

- A. The living stars follow the heavenly, living, up-to-date, and instant vision of Christ as the centrality and universality of God’s economy—Acts 26:16-18.
- B. The living stars are those who bless God’s people; the more we praise the Lord for God’s people and speak well of them in faith, the more we put ourselves under God’s blessing—Num. 24:9; Gen. 12:2-3; 22:17.
- C. The living stars give heed to the prophetic word of the Scriptures “as to a lamp shining in a dark place” so that Christ as the morning star rises in their hearts day by day; if we give heed to the word in the Bible, which shines as a lamp in a dark place, we will have His rising in our hearts to shine in the darkness of apostasy where we are today, before His actual appearing as the morning star—2 Pet. 1:19; John 6:63; Rev. 2:28; 22:16; 2 Tim. 4:8:
 1. In the principle of the morning star, a Christian should rise up early because the early morning is the best time to meet the Lord (to fellowship with God, to praise and sing, to pray-read the Bible with the ministry, and to pray to the Lord)—S. S. 7:12; Psa. 5:1-3; 57:8-9; 59:16-17; 63:1-8; 90:14; 92:1-2; 108:2-3; 143:8; Exo. 16:21.
 2. He will secretly give Himself as the morning star to those who love Him and who watch and wait for Him so that they may taste the freshness of His presence at His coming back after a long absence.
- D. The living stars enjoy and are filled with the sevenfold intensified Spirit to make them intensely living and intensely shining for God’s building—Rev. 3:1; 4:5; 5:6.
- E. The living stars are the messengers of the churches, those who enjoy and experience the pneumatic Christ as the Messenger of God and as the fresh message from God so that they can dispense the fresh and present Christ into the people of God for the testimony of Jesus—1:16, 20; 2:1; Mal. 3:1-3.

- F. The living stars have “great resolutions in heart” and “great searchings of heart”; they are lovers of God who are like the “stars...from their courses” to fight together with God against His enemy so that they may be “like the sun / When it rises in its might”—Judg. 5:15-16, 20, 31; Dan. 11:32; Matt. 13:43.
- G. The living stars are those who fear Jehovah and hear the voice of His Servant, trusting in Jehovah so that they may have light while walking in darkness—Isa. 50:10-11; Psa. 139:7-12, 23-24:
1. Those who make light for themselves and walk in their self-made light instead of in God’s light will suffer torment—Isa. 50:11.
 2. This should be a warning to us so that we may walk in the light given by God, not in the light we make for ourselves—1 John 1:5.
 3. “Come and let us walk in the light of Jehovah”—Isa. 2:5.
- H. The living stars are typified by the stars that were established on the fourth day of God’s restoration with His further creation, in which they rule by their shining; where there is shining, there is ruling for the growth of life—Gen. 1:14-19:
1. The shining forth of the Lord Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration was the coming of the kingdom in power; this shining forth is actually the ruling presence of the Triune God—Matt. 17:1-8; Mark 9:1-8.
 2. The kingdom of God as the ruling of God, the reigning of God, with all its blessings and enjoyment is the shining of the Lord Jesus, and the kingdom is the spreading of the Lord Jesus by shining over us.
 3. The kingdom is the shining of the reality of the Lord Jesus; whenever He is shining over us and we are under that shining, we are in the kingdom under God’s ruling and reigning within us for our growth of life.
- I. On the negative side, there are some who are “wandering stars”—Jude 12-13:
1. The metaphor of wandering stars indicates that the erratic teachers, the apostates, were not solidly fixed in the unchanging truths of the heavenly revelation but were wandering about among God’s starlike people.
 2. Their destiny is the gloom of darkness, which has been kept for them for eternity; the erratic apostates are wandering stars today, but they will be imprisoned in the gloom of darkness.
 3. We may also say that anyone who keeps us from the genuine local church and from meeting on the ground of the church with the Lord’s people is a wandering star; the true stars are those who turn many to righteousness, those who do not lead people astray but turn them to the right way.
 4. Today the living star and the living stars are not far from us—they are in and with the local churches as the practical expressions of the Body of Christ—Rev. 1:11, 20.
 5. Among all the local churches there are some living stars; we simply need to contact them and keep company with them; they will lead us to the place where Jesus is.
- J. May the Lord be merciful to us that we may always be kept in the right way to meet the Lord, to worship Him, and to offer our love to Him; may the Lord make us all like the magi, following the living star to find Christ in order to become His duplication as the living stars—cf. Eph. 5:8-9.