

For many thousands of years until the discovery of electricity, and our brilliantly illuminated cities, the thoughts of men went out toward the stars. The ancient study of stars led to our first science - astrology - which led the world to the study of astronomy. . . just as the study of alchemy led to the knowledge of chemistry.

Augustus was sitting on the throne of the Roman Empire. One of his favorite occupations was to compile a register of populations and revenues of his vast dominions. According to Jewish custom the census was taken, not at the center of your residence, but at the place or center to which you belonged as members of one of the original twelve tribes.

Thus, Joseph and Mary had to go nearly one hundred miles to reach Bethlehem, for they were of the lineage of David. Though peasants, they had royal blood of kings in their veins, and belonged to the royal town of Bethlehem in the south. The journey was difficult and the rocky ascent to the town increased the fatigue. The husband walked beside the donkey upon which rode Mary. He was terrified with anxiety, for she was terribly fatigued. The inn of that day was like the inns of Central Asia throughout the northwest of China today. Accomodations for the beasts of burden are in the court yard immediately adjoining the guest rooms for the travelers. But there was no room at the inn, and they must needs rest in a stable. Here Joseph was able to make a bed of soft hay, and Mary brought forth her first born, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger.

Next morning noise and bustle broke out again in the inn and court yard. Citizens went to work, and registration proceeded. Onlu Joseph and Mary knew.

According to Kepler, at this time of the calendr there was visible a brilliant temporary Star. The Magi of the East were ardent students of the ancient science of Astrology. In the Wise Men of the East mankind had its repository of acience, philosophy, medical skill, and religious mysteries, cradled in the valley of the Euphrates. The Magi believed that events in the Heavens had significance on earth, and thus to them God spoke in the language they could understand.

They followed the Star in the East. They traveled by night, following the light of the Star, and their camels moved softly and steadily under the silent stars.

We who follow the Star today, must ponder the significance of all its deeper meanings. Through the Star, God makes manifest his messages to each of us. When we respond as eagerly as did the Magi of old, then our Star will shine with more beauty, and give greater guidance in the darkness of our present world.

Christmas is only one short, short day.  
Can you carry its meaning the whole long way,  
And make the Peace and Good Will cheer  
And add a blessing to each New Year.