

Star-Gazing: Being the Light  
CCUM - 27 Dec 2015

Isaiah 9: 2-7

- 2 The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.  
On those living in a pitch\_dark land, light has dawned.
- 3 [Holy One,] you have made the nation great; you have increased its joy.  
The [people] rejoice before You as with joy at the harvest...
- 4 As on the day of Midian, You've shattered the yoke that burdened them,  
the staff on their shoulders, and the rod of their oppressor.
- 6 [And] a child is born to us, a son is given to us,  
and authority will be on his shoulders.  
He will be named  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.
- 7 There will be vast authority and endless peace  
for David's ... kingdom,  
establishing and sustaining it  
with justice and righteousness  
now and forever.

The zeal of the Lord of heavenly forces will do this.

[The devotion, the passion, the enthusiasm of God's forces will do this.]

We've been star-gazing - Did you realize that we are all star dust... We are all woven into the very fabric of the universe. "From dust we came and to dust we shall go" is very true!

...Every element in the periodic table aside from hydrogen is essentially stardust... how much of our body is made up of this stardust [?] If we know how many hydrogen atoms are in our body, then we can say that the rest is stardust. Our body is composed of roughly  $7 \times 10^{27}$  atoms. That is a lot of atoms! Try writing that number out on a piece of paper: 7 with 27 zeros behind it. [this alone is just an amazing miracle!] ... Now it turns out that of those billion billion billion atoms,  $4.2 \times 10^{27}$  of

them are hydrogen. Hydrogen is big bang dust and not stardust. This leaves  $2.8 \times 10^{-27}$  atoms of stardust. Thus the amount of stardust atoms in our body is 40%.

Since stardust atoms are from the elements [that are heavier than hydrogen], the percentage of star mass in our body is much more impressive. Most of the hydrogen in our body floats around in the form of water. The human body is about 60% water and hydrogen only accounts for 11% of that water mass... [because] hydrogen has much less mass. We can conclude that 93% of the mass [or weight] in our body is stardust.

I'm sure you didn't expect a physics lesson and certainly I'm no expert. But, this is one of those things that is just amazing to me - we are from the stars.... we are of the stars that we gaze upon.... and as such, we are very much a **part** of the light of the world.

From Isaiah 9: 2-7

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Isaiah offers a powerful prophesy, signs of what was to come, what could  
still come -

We hear this scripture and long for the light to shine. As people who often  
feel like we are walking in darkness especially this time of year, we are  
attracted to the light... and the hope and peace that this promises. But we  
also know too well that

this promise of joy in the coming of a new king is deeply  
problematic. We have had new kings and rulers before, and they  
have been troubling at best and monstrous at worst. ... and the  
very last things too many of them have seemed to concern  
themselves with are "justice and righteousness," [Yes, sadly, this  
scripture is often perceived as] far more promise than reality.

[Then like now], is it any wonder that the early Christians seized  
upon this joyful promise of Isaiah's and found in it the [hope] of  
their Messiah, the babe of Bethlehem, who grew up to teach and  
heal and love and... to represent the living image of a God of  
justice and righteousness? (John Holbert)

[Even as we listen again to this wondrous foretelling, what is to keep us]  
from falling back into the darkness and gloom like those ancient Israelites,  
who too often could not see the great light of their promised just and  
righteous kings?.... (John Holbert)

We need but hear the news and we are reminded that peace is all too

distant. We know that peace must be hard fought by justice seeking people of righteousness. I very much believe that such a peace is possible.... that it is God given and within our grasp. Even though, now as then, too many people, some in power, and some who feel especially powerless, push the possibility of peace away. Peace and good will can be reached, WHEN we .... all of us.... become the light... that shines in the darkness.

As we heard again the retelling of the story on Christmas Eve, we were reminded “For onto us, a child is born.” And we long for that child, and the hope for the future for our children and grandchildren.

[Karen Park suggests a] beautiful but also shocking idea, central to Christianity - that the infinite God who created the universe also chose to descend, to become small, and helpless, to become dependent on human beings. The baby Jesus is not merely a sentimental or cute idea but is potentially radical, transformative, and controversial.... what is truly controversial about the baby Jesus? that he IS our Holy One, God made weak, helpless, and dependent on us.

What a lot of trust that implies! Newborn babies are fragile, and they are completely helpless.... If God became a helpless and vulnerable baby, then God must also trust us very much...God must know something about us — maybe that we are all, in our deepest selves, capable of caring and nurturing. God must have known that we could be trusted not to drop, or forget to feed, or leave the infant God alone to cry and feel abandoned. In other words, we must be capable, we must be trustworthy, we must be loving and lovable, if God became a baby and was born to us. (Karen Park)

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.. [And] a child is born to us,

[who will be] ... Prince of Peace.

7 There will be endless peace

... establishing and sustaining it... with justice and righteousness

now and forever.

[The devotion, the passion, the enthusiasm of God's forces will do this....

with our help!]

We are not to sit back and just wait. Babies certainly don't let us do that.

For their very survival, we must act with patience and love and care, and

right now!! We are called again and again to take action. We are called to

take care of the Christ Child. When we clothe, and feed, and love, and care

for others? "When you do these things for others, you do this for me."

"The zeal of God's holy forces.... the devotion, the passion, the enthusiasm

that we have and offer to others will make all the difference.

The Prince of Peace is born anew. That infant has been entrusted to our

care. And the people who walk in darkness have seen a great light. That

light is within us, the very star dust that makes up the whole of creation.

How can we respond so that the world sees in us the reality of that light of

justice and righteousness?