

A Reflection for Christmas Morning 2021

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It's a great story: someone arrives in our world from somewhere else, with strange powers, and points to a universe filled with greater possibilities than we had previously imagined.

They live in ways that draw us out of the everyday, and help us to find new meaning in old traditions.

They awaken in us new love, then they depart, but leave us with a hope of a reunion one day.

It is, of course, the story of ... this year's John Lewis Christmas advert.

The young alien girl and the young earth boy strike up an unlikely relationship while she repairs her damaged spaceship, getting into amusing scrapes along the way.

And then she's gone, except that, now the boy knows she exists, she never will be really gone.

So the advert which, at first glance, has little to do with Christmas, perfectly mirrors the original Christmas story.

Jesus, too, came from beyond our world, with power to heal, to provide, to forgive.

He pointed to far vaster truths than our everyday world lets us imagine.

But, he also taught us the best way to live, and showed us the true face of love, ultimately dying for our salvation.

He rose from death, meaning that nothing could be the same ever again: the knowledge of something beyond this life gives new meaning to everything.

John Lewis, like any other business, want to sell their products: they want to catch our imaginations, our emotions, our wallets.

The stories they use to do that are effective because they tap into the great Story which shapes our world – the story of God's plan for humanity.

We all yearn for our lives to have meaning, and there is no greater meaning to be found than knowing that we are loved by God and have the promise of eternal life with our creator.

It's the knowledge that reframes our existence even more than meeting anyone or anything else ever could.

Whether or not John Lewis get your business this Christmas, and whether or not their advert has anything to do with the real meaning of Christmas is not the point. But, maybe, it will encourage you to listen afresh to the Christmas story this year.

To hear that wonderful story told as if it was the first time you had heard the Good News of a child being born in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago.

And in listening again I pray we will find a new and fresh perspective in that story which will reshape the way we live.

May you be blessed by the Christ Child, the one who came to earth to change things forever and to be eternally present with us.