Text: Christmas Eve

There are a lot of Biblical Themes that are captured in the Texts, Pageantry and Hymns of Christmas.

**Truth**

A big one is light. From the appearance of the light at the start of the service, through the promise of the great light to those who walk in darkness, to the Evangelist John’s echoing words “The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.” To singing all is bright to a house full of candlelight. That light is often attached an idea of enlightenment. “The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him. A Spirt of Wisdom and understanding, the spirit of Counsel…the Spirit of Knowledge.” Instead of calling it enlightenment the light is the appearance of The Truth. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us…full of truth.

And as much as I tend to be a head guy, does truth really inspire millenniums of adoration? Maybe you experience is different than mine, but if Christmas was just about enlightenment or truth, the darkness probably would have overcome it. It is a daily struggle, that we usually lose, to see what is right in front of our nose. The more someone loudly says they care about truth, the closer I read their footnotes and keep a hand on my wallet.

**Glory**

Light might sometimes be used to portray glory. “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulders, and his name shall be called…mighty God.” “An angel of the LORD appeared to them, and the glory of the LORD shone around them.” “Where is the one born the King of the Jews. We saw his star and have come to worship him.”

But what happens to glory? At least the earthly glory that we know about fades. It leaves you with nothing mister, but boring stores of glory days. If Christmas was about the glory of kings, this day would have been left in the dust long ago like the statue of Ozymandias. And that is certainly what the currently glories of the world would like you to do. Heck, not even his own people received this one, maybe you should walk away from that dim light. And toward something with a little more current glory.

**Righteousness**

Ok, maybe Christmas isn’t captured in truth or glory. Maybe that light is the dawning of righteousness. “Your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies and all nations shall be blessed.” “The throne of David established…With Justice and Righteousness from this time forth and forevermore.” “With righteousness he shall judge the poor…and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth.” There are all kinds of things that can be glorious, but to exercise righteousness. Maybe that is the light.

But eventually if you ponder righteousness enough I think you get to Luther. “Who can stand the day of his coming?” If the light that has come is the refiners fire, and all who are not pure are melted away like dross, what exactly would be left? I wouldn’t be. Everyone who sees an angel, which are just reflections of that light of righteousness, their reactions is cowering fear. When you see that light, you know. You can only celebrate the coming of righteousness, until it searches you.

**Grace/Salvation**

If the birth of Jesus was primarily about truth, it would have become a truth lost to the ages. If it was about glory, some other light would always attract our attention. If it were about righteousness, eventually we could not bear to stand under that light. Christmas would be a day that we run from.

No, the truth of Christmas is that this child is the one promised to crush that old serpent’s head.

The glory of Christmas is that that this is the Immanuel, born for us on earth below. The Child conceived by the Holy Spirit, was born of the Virgin Mary and wrapped in swaddling clothes. That choirs of angels with the greatest proclamation of all time, appeared to shepherds keeping watch. Evermore and Evermore, the alpha and the omega, the one through whom all things were made, has become our brother.

And the righteousness of Christmas is that this Child has come to give us His. “In him was life, and that life was the light of men.” From sin and death he saves us, and lightens every load.

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us…full of grace. That is the perpetual light. When God said let there be light, it was this perpetual gift. Not the glory of the sun that will one day burn out. Not some ineffable truth that only sages might ever glimpse. Not even the zeal of a prophet for righteousness. When God gave us light, it is the perpetual gift of his grace through this child. However the snake has deceived you, here is the balm for his poison. However the darkness has drained you life, here is the life of men that that the darkness does not overcome. However far from God you might feel, here is the one who gives the right to become Children of God. The Child of Christmas is God’s light to us. God’s light to us that in whatever situation we find ourselves, here is the love of the Father for all his children. That he would not withhold his son, his only son. The gentle lamb appears, promised for eternal years. Given to you, tonight. Amen