

“The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it” John 1:5

This is a statement of faith; It is not a statement that is easily proven. Jesus truly is the light of the world, yet our present world appears to be in great darkness, and getting darker by the minute. All you have to do is open up a newspaper, or turn on the television to confirm the darkness. Stories of war, and terror, and violent crime dominate the print and the airwaves. Still, we believe that Jesus is the light of the world.

Even in this Christmas season we cannot seem to get away from the darkness. We will hear the story of Herod’s murder of all the male children in the region of Bethlehem. Herod saw the baby Jesus as a threat to his throne, and many babies died as a result. But Jesus, the true light of men, miraculously survived this threat.

These kinds of events seem out of place in our celebratory “holiday” season. This is supposed to be a season of parties and gift giving, of peace and goodwill to all; not about murder and evil and darkness. Yet the darkness has a way of getting into our lives. Some of us have lost loved ones in the past year, or struggled with our health. Some of you may be having financial difficulties, or may have even lost a job. For these and many other reasons, many will find it difficult to make it through the Christmas season. Still, We proclaim Jesus, “the true light which enlightens everyone was coming into the world”. (John 1:9)

Keeping the focus on Jesus while all of these other things are going on is often difficult. So is keeping the right focus on Jesus; not sentimentalizing His birth. It is all too easy to see the baby Jesus in the manger and forget why He came. Simeon told Jesus mother Mary, “This child is appointed for the rising and falling of many and for a sign that is opposed. And a sword will pierce your own soul also”. (Luke 2:34-35a) To focus on Jesus birth without also focusing on His cross is to ignore the magnitude/darkness of our sin. Yet Jesus tells us, “Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life”. (John 8:12)

John says that Jesus, “was the light of men” (1:4) and the “true light which enlightens everyone” (1:9). Jesus says of Himself in John 12:46, “I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me will not remain in darkness”. Jesus brought light into our dark world, into our dark hearts, but He came to do more than enlighten us. Jesus came down from heaven to be one of us; to be like us in every way except for sin. Jesus came to be our Savior.

Jesus saved us, not because we are deserving, but because He is good. Jesus goodness and loving kindness of course, led Him to the cross. He took all the darkness and burden of our sins upon Himself. Jesus suffered in agony while praying in the garden, sweating drops of blood. He experienced the denial and abandonment of nearly all of His followers. The Christmas hymn puts it this way:

Nails, spears shall pierce Him through

The cross be born for me, for you

Hail, hail the word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mary

So Jesus birth is not a sentimental birth. Jesus came to bring us eternal life with Him in heaven. Jesus is the true light which has come into our dark world. He has shined His light into our dark hearts and has set us free from our sins. Because of this, we can truly celebrate Jesus' coming in the flesh at Christmas, and look forward to His coming again in glory.

“From His fullness, we have all received grace upon grace”(John 1:16)

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