

Meeker Christian Church
12-15-24
The Christmas Story

Today we examine JESUS as the person for which Christmas is named and celebrated. Go with me to John 1 and I will read the first 14 verses, but with one slight change, instead of reading the pronouns in the text that refer to JESUS - I will read in the name of JESUS - perhaps it will make the person of Christmas more vivid and the meaning more emphatic.

John 1:1-14 1 In the beginning was JESUS the Word, and JESUS the Word was with God, and JESUS the Word was God. 2 JESUS was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through JESUS, and without JESUS nothing was made that was made. 4 In JESUS was life, and JESUS the life was the light of men. 5 And JESUS the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. 6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 This man came for a witness, to bear witness of JESUS the Light, that all through him might believe. 8 He was not JESUS THE Light, but was sent to bear witness of JESUS THE Light. 9 That was JESUS the true Light which gives JESUS THE light to every man coming into the world. 10 JESUS was in the world, and the world was made through JESUS, and the world did not know JESUS. 11 JESUS came to JESUS' own, and JESUS' own did not receive JESUS. 12 But as many as received JESUS, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in JESUS name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. 14 And JESUS the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld JESUS' glory, the glory as JESUS the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

The message of Christmas and the full gospel message is contained in these introductory verses to the gospel book of John.. JESUS has always been: before time JESUS was - when time ends and eternity begins, JESUS will be there JESUS the Messianic king, a ruler of the house of David, whose reign is righteous, perpetual, and universal .

The writer of Hebrews 13:8 said it like this: Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

This explains and warns us to be aware of the two world-views of mankind of every age for every individual: Those two world-views are those who acknowledge God and those who dismiss God.

In this present world,- which world view seems to be predominant? Your life purpose and choices depend on your diagnosis and decision regarding the Christmas earthly appearance of Jesus. Just how meaningful has Jesus become in your life?

The O.T. Prophet was inspired to proclaim 750 years before the incarnation of JESUS on earth:

Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.

And later in: Isaiah 9:6-7 For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

As CREATOR, JESUS knows those whom HE has created, HE knows what is best for every one of them, every person of the human race, and JESUS has repeatedly revealed HIMSELF to everyone for abundant life. Paul reminded the Romans in Romans 9:20 But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, "Why have you made me like this?"

First century Christians found themselves embattled in the conflict of the ages since sin became the enemy and antagonist of humankind and progenitor of the worldview that has dismissed God.. Those first century Christians found themselves living with the fulfillment of old prophecies about Jesus the Messiah and having to decide for JESUS or dismiss JESUS.. And those who accepted JESUS found themselves trying to proclaim JESUS to their skeptical Jewish brethren - much less the secular world dominated by Rome who enforced emperor worship.

We find ourselves embattled against antagonists who deny any God beyond the logic and analysis of their own experience and selective resources of other men as their universal and eternal authority.

One part of the creation by JESUS recorded for us in Genesis 2:7 was:
And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

"in breathing into man the breath of life," JESUS is declared to be "life," or the "living" God, because he is the source or fountain of life. He not merely made the MATERIAL worlds, but he also gave the spark of "life" that separates us from the inanimate minerals from which we are made. He was the agent by which the vegetable world became animated; by which animals live; and by which man became a living soul, and was endowed with immortality. i.e. created with a soul/spirit that will live forever - either in heaven or in the place of punishment. This JESUS, whom we celebrate and venerate, this CREATOR/designer/sustainer and giver of life is the person and purpose of the Christmas story. All that is ...is a blessing from the christchild of Jesus - have that in mind as you celebrate.

One author has written about societies current Christmas celebrations:
People are no longer celebrating the truth of Christmas, but rather they are celebrating the truth they have attached to Christmas. Thus, in effect, people are celebrating themselves. It's not about GOD becoming man, but about man becoming his own "god." Welcome to the era of the postmodern Christmas.
(A Postmodern Christmas by Michael J. Kruger, Reformed Theological Seminary Quarterly winter 2002 page 4)

JESUS is the "light" of the world, - reason enough for the symbolism of the celebration of lights at the Christmas season. John 8:12 Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

When JESUS was on earth it was HIS presence, HIS authority, HIS example that was the light. When JESUS returned to heaven after the crucifixion and resurrection the HOLY SPIRIT became the light of JESUS on earth. 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? 17 If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.

Therefore the Christian who is indwelt with the HOLY SPIRIT has become the light of the world for the present age in which we are given to live. We receive the Holy Spirit:

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. With that authority, by that delegation Christians are

John 15:5-8 "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. 8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

This Christmas Celebration and the birth of Jesus eventuating in our salvation and provision for us being a light of Holy splendor for the health and well-being of everyone God brings in contact with us -- is a priority and purpose of Christianity. Make the most of it. It is not a trite statement that life passes quickly. Please be wise, fill life with Holiness thoughts and deeds-- for otherwise life's consequences cast and become a burden of darkness and disappointment. Amen