

Happy Holidays – Or Merry Christmas

Psalm 119:22 Remove from me reproach and contempt; for I have kept thy testimonies.

'Offended' appears to be the fashionable attitude of this age, and it has contaminated the joy of Christianity, as believers strive to spread the joy of our Savior, Jesus Christ, and at the same time, limit the risk of inducing rage due to a departure from 'political correctness'.

We observe Christmas day as a memorial of the birth of our savior, Jesus Christ – A few points

December 25th does not mark the beginning of Jesus Christ:

John 8:58 Jesus said unto them, **Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.**

Jesus Christ pre-existed the Hebrew patriarch – The very beginning of Jewish faith (about 2,000 years before the birth of Christ)

John 1:1-4

(1) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

(2) The same was in the beginning with God.

(3) All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

(4) In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

The existence of Jesus Christ predates the world itself!

Jesus is the instrument of creation.

Why is the doctrine of pre-existence so important?

It is the foundation of the Christian faith:

- If Christ was not pre-existent and came into existence at His birth in Bethlehem, then He was not eternal and no eternal trinity exists.
- If Christ was not eternal then He could not possibly be God (key attribute of God is being eternal).
- If He is not God, then He cannot be Creator and Redeemer.

Old Testament reference to the eternal nature of the Christ

Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, **The mighty God, The everlasting Father**, The Prince of Peace.

- The child is God (come to humanity as flesh and blood – as one of us)
- The child is eternal (without beginning or end – Alpha and omega)

Micah 5:2 But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *though* thou be little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth *have been* from of old, **from everlasting.**

The Messiah / Christ is not only eternal, but of the God-Head.

Jesus Christ appeared incarnate as the Angel of the Lord many times to bring guidance to man – These are known as 'Theophanies'

- Theos –God
- Phaino - to appear

Some examples:

Exodus 3:2,14

(2) And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.

(14) And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

The Angel of the Lord (Christ pre-incarnate) identifies Himself as God

Remember John 8:58 – Jesus referenced this scripture as He defined His eternal state

Genesis 16:7-10 (appearing to Hagar)

(7) And the angel of the LORD found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur.

(8) And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai.

(9) And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands.

(10) And the angel of the LORD said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude.

Christ pre-incarnate guides the actions of Hagar

John Walvoord – Christian theologian

"The similarity of function between the Angel of the Lord and Christ can be observed in the fact that both are sent by the Father.

In the Old Testament, the Angel of the Lord is sent by God to reveal truth, to lead Israel and to defend and judge them.

In the New Testament, Christ is sent by God the Father to reveal God in the flesh, to reveal truth, and to become the Savior.

It is characteristic for the Father to send, and the Son to be the sent One.

These facts again point to the identification of the Angel of the Lord with Christ."

As there are many examples of pre-incarnate Christ, Christmas is different:

John 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

Christmas is the day set aside to call into remembrance Christ's incarnation – When He chose to dwell among us as one of us.

Prophecy:

Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

'Immanuel' interpreted to be 'God with us'

Come to pass:

Matthew 1:18-21

(18) Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

(19) Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.

(20) But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

(21) And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

The Angel of the Lord – Pre-incarnate Christ active among His people

Jesus Christ – God come in the flesh to reconcile man to God with the only sacrifice fitting to pay man’s sin debt

Holy Ghost – The ‘Comforter’ provided by God, the part of God that indwells with each believer that accepts Jesus Christ as Lord and savior

Now back to the beginning – Happy Holidays vs Merry Christmas

First – Be glad others are welcoming you with ‘happy’ anything!

- It is much better than ‘bah humbug’, ‘I hate you’ or ‘hand over your wallet’!

Second – Be considerate and gracious

- The person may not know Christ as savior, may have never heard the truth (this is an opportunity for you not to be upset, offended and angry, but to reach out in Godly love)

Jesus never wanted worldly fanfare. Some of the things He did request:

John 15:12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

John 21 ...Lovest thou me? ...Feed my sheep.

John 14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

It is Satan who is divisive, bitter and angry – Do not let hate rule your life:

Ephesians 4:29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

Jesus Christ is eternal – He has given us eternal life as we are His – He did not intend on us squandering our eternity in bitterness, but in love.

Start your eternal attitude of Godly love today – Don’t let ‘happy’ greetings get you down!