



# TRUTH APPLICATIONS

Articles

## JESUS IS THE REASON

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I haven't seen it yet this year, but I'm pretty sure I will. It may be a Christmas card, a TV advertisement, a flyer from a business run by Christian owners, or a sign in front of a church building. It may be somewhere else. Sometime this month, I expect to see some variation of the phrase, "Jesus is the Reason for the Season."

That's not wrong. Much of the world does stop — and many do treat people differently — because of a shared perception that late December (or early January in Eastern traditions) is the anniversary of Jesus' birth. Whether the celebration has roots in pagan celebrations has been debated (while channel surfing one night, I heard someone on a Christian station broadcast flatly deny any connection). There is evidence that pagans in multiple cultures had festivals and celebrations at about the same time as modern Christmas celebrations. That the developing Church took them over or absorbed them (take your pick) is evidence of the conquest of Christ's way over the most powerful Empire of its (and perhaps any) day.

So, yes, Jesus is the reason for the season. Be glad he is. At least for a time, more people than normal are thinking seriously about "peace on earth, good will toward men" more than about getting ahead through whatever means necessary.

The real challenge for us is not to get the world to stop thinking of Jesus as the reason for the season, but to influence people to learn from him (Eph. 4:20) when all of us return to life as usual. Is that even possible? Well, our spiritual forbears did it, not so much by minimizing his birth as by maximizing everything else.

They taught — and lived like they meant it — that Jesus is "the Alpha and the Omega, . . . who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty" (Rev. 1:8). By this, they meant that he was "the first and last, the beginning and the end" (Rev. 22:13; cf. 21:6). They believed Jesus is the reason — for *everything*.

Paul used similar language to establish a direct connection between the identity of Jesus and the importance of the church, his body (Col. 1:15-18). Although we are not as he is — alpha and omega, beginning and end — without us, the world will never see him as he is.

But only if Jesus is our reason for everything.

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