

they are called in Australia. The law was a package—in a box—it was delivered by Moses.

But, when God sent the gospel, he didn't stuff it in an envelope or squeeze it into a box. He didn't send the gospel as an attachment in an email, nor did the post the gospel on a website.

When God sent the gospel—his eternal grace and truth—he did not entrust its delivery to any third-party human messenger.

When God sent grace and truth, he wrapped it up in himself. He personified the gospel himself in the person of Jesus, the God-man, who revealed

Will we receive God, who took human form, and came to dwell among us as one of us, with us and for us? Will we receive Jesus, who was and is the gospel personified? Will we receive the all-embracing, inclusive message of Jesus, who came not just for one race, gender or denomination, but for us *all*?

Will we receive the little baby—a tiny impoverished alien child—a baby deemed “illegitimate,” a baby born among animals—a dependent baby needing his mother's milk, whose first bed was a feeding trough where animals feed?

When God sent grace and truth, he wrapped it in himself.

all of God's love, his grace and his truth. And we call that message, wrapped up in Jesus, the gospel.

In order to deliver and send us the fullness of the gospel, the fullness of his grace and truth, God in Christ came to us, and he became one of us. He delivered grace and truth personally. Grace and truth were wrapped in those swaddling clothes in the manger and grace and truth poured himself out on the Cross for you and me.

So, which *is* more important—the law or grace and truth? Moses or Jesus? Surely the grace and truth God wrapped in his own person were far more important than the law he sent through Moses.

There is no doubt that this baby is the Prince of peace. There is no doubt that the gospel of grace and truth blankets, surrounds and “swaddles” all that he was and is.

Behold—our Lord and Savior, our Prince of peace—our suffering Servant, who brings us grace and truth. O come let us adore him, O come let us receive him. O come let us embrace him and his wonderful, life-changing gospel, filled with grace and truth, perfectly embodied and personified in him. □

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THE REASON FOR THE SEASON

Every year around Christmas we see and hear the cliché, “Jesus is the reason for the season.” While the statement is accurate in recognizing the historical connection between Jesus' birth and the socio-cultural celebration of the Christmas season, and the phrase is an attempt to remind people “the issue is Jesus,” it fails to direct people's attention to the reality of the incarnation of the God-man. Even the predominant religious emphasis on the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem with the accoutrements of the manger, the Magi, the angels, the star, and Herod the villain diverts the attention of the listening public to the sentimental details of an infant's birth, rather than proclaiming the cosmic supernatural reality of the Son of God becoming a man to redeem and restore mankind with the presence of his life in receptive individuals.

When Christians hang banners and send Christmas cards with the phrase “Happy Birthday Jesus,” they perpetuate the misemphasis on a baby's birth and infancy without directing any attention to the divine life vested in the Christ-child who would grow up to give his life for mankind on the cross of Calvary as “the one mediator between God and man” (1 Timothy 2:5), thereby making his divine-human *Life* available to all persons.

Jesus did not come to establish a season of celebration and to be “the reason for the season.” Jesus did not come so we could remember his birth and infancy, and sing “Happy Birthday Jesus” at the end of the calendar year. Jesus declared, “I am the way, the truth, and the *LIFE*

The REASON for the SEASON

Jim Fowler

“Fix your eyes on Jesus,
the author and finisher of your faith.” —Hebrews 12:2

(John 14:6); “I came that you might have *life* and have it more abundantly” (John 10:10. Every individual who receives the Spirit of the living Lord Jesus by faith partakes of his *life* (1 John 5:12). The issue is *Jesus*—the living Lord Jesus who comes to be our *Life* (Colossians 3:4), and manifest his *life* in our mortal bodies (cf. 2 Corinthians 4:10-11).

WHAT DID JESUS COME TO BRING?

Did Jesus come to bring hope to mankind? “Christ Jesus is our hope” (1 Timothy 1:1). Jesus said, “I came that you might have life” (John 10:10). He is that *Life* (John 14:6; 1 John 5:12). Christian people often seem to think they need something in addition to Jesus. Having received Jesus, they

pray for patience. But they’ve already received the “fruit of the Spirit” (Galatians 5:22-23), including patience in their regeneration. Christians pray for wisdom. “Christ is our wisdom” (1 Corinthians 1:24, 30).

Some Christians pray for righteousness, failing to recognize that Christ is their righteousness (Philippians 1:11).

Some pray for divine grace, but God’s grace is in the Son (John 1:17; Romans 16:20; 1 Corinthians 16:23). Others pray for God’s blessing, forgetting that “God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 1:3). Still others pray to know the “will of God.” God’s will is always that the life and character of Jesus should be

lived out through us in every circumstance.

We must be careful about placing our attention and focus on something other than Jesus, even upon the blessings and benefits that are all inherent in him. We are advised to “fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith” (Hebrews 12:2). What Jesus came to bring is *himself*. Everything that mankind needs or ultimately desires is in *him*. Jesus has come to bring to humankind every good gift in *himself*. □

Excerpted from James A. Fowler’s book, The Issue Is Jesus.

For more on this topic, see Jim’s booklet, “Christmas: What It Means for You” on the PTM website.