

#2 Front & Center: Jesus Christ in the Church Year

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Good morning... I know how you all like diving into theology first thing in the morning, but nevertheless I would like to thank you all for coming. "Front & Center: Jesus Christ in the Church Year." The Church Year consists of the various seasons of the Church. Jesus Christ, the Savior of the World, is not only the heart and center of the Scripture and therefore the key to Its true meaning, but He is also the true meaning behind every season of the Church Year. The Church seasons start off with **Advent**, then with **Christmas**, continuing with **Epiphany**, **Lent**, **Easter**, and lastly the Day and season of **Pentecost**. The most important key that ties all of these seasons together is Jesus Christ, Himself. The season of **Advent**, for starters, reflects what we confess in the Apostles' Creed that Jesus Christ was "conceived by the Holy Spirit." This season of waiting and watching for Christ to come is the season of **Advent**. And this leads to, as we all know, **Christmas**.

Christmas is a time where people unfortunately forget what it's really all about: that it is the time when Jesus, Son of God, born of the Virgin Mary, as the Creed declares, entered this world as a man: God Incarnate. He showed His divine nature to His disciples John, James and Peter on the Mount of Transfiguration - a true **Epiphany**, and the next season of the church year...

Then follows the season of **Lent**. As Jesus grew up in our world He was gratefully received by humble believers but was despised and rejected by those who denied Him as Lord. Through His teachings, Jesus showed all the people the Truth. Yet those still in darkness hated this true light, and one of His own Disciples betrayed Him, which resulted in Jesus being crucified, dying and being buried. According to the Scriptures, Jesus was the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is **Good Friday**, the Victory Christ was born for.

Next, the Apostles' Creed states, "He descended into hell. On the third day He rose again from the dead." This third day is celebrated as **Easter** Sunday and begins the seven Sundays of the **Easter** season. With many evidences of His resurrection, Jesus stayed on earth for forty days before "He ascended into heaven and [took His seat] at the right hand of God the Father Almighty." Ten days later, on the fiftieth day after **Easter**, all the Disciples gathered obediently to await the promised Holy Spirit. On **Pentecost** Sunday (which is **today**, by the way), the Disciples were soon speaking with tongues with the flame of God's Spirit over their heads.

There are many seasons in the **Church Year**, each with its own significant impact based on Christ's life. Thus, we call it a *Christo-centric* Liturgical year. Though, if I had to choose my favorite season it would be **Christmas** because of all the free stuff. Nothing like waking up to a free gift of forgiveness and eternal life right in your hands. All in all, the life of Christ has well defined the **Church Year** and the life of all its members. And on this day, May 27th, in the Year of our Lord, 2012, I am proud to be confirmed in Christ. Amen.