

# ADVENT Episode I: A Christmas Story

Pastor Bill Bowers | December 23, 2018

## *The Greatest Story of All*

Scripture: Luke 2:4-7 (NLT)

**Jesus' birth and His return bear many similarities:**

- Both are **appointed** times. (Galatians 4:4)
- Many were/will be **unaware**. (Mark 13:32)
- Many were/will be **unprepared**. (2 Peter 3:10)

**Bottom Line:** While Christmas is cause for **celebration**,

we look forward to Jesus' return with **anticipation**.

---

**NOTES:**

## HOMEGROUP & PERSONAL STUDY QUESTIONS

**Scripture:** Isaiah 9:1-7 (NLT)

1. Pastor Bill shared the importance and significance of “appointed times” (Luke 2:6) and “the fullness of time” (Galatians 4:4). In these references we witness God’s redemptive plan through the birth of Jesus in the appointed and fullness of time. Have you witnessed a “fullness” or divine “appointment” of time in your own spiritual journey? If yes, can you explain what and how God was working?
2. How do you understand the reasoning behind God’s appointed times? Why do you think God is so patient in his actions? Why wasn’t Jesus born sooner or later than he was? Why doesn’t God work sooner in the circumstances of our own lives?
3. Jesus advised his followers that “no one will know the day or hour when the Son shall return...” (Mark 13:32). How do you stay prepared for Jesus’ return when he has been so long in returning and still we do not know when he will return? Do you think it makes a difference what your degree of preparation is for Jesus’ return? Why or why not?
4. What, in your opinion, does being prepared for Jesus’ arrival look like in practical terms?
5. A second very important point in our teaching was the unfortunate reality of people who were unaware of Jesus’ birth (arrival). Awareness precedes Preparation...if people had been aware of Jesus’ birth, they may have been more prepared. How can we cultivate an attitude of awareness to God’s constant presence, so we might be better prepared for his return and work within us daily?
6. We have been preparing and building anticipation for the celebration of our honoring Jesus’ birth. If you have participated in this preparation journey, do you sense an elevated sense of excitement or expectation? Can you share what your excitement and/or expectation might be? How will you celebrate Jesus this season?