

# GraceCity Advent Study

## A Holy Night



Week #1

November 27-December 3, 2017

"A Holy Timing" (Galatians 4:4-5)

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In the first two chapters of the first book of the Bible, God creates the heavens and the earth; land, sea, and sky; plants and animals; and mankind in His image. At first, God and man dwell together in the Garden of Eden in perfect communion. Then, in the third chapter, Adam and Eve are lured by the serpent to sin and consequently are banished from the Garden. The remainder of Genesis and all of the other sixty-five books of the Bible tell the story of God calling his people back to him. In this Advent season, we look toward that one holy night when Jesus was born, an instant that changed the world!

### Preparation:

Reflect on the overarching story of the Bible, which can be simplified as the four-part Gospel – Creation, the Fall, Redemption, and Restoration. Where does the Christmas narrative fit in the overall story?

**Read:** Galatians 4:4-5

### Looking at the text:

1. "But" is a conjunction that cancels what comes before it. What does the "but" that begins verse four negate?
2. God sent Jesus "when the set time had fully come" (NIV). Other translations refer to "the fullness of time." What was opportune about when God chose to send his Son?
3. "God sent his Son, born of a woman." How does this speak to Jesus' divinity and his humanity? What are the implications of Jesus being fully God and fully human?
4. In this passage, for what purpose did God send his Son? How is Jesus' purpose declared elsewhere in the Bible? (*Consider in context Mt. 1:23, Mt. 5:17, Lk. 19:10, Mk. 10:45, Jn. 3:16-17, Jn. 10:10 among others*)
5. Adoption in Biblical times was associated with choosing heirs if no appropriate heir existed. In light of that, what benefits come from being God's adopted sons and daughters? (*Consider Rom. 8:17, Jas. 2:5*)

### For discussion:

1. In the Old Testament, God had a covenant with the Israelites through the Law of Moses. How did Jesus' coming create a new covenant between God and his people that was fully realized upon Jesus' death? (*Consider Ex. 19:3-6, Ex. 34:10-28, Heb. 8-9*)
2. What emotions do those in the Old Testament express in waiting for Jesus to come? (*Consider Ps. 22, Ps. 72, Is. 9:6-7*) What tensions do we feel as we wait on Jesus to come again in God's opportune timing?
3. Jesus was born to die in order to fulfill God's purpose of reconciling us to God. What roles does God give to the body of believers? What does he keep to do himself? (*Consider Mt. 28:18-20, 2 Cor. 5:17-21, Eph. 2:10*)

*\*\*\* Praise God for sending his Son for our benefit. Pray to be an instrument of peace and a non-anxious presence in an uncertain world yearning for Jesus to come again. Pray for those seeking God this Advent season and the courage to be a witness to them. Invite others to join you on Sundays and in this study.*

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This study has been developed for personal reflection and group discussion. To participate in the conversation, join a GraceCity small group. For more information on times and locations, email [smallgroups@gracecitybaltimore.org](mailto:smallgroups@gracecitybaltimore.org).

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