

The Start of Advent

So today starts the time we call advent, which means coming . It refers to the coming of Christ although in our case, really, we're talking about the coming of his Birthday celebration. I find it interesting that we set aside the next few weeks and call them Advent to focus on the coming of the King when really we are in a constant state of advent. The King is coming and we don't know when he will arrive. It could just as easily be tomorrow as next year or next century.

When I was young, if I knew someone I was looking forward to seeing was coming I always found myself preparing far in advance. If we were going to be going out I would get my coat on hours in advance so that the moment I saw them I could run out and we could go somewhere. But after awhile, sometimes the person would be late, and that enthusiasm would wear off. I would watch out the window with less intensity. Eventually I might turn on the TV and just go look outside during commercials. If the person were much later than I had expected then I might even take my coat off and stop looking out the window. Eventually I would start thinking that they weren't coming at all, and I would get mad or sad.

I think advent is kind of like that. It seems to be this never-ending waiting for something we're looking forward to, the return of Christ. We know that when He arrives we'll have a wonderful time and things will be so much better than they are now. But in the mean-time we have to wait. And it seems like a never-ending wait. We know deep down we may need to wait until we die to see Him and yet there is this hope deep inside me, at least, that He would come back to us soon and reign here on earth. That we could see Him and hear Him.

With Christmas coming, of course, 'tis the Season for parents to hit their children over the head with the be good or Santa won't bring anything stick. What I find interesting about that whole thing is it's usually only done as you get close to Christmas. You don't hear parents as often in say, May or June warning children about being good for Christmas because it seems so far away and distant that it's not really on anyone's mind. It's only as we get close to the time that it seems to have more usefulness and the parents think to use it more frequently. And I think the children tend to try to be better and use that in their arguments over what they want for Christmas. It becomes a kind of Look how good I've been lately. kind of scenario. But it would be different if nobody knew when Christmas was going to be until the last minute wouldn't it? Children would have to try to be good all the time in hopes that it would be Christmas the next day and they could point at their good deeds.

I've known some adults who try to play that game with Christ. A man once told me he was going to do what he wanted and do it his way because he could always accept Christ later and be forgiven. It's kind of like the child hoping they can guess about when Christmas will be. But the simple fact is that man has no more idea when Christ will return (or when he will die) than any of the rest of us. What a loss to think he could lose salvation over a game of Russian roulette with God's timing. Is this the day? Click. Nope, not yet.

So as we wait for the second coming of our King and as we approach the celebration of His birth let's keep the excitement of knowing we could be seeing him any day, any minute now and be glad that we are in Him and He is in us. Let's remember that He not only was born, but died for the forgiving of our sins and rose again. Let's be excited that we are servants of Jesus Christ and that on the day He returns there will be joy and celebrations like no Christmas we've ever had.