



Now the Heavens Start to Whisper

When we sense that something is about to happen, especially something good, the anticipation becomes part of the event itself. Prefaces should be read. Preludes should be heard. Introductions should be afforded our full attention. Notions and hints, glimpses and whispers should be respected.

Folklore honors notions and feelings, rumbles, and ideas, words that express anticipation. Folklore honors these out-of-the-blue expectations because over time, they've proven reliable. When the locusts suddenly stop singing, when the cattle all have their backsides to the wind, when you can't get a person from the past off of your mind; the "old folks" paid attention to such things.

In the case of the coming of the baby Jesus, however, recognized prophets had given us a Scriptural heads up. Things began to line up according to the old stories. Jesus has come to earth now and has returned to Heaven. Still there are stories and promises to be anticipated. To live in anticipation is to borrow future light and bring it back into our darkness. Anticipation is a friend of faith and both gain encouragement from each other.

Advent acknowledges both darkness and light. Advent is not naïve. It simple trusts the whispers. Anticipation, such as advent affords, teaches us how to live in expectation. It is good training in how to see hints of God's presence in our lives. We learn to notice glimpses and whispers, and sometimes those hints are not so much about what is about to happen as they are about what is actually happening now.

God is with us. Can you see the evidence? Advent teaches us how to see and hear the evidence; how to believe the notions. Nature itself teaches us about anticipation and advent. We can "feel Autumn in the air." We can "smell rain coming." We can sense unusual quietness as a storm approaches. Changes in the direction of the breeze give us hints of things to come. Long before Doppler radar, these "whispers" did the forecasting.

As in the physical world, so in the spiritual: there are things to be sensed and remembered and interpreted that bring us great hope. The Heavens are always whispering, through scripture and the quiet parts of prayer and the nudges and urgings of Holy Spirit. Discipleship is learning to see and hear and trust. Jesus said that His sheep know his voice. Well sheep, let's listen at ever new depths. Let's watch more closely so that when we peer into the eyes of Jesus we will recognize Him. Anticipate these occurrences.

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