**‘The Advent of Jesus’**

We are less than a month away from the celebration of the birth of the Christ child. These days leading up to Christmas are generally known in the Christian Church as Advent.

The word Advent means “coming.” God’s only-begotten Son came to earth nearly two thousand years ago and when he came earth’s history was forever changed. When sin entered into the world “in the beginning,” God promised to bring a remedy for it. Jesus is that remedy. He came, born of his human mother Mary, but his Father is God. The Bible states that Jesus is God in the flesh and that his death and resurrection reconciles us to God.

There is, however, a little detail regarding Advent that a lot of people overlook. The little detail is this. There isn’t one Advent of Jesus but two Advents of Jesus! The first time Jesus came, he came as a sweet baby in Bethlehem’s manger, but the next time he comes, he will come as Judge of all the earth.

Are we ready to receive THAT Jesus? Sadly, many people are not. The reasons most people aren’t going to be ready to receive Jesus the Judge are many but let me lift up three. First, most people can’t imagine that God would judge anyone, though His Word states many times that He will. Second, a lot of people think that God is going to judge them on a curve. Not so! God doesn’t have a curve. He’ll judge each person on whether their faith, hope, and trust is in Jesus His Son. Third, most people live their lives without giving much thought about tomorrow much less what will happen to them when Jesus returns as Judge. God knows this, which is why His plan is to send judgments to the earth before Jesus returns to judge.

The thought of judgments coming to the earth doesn’t sound very warm and fuzzy or loving for that matter, but judgments, in actuality, are an expression of God’s love. You may be wondering, ‘How is that possible?’ Well, let me state the reason in the form of a question. Which is more loving? Is it more loving for Jesus to suddenly appear and say “Surprise! Times up?” or is it more loving to send a series of judgments to the earth in order to wake people up to the nearness of his return so that they might actually be ready to receive the Judge when he comes? Personally, I’m thankful that God’s plans are for judgments to come before Jesus returns. Even though I’m thankful for this, it isn’t a wise thing to wait until judgments come to get my spiritual house in order. It isn’t wise for anyone to wait. Don’t we realize by now that each and every one of us is only one breath or one heartbeat away from crossing over from this life into the next? Now is the time to choose Jesus not sometime down the road.

Please keep these things in mind when remembering Jesus’ first Advent.

*Kathleen*