

“Mothers of God”

When I was in my early teens my Sunday School teachers were a little nuts. They got caught up in reading the Bible for clues to the eschaton or end times. I do not know if they were influenced by a particular writer, pseudo-theologian or were just coming up with this stuff themselves. Regardless of their source, they had decided that the end of the world was going to be in the year 2,000.

At the time my friends and I were skeptical even if we did not challenge our teachers. That is because of the verses we heard a moment ago. Jesus tells his disciples and us, “...that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”¹ If Jesus says that no one knows when the eschaton will be not even him, then we thought that meant that no one can figure it out. Indeed, we did not think that anyone should try to figure it out. Neither are we supposed “to party like it is 1999.”² Rather we are supposed to live in the present while preparing ourselves through prayer, worship, good works, and restraint.

Because Advent is time of anticipation this verse of scripture comes to challenge us. It asks us to wonder about our expectations and what exactly we are expecting. A few years back I was talking with some children about the Advent wreath and why we have it. Some said it marked the days to Christmas, but one young girl said, “We light the candles to mark the days until Jesus is born.” That is it! Whether or not she realized it she had hit on something important. We are marking the days until Jesus **is** born. We are not waiting for something that already happened. We are waiting for something that is about to happen. We are expecting the birth of Christ this year.

Our yearnings and our hopes are encompassed in the birth of this little baby. We desire that this year’s birth of Jesus will be the one that marks the age of peace on earth and good will for all people.

We are a people whose hearts have been broken again and again by this world. We have put our trust in ideas, philosophies, governments, and movements and they have all turned out to have clay feet. We know there is something genuine because we have experienced it—in a sunset, in the touch of our beloved’s hand, in the smile of a stranger, in the thrill of a song, or in an unexplained, but very real, joy. We know there is something, and we know because it was planted inside of each of us in our mother’s womb.

We have the divine spark. That is how we know that we are made for something more profound than the clay-footed idols of this world. Each year when we approach Christmas Day we feel the yearning grow. Each year we prepare and hope.

¹ Matthew 24:36

² “1999” by Prince, 1982.

Meister Eckhart a theologian and mystic who lived in the late 13th and early 14th centuries wrote these words:

“What good is it to me if Mary gave birth to the Son of God hundreds of years ago, if I do not give birth to the Son of God in my time and my culture? We are all meant to be Mothers of God, for God is always needing to be born.”

It is a surprising and profound theological statement. We are all meant to be mothers of God. We have to give birth to Jesus in our hearts and in our own life. I think we are meant to give birth to Jesus every single year. We make a place for God in our heart in order that God will come.

There are so many things fighting for our hearts—money, ego, lust, pain, resentment, wars and rumors of wars. The world keeps looking for salvation in glitter, celebrity, the histrionic, and in wind, thunder and lightning. We know that is not how God works. Rather, God breaks into the world quietly in a dingy stable, born to poor parents, living unremarkable, but faithful lives in a backwater of the greatest empire the western world has known. God breaks in with the wail of a newborn, not the battle cry of the Empire. God gets us where we are vulnerable—in the wonder of a newborn baby.

As we begin our Advent journey let us make our hands and hearts into a cradle. Let us make room in the inn of our hearts for the baby. Let us cradle his body in our hands at the altar rail. As the expectant mother prepares to give birth, prepare yourself for the miracle that is the birth of Christ in your life again this year. It is a miracle worth waiting on for it leads us to a fuller life with each other and with God.