

Advent 3A - December 2022

We Can't See What Is Before Us, We Are Never Content

In a Peanuts comic strip Lucy is speaking with Linus at the base of a hill. She says, "Someday I'm going over that hill and find the answer to my dreams.... Someday I'm going over that hill and find hope and fulfillment. I think, for me, all the answers to life lie beyond these clouds and over the grassy slopes of that hill!"

Linus removes his thumb from his mouth, points toward the hill, and responds: "Perhaps there's another little kid on the other side of that hill who is looking this way and thinking that all the answers to life lie on this side of the hill."

Lucy looks at Linus, then turns toward the hill and yells, "Forget it, kid!"
(by Brett Blair, www.eSermons.com)

Where Is the Fire?

We get this comforting idea that if we follow the Messiah life will somehow be smoother, or at least all fit together in some "good" way. Then we run smack into the reality that the **only guarantee Jesus made to us had to do with the activities that come after this life.**

In fact, Jesus very clearly expected that his followers would have a harder time getting through this life than those who walked away.

But we still have these expectations of a "Savior" and when Jesus doesn't meet them we begin to wonder if he is really who we thought he was. There are thousands of empty church pews that used to be full of people who believed in Jesus Christ. But then he didn't live up to their expectations and they went home. Their families still fought, they still had some frightening decisions to make, and they still couldn't make ends meet on a budget. They began to wonder if they had made a mistake with Jesus.

Maybe that's what happened to John. He said that he had come to baptize with water, and that the one following him would baptize with "fire from heaven."

So where was the fire? So far there wasn't even smoke. So far, the Pharisees and Sadducees were still in charge of the faith, and Rome was still in charge of the government.

In fact, instead of bringing in the kingdom, Jesus had kept pretty quiet up north while John got himself arrested and thrown into one of Herod's dungeons on a mountaintop down by the Dead Sea.

That might make a person ask some questions. Is this any way for a Messiah to behave? At least I hope that's what happened with John. If John the Baptist, as high up as he ranked, still had some questions, maybe there is room for me and mine.

(by John B. Jamison from *Time's Up!*, CSS Publishing Company)

"I wasn't sure which song God would like better."

I'm reminded of the story of a Catholic Church in which the choir director had gone to a great deal of trouble preparing an excellent soprano for a solo for Sunday Mass.

As the soloist's beautiful voice soared through the church, a bedraggled "street person" who had wandered in and taken a seat near the choir suddenly joined her. The newcomer's voice had seen better days, and it quavered along, slightly off-key, through the entire song. The choir members kept looking frantically at the director, who made no move to interrupt the intruder.

Afterward, some of the members of the choir asked the director why he hadn't stopped her. **"Because," he replied, "I wasn't sure which song God would like better."** (Kate Kellogg, *The Catholic Digest*, September 1992, p. 65.) (<https://frtonyshomilies.com/>).