

Saturday 7th December



*The Word was first, the Word present to God, God present to the Word.
The Word was God, in readiness for God from day one.
Everything was created through him; nothing - not one thing! - came into being without him.
What came into existence was Life, and the Life was Light to live by.
The Life-Light blazed out of the darkness; the darkness couldn't put it out.*

[John 1:1–5, The Message]

The word 'Advent' means the arrival of a notable person. For Christians, we look towards the coming of Jesus as a baby in Bethlehem, as well as the return of Jesus in glory. The opening of John's gospel reminds us that Jesus has always been, was there at creation. The biblical story constantly reminds the people of Israel that God is coming, giving signs to look for.

In Micah we hear that he will be born in Bethlehem, in Isaiah that he will be a wonderful counsellor, almighty God, everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. There are many other places where the coming Messiah is mentioned, to keep it in the minds of the Hebrews that they had hope for the future.

During advent, many skip straight to the Christmas celebrations and carols, but there are many beautiful advent hymns that remind us of the hope that the Hebrews held on to about their coming Messiah and the hope that we hold on to for his return. This advent I encourage you to spend time with advent hymns and feel that anticipation and hope for the coming of God.

Some great hymns include 'O come, O come Emmanuel' (*Singing the Faith* 180), translated by John Mason Neale, which looks at some of the biblical images of their coming Messiah, and 'Long ago prophets knew' (*Singing the Faith* 178) by Fred Pratt Green, which speaks of the prophecies, how God became human and then how this is fulfilled in the birth of Jesus.

Advent God,
as we wait for your coming,
help us to wait with anticipation:
anticipation for what your coming means for us;
anticipation for what your coming means for the world.
Help us to dream your dream for the world,
to make ourselves part of your vision
as we wait for your return.
Amen