

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16

DO YOU SEE THE KNAPSACK FULL OF SCROLLS?

Time is relative. To a child, the four weeks of Advent stretch endlessly until Christmas; to the adult packing in parties, planning and purchases, they fly. To the person waiting for news of a loved one, an hour is an eternity; to the caregivers attending them, that same hour goes by in a blink. Experiences of joy and sorrow, focus and distraction, busyness and boredom can all stretch, speed up or even stop time altogether.

Consider the image. Did you notice the scroll? Tucked carefully into the pocket of the group walking to the manger, the scroll is a symbol of the prophets of the Old Testament. Depicted with wild hair and an unrolled scroll, the prophet Isaiah is a familiar figure in Advent. Isaiah and the other prophets remind us that God's time is not our time.

In today's gospel reading, the disciples of John the Baptist are trying to understand Jesus. Who is he? What is his role? Is he the one foretold by the prophets? Jesus uses the words of Isaiah to answer them, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the good news proclaimed to them." The promise of God given to Isaiah 800 years before, is being fulfilled in Jesus.



The scroll and the prophets remind us of two things: God keeps God's promises; and, still, God's time is not our time.

This Advent, each of us are waiting for something. We wait for small things like weekends or the sugar cookie to cool. We wait for larger things: test results; cures; vaccines; decisions; closure. As we wait for the dawn of Christmas day, let us also consider what it is our hearts are waiting for. What promises of God do we still cherish in our hearts? How might God be keeping God's promises even if God's time is not our time? May our prayers this Advent be ones of hopeful waiting for ourselves, our loved ones and our world.

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