

**Advent, Day 9**  
**Read Isaiah 35:1-10**

**Monday, December 10**

*“Be strong, do not fear; for your God will come...” Isaiah 35:4*

**THEN**

Fighting to hold back his tears, the boy put on a braver front than he was feeling. The older boys had singled him out for teasing. It happens often with children because the smallest is always the easiest target.

With defiance in his eye he uttered those words of hope and doom,

*“You just wait til my big brother gets here!”*

For the people of Israel it had been a long and painful drought of powerlessness. They had reaped what they had sown, of course. For years they had been forming alliances with stronger allies. In the process they had more and more allowed the encroachment of the worship of strange gods among their people. This had caused a weakening of their identity, and thus a weakening of their national spirit.

The result was that they had been caught up in the huge Babylonian net that had swept through the region. Israel’s leadership was weakened and ineffectual by that time, and unable to mount any meaningful resistance. Nor was Babylon inclined to be forgiving of the alliances that Israel had formed with the enemies of Babylon. So many had been taken captive. Their leaders had been taken in slavery and to insure that they could mount no resistance, many of the brightest and best among the populace were exiled. There was little possibility that they would ever return to the power they had once known.

This time in their history was nearly as bad as the time they had languished as slaves in Egypt.

The prophet Isaiah was not ready to be tolerant of their whining, however, and called the people to regain their resolve and to bolster their courage by perseverance in the face of their adversity. He called them to be strengthened by the knowledge that Yahweh was not yet done with them and would not desert them.

Just wait. You’ll see. Yahweh will once again show the power that was shown in the confrontation with Pharaoh.

Just wait. You’ll see. It won’t always be the way it is now.

Just wait. You’ll see. The land will once again blossom into flower and will be filled again with the songs of Zion.

Just wait.

Waiting is hard. Waiting takes patience. Waiting sometimes takes courage.

In the early church the initial excitement about the resurrection translated itself into the hope for Christ’s immanent return. But as the years passed, that hope began to dim and early Christians began to wonder about their commitment.

The gospel stories were finally written down to assure people that in Christ God has done something, and there’s no waiting to receive it. In Christ the love and power and presence of God is real right here and right now.

Yes, there is still need to hope for a future in the kingdom of God. But, at the same time, you are a child of God today. You don’t have to wait to experience the full and powerful love of your heavenly Father.

You see, big brother Jesus has already come.