

**Advent, Day 12**  
**Read Matthew 11:2-14**

**Thursday, December 13**

*“Are you the one, or should we look for someone else?” Matthew 11:2*

### **WHAT DO YOU EXPECT?**

It was dank and dark in his lonely cell. The only light came from a tiny window high up on the wall. He couldn't see out, but at least he could tell if it were day or night. The straw that covered the floor stank of many who had been there before. They didn't change it often. There was barely room to turn around. He had to sleep curled up against the cold because they provided him no other cover than what he was wearing.

He had time to think there, at least. Lots of empty time.

The crowds had flocked to him in the wilderness. They had listened to his impassioned call to repentance and had responded to his invitation to be washed clean of their sins in the muddy waters of the Jordan. They encouraged him in his challenge to the authority of Herod and the empire which he represented. They applauded his denouncement of Herod and the sins of his household.

But that public challenge had landed him here. It was here, in the dark, that he began to understand that he would likely not see the unimpeded light of day or feel the desert winds of freedom on his face again. He realized he would likely die here. He began to question his own call.

He knew he was not Messiah. That was clear to him. He had thought that the chosen one was his cousin, Jesus. If it was Jesus, then John wanted to know why he had not yet begun to raise an army of righteousness to throw off the yoke of Rome and return Israel to its former glory. He was sure that his own arrest could be the galvanizing event. All it would take would be for Jesus to pick up the gauntlet where it lay in the dirt, waiting for a new champion. If Jesus would seize the opportunity he felt that the stampede toward freedom would be unstoppable. All of Israel could be free – perhaps even himself.

But Jesus had not acted, thus far.

So, frustrated, John sent his terse query.

*“When are you going to do what Messiah is supposed to do? Are you the one, or shall we seek another?”*

Jesus answered, but his answer was not what John expected.

*“Tell John...”* And what followed was basically a quote from Isaiah.

*“The blind see. The lame walk. The poor hear the good news.”*

The added word was hard to hear. *“Blessed be the one who is not offended by who I am?”*

We aren't told if John understood or not. I hope so. And I hope we get it, as well.

If we are looking for a knight in shining armor who comes striding through life on a charger and who fixes everything with a wave of his powerful hand and a blow from his mighty sword, we are likely to be disappointed.

The one who comes is the one who rides into Jerusalem on a donkey. His destination is not the palace, but a cross. The kingdom he brings into being is not based on power, but on love.

Some people still hope that Jesus will be who John wanted him to be. They still aren't ready to receive the gift that God has to give.

Jesus may not be what we expect. But he certainly is what we need.