



### **Advent Reflection for Saturday, December 16, 2023**

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#### **Isaiah 52:4-12**

For thus says the Lord God: Long ago, my people went down into Egypt to reside there as aliens; the Assyrian, too, has oppressed them without cause. Now therefore what am I doing here, says the Lord, seeing that my people are taken away without cause? Their rulers howl, says the Lord, and continually, all day long, my name is despised. Therefore my people shall know my name; on that day they shall know that it is I who speak—it is I!

How beautiful upon the mountains

are the feet of the messenger who announces peace,  
who brings good news,

who announces salvation,

who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."

Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices;

together they shout for joy,

for in plain sight they see

the return of the Lord to Zion.

Break forth; shout together for joy,

you ruins of Jerusalem,

for the Lord has comforted his people;

he has redeemed Jerusalem.

The Lord has bared his holy arm

before the eyes of all the nations,

and all the ends of the earth shall see

the salvation of our God.

Depart, depart, go out from there!

Touch no unclean thing;

go out from the midst of it; purify yourselves,

you who carry the vessels of the Lord.

For you shall not go out in haste,

and you shall not go in flight,  
for the Lord will go before you,  
and the God of Israel will be your rear guard.

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### **Today's Reflection is by Jacob Arnold**

After reading and re-reading this passage, two things keep standing out to me. First, after starting this passage with a messenger perched on a mountaintop (which paints a dramatic image for me of a windswept landscape and sunlight streaming through pines and brush), instead of waxing on about the grandiose mountains and the beauty and awe-inspiring nature of the Lord's creation, in verse 7, Isaiah says, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace." Here is one of the most important prophets in the Hebrew Bible talking about the feet of this messenger. I would think there would be some other prominent characteristic of this emissary to look at besides their feet. I know feet are important throughout the Bible, but surely a booming voice or an eloquent selection of words would be more important than feet. But, that little moment catches me off guard each time I read this passage. There is just something incongruous about Isaiah choosing to focus on feet before mentioning the message of salvation. Is this a direct connection to Jesus washing the disciples' feet before his Crucifixion?

Second, I see a call for patience in verse 12, "For you shall not go out in haste, and you shall not go in flight, for the Lord will go before you." I know, given that this writing is about 3000 years old, that a message of patience may seem obvious. But this is a lesson I find I need to be reminded of regularly. Here we are in Advent, a time of reflection, and I find myself like most years, anticipating being ultra-busy once again. I think with the amount of activities that are planned over the next month, I will be speeding from one place to another, forgetting to take moments to breathe. I have been trying to remind myself everyday that God works slowly. When my mind starts to race ahead with anxious thoughts and unproductive worries, I think this message helps bring me composure and calm. This serves as another reminder to slow down and that the Lord is with us on our journey.



Jacob lives around the corner from Holy Apostles with his wife Megan, and their children Olivia and Riley Kate. He loves music, enjoys running and spending time outside.