

# Second Hand Preacher

*2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent*

December 4, 2016

**Romans 15:4-9**

When I was younger, I didn't always get the Old Testament. God seemed spiteful and too powerful for his own good. He always took Israel back, but he exiled them, bound them by slavery, and even used a flood to wipe them out. I was much more attracted to Jesus. He was my friend who taught, healed, and performed other miracles. As an adult, I realize Jesus is much more than a friend. He challenged the status quo and he challenges us when we disobey. I also came to believe that the whole of the Old Testament points to a Messiah. Jesus is that Messiah and so that is why the Old Testament is so important for us to consider.

St. Paul wanted his followers to know the importance of the scriptures as well. This was at times a tough sell. These were the scriptures of the Jews. Some of the Gentiles who were non-Jews found this really hard to accept. This was very true of the Romans who were more worldly and didn't see a need to know what the Hebrews went through. Paul worked hard to let them know that the Old Testament spoke about a Savior and that Savior was Jesus the Christ. He helped make this connection by being welcoming. He would make the new Christians feel part of the community. The Gentiles were baptized and forever changed. Paul wrote letters to help them to relate to the changes.

Some of the Old Testament may be hard to read, but Isaiah gives us hope. We will read from this prophet many times during Advent. These passages are so good that they inspired St. Paul and they are also trying to inspire us. The plight of the Jewish people is directly related to us. They suffered for a Messiah and, as Christians, we know who that Messiah is. Jesus is the answer to our prayers. The Jewish people rejected Jesus and still hoped that a Messiah is on the way. In Advent, we prepare to memorialize the incarnation and we wait for Jesus to come again. We believe in a Virgin birth and trust that Jesus can help us in the world today. Jesus is our light in the darkness. St. Paul knew this and he longs for us to know it too.