



READ: Isaiah 11:1-5,10 (ESV)

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins... In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious.

ENTER THE STORY:

Jesse Tree...A tree with roots deep into the past, that twist and wind themselves through the stories of the Old Testament. With branches that stretch so high and wide, you can climb atop them and catch a beautiful glimpse of God's grand story from the very first blink of a star over Eden to the blinding light over the stable in Bethlehem.

This Jesse Tree is named after the father of King David, the first royal branch in the tree of the Messiah to come. David, to whom God promised that his line and his throne would be established forever. And when his sons and grandsons and great-grandsons turned away from God and chased after the things of the world...and their kingdoms fell...and it seemed like the whole royal family of Jesse had been chopped off right down to the roots, our covenant-keeping God vowed to bring forth someone NEW from David's line. An heir to his throne that would be a banner of salvation to ALL of the world. *This is one of God's titles: "Yahweh Nissi - Banner of Salvation,"* and it is brought to fulfillment through David's heir...Jesus Christ himself! And on that day, when Jesus comes...ALL of the nations will rally to him because they will recognize that he is the answer.

When all hope seems lost, and nothing but a dead stump remains...God reminds us that he and he alone brings dead things to life. Praise the LORD that we serve a living God who has all the answers and will always work everything out according to His plan.

This is just the beginning of our season of Advent, and already our hearts are FULL of hope and joy! We're going to hear more stories about the people in Jesus's family history and about how they helped God bring new life to his people.

PRAY: *Heavenly Father, you truly are our only hope, and we praise you that you bring life from dead stumps. Thank you for sending your Son Jesus, to save us from ourselves and be our banner of salvation! Would you help us pay close attention to him this Advent? Amen.*