



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

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD—and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist... In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his resting place will 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 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, *"Out of the stump of David's family will grow a shoot – YES, A new branch bearing fruit from the old root. In that day the heir to David's throne will be a banner of salvation to all the world. The nations will rally to him, and the land where he lives will be a glorious place."* (Isaiah 11:1,10 NLT)

This verse includes one of God's many titles: Yahweh Nissi - Banner of Salvation, and it is Jesus who fulfills this promise!

When all hope seems lost, and nothing but a dead stump remains, God again 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' family history and 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.*