

The Stump of Jesse

Scripture Reading — Isaiah 11:1-10

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. — Isaiah 11:1

During Advent, Christians look forward to the birth of the Savior. While Christmas joy rightly peaks at the birth of Jesus, sometimes we forget the Old Testament stories pointing to that moment at the manger. The Jesse Tree, which invites the retelling of many of those stories, can heighten our joy at Christmas as we see God's promises unfold in history.

In the chapter leading up to our reading for today, Isaiah describes God's wrath against human rebellion and sin. The prophet declares that it will be like God taking an ax to the arrogance of human evil, cutting a forlorn scene like a hillside stripped bare of trees, leaving nothing but wretched stumps.

But wait, says, Isaiah: "A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit." There's hope for God's people! God plans to raise up a Savior, both tender and powerful, a promise not only to Israel but to all nations. Isaiah declares, "In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples."

This month we will trace passages in Scripture that show the promise developing right up to the coming of the Jesse Tree himself—that is, Jesus, the Christ. As we recount the great, sweeping story of God's faithfulness, may we abound in hope, joy, and faith in God's promises of full life in Christ.

Prayer

God of all hope, fill us this season with joy and peace as we remember the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

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