

## *Day 1*

December 11



*Pray* | Give thanks for our one true king, Jesus Christ.

GOD WILL RESTORE HIS PEOPLE.

Seven hundred years before the time of Christ, Isaiah wrote to the Jewish people in Judah to inform them of a future king -- an unlikely king from the line of David -- who would be filled with the spirit and who would bring God's justice and redemption to the world. At the time this prophecy was written, many people had given up hope. The nation, filled with sin and rebellion, did not resemble the mighty kingdom that David established. The nation was in trouble, and would one day be cut down like a tree and reduced to a stump.

From that lifeless stump, a tender new shoot would grow. God would bring that shoot from the line of David and his father, Jesse. This shoot, our savior Jesus Christ, would be greater than the original tree, and would bring new life, new promise, new hope.



*Read* | *Isaiah 11:1*



*Reflect* | Spend some time reflecting on the following questions.

In what ways does God's promise to bring life out of death give you hope for the seemingly hopeless circumstances that you currently find yourself in, or see in the world around you?

Where have you seen God bring new life and hope from the "stumps" in your life?

Jesus is the shoot from the stump of Jesse who came in the most unlikely of circumstances. He came as one of us to save us from our sins. Have you committed your life to Jesus? Spend some time in prayer inviting Jesus into your heart, promising a life of faith and work to him.

## Day 2

December 12



*Pray | Ask for the Holy Spirit to fill you today.*

### THE PROMISE OF A NEW KING

All over the world, people greeted the news with celebration. A baby was to be born, a baby who would grow to be a popular king. After months of increasing anticipation, the future king was born. This is not the story of an ancient king; instead, the year was 2013 and Prince George, the future king of England, was born to William and Kate. The news of his birth stirred up hope, joy, and possibility for the future across the globe.

Isaiah's prophecy of a new king also stirred up hope and joy, but he pointed to a coming king that would be filled with the spirit of the Lord. Unlike any other king, this king would have spirit-filled wisdom beyond comprehension, and knowledge and fear of the Lord. Jesus Christ, our Savior, our one true King, is wise, brave, and the spirit of the Lord rests in him. He is different from all kings prior to him, and no one will ever succeed him.



*Read | Isaiah 11:1-2*



*Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on the following questions.*

Reflect on this truth: The spirit that was upon Jesus is also the spirit that empowers those who know him to love him and honor him.

To be effective servants of Christ, the spirit of God needs to continually dwell in us. Spend a few minutes in prayer, humbling yourself before God, asking for his spirit to help you continually live out your life working for his will.

As we depend upon the Holy Spirit, he effectively leads us closer to God and makes our lives more fruitful. How have you seen the Holy Spirit at work in your life recently?

## Day 3

December 13



*Pray* | Ask for forgiveness for judging others.

### WE NEED TO LOVE LIKE JESUS DOES.

We humans often cast judgement based on what our eyes see and our ears hear. We judge based on jealousy and what we think is right. We seek evidence that can be verified and scientific experiments that can be replicated; we also judge based on human perception. In today's judicial system, we spend enormous amounts of time and money trying to convict those who are guilty and to exonerate those who are innocent. We demand fairness and that rules and evidence are observed. But the coming king, the shoot that grows out of the stump of Jesse, will not be bound by evidence, lab results, by what humans see and hear, or by human opinion. He will see our hearts and know our innermost thoughts. His judgments will be accurate and sure, and nobody will be unjustly condemned.



*Read* | Isaiah 11:3-5



*Reflect* | Spend some time reflecting on the following questions.

We long for fair treatment from others, but we often don't give it. We hate those who judge based on appearance, false evidence or hearsay, but we are quick to judge on those standards. Whom are you judging today? How can you fill your heart with God's love and love others like Jesus does, unconditionally?

Several qualities of Jesus are described in verse 2-5. Which of these qualities of Jesus has particularly made a difference in your life? In your relationships, which of these qualities of Jesus do you struggle with the most?

Jesus knew, respected, and honored God. How can you follow in his footsteps and honor God today?

## Day 4

December 14



*Pray* | Help keep us strong in faith until Jesus returns.

ANTICIPATE A KING WHO WILL BRING REDEMPTION AND ESTABLISH PEOPLE.

If you have ever watched Animal Planet, odds are you have witnessed a predatory animal seeking after its prey. In the wild, animals are often at war. Survival is the top prize. They battle each other for food and shelter to care for their young and to sustain themselves. The relationship of predator and prey is pervasive throughout the natural world. In today's passage, the most unlikely of animals find themselves bonding together, living in harmony, sharing their lives and resources. Nature can be brutal, but humans can act in savage ways also, one of the unfortunate consequences of our world of sin. Thankfully, as noted in Isaiah's prophecy, humans will eventually live in peace. Not only has Christ claimed us for his own, but also, he is coming back to establish a visible kingdom.



*Read* | *Isaiah 11:6-9*



*Reflect* | Spend some time reflecting on the following questions.

We don't know whether the Lord will ever change the way nature works. But the Lord will help us to change the way we treat each other. Reflect on a relationship you are struggling with. Are you acting like wolves and lions? How can you reflect the love of Jesus in this relationship?

Verse 9 tells us, "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord." How can you devote more of your energy, resources, and time to help fulfill this prophecy? Whom can you share your faith with this Advent season?

Isaiah tells us that Jesus will bring restoration; humans will live in peace and harmony. We tend to focus our time and energy into relationships with people we know and are comfortable with in our local neighborhoods and community. Where can you step out of your comfort zone to reflect God's promise and love to others today?

## Day 5

December 15



*Pray* / Give thanks to God for his faithfulness.

### GOD IS FAITHFUL TO ALL HIS PROMISES.

God was faithful to his promise to bring the Messiah from the family of Jesse, just as God is faithful to all his promises. People waited and waited with hope to see the birth of the Messiah, just as today, we wait and wait with hope for the return of Jesus. Our hope is not empty because we know God will do all he has promised.

God has been establishing a kingdom from the beginning, and his kingdom is fully realized through the gospel. We have been redeemed as the people of God through Christ's sacrifice and resurrection. Now we are called to go and spread the news of our unlikely king and his kingdom.



*Read* | Isaiah 11:10



*Reflect* | Spend some time reflecting on the following questions.

Christmas is a time when we look at the coming of Christ. First, we look at Jesus' coming in the past when the son of God became man and offered himself for our redemption. Second, we look forward to the future coming of Jesus, when he will return to our world as the king who brings redemptive justice. What aspects of Christ's future reign are you most looking forward to?

What traditions or practices could we implement to cultivate excitement for Christ's second coming during each Christmas season?

Can you imagine a world without Jesus? How can you be the light of Jesus through this Advent season?

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