

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse;

from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.

- ² **The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—
the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and of power,
the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD—**
³ **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;**

- ⁴ **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.**

- ⁵ **Righteousness will be his belt
and faithfulness the sash around his waist. (NIV 84)**

Theme: The Messiah's Name: Root of Jesse

1. He comes from a dead stump
2. He comes with justice.

In central California lies one of North America's most well-known mountain ranges, the Sierra Nevada. The highest peak in the continental United States Mount Whitney, Lake Tahoe, and Yosemite national park can all be found in the Sierra Nevada mountain range. Also home in the Sierra Nevada are the Giant Sequoias—the largest trees in the world. The Giant Sequoia may not grow quite as tall as its relative, the Coastal Redwood (mostly found north of San Francisco), but it's much larger in diameter. These trees are the oldest living plants in the world. One of them, named the Muir Snag—now dead, is thought to have been 3500 years old. Other living trees are estimated to be at least 3200 years old. To put that in perspective, King David lived roughly 3000 years ago. The tallest Giant Sequoia is 311 feet tall, the widest at its base is 69 feet wide. One of the reasons these trees are able to live so long is that because of their deep root system;

plus they are able to withstand low-intensity fires. In fact, they do better after a fire.

There really isn't much that can do damage to a Giant Sequoia—expect if you cut them down. That is what happened—when settlers came through the land many of the trees were cut down and used for lumber. All that remained was a dead stump.

In the verses preceding our text God uses the figurative language of cutting down a tree by saying he would do so to those who oppose him and fail to do his will. In the last verse of chapter 10 we read, **He will cut down the forest thickets with an ax; Lebanon will fall before the Mighty One.** Chapter 10 focuses on the destruction of his people's enemies—Assyrian specifically. But here in chapter 11 our attention shifts to the nation of Judah and it's monarchy from David's line. **A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse.** David's Father of course was Jesse. His descendants would no longer be kings over God's chosen nation.

This wasn't supposed to happen. The Jews were supposed to be big giant trees—indestructible. They were God's chosen people, protected by him. They have withstood and defeated numerous enemies. David was had chosen by God to serve as his king. To David God said, **Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.** Israel and its kings thought they were untouchable—no one could do them harm. So they tested God. They became just as wicked as the nations around them. Last week we talked about their king, Ahaz. He sacrificed his own son in a fire to an idol. The whole nation followed him and the other kings in idolatry. And so God cut them down—both the nation and the kings. Over time he sent nation after nation who cut the Jews down to almost nothing. Eventually, David's kingly line was cut off, leaving only a stump.

We too like to consider ourselves Giant Sequoias. We are untouchable, able to withstand any attack. We are Christians now, so we figure that we'll always be believers. So we get this false sense of security—that we can do whatever we want when we want or believe what we want, just like spoiled children. We often care little for God as we go after the fame, fun, and fortune that this life offers. At times, we act just like the rest of the world and yet expect to be treated differently.

Paul's warning to the Corinthians stands for us too—**If you think you are standing firm, be careful that you do not fall.** In many ways we are like those Israelites. We think that we cannot fall. We think that on the basis of who we are we'll stand forever. We become proud and arrogant. And soon we trust in ourselves instead of the Lord. Let the people of Judah and Israel be a warning for us. If we follow in their footsteps we too will be cut down. We too will be nothing but stumps—like the stump of Jesse.

But look what comes from that stump—it was not completely dead, **A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.** From this seemingly dead stump of a tree comes a shoot, a branch. A few verses later he is called the root of Jesse. You may have seen something like this—you cut down a tree or a bush or something of the sort; but the roots are still there, the tree isn't completely dead. The next summer you see some new growth—coming off the sides of the stump, a shoot. Usually these stumps don't amount to much and you're better off just cutting them off.

2. Of course we know who this shoot is—Jesus Christ. He came from that stump of Jesse as a second David. The line of the monarchy had long been cut off, so Jesus came in lowly circumstances. Born of a poor virgin in a stable—not with the grand pomp and circumstance in a grand palace that you would expect of a king. God's promise to David still stood even if he did cut down the tree—his kingdom would last forever and ever. That is because, as God, Christ is forever and ever. And even though he was born as a shoot, he became the grandest tree of them all. He is now the King of kings and Lord of lords.

And he is no ordinary king. No, this root of David is starkly contrasted to the wicked kings of the Jews. They rebelled against God; they failed to follow the will of the Lord. But not the shoot of Jesse. He is given a seven-fold Spirit, the number of completeness. In other words, Christ has every spiritual gift. The Spirit gives him wisdom and understanding. He knows and understands all things—including all your wants and desires.

He also has the spirit of counsel and power. Not only does he know what you need, he also gives you advice. He does this through his Word, through which he relays to you the plan of your redemption. His power means that he is able to guard and defend you against all harm and danger and to bring you safely to his heavenly home.

He also has the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. As God he knows God more than anyone. He knows him as a gracious and loving God and Savior. The fear of the Lord indicates that in his humility Jesus respectfully would submit to the plans of the Lord. In his spirit of knowledge and understanding the Lord doesn't see us as we see us. As we read 1 Samuel 16, **man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.** We see someone who is poor, someone who is sick, someone who is beat down and abused. We see those who are rich and powerful. We see those who act like Christians, are proud of their Lutheran heritage. The Lord, however, cares about one thing—the heart. He knows if someone has faith or not—no matter what they say or do. As we read, **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.**

Christ always does what is right—not only did he keep God's commands perfectly, but he also does what is right by us. He doesn't mistreat us or abuse us. But he lifts up the poor and needy in spirit—he gives us his grace and makes us righteous in his own sight. He is also fair. God is a just God who demands that a price be paid for our sins. So the Lord paid the price for us by suffering through our punishment. With our condemnation paid for, the just Lord declares us not guilty.

These blessings, of course, are received by faith. And notice how this Root of David **delights in the fear of the Lord.** Christ takes pleasure whenever someone believes in him. Whenever someone has awe and respect for the Lord through faith, the root of David rejoices and the angels in heaven along with him. He takes pleasure when someone is made his child through the gospel, for he will have another companion in heaven. Unlike the other kings who hated the Lord, the King of kings delights in those who fear him.

And finally we see that this shoot wears two belts—not literal belts, of course. No, they are belts of righteousness and faithfulness. Again, contrasted to the kings of Isaiah's day who didn't do what was right and weren't faithful to the Word. The faithful and perfect Lord makes us righteous in the sight of God through faith in him!

The Great Sequoias are certainly great and magnificent. You can say there is nothing else like them on the face of the earth—some living

for over 3000 years! Contrary to what we like to admit, we aren't that great and magnificent. And soon one day we'll be cut down and die. But Christ is that root from Jesse—that shoot who grows into the most significant and magnificent tree the world has even seen. And soon, when he returns he will give life to our lifeless stumps. And he make us great and glorious just like him. And unlike those great trees, we will live forever. Amen.