

# Dec 1. The Promise of Advent

I've never really paid that much attention to Advent. Oh, there was always a calendar with little doors to open each day (preferably with chocolate inside – double points if there's chocolate and a nativity scene!) but otherwise the days leading up to Christmas were just the same as any other days of the year, albeit with the added busyness of the season. There was still that magical feeling of winter-time cosiness and anticipation, but anticipation of what?

It's only in recent years, partly as we've had the advent devotional books to read together as a church family, and partly because of the children, that I've begun to appreciate the promise of advent properly...

...The Jesse Tree has become a trendy thing these days – so named because of Isaiah 11v1 *"There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit"* – but it's actually an ancient medieval tradition of telling the story of creation through to the birth of Jesus, typically using pictures for those who were unable to read. A few years ago I realised that a favourite book for reading when the children were littler, "The Jesus Storybook Bible" fitted the idea of the Jesse Tree perfectly. The book tells the story of the Bible as one big story, with every chapter pointing forward to the promise that "one day, God himself would come" and the first 24 chapters take you from creation to the birth of Jesus. A chapter for each day of Advent and each day a reminder "the Rescuer will come. Look for him. Watch for him. Wait for Him. He will come! I promise."

Over the course of Lockdown we've been reading The Chronicles of Narnia. We just finished "The Last Battle" this week, and I'll tell you, reading the last chapter of that book aloud is no easy thing to do!! As we look ahead this Advent 2020, to the celebration of the birth of Jesus - our promised rescuer, to the easing of lockdown restrictions and the potential of being able to visit loved ones ever so briefly, and to the hope of a 'more normal' 2021, let us also hold onto the promise, in the words of CS Lewis, that one day we will begin the "Great Story, which no one on earth has ever read: which goes on forever: in which every chapter is better than the one before."

"Father, thank you for our Root of Jesse. Thank you that out of the smallest remnant you brought your Son, our Rescuer, and through Him the way for all to know you and rejoice with you one day in eternity. As we look to the past to see how you have fulfilled your promises to us, let us look to the future with hope and certainty that we will one day be in the presence of the Root of Jesse." Amen.

*Jesus Storybook Bible downloads for Jesse Tree: [page 1](#) & [page 2](#)*