

Jesus, the Seed of Jesse's Tree

Michael J. Nielsen / General

Jesse Tree / Creation; Seed; Christ / Genesis 1:27; Genesis 3:8–15; Romans 5:12–21

Jesus, The Seed of Jesse's Tree

- › Grace, mercy, and peace be yours from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, our Coming Advent King. Amen.

There is one story that the Bible tells: it is the history of our salvation. But to understand the end of a story, one must go back. Way back. To when it all began.

The story of salvation does not begin with the incarnation—though everything in time before leads to the incarnation and everything afterward flows from that central point in history. We see that story in the Jesse Tree—a story that is Jesus' story and is our story as well. Look around you and you might see a growing tree—an oak, a pine, a maple. Yet the mightiest tree in nature began as a small seed, so small that the world takes no notice.

And so our story begins. Back to the beginning. Back to the tree on the Jesse Tree. Way back when the story our salvation began.

We have all heard the story of creation. We have the first verse of the bible memorized: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” With this the panorama of the history of the universe begins. We also know that the crown of creation came on the sixth day when

English Standard Version Chapter 1

God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them

Creation, including the human race, both male and female, was not by accident or chance but by the intentional act of the eternal God. And again and again, God saw what He had made, and again and again, He Called it good.

And Good it was! For the man and the woman, God planted a garden we know as Eden. There, our first parents lived a life of harmony and peace with nature, with each other, and with the One who had created them. Sin and its ugly consequences were unknown in this world. So many have dreamed of living again in an earthly Eden, a utopia of humanity's own making. But only God can create that which is truly good and a true Eden.

How beautiful was that paradise known as Eden! Yet it was not to last. You and I can see its loss just by looking around us or by looking into a mirror. We see a brokenness and sin. We see hate and war. We see despair and loneliness. We see disease and death. In other words, our eyes bear witness to what happened in the Garden of Eden. You know the story. The serpent tempted the woman. Her husband stood by and watched and then with her ate of the fruit of the one tree that was forbidden to them. Yet their initial sin was not in the physical eating but rather in their hearts choosing to listen to the serpent and rejecting the Creator's loving law. A seed of doubt caused an act that would close the gates of Eden to all humanity.

So what does the Creator do to those who sinned against Him? Reject them? Leave them without hope and redemption? Such is not the nature of the triune God. He is love itself, and that love reached out to Adam, to Eve, and to all their descendants. So great is His love that He could not destroy His creation or leave it to itself. In love, He created the man and the woman, and in love, He would provide a way of redemption that He had known from eternity. It was a price only He could pay, a price paid by, as the old King James Version so beautifully translates it, a "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

Sin brings death. And yet, from death springs life. Think about what happens after a devastating forest fire. The seed remains even amidst all the death. And from that seed New Life bursts forth. Though Adam and Eve and all the subsequent generations have borne the curse our sin has earned, our loving Creator has not deserted us. On the contrary, He has not only embraced us but

joined Himself to us. Here is the first promise of salvation, and it is given immediately after the first sin and the darkness that it had brought. The Lord God said to the serpent:

English Standard Version Chapter 3

15 I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and her offspring;
he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel.”

The word for offspring is the word for “seed”. And here the love of God shines through the darkness. There would be one seed that would defeat the serpent. And yet that seed would not be the seed of the man and the woman, as every other subsequent human birth would be. No, this Seed is the Seed of the woman—a miraculous and divine conception.

The tree of Jesse begins with a seed—a seed present but dormant in Eve. In love, God remembered His promise through every generation of fallen humanity. Through those generations, that Seed was promised as Eden closed would remain present though hidden to human eyes. In the fullness of time, in the womb of a daughter of Eve, the Virgin Mary, that promised Seed would spring forth and grow. This was the Seed the woman promised at the fall. From her womb would come forth the Creator Himself joined to His Creation in the God-Man, Jesus Christ. Here is the Redeemer!

All that was lost in Adam is restored in the Seed of the woman. Here is the Christ, the Messiah. Here is the Lamb of God, the one and perfect sacrifice whose blood reverses the curse of the fall and brings grace and forgiveness to the whole human race. This is Jesus, Son of God and Son of Man. This is the new Adam, who bears the sin of the old Adam and every human being and carries it all to the cross. From the tree of Eden would come death to all humanity, but from the tree of Calvary would come life to all humanity. This is the Christ of Easter by whose resurrection all the universe is forever changed. This is the Lamb into whom you and I were baptized to share in His death and resurrection. This is the Lamb whose body and blood have sustained us all at

altars great and small. This is Jesus the Seed of Jesse's Tree, and through Him, the Eden that was lost is restored for Eternity .

In the name of Jesus. Amen.

- › Now may the peace of God which passes all human understanding, guard your hearts and your minds and keep them focused in Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior, the seed of Jesse's Tree. Amen.