

MIDWEEK OF ADVENT 2: STUDENT

Jesus, the Root of Jesse's Tree

Genesis 22:1–18; Hebrews 11:17–22

OPENING

Pray: Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to make ready the way of Your only-begotten Son, that by His coming we may be enabled to serve You with pure minds; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen. (Collect for Advent 2; *LSB Altar Book*, p. 841)

INTRODUCTION

O come, Thou Branch of Jesse's tree,
Free them from Satan's tyranny
That trust Thy mighty pow'r to save,
And give them vict'ry o'er the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel! (*LSB* 357:4)

“There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. . . . In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of Him shall the nations inquire, and His resting place shall be glorious” (Isaiah 11:1, 10). Last week, we saw that Jesus is the Seed of the Jesse Tree, first promised to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:15). About seven hundred years before Jesus' birth, He was identified as the “root of Jesse” who would come to bear the good fruit of eternal life for sinners (Isaiah 11:10). But before Isaiah could prophesy about Jesus as the Root, the promise of the Seed had to be preserved through Abraham.

QUESTIONS

1. Read Genesis 12:1–3, 7 and Galatians 3:7–9, 16. What is the scope and content of the promises made to Abram (later renamed Abraham)? How are these promises fulfilled?
2. Considering the twenty-five years that Abraham had to wait for the Lord to fulfill the promise of a son, what narrative effect does this have when we reach God's test of Abraham in Genesis 22:1–2? What effect would this have had on Abraham as a flesh-and-blood man? How does Abraham overcome any hesitation to obey God's command? See Hebrews 11:17–19.
3. According to James 2:20–24, what insights should we draw from the example of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac? Does this contradict Paul's teaching about justification in Romans 4:1–5? Why or why not?

4. Read Romans 5:8–9 and 1 John 4:7–11. How does God show His love to us, and how is His love to manifest itself in our lives?
5. What counsel does the Root of Jesse give to His Church in Revelation 22:16–21? Although He has promised to return soon, what would be the purpose for Him delaying? See 2 Peter 3:8–10.
6. According to Romans 15:8–13, who are the beneficiaries of the work of the Root of Jesse? What benefits do they receive from Him?

CONCLUSION

“If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us” (Romans 8:31–34). In Christ Jesus, the Root of Jesse, we have justification, an intercessor with the Father, and the promise that God will give us “all things!” What more could we ask for?

CLOSING

Pray: O Father in heaven, You sent Your only-begotten, beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to be the Root of Jesse’s tree and the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Grant to us, who have been grafted into Christ through Holy Baptism, a steadfast faith like Abraham’s, who demonstrated that he was justified by faith through his work of his obedience to You; through the same Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.