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Johanana

## THE WATER OF LIFE AND THE TREE OF LIFE

The Bible speaks of the Fountain of Life, the River of the Water of Life, and the Tree of Life. We know that when God created our visible world, He created springs, streams, rivers, and lakes, and trees along the banks of the waters. We can admire their beauty, but on the other hand, we understand that they are only shadow images of what those “Life” ending words actually mean. In this article, we will find out what the Bible says about them.

I was also interested in how John and other biblical seers described what they saw in the heaven. I wanted to visualize their visions and thereby unravel the mysteries of the invisible creation. These revelations also reveal the ultimate secrets of the Water of Life and the Tree of Life.

### River of the Water of Life

Figure 1 is based on John's vision, which is described in Revelation chapter 22. It speaks of the River of Water of Life and the Tree of Life as follows.

*And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*

*And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever. (Rev. 22:1-5)*

In the Figure, Jesus Christ sits on His throne, in the invisible realm of creation, radiating supernatural heavenly light. From beneath His throne flow streams of the Water of Life, which are crystal-clear spiritual water. However, they soon branch out into seven branches. From the central stream, as it were, irrigation canals branch out on both sides, so that together they form a tree-like pattern. Around each branch of the stream, vegetation and trees grow, producing abundant fruit. The streams that flow from under Christ's throne, around which Life is emerged, are called the Tree of Life in the above-mentioned passage in the Book of Revelation.

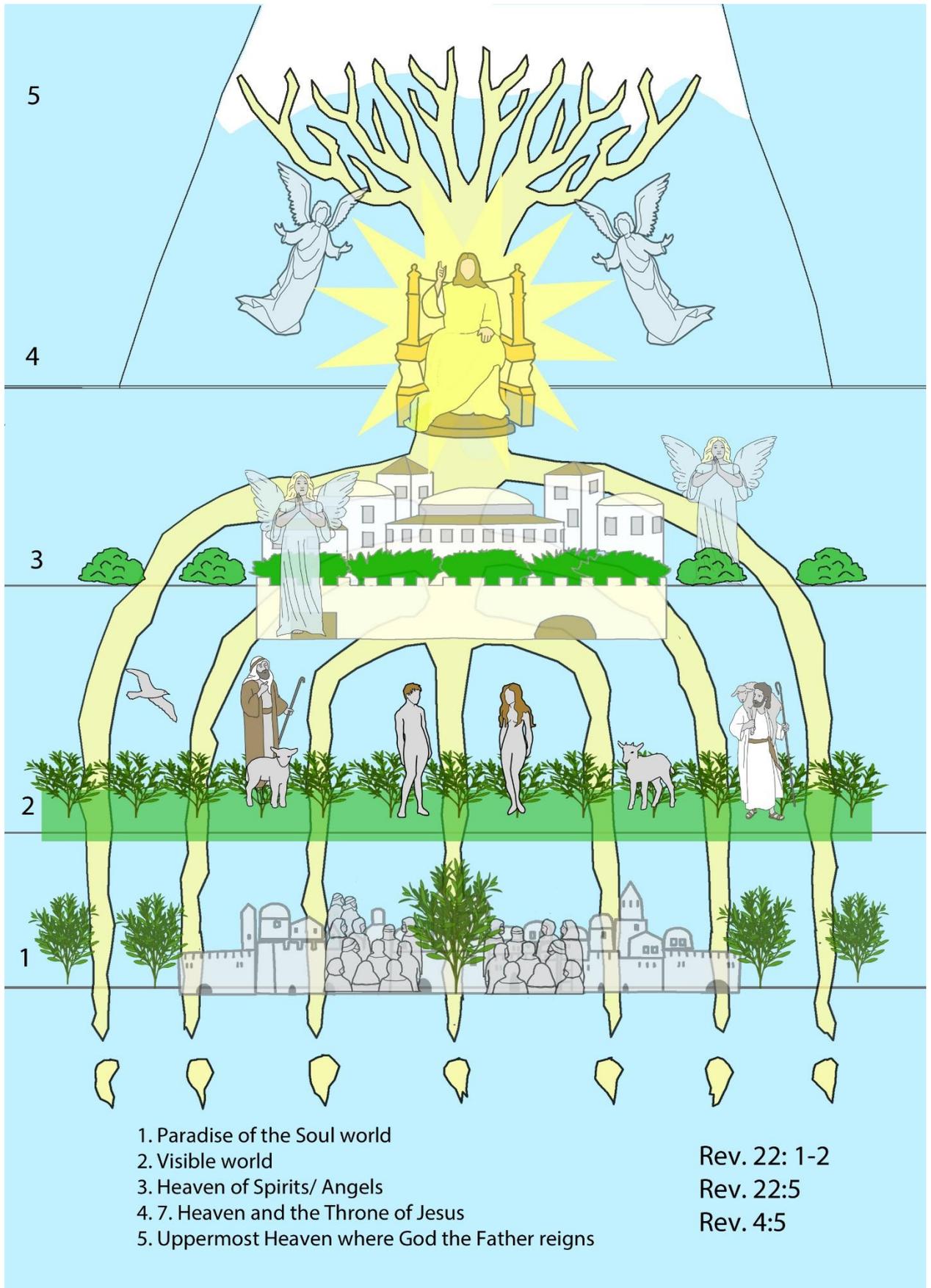


Figure 1. The rivers of the Water of Life according to the Book of Revelation, supplemented by other Biblical descriptions of the invisible creation.

Revelation chapter 4 speaks of the seven lamps of fire before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the world.

*Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back. (Rev. 4:6)*

*And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. (Rev. 5:6)*

This metaphor speaks of the same thing as the streams in Figure 1. The horns of Christ represent power and strength. Christ rules the universe through these spiritual streams.

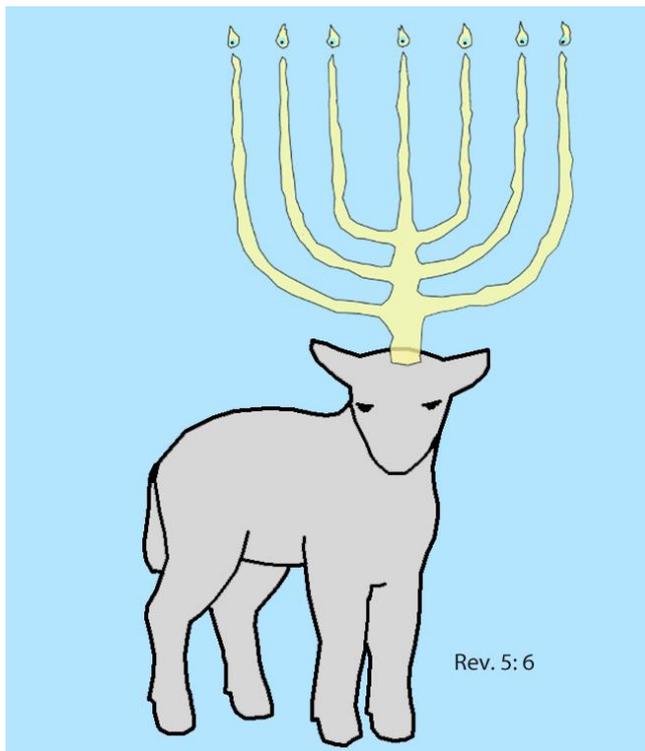


Figure 2. The Lamb with seven horns and seven eyes—the seven spirits of God sent out into all the invisible creation.

The river flowing from under the throne of Christ is thus divided into seven streams that permeate the entire invisible creation, all its worlds and heavens. They also permeate our visible world. They are spiritual streams whose water is pure, clear, living, light-giving and even burning. According to the Bible, they can be given the following names: Spirit of Wisdom, Spirit of Understanding, Spirit of Power, Spirit of Love, Spirit of Faith, Spirit of Hope, Spirit of Grace, and Spirit of Truth, and they also work in us who live in this world, in our spirit and soul.

But where do the rivers of the Water of Life ultimately come from? They ultimately come from God the Father, from an even higher level of heaven than where Christ reigns. Psalm 104 tells us about this:

*He sends the springs into the valleys, They flow among the hills. They give drink to every beast of the field; The wild donkeys quench their thirst. By them the birds of the heavens*

*have their home; They sing among the branches. He waters the hills from His upper chambers; The earth is satisfied with the fruit of Your works. (Ps. 104:10-13)*

Psalm 104 is a creation psalm that relates to the creation of both the invisible and visible creations. The sources of the Water of Life of the invisible creation are in the highest mountains where God the Father dwells. Just as the Jordan receives its water from the snow-capped mountains of Hermon, so too the sources of the Water of Life are ultimately in the mountains of God the Father, where they flow in small streams and gather into a great river at the throne of Jesus Christ. Jesus governs these waters from then on.

*For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. (John 5:26-27)*

The small streams that flow down from the mountains form, as it were, the roots of the Tree of Life. God the Father represents the roots of the Tree of Life. Psalm 36 says:

*How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! Therefore, the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Your wings. They are abundantly satisfied with the fullness of Your house, And You give them drink from the river of Your pleasures. For with You is the Fountain of Life; In Your light we see light. (Ps. 36:7-9)*

### Heavenly Menorah

The following Figure shows John's vision, which is described in Revelation chapter 1. It has the same pattern of streams of the Water of Life in the background as in Figure 1. These streams of the Water of Life form not only the Tree of Life but also, symbolically, the heavenly Menorah, both of which are turned upside down. A Menorah means a seven-branched lampstand. God instructed the Israelites to make such a lampstand to light the part of the tabernacle where the priests performed their services.

God gave the following instructions for making the lampstand:

*"You shall also make a lampstand of pure gold; the lampstand shall be of hammered work. Its shaft, its branches, its bowls, its ornamental knobs, and flowers shall be of one piece. And six branches shall come out of its sides: three branches of the lampstand out of one side, and three branches of the lampstand out of the other side. Three bowls shall be made like almond blossoms on one branch, with an ornamental knob and a flower, and three bowls made like almond blossoms on the other branch, with an ornamental knob and a flower--and so for the six branches that come out of the lampstand. On the lampstand itself four bowls shall be made like almond blossoms, each with its ornamental knob and flower. (Exodus 25:31-34)*

On the branches of the lampstand were to be made knobs and flowers of an almond tree. Therefore, the menorah with all its branches represents the almond tree. In it we can see the same symbolism of the Tree of Life as earlier in the streams of the Water of Life. The oil inside the lampstand represents spiritual, living and burning water.

It is probably this heavenly Menorah that John is talking about when describing his vision in Revelation chapter 1.

*Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. (Rev. 1:12-13)*

John saw a gigantic figure of Christ in the midst of a heavenly golden lampstand. Christ was like the central pillar of the lampstand, from which the other branches extended as if they were extensions of Christ's hands and feet. The lampstand and Christ were so enormous that they filled the entire invisible creation.

In Christ's right hand were seven stars. In explaining the vision to John, Christ said:

*The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches. (Rev. 1:20)*

So, the lamps on the lampstand represent churches. The churches grow around the branches of this heavenly lampstand. Thus, the vegetation and trees that grew along the rivers of the Water of Life represent the seven heavenly churches (Figure 1). The greenery growing around the branches of the Tree of Life represents the churches.



Figure 3. John's vision (Rev. 1).

## Tree of Life

This leads us to the next Figure, which represents the Tree of Life. Just like the heavenly Menorah, it also appears to be upside down in relation to the trees of our visible world. The roots of the heavenly tree, which represent God the Father, must be at the top. In some passages in the Bible, the Father appears as the stump from which the New Branch grows.

*There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. (Isaiah 11:1-2)*

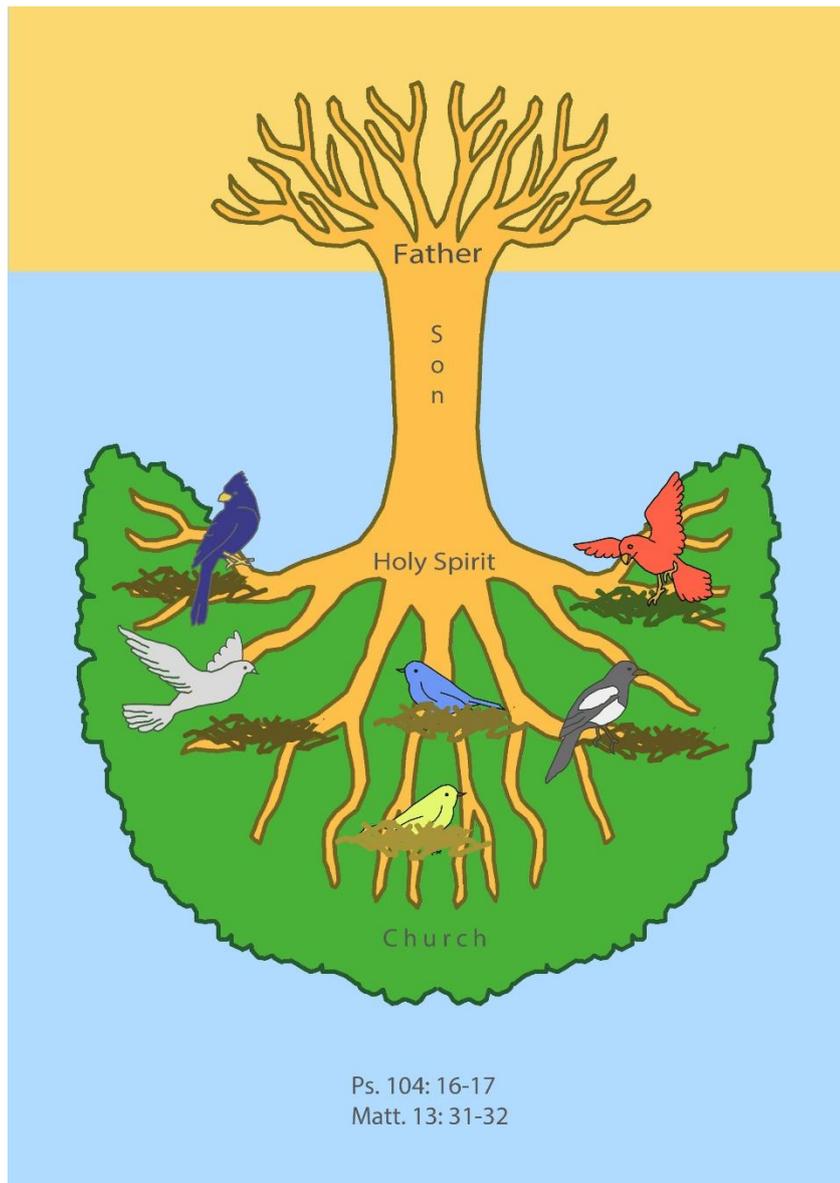


Figure 4. The Tree of Life, on whose branches the birds of the air make their nests. The roots represent God the Father, the trunk represents Christ, and the branches represent the Holy Spirit. The green covering of the tree represents the church.

The New Branch, of course, represents Jesus Christ, who starts to grow from His Father's stump and eventually grows so large that it fills the entire space, i.e. the invisible creation. The Holy Spirit with

its many streams forms its branches. The Tree of Life, just like the previously discussed Menorah and the streams of the water of Life, thus depict the triune God of Christianity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The same Psalm, which was quoted in connection with the Fountain and the River of Life, now speaks of the Tree of Life as follows:

*The trees of the Lord are full of sap, The cedars of Lebanon which He planted, Where the birds make their nests; The stork has her home in the fir trees. (Ps. 104:16-17)*

Jesus also spoke in His parable of a tree in whose branches the birds of the air build their nests. (Matthew 13:31-32)

The congregation forms the green cover of the Tree of Life, the new vegetation. The congregation is therefore closely connected to the Tree of Life and receives its life force from it.

Jesus compared Himself to a vine:

*"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean, because the word that I have spoken to you has made you clean. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit unless it remains in the tree, neither can you unless you remain in me. "I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him, the same bears much fruit. Without me you can do nothing. (John 15:1-5)*

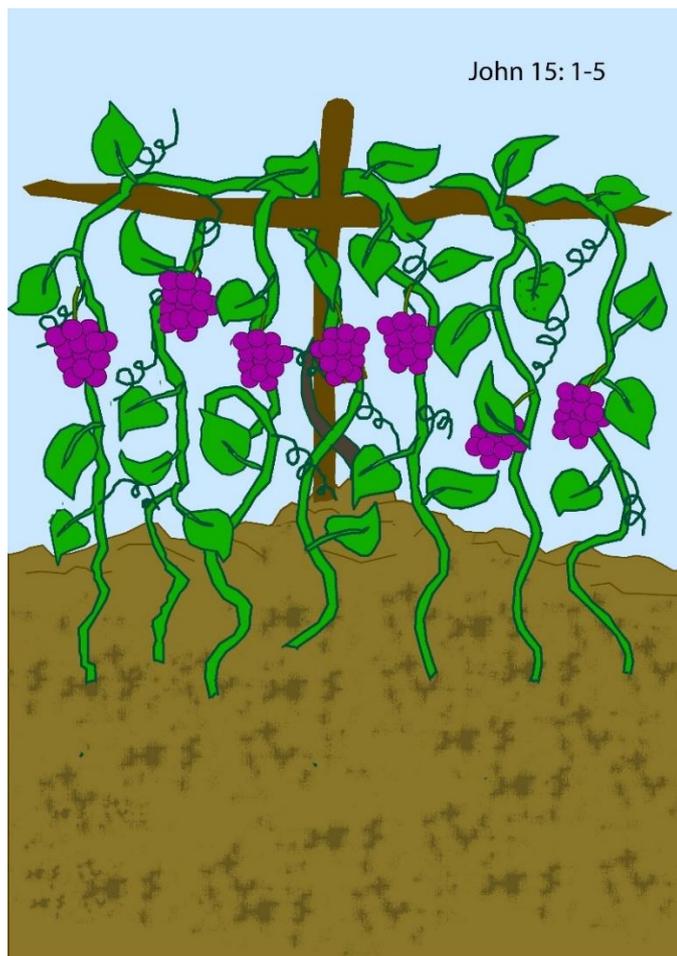


Figure 5. Supported vine.

With this parable, Jesus wanted to say that He is the Tree of Life. The large shoots coming out of Him represent the branches of the Holy Spirit. People can attach themselves to them as living leaves and shoots.

If a person is born again in his spirit, he is already connected to the Tree of Life through the Holy Spirit, for according to the Bible the Holy Spirit will dwell in his heart (Romans 5:5). In that and only in that he has Life, with a capital letter.

### Conclusions

We therefore come to the conclusion that the streams of the Water of Life, the heavenly Menorah, and the Tree of Life all speak of the same thing. They describe the triune God of Christianity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Could anything other than God be the Source of Life or the Tree of Life from which man can eat for Life? And could anything other than a tree better describe the triune God? The Father forms the roots, the Son the trunk, and the Holy Spirit the branches of the Tree.

The Tree's foliage and fruit also very well describe how the church/Israel connect to their God and how they receive their nourishment from the Tree. What could better describe this connection? Jesus said to the Samaritan woman:

*Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." (John 4:13-14)*

In the Book of Revelation, Jesus says:

*And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. (Rev. 21:6)*

*for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes." (Rev. 7:17)*

Christ (the Lamb) gives the Water of Life to those who dwell by the rivers of the Water of Life. Psalm 1 says:

*Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,  
Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;  
But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night.  
He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water,  
That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither;  
And whatever he does shall prosper.  
(Ps. 1:1-3)*

People who have given their lives to Christ are like trees planted by the rivers of God, which grow green and never wither. Thus churches are formed along the spiritual rivers of God.

Let us return to Figure 3, which shows John's vision. The same thing can be said from it, for according to Christ's explanation, the lampstands, or branches of the candlestick, mean the churches. They grow around the lampstands. The angels of the seven churches mean the personal Spirits of God in their midst. In this connection it should be mentioned that in each branch of the Spirit of God all the Spirits are represented, although one of them is dominant. For example, the spirit of grace is in each of them.

As for the tree of life of Adam and Eve in Paradise, it was symbolic in a way, but it had a direct connection to the heavenly Tree of Life mentioned above. When Adam and Eve fell into sin by eating from the forbidden tree, they fell before the serpent, i.e. Satan. As a result, they were cut off from the heavenly Tree of Life, and they were expelled from Paradise.

It is important to realize that not only the church, but also Israel is a partaker of the Tree of Life. God has not abandoned and will never abandon Israel. Paul taught the following regarding the olive tree:

*And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you. (Romans 11:17-18)*



Figure 6. The olive tree and a grafted branch. Paul's olive tree is a picture of the Tree of Life.

### Other words ending with "Life"

What about the other biblical words that end with "Life"? These include Bread of Life, Word of Life, Way of Life, and Book of Life. These issues can probably be better addressed based on the above.

Let's first look at the Bread of Life, which Jesus speaks of in the Gospel of John:

*For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." Then they said to Him, "Lord, give us this bread always." And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread*

*of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. (John 6:33-35)*

Then Jesus elaborated further:

*Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world." (John 6:47-51)*

When these words aroused irritation in the listeners, Jesus explained the matter to his disciples:

*When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, "Does this offend you? What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before? It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him. (John 6:61-64)*

Jesus is referring here to the heavenlies. No one needs to eat His physical body or drink His physical blood, but must partake of the Tree of Life, which is His heavenly body, and through which he also partakes of His blood. Here we can return to Figure 3, which shows His gigantic body of creation. Everyone who wants to enter into Life must partake of His heavenly body and of the spiritual blood of grace that flows with the streams of the Water of Life.

The Bread of Life brings to mind the words of the New Covenant that Jesus spoke to His disciples at the Last Supper:

*For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. (1 Cor. 11:23-26)*

The communion bread and wine, which are consumed in this world in His memory, of course contain only a picture of the heavenly bread and wine, through which the believer is planted in the Tree of Life, or the Body of Christ. Already while living on earth he may experience the growth of his spirit in connection with the Body of Christ.

The Word of Life refers to Christ Himself, who has the words of eternal life. Peter once confessed to Jesus:

*But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." (John 6:68-69)*

Here the words of Life mean the proclamation of Christ, which leads to human salvation and eternal Life. The angel opened the prison doors to the apostles and urged them to teach the people the words of the new Life:

*"Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life." And when they heard that, they entered the temple early in the morning and taught. (Acts 5:20-21)*

When a person receives in faith the words of Life proclaimed to him, he begins to walk the Way of Life, which leads to eternal Life.

*You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore. (Ps. 16:11)*

Jesus Christ Himself is the Way of Life:

*Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. (John 14:6)*

Jesus described the road to Life as narrow. Many travel the broad road that leads to destruction. Only through Jesus can we find the way and the gate that leads to eternal Life.

*"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it." (Matthew 7:13-14)*

The Old Testament mentions the word Book of Life only once:

*Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, And not be written with the righteous. (Ps. 69:29)*

Only the names of the righteous are written in the Book of Life. It can be concluded that only the names of believers who have been attached to the Tree of Life by the Holy Spirit are written in the Book of Life, since according to the New Testament, they are righteous in Christ. (Gal. 2: 16)

The Book of Life is mentioned several times in the Book of Revelation, usually in connection with the Last Judgment:

*He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. (Rev. 3:5)*

*And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. (Rev. 20:12)*

*And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire. (Rev. 20:15)*

### Final words

Essentially, God is Spirit. Jesus taught:

*God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." (John 4:24)*

The streams of Spirit represent the basic nature of God. They come from the sources of Eternal Light outside of creation. God is the Spirit of Life. When God created the invisible and the visible creation, He caused His own Spirit to flow through them like a river. Creation drew its life force from the streams of Spirit with which it was connected.

The Fall severed man's connection with the flow of God's Spirit. Thus man fell into the power of darkness. But Christ loved man and became the Light of the world. He came into the world to reopen the springs of Life that had dried up because of sin. Through the Holy Spirit, man was given a new opportunity to connect with the flow of God's Spirit. When a person accepts Jesus Christ into his life, he/she literally connects with the Tree of Life and becomes a partaker of God's flow of the Water of Life.

God is thus Spirit by nature, but in what form He wishes to appear in the visible creation is a different matter. When Christ came into this visible world, He was born in a humble human body. This was necessary because He was to reconcile natural mankind. When He then rose from the dead and when He ascended to the heavenlies to rule over the entire invisible and visible creation, He put on a heavenly body that is not flesh and blood. And when He wishes to appear as King of His entire heavenly Kingdom, He may take on the form of all the structures of the invisible creation that channel the currents of God's Spirit in the invisible creation. Then He appears as the gigantic body of Christ that fills the entire invisible creation. Some seers may have seen in heaven an upside-down tree or lampstand instead of a human body. In essence, these too represent the body of Christ that fills everything in the invisible creation. Saved people become part of the body of Christ.

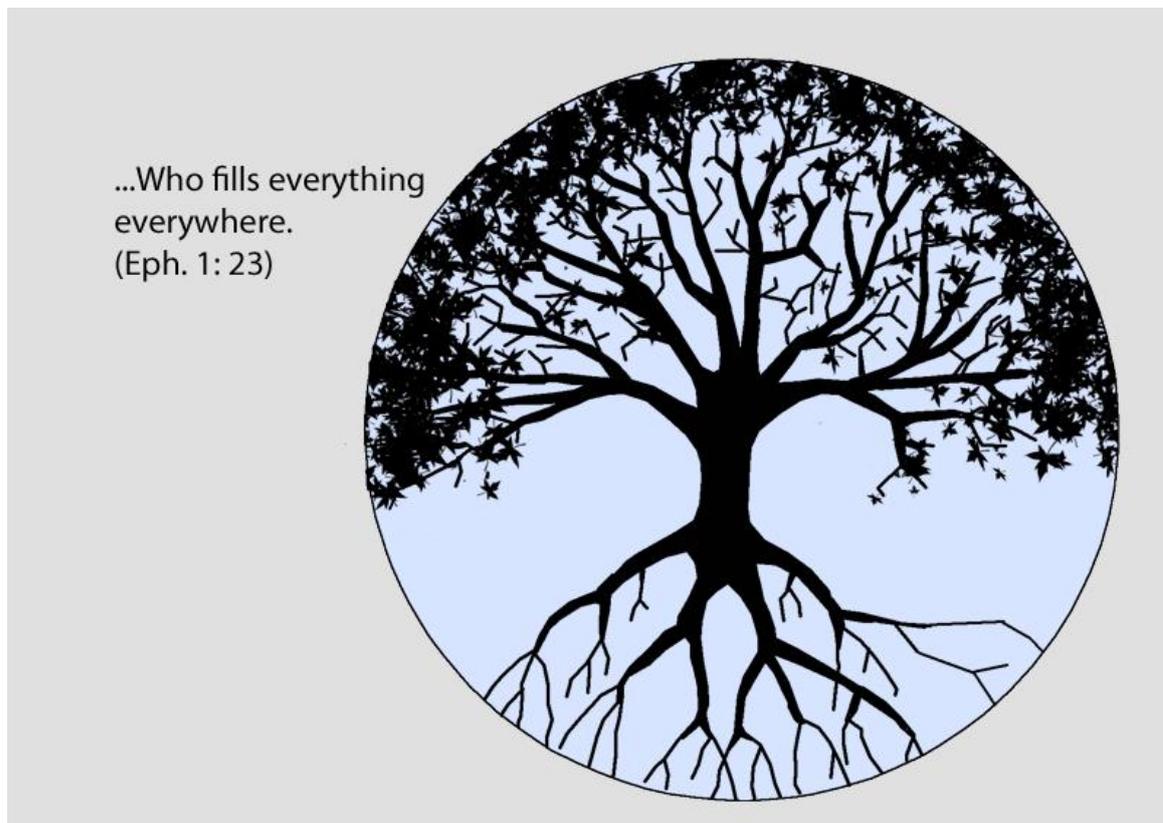


Figure 7. The Tree of Life (the Body of Christ), which fills all space in the invisible creation.

Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life. (John 14:6). Christ built a new Way of Life for man, which leads to the Kingdom of God.

The following verse in Hebrews, which mentions the Way of Life, contains an important exhortation from Paul:

*Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. (Hebrews 10:19-23)*