

The following sermon was preached at Redemption Baptist Church on Sunday, 31 May 2026. We encourage you to look up the Scriptures that are referenced and see the context for yourself. May the Lord speak to your heart as you study His Word.

The Life Source in Heaven

This past week, as the temperatures here in Ireland were sizzling, my mind wandered back to the summer of 1988. It was that summer when my dad first let me mow the entire garden all by myself. Now, this was no small task. My parents have 3 ½ acres of grass, with lots of small hills, bumpy, uneven places, and places where the grass is very thick, and hard to mow. There are also many tree stumps and tree roots to mow around; and much of the garden is on an uphill incline. It usually takes all day to finish the job, if not two days.

Now, the summer of '88 was very hot, with temperatures of 30 to 40 degrees Celsius; and I remember that on one of the days when I was mowing, it seemed unbearably hot. I was sweating like crazy, and feeling faint. I remember finishing up the last row of grass, pushing the mower onto the back porch, and dragging myself into the house. And what was the very first thing I wanted after I got inside the house? **Water!** I didn't bother to get out a glass from the cupboard; I just picked up a water jug, and drank straight from the jug. From what I remember, I chugged down almost all of that gallon of water within one minute! By the way, this wasn't store-bought water. We got our water from a natural spring, in an old churchyard in the next county; and it was (in my opinion) the sweetest, best-tasting water on the planet. When my family went to that churchyard to get water, we filled up dozens of jugs. I still remember how good that cool, tasty spring water felt as it went down my parched throat that day.

In this country, where we have an abundance of rain, we take water for granted. However, if you are ever in a situation when you *don't* have access to water, you soon find out how weak and vulnerable you really are. I remember once when my brother took a business trip to France; and while he was there, he began to feel very ill. Before long, he was virtually incapacitated; and he ended up in the hospital. What was wrong? In the busyness of the trip, he simply hadn't drunk much water; and he was severely dehydrated.

This reminds me of the many Scriptures in which the prophets spoke of the ***“dry and thirsty land,”*** or about the blessing of the ***“former and latter rain,”*** or about how wonderful it is to have fresh, cool water from a fountain, instead of from a cistern. The land of Israel is very hot and dry for much of the year; and water is precious. It is for that reason that God, through the pens of the prophets and Apostles, often compared *Himself* to water. David said, ***“O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is.”*** The LORD, through the prophet Jeremiah, said, ***“My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.”***

You cannot live without water; and likewise, you cannot live *spiritually* without the Lord. The Scriptures are filled with pictures of Christ as the “water of life”; and, as we will see this morning, the city of New Jerusalem is filled with these pictures, as well. The title of this message is ***The Life Source in Heaven.***

Read Revelation 7:13-17 / 21:5-6 / 22:1-3, 12-17.

I. The Giver of Life

In last week's message, we saw that the "**Light Source**" of Heaven is the Lord Jesus Christ; and now, in this morning's message, we find that Christ is also the "**Life Source**" of Heaven! In **Revelation 21**, we are told that John heard a "**great voice**" from Heaven, which said, "**It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.**" Obviously, it was God who was speaking to John: but it was the *second* member of the Godhead, in particular, who was speaking. How do we know this? Because when Christ first appeared to John on the Isle of Patmos, He called Himself by the name "**Alpha and Omega, the first and the last**"; and He called Himself by this name a total of four times throughout the book of **Revelation**.

Read Revelation 1:7-18.

Jesus is the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last; and He promises to give water from the "**fountain of the water of life**" to whoever will have it. As this message unfolds, we will see exactly what this means. First, though, we need to establish the identity of Christ Himself. *Who is Christ*, according to the passage we just read? Well, first of all, you'll notice that Christ identified Himself as "**he that liveth, and was dead,**" but who is now "**alive forever more.**" Only one man can meet that description: and His name is the Lord Jesus Christ! Jesus reassured John that He was, indeed, the same flesh-and-blood Man with whom He had walked and talked six decades earlier, and who had died on a cross, and risen from the grave. However, not only did Jesus identify Himself as the *Man* who died and rose again; He also identified Himself as *God*. You'll notice that Jesus called Himself by a very unique title: "**the first and the last.**" This title is found in **Isaiah 44:6** and **Isaiah 48:12**, where Jehovah said to Israel, "**I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.**"

Folks, do you realise what this means? "The First and the Last" is a title that belongs *only* to Jehovah God. By calling *Himself* "the First and the Last," Christ was confirming that *He is* Jehovah! Not only that, but Christ applied this title to Himself throughout the book of **Revelation**. In **Revelation 1:8** Jesus said, "**I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.**" In **Revelation 22:13** Jesus said, "**I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.**" Just as the Greek alphabet begins with the letter Alpha, and ends with Omega, so Christ is the Beginner and Ender of all things. He began and finished the work of the Creation in six days; He began and finished the work of man's redemption on the cross in six earth hours; and in the future, He will finish the restoration of all things, in the new heaven and new earth that He will create. No one but God, the *Giver and Taker* of life, could hold the "**keys of hell and of death**": and the Lord Jesus Christ meets those qualifications. His name, Jehovah, means "I AM": and this name implies eternal existence. In **John 1**, John says that "**In him (Jesus) was life**"; and in **John 5**, Christ Himself said, "**For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.**" As God, the Father and the Son have life in and of themselves. This means that they are eternally self-existing! It also means that the Father and the Son are the ones who *give life to us*—both physically and spiritually. It was Christ, the second Person of the Godhead, who appeared in human form in the Garden, took clay in hand, formed the first man in His own image, and breathed the breath of life into him. It is also Christ who gives spiritual life to a sinner at the moment when he believes on Him. Jesus said, "**And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish.**"

Christ is the Giver of Life; and in the city of New Jerusalem, this truth is beautifully illustrated. This brings us to our second point.

II. The River of Life

In the first two verses of the book of **John**, John declared that “*the Word*” (who is Christ) created all things. John then went on to say that in Him “*was life*.” Christ gives eternal life (a relationship with God) to sinners; and in the city of New Jerusalem, this eternal life is visibly symbolised by a river. This crystal-clear river proceeds forth “*out of the throne of God and of the Lamb*,” and flows throughout the city.

Now, make no mistake about it: the “*river of life*” that John saw in his vision is *not* figurative or allegorical: *it literal*. Likewise, the “*tree of life*” that grows on both sides of the river of life, and which bears twelve manners of fruits throughout the months of the year, is not figurative, but literal. (By the way, there is the number “12” again, reminding us God’s relationship with His people.) Just like the *river* of life, the *tree* of life reminds us that **spiritual life with God** is a gift that proceeds forth from God. The tree of life will impart ongoing *physical* life and refreshment to the saints in Heaven; but that’s not all it will do. It will also serve as a reminder of the “*water*” of eternal life, which Christ made possible for us through His death on the cross. Christ purchased our eternal life with His own precious blood; but to us, eternal life is “*without money, and without price*.” Salvation is a free gift from God, which you cannot possibly earn; and all you have to do to receive this gift is to “drink” it. This simply means that you place you complete trust in the Lord Jesus Christ to save you from your sins.

Now, Heaven isn’t the only place where there was ever a “*river of life*” and a “*tree of life*.” At the beginning of human history, there was a tree of life right here on earth, in the Garden of Eden. In the centre of the Garden God placed a “*tree of life*”; and this tree imparted eternal *physical* life to Adam and Eve. There was also a river which flowed from the centre of the Garden; and this river broke into four main tributaries, which watered many lands beyond the Garden. Tragically, though, Adam and Eve were banned from access to the tree of life after they sinned against God. The Bible says that as the punishment for man’s sin, God “*drove out the man*” from Eden; “*and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life*.” God barred man from the tree of life so that he would not be able to live forever physically, while remaining *dead* to God spiritually. (Living forever in your wicked, sinful condition wouldn’t be a blessing; it would be a curse!) Ever since the Garden, every one of us has been born into this world already cut off from God on account of our sin, and under the curse of *physical* death, to boot. To this day, many scientists are trying their best to crack the code to eternal life; yet, despite their best efforts, man cannot cheat death. We can’t even break past the 120-year cap that God put on our lifespans. Many rich people spend a fortune to find a way to extend their lives; but very few make it past age 100. The wages of our sin is **death**, both physically *and* spiritually; and none of us can escape this fate, apart from the miracle of salvation.

Now, let’s get back to the Garden. The Garden of Eden was literally God’s House here on earth. It was a giant, outdoor Temple, where God met with man in Person. The tree of life, and the river of life, symbolised the life with God that man possessed. Tragically, the Temple of Eden was shut off to man after he sinned; however, the tree of life, and the river of life, *will* exist here on earth again! During the future 1,000-year reign of Christ, a river will issue forth from the Temple in Jerusalem, where Christ will be sitting on His throne. Let’s see what **Zechariah** prophesied about this Temple.

Read Zechariah 14:1-8.

When Christ returns to earth, He will set His feet down on the Mount of Olives, on the east side of Jerusalem. At that point, a new valley will be created in the place where the Mount of Olives once stood; and this new valley will be the channel through which this new river will flow. It will gush from a subterranean fountain, and will spring up near the altar, in the courtyard of the Temple. It will begin as a small stream, and will flow down the slopes of Mount Zion (which will be greatly elevated above its current altitude); and, being located at a watershed, this river will quickly part into two streams. One stream will flow down toward the “*former sea*” (which is the Dead Sea); and the other stream will flow toward the “*hinder sea*” (the Mediterranean Sea). The stream that flows into the Dead Sea will give life to it, so that it will no longer be dead, stagnant, and salty. Fish will thrive in it throughout the 1,000-year Kingdom Age. This river will be much like the one that flowed from the centre of the Garden of Eden; and it will be the **earthly parallel** of the River of Life in Heaven. Just like the River of Life in Heaven, this earthly river will have the ancient Tree of Life on both sides of its banks, to bring physical healing to the nations. Believers will eat the fruit of this tree, and receive ongoing physical life from it, throughout the 1,000-year Kingdom.

Read Ezekiel 47:1-12.

Read Psalm 46:4-5.

As you can see from the **Ezekiel** passage, the waters that will flow from Jerusalem will give life throughout the whole region. In fact, the whole land of Israel will flow with streams of water! Zechariah says that this water will be available throughout the year, “*in summer and winter.*” This may not sound like such a bit deal to us; but to the inhabitants of Israel, this is a very big deal. For thousands of years, Israel’s streams have flowed only during the winter months, when there is rain; and the summer months are very parched and dry. However, it won’t be that way during the 1,000-year Kingdom! Everything about the land of Israel will be radically different from what it is today. In **Joel 3:18**, Joel prophesied that during the Kingdom age, “*The mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord, and shall water the valley of Shittim.*” In **Isaiah 35**, Isaiah prophesied that “*The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly.*” Isaiah also prophesied that “*The parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water.*” Not only Israel, but the whole world, will return to Eden-like conditions.

The river that will flow from Jerusalem will bring physical blessing to the land of Israel. However, it will also have a wonderful *spiritual* meaning. This river will be a constant reminder of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Spring of living water to all who believe on Him! We must remember, though, that the river of life that will exist in Israel during the 1,000-year Kingdom will merely be a reflection of the river of life in Heaven! Just as the earthly city of Jerusalem is situated on a mountain (Mount Zion), so there is a literal “mountain of the LORD” in Heaven. In the centre of the 1,300-mile-square city of New Jerusalem, there is a mountain; and on this holy hill, the Lord sits on His throne. From His throne springs the River of Life; and this river flows downward from God’s holy mountain, and breaks into streams, which water the city. For all eternity, this river, and the tree of life along its banks, will remind God’s people that Christ is the Author and Giver of eternal life.

By the way, there is a question that I’ve often been asked. Many Christians wonder why we would *need* to eat food or drink water in Heaven, if we will be immortal. For that matter, why does John say that the leaves of the tree of life will be for the “*healing of the nations,*” if there will be no more

sickness in Heaven? The answer is: the fruit of the tree of life will *prevent* sickness, and *prevent* the breaking down of our bodies; and the water of life, and the fruit from the tree of life, will, in fact, impart eternal physical life. You see, though we will never die in Heaven, we will never be *self-existing* and autonomous, as God is. God has life in Himself; and He will continue to impart not only spiritual life (an eternal relationship with Himself), but also *physical* life to us, for all eternity. Just as we will continually rest in Christ for our *spiritual life* for all eternity, so we will continue to depend upon the Lord for our physical life. We *will* continue to be dependent upon God, just as Adam and Eve depended on God in the Garden of Eden. Yet, there will never be any question as to whether our physical needs will continue to be met. Every time we pick the fruit from the tree of life, and sink our teeth into it, we will remember that Christ is the Author of eternal life—the one who opened up the stream of salvation through His death on the cross, and His resurrection from the grave!

III. The offer of life

Throughout Christ's earthly ministry, He often used **water** as a symbol of the spiritual life that He provides. For example, in **John 7**, we are told about an incident that happened in the Temple, during the last Feast of Tabernacles of Jesus' ministry. Let's take a look at that Scripture.

Read John 7:37-39.

The event that you've just read about happened during the "**water libation ceremony**," which was held on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles. During this ceremony, a group of priests would conduct the sacrifices in the Temple courtyard: and meanwhile, a second of priests (which was headed up by the high priest himself) would go out through the **Water Gate**, and walk down to the **Pool of Siloam**. They filled a golden vessel with water (which they called the "living water"), carried it back to the Temple courtyard, and poured the water onto the sacrifice. At the same time, they poured fresh wine (grape juice) onto the sacrifice, from a silver vessel. The people then sang the words to **Isaiah 12:2-3**: "*Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.*" Since the Hebrew word for "salvation" is *Yeshua* (the name of "Jesus"), the people were, quite literally, singing about Jesus, without even realising it!

Now, while all this was taking place, a third group of priests was engaged in yet another activity. This group went outside the city through the **Beautiful Gate**, walked down the slope into the Kidron Valley, and cut off branches from willow trees. They then went back up to the Beautiful Gate, and into the Temple; and as they walked, they waved their branches back and forth, to make wind with them. They purposely made wind with their branches in order to symbolise the **Holy Spirit**. (The Hebrew word for "wind" is *ruach*, which also means "spirit.") These priests then entered the Temple at the same time that the water libation was taking place; and as they walked through the gates, they were welcomed by a priest who was playing a flute. This priest was called the "**pierced one**," because of the air holes in his instrument. The people would then sing the "Hallel" (**Psalms 113-118**) to the sound of the flute, while walking around the altar. The ceremony would end with three three-fold blasts from silver trumpets, which were played by the priests.

Now, if you have known the Lord for very long, and if have been reading your Bible, you probably noticed many pictures of Christ and salvation in the ceremony that I just described to you! The "**water of life**" from the pool of Siloam is a picture of the **Holy Spirit**, whom Christ sent to His followers after He was "**glorified**" (after His death on the cross). The **golden vessel** which held the water speaks of

Christ's royalty and deity. The **silver vessel** speaks of redemption, which Christ has provided for us. The **wine** speaks of Christ's blood, which made redemption possible; and the **sacrifice of the bullock** is a picture of Christ's sacrifice on the cross for us. The **wind** is a picture of the **Holy Spirit**, who was sent by Christ after His resurrection, to live inside believers; and the **man with the flute** (the "pierced one") is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. In **Zechariah 12:10**, the LORD God said, "***And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.***" I have a question, folks: When was God "***pierced***"? And how *could* He be "pierced"? There is only one way this could happen: God took on human flesh! The Lord Jesus Christ *is* the "pierced one," who shed His blood to pay for our sins!

In light of all this, it isn't hard to understand why Jesus made this public invitation to drink of the "***water of life***" on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles. Jesus probably spoke these words during, or immediately after, the water libation ceremony, while the people were waving their branches and singing. The Jews may not have understood everything that Jesus was saying; but they knew that He was claiming to be the fulfilment of **Isaiah 12**, which they had just sung!

My friends, Jesus *is* the Water of Life; and all who believe on Him have the Spirit of God flowing inside them. To "drink" of the water of life simply means to "believe" on Christ. When you repent of your sin in your heart, and believe on Christ, you receive the Holy Spirit of God into your innermost being. And do you know what the best part is? The best part is that *anyone* may believe on Jesus and be saved! The invitation is given to *all* who will admit their need of Christ, and come to Him. Let's look again at what Christ says to sinners at the end of the book of **Revelation**. (**Read Revelation 22:16-17**).

My friends, what we've just read is the **last invitation to salvation** in the entire Bible. As Christ delivered the very last words of Scripture to the Apostle John, the thing that was on His heart was *saving sinners* from their sin, and giving them eternal life. To this very hour, Christ is *earnestly and passionately offering Himself to sinners*. These words that God gave to the Apostle John are still resounding throughout the world, and awakening sinners to their need of Christ. The invitation is clear: *Drink* from the water of life! In other words, "*Believe* on the one who died for you, and rose again, and receive eternal life with God!" Put your complete confidence in *Him*. Just as **Moses** struck the rock of Horeb with his shepherd's staff, and God immediately brought forth water from the rock for the children of Israel to drink, so Jesus was stricken on the cross, so that the "living water" of the Holy Spirit might be made available to all who will believe on Him. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the believer isn't merely for this lifetime on earth: it will continue on throughout eternity, in the heavenly New Jerusalem. There will be no sin in Heaven, and no more separation from God. Wherever there is sin, there is the curse; but the "new heavens and new earth" will have no curse in them, because it will be a place "*wherein dwelleth righteousness*."

Friends, Christ took our death upon Himself on the cross, so that we might receive eternal life. The instant you believe on Christ, you pass from death unto life. Have *you* received this new life? If you will repent of your sin and believe on Jesus, the Holy Spirit of God will come to live inside *you*, and will be like a river of life-giving water, springing up into eternal life. And best of all, one day, you will go to live in the beautiful City where the river of life flows, and where the tree of life blooms eternally!

This morning, we sang a hymn that was written by a blind woman named **Fanny Crosby**, about 140 years ago. From age two, when Fanny went totally blind, until the end of her life, she didn't see a

single thing in this world. Yet, from the moment when she heard the Gospel at a revival meeting at age 30, and truly *understood* the Gospel for the first time, and repented of her sin and believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, she *saw*... with *spiritual* eyes. As a lost person, her spiritual eyes had always been on the things of this world; but when she became a true follower of Christ, her whole worldview changed. In her lifetime as a Christian, Fanny wrote about 8,000 hymns; and in most of those hymns, she wrote about *Heaven*. She longed for the day when she would stand before Christ, with perfectly functioning eyes, and look into the face of the one who saved her soul. She longed for the day when she would drink from the River of Life, and eat from the Tree of Life. She also intensely longed for others to join her there. That is why she wrote, “Here our fondest hopes are vain, dearest links are rent in twain, but in Heav’n no throb of pain, Meet me there! By the river sparkling bright, in the city of delight, where our faith is lost in sight, meet me there! Meet me there, meet me there, where the tree of life is blooming, meet me there! When the storms of life are o’er, on the happy, golden shore, where the faithful part no more, meet me there!”

Conclusion: As we close this morning, I would ask, “Will *you* meet me there, by the River of Life? Are *you* on the path to Heaven? Have *you* received God’s free gift of salvation? Have *you* drunk of the water of life by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ?” If not, I urge you to do so this morning! The water of salvation is still flowing; and *you* are invited to drink. *You* are invited to come forward in this invitation time, and surrender your heart to Jesus Christ. You may think that you have too much to lose by becoming a real follower of Christ; but the reality is that you have *everything* to lose if you reject Him. Die to sin and self this morning, and receive new life from Christ!

If you do know Christ as your Saviour, I would ask, “Are you fulfilling the purpose for which you were saved?” God gave you eternal life not just so that you can miss Hell and go to Heaven, but so that you might serve Him with all your heart and life—both in this life, and for all eternity. Christian, confess whatever sin is hindering your fellowship with the Lord; and let the life of Christ manifest in *your* life, to everyone around you!