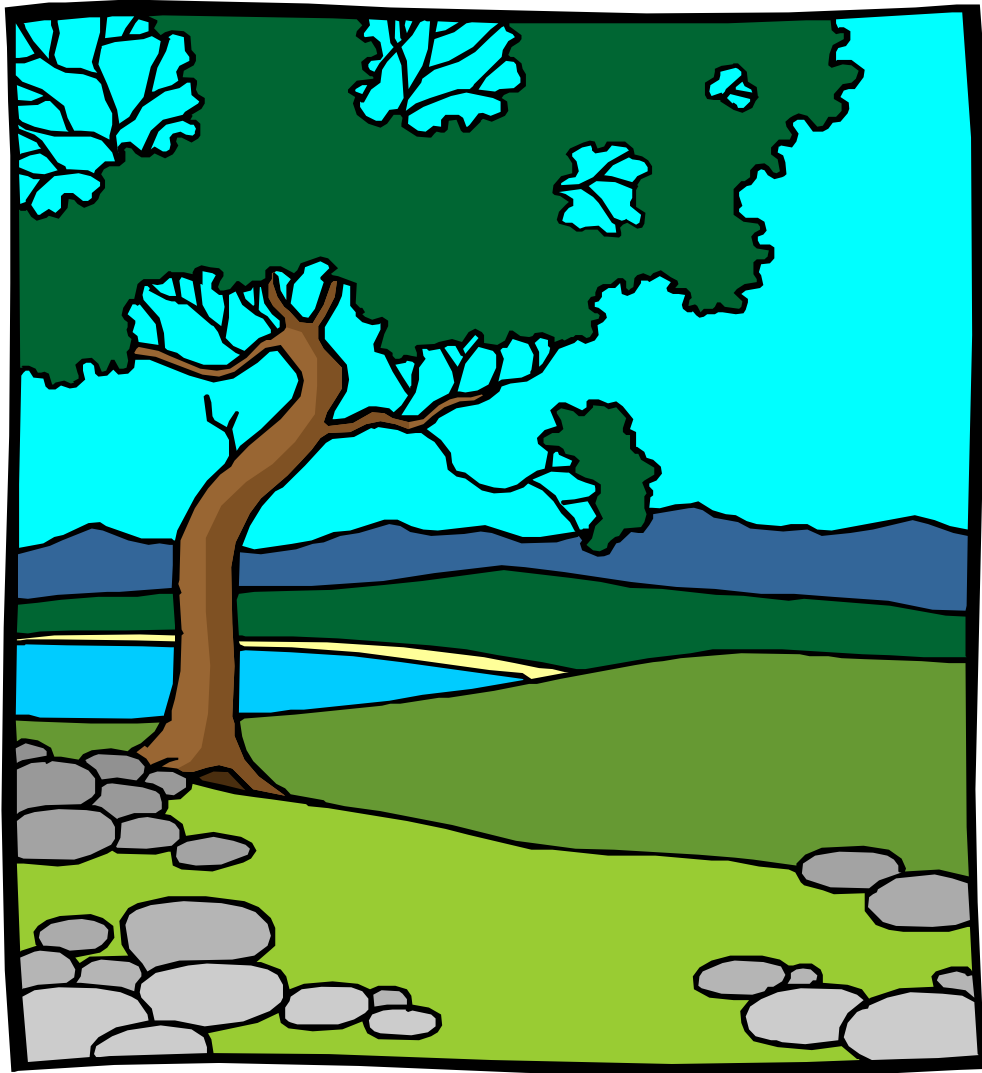


THE OAK TREE



The oak tree is different from a pine tree because it loses its leaves in the fall. The pine tree keeps its leaves (needles) all year round. In the spring the oak tree grows a whole new set of leaves.

If we look at the branches of the oak tree we see an interesting pattern. The trunk of the tree goes straight up and then it divides into smaller branches. Each of these branches will also divide into even smaller branches and so on.

What can we learn from God's creation of the oak tree?

The oak tree gives us a picture of Jesus as the main tree trunk from whom all of us get our life. Jesus taught us this lesson when He said in John 15:5, "I am the vine; you are the branches." Jesus was describing how we must depend on Him for forgiveness of our sins, eternal life and the desire to tell others about the great love of God. When we look at the branches of the oak tree we get a good picture of what Jesus was talking about. The smallest branches depend on the small branches for their life, the small branches depend on the medium branches and the medium branches depend on the large branches. All of the branches depend on the main tree trunk for their life.

The oak tree also gives us a picture of God's gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Savior. As the year goes from spring to summer, the oak tree has many fresh, green leaves. As the year grows older and we go into autumn and winter the leaves turn brown, die and fall off the tree. During winter the tree looks dead. In the spring the oak tree comes back to life and grows a whole new set of beautiful green leaves. This is a good picture of eternal life. As we get older we grow weaker until one day we die. If we believe that Jesus is our Savior then this is not the end of our lives. Like the oak tree which becomes new again in the spring, we will become new again in heaven. We will be young and healthy and never know pain or fear or sadness again. How do we know this? Jesus tells us in John 11:25-26, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die." We also know that heaven will be wonderful because the Bible tells us in Revelation 21:4, "He (God) will wipe every tear

from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain.”

The oak tree also gives us a picture of the difference between how we see ourselves and how God sees us. When we think about ourselves we often fool ourselves that we are good. We look beautiful to ourselves just like the oak tree with all of its leaves. God, however, sees us differently. God sees all the sins we have done and all of the bad things we are thinking. God sees us like the oak tree without any of its leaves. God sees us as we really are. The Bible tells us in Proverbs 16:5, “The Lord detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this; they will not go unpunished.” The Bible also teaches us in Galatians 6:7, “Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked.” We can fool ourselves and other people but we cannot fool God. God sees us the way we really are.

If we did not have Jesus as our Savior from our sins, we would be in big trouble. Because Jesus lived without sinning and then gave His life on the cross to

pay for our sins, God the Father forgives us. If we believe in Jesus, we will have eternal life.

