

Series: God & Man & Woman #745

Title: Genesis 2.10-14

Thank you for joining me today from wherever you are and by however you listen as we meet together coast-to-coast here in the United States and all the way around the world! We come now in our passage of Genesis chapter 2 to verses 10-14. Listen as I read Genesis 2, verses 10-14. This the Word of God, **"¹⁰ Now a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it divided and became four rivers. ¹¹ The name of the first is Pishon; it flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. ¹² The gold of that land is good; the bdellium and the onyx stone are there. ¹³ The name of the second river is Gihon; it flows around the whole land of Cush. ¹⁴ The name of the third river is Tigris; it flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates."**

Now what I observed when I read these verses several times is that Moses describes four rivers, three elements, and three places. We have four rivers: Pishon, Gihon, Tigris, and the Euphrates. Three (what I will call) elements: gold, bdellium, and onyx. And three (what I will call) places: Havilah, Cush, and Assyria. I hope that you will see these when you get a chance to look at your copy of God's Word.

Still, sticking with a big picture perspective on these verses, I want you to remember that I have said we do not know where Eden and the garden within Eden were originally located. Some people will try and use these verses to pinpoint exactly where Eden was on a modern map. And I understand why they do, but to me this, while an interesting and fun exercise, is still futile for finding an exact location.

And one of the reasons for this is that we have to take into account a major world event that Moses also writes about in the Book of Genesis and that is the flood! The flood so changed the geography of the world, including the garden in Eden, that the description Moses gives us here in Genesis 2 of, for example, the rivers no longer applies. Because of the great flood, the geography had shifted. In the words of one commentator, the flood disarranged the old order (Leupold, 79).

So that, what was accurate from the perspective of Moses as he placed what he wrote in the time period in which he describes, has shifted during the time of the great flood. Therefore, making the exact locations of these rivers, for example, impossible to place in today's world. (Although, admittedly, we do know of the second two rivers, and where they flow today).

The point of verses 10-14 is not that you and I will be able to figure out where exactly Eden was located. That is *not* the point. The point *is* that the first readers of the Book of Genesis would have known where these were. For example, Noah and his family (who survived the flood) would have remembered these locations and names and then applied them (in memory, as it were) to the people and places that came after the flood. So that you understand this, let me give you an example. And I am following the good work of Dr. Henry Morris here.

In Genesis chapter 10 and verse 7 (I will not take time to read it), but in Genesis 10.7 we learn that one of Noah's sons (Ham) had a son named Cush who had a son named Havilah. There you go. We read about both Cush and Havilah in Genesis 2, verses 10-14. I submit to you that Noah and his family knew exactly where Cush and Havilah were. And something of those places caused them to name their children after them. They knew. We do not know. It's OK. My point here at the beginning is that the flood (Genesis 7) so shifted the world's geography that we cannot pinpoint Eden and associated places and rivers (Genesis 2) on today's map.

Another way to put this will be to say that the geography that Adam, the first man knew, is not the geography Noah knew after the flood (but Noah did remember it). And, of course, this is not the geography we know nor do we even remember it. I hope this is clear.

So, as we move now from the big picture perspective on these verses, down into some detail, remember how impactful the flood was. We cannot find Eden and the garden in Eden. But, as we come back to verse 10 we learn that, **"...a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it divided and became four rivers."** This is fascinating and unique. Remember, there is no rain. So, somehow the garden needs to be watered, because water is essential for the trees, bushes, the flowers, and fruit to grow. So what does God do? He creates an underground reservoir of water that gushes in the land of Eden, thereby

watering the garden. *And*, there is so much water that it divides and becomes four rivers! That is a lot of water.

What is the source of the rivers Pishon, Gihon, Tigris, and Euphrates? Their source is the river that flowed out of Eden. And of course this is unique because typically the four rivers (or streams) would dump out into one major, large, and significant river. But here one river becomes four. What an unusual situation. God often does what seems unusual to us, because God is unlike us. From the one river in Eden the Bible says the world gets four rivers. (One becomes four.)

And let me give you a reading recommendation if you would like a very concise, but good description of the science of how, with no rainfall, God designed this river in Eden. Get a hold of the book whose author I quote from, Henry Morris. His book is *The Genesis Record*, and in chapter 4 on The Creation of Man he writes eloquently about this. If you forget the title or author, write to me. It's Henry Morris and his book is *The Genesis Record*. I highly recommend it and will surely quote from him again. But today, I want to keep moving.

Alright, we have talked about verse 10, identifying this river in Eden. And we have talked about these other rivers. Now let's move down to verses 11 and 12 and talk about Havilah, gold, bdellium, and onyx. I'll re-read Genesis 2, verses 11 and 12, **"¹¹ The name of the first is Pishon; it flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. ¹² The gold of that land is good; the bdellium and the onyx stone are there."**

Havilah, I once knew parents that named their daughter Havilah (pretty name), Havilah can be translated "sand land." It obviously was a fertile place for gold. We know what gold is. And I like how the Bible adds, **"¹² The gold of that land is good."** We might say, pure gold! But what is bdellium?

It is a gum resin. What's that? It's a product consisting essentially of a mixture of gum and resin usually obtained by making an incision in a plant and allowing the juice, which exudes, to solidify. Israel was very familiar with it, as it is compared to manna in appearance. Let me give you one cross-reference. This is Numbers chapter 11, verse 7. I am reading Numbers 11.7, **"⁷ Now the manna was like coriander seed, and its appearance like that of bdellium."**

And then in the land of Havilah there is the onyx stone. And this was and is a precious stone. Maybe you have it as part of your jewelry? I want you to see how onyx was used a little further along, in an important way, in the Old Testament. As we come to the weekend, come with me in your Bible to Exodus chapters 25 and 28. Genesis, then Exodus, chapters 25 and 28. I will read Genesis 25, verses 1-7. God is calling for a contribution from the people of God. This is for the building of the tabernacle, the worship center for God. And God Himself mentions onyx stone in verse 7.

Hear now God's Word again from Exodus 25, verses 1-7. **"Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ² Tell the sons of Israel to raise a contribution for Me; from every man whose heart moves him you shall raise My contribution. ³ This is the contribution which you are to raise from them: gold, silver and bronze, ⁴ blue, purple and scarlet material, fine linen, goat hair, ⁵ rams' skins dyed red, porpoise skins, acacia wood, ⁶ oil for lighting, spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense, ⁷ onyx stones and setting stones for the ephod and for the breastpiece."**

Then, over in the text to Exodus 28, verses 6-10. This is what God prescribed to Moses for the ephod of the high priest in his service in the tabernacle. An ephod was a sacred vestment draped over the shoulders that hung down around the body of the priest (front and back). Listen to what God says in Exodus 28.6-10.

"⁶ They shall also make the ephod of gold, of blue and purple and scarlet material and fine twisted linen, the work of the skillful workman. ⁷ It shall have two shoulder pieces joined to its two ends, that it may be joined. ⁸ The skillfully woven band, which is on it, shall be like its workmanship, of the same material: of gold, of blue and purple and scarlet material and fine twisted linen. ⁹ You shall take two onyx stones and engrave on them the names of the sons of Israel, ¹⁰ six of their names on the one stone and the names of the remaining six on the other stone, according to their birth."

Wow. The names of the sons of Israel are etched into the onyx stones. And where did the onyx originate from? Havilah, that we read about all the way back in Genesis 2, verse 12. It's amazing how God ties this all together in the Bible.

We started today with a big picture perspective, then down into some of the details of verses 10-14 of Genesis 2. On Monday I want to draw us back up again, above the text for another big picture perspective before we move along to verse 15. The land being described here sure is beautiful, because God made it. I hope that you have benefited from the teaching this week, and that you will join me again on Monday for God Is!

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