Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Man in the Garden of God
Scripture: Genesis 2:8-17
Code: 90-227

Now as we have learned, the peak of creation came on day six. The entire universe as we know it today was created in six, 24 hours day, six solar days with an evening and a morning for each day. There was no evolutionary process whatsoever. There is no evolution from species to species. In fact the God created the universe with all of its diversity and variety as we now know it in six, 24 hours days.

But on day six, the final act of His creation was the creation of man and woman in his own image. And of course the rest of the created world was merely a stage on which man and woman would play the primary role in history. God created man the supreme point of creation in his own image which means with self-consciousness, with personality, with rationality, with intelligence, with creativity and the capability for relationship.

And then he gave man sovereignty over all the created world and its vast and rich resources. That was the culmination. With the creation of man then the real story begins. Because history is not about matter, it's not about stars and planets, it's not about the earth and its topography or geography. It's not about animals. The real story is the story of man. Everything else was scenery for the story of man and his redemption.

Now the original history of man begins in Chapter 2, Verse 4 and goes on from there to the end of the book of Genesis and frankly to the end of time. You could simply say that all of time is divided into two categories. Genesis 1:1 to Genesis 2:3 the creation of the universe. Genesis 2:4 to the rest of history the story of man. And certainly that is true to the end of the book of Genesis, Chapter 50 and Verse 26. So Chapter 2, Verse 4 points forward. The scene has been set, the stage has been made ready and here is the saga of man.

Verse 4 begins this is the account or this is the tolodothe, these are the generations is what it really says. The generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created in the day that the Lord God made earth and Heaven. These are the generations of man when God created the universe. This is the beginning of man's story. Now some people have tried to find conflict between the creation account in Genesis 1 and the account in Genesis 2. There is no conflict whatsoever. In Genesis 1, you have the simple fact of man's creation. In Genesis 2, you have the details of that creation.

So in this chapter, starting in Verse 4, man takes the center stage. Becomes the subject of all the rest of Genesis and all the rest of human history. Here in Genesis 2 then, we're going to go back to day six because after all this is the saga of man. And though man was mentioned in Chapter 1 as one of the details in the creation of the universe, here he takes center stage so Chapter 2, Verse 4 takes us back to day six and a more detailed look at the creation of man which begins his wonderful story.

Now as we look at the details of day six and the original creation of man, we're going to note five things. The creation of man, the location of man, the vocation of man, the probation of man and the relation of man. And I really didn't have to contrive anything, it just fell out that way almost as if the Holy Spirit knew that this would come up somewhere down the future through an English speaking preacher.

The creation, the location, the vocation, the probation, the relation. Now last time we looked at the creation of man in Verses 5 to 7 and I will just briefly remind you of what we learned. Remember now everything here is on day six. We just look at day six for more detail. And on day six, according to Verse 5, "no shrub of the field was yet in the earth and no plant of the field had yet sprouted. For the Lord God had not sent rain upon the earth and there was no man to cultivate the ground."

Now that verse has posed a lot of interesting dilemmas and problems. And in fact I didn't really fully understand that verse up until the last couple of weeks or so and so I'm going to alter the note that I wrote in the McArthur study Bible a little bit in the next edition. But this takes us back to day six. Now on day six it says "there was no shrub of the field and no plant of the field." Now we know that trees and plants were created on day three.

So whatever these are, that didn't exist on day six, they aren't the same as trees and plants that were created on day three. This is not a reference to the plants and the trees that were created by God on day three. Whatever these are, they are different and we looked at them last time, fascinating. The shrub of the field as it's translated in the NAS as the seeya in Hebrew, seeya and it refers to as thorns and weeds. When man was created, there were no thorns and there were no weeds. Chapter 3 in Verse 18 tells us the part of the curse was thorns and thistles or weeds would grow.

There would be because of the curse some mutation of the plants into weeds. Such plants did not exist on day six because there was no sin. There was no curse. Secondly there was no plant of the field and the word here is esev. And it refers to crops. It refers to the kind of crops that man had to plant by tilling the soil. And that's why it says at the end of Verse 5, "these things didn't exist because there wasn't any rain on the earth and there wasn't any man to cultivate the ground."

These were the things that took place after the fall. So all that they words of the inspired writer Moses are intended to tell us here is that at the time man was created, there was no curse on the earth. No weeds existed and no necessity to till the ground. Grain existed certainly wheat, and oats and barley and corn and some form of those existed in the original creation. And they grew out naturally and they grew in the wonder of God's creation in a perfect and very good way as Verse 31 of Chapter 1 tells us. "Everything was very good."

There wasn't any need to cultivate the ground with these things. There wasn't any need to bring forth these crops by the sweat of your brow and hard work. There wasn't any need to fight the weeds and the thorns and the thistles that grew up and impeded the progress of the crops and those things that challenge so greatly the farmer even today. Those crops came later on only by the hard labor of man to produce them. And those weeds came because of the curse. And they made his task hard. And they were destructed and bothersome.

And in fact you'll notice at the end of Verse 5, he says that there were no weeds on the earth because God had not sent rain on the earth yet. Now when the fall came, rain didn't come 'til the flood. When the fall came in the garden and God cursed the earth, at that point in time according to 3:18, "weeds came." There was some mutation in the plant and they began to grow in an unruly way a counterproductive way and choke out the life of the naturally growing food. So that man had to protect that and plant it and guard it and till it and keep it from the intrusion of the weeds. So there were weeds before the rain came. But let me tell you why it says that.

I don't normally get interested in scientific information unless it has some biblical benefit. And one of the things that fascinates me is the science of seed dispersal. And I'm sure you know this to one degree or another that what causes seed to be dispersed across the face of the globe is the movement of the weather.

What moves the seed is the wind. You can plant in your yard, you can till the ground and have very clean soil and bring in soil that's been filtered and you can prepare your garden or your lawn. And in a matter of months or years all of a sudden weeds start to pop up and pop up and pop up. And there are a couple of contributors to that. One being birds who eat the seed in one place, fly over and deposit it in your yard. And already fertilized when it lands, it begins to develop. And so there is a movement into your property of something from somewhere else.

But much more powerful in the movement of seed across the face of the earth is the movement of air, the wind carries that. And so when rain came, then you had the hydrological cycle and water being moved by mass air movement which carries this dangerous kind of seed that makes it hard to plant and succeed with crops. But this is a time before rain moved of the seeds the unwanted seeds around the globe. And this is a time before there was any necessity to cultivate the soil. This was the time when there were no weeds and this was the time when man didn't have to till anything because

everything grew and flourished in its proper place and nothing impeded the progress and the development of what was good for food.

So you have a pre-cursed environment from the standpoint of plants. Then in Verse 6, you have a pre-cursed environment in relation to water. Literally Verse 6 says but a flow translation of a mist I think is not a good translation. "A flow used to rise from the earth and water the whole surface of the ground." Now in the original creation, there was no wind. There were no air movements to move clouds to deposit water on the land and then to sweep back over the ocean for condensation to pick up water and again drop it on the land.

That's not how it was. There was no rain; there was no air movement. And so what you had then was water flowing, gushing up from underground. And covering the necessary rains that would supply a water table both underground and surface water to water the whole earth. And it wasn't irregular. As I said last time, rain comes and goes. Sometimes it rains, sometimes it doesn't. And there can be terrible drought and God reserves the right to deliver the rain or hold the rain back as we saw as a part of God's judgment on the earth.

The very fact of rain was a judgment of God by which he broke the normal continual flow of water that once existed when water just gushed up from underground subterranean sources. The whole earth originally was being constantly, not intermittently, but constantly irrigated from below. A marvelous environment, free from anything but what was good. And in that marvelous earth, God had provided everything for man's enjoyment. Everything watered to the max, everything producing in its fullness.

It was in that kind of environment Verse 7 says "the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground that is he was made out of the same basic elements that everything else is made out of." The same atomic elements, the same chemical elements as we saw. He then breathed into his nostrils that breath of life, that life which is the principal of existence, not measurable in any scientific fashion. And man became a living being.

What we remind you of there is there is no preadamic man, there are no preadamic homonoids, God made man not of a monkey or an ape or a baboon, God made man out of dust. The same elements that make up the ground. Now that brings us to the location of man. That was a review.

The location of man. Now the whole earth really was his domain, the whole earth was under his sovereignty, but he needed a home. And so God was the first environmentalist, the first gardener. And he planted a garden toward the east in Eden. And there he placed the man whom he had formed. The whole earth was good, the whole earth was very good, Chapter 1, Verse 31 says, "but God made man a special home. God planted a garden toward the east and there he placed the man that he had formed." Again a reminder that there is no testimony anywhere on the pages of Scripture that man evolved, it is always God who formed him, created him, made him.

And so man's home was the garden. The special garden that God made for his joy and his delight. It is called Eden. Eden actually means a place that is well watered throughout. The defining character of the garden was that it was so well watered. Everything was lush, everything flourished. In fact the Babylonians call lush green land from which is well watered, Edenu, Edenu.

God planted a well-watered garden. Where is it? It's east toward the east, well you say that's a pretty nebulous identification. Well not really. Not if you realize that God views everything from the vantage point of his promised land. That's why we would say that Eden is toward the east of Israel. And so God planted a garden. Now we learn a little bit about this garden from some other passages of Scripture. Let me kind of show you.

Look at Ezekiel the Prophet and Chapter 28. Because here are some references to this. I want you to understand this location that God gave man. And that has a lot of implications by the way even for us today. But Ezekiel 28, we have a description here against the King of Tire, starting in Verse 12, which most Bible scholars would associate with Satan that he's really talking through the King of Tire to the one who's behind him, namely Lucifer the fallen angel who is Satan.

And he is saying about him in Verse 12 "you have the seal of perfection full of wisdom and perfect in beauty, you were in Eden the garden of God." And notice this, every precious stone was your covering. The ruby, the topaz, the diamond, the barrel, the onyx and the jasper, the lapas lazuli, that's a strange name referring to a familiar ancient stone. The turquoise and the emerald, the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets was in you on the day that you were created. It goes on to say "it was the anointed cherub, I placed you there, you were on the holy mountain of God. You walked in the midst of the stones of fire."

He says, Verse 16, "I have cast you as profane from the mountain of God, I destroyed you oh covering cherub." Now we learn a few things there. We learned that this garden was not only a garden with plants, but it was a garden with minerals. Every precious stone was there in the original creation and is associated with the beauty of this fallen angel. Ruby and topaz and diamond and barrel and onyx and jasper and lapus lazuli and turquoise and emerald and gold was there.

There's even an indication and we can't be particularly specific about this, but he does mention in Verse 14 and 16 "the mountain of God," it could be well that there was some kind of hill, some kind of elevation of Eden so that it was up from the surrounding terrain, maybe not the full sense of mountains that we know in a post flood environment when literally the place of the surface of the earth were shattered in the continence divided as we'll see when we get to Chapter six. But that there was an elevated place just loaded with wonder and beauty and riches.

I want you to notice also Chapter 31 because in a very interesting way, Ezekiel 31 also gives us an insight into Eden. This is really a judgment; this section in Chapter 31 is a judgment on Pharaoh. Pharaoh was a very proud and self-exalting and Verse 2 comments about "son of man who is Ezekiel say to the Pharaoh King of Egypt and to his multitude whom are you like in your greatness?" And this is all sarcasm. This is all mockery; this is all irony. God is pronouncing judgment on Assyria, he starts with talking to Pharaoh, but he says, "Look at Assyria," Verse 3, it was a cedar in Lebanon with beautiful branches and forest shade and very high and its top was among the clouds and he's talking about how Assyria was and of course God pronounced a great judgment on them.

And he goes on to talk about all of that greatness. And then in Verse 8, the sarcasm starts to come, the cedars in Assyria, that even the cedars in God's garden couldn't match them. And here's the sarcasm. And the cypresses why they couldn't compare with its bows and the plain trees couldn't match its branches. No tree in God's garden could compare with it in its beauty. This is all sarcasm. Boy you were so great, weren't you. You were so beautiful; you are more beautiful than Eden. Well what it does tell us is that Eden had cedars and cypresses and something called a plain tree.

He says in Verse 9, "I made a beautiful with a multitude of its branches." And all the trees of Eden which were in the garden of God were jealous of it. This is all mockery. All sarcasm. And in Verse 16, "I made the nation's quake at the sound of its fall when I made it go down the Sheel with those to go down to the pit and all the well watered trees of Eden, the choicest and best of Lebanon were comforted in the earth beneath."

They also went down with it to Sheel, to those who were slain by the sword and those who were at strength live under the shade among the nations. To which among the trees of Eden are you thus equal in glory and greatness. You will be brought down with the trees of Eden to the earth. So will happen to Pharaoh and his multitudes. Sarcastically the Lord gives us a glimpse of Eden. That it was full of these various kinds of trees that were absolutely magnificent.

Now with that go back to Genesis Chapter 2. And we find Verse 9 that having placed man in his garden; man found that out of the ground the Lord God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food. Every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food. Now I'll tell you something. There are some trees that are not pleasing to the sight, or not at least as pleasing as other trees. It may be sort of a bad thing to say in Southern California. But one of the ugliest trees I have ever seen is a palm tree.

I mean it's just a stick with a big bunch of thorns at the top. It's not good for shade; I don't know what it's good for. Maybe there weren't any in the garden, but maybe there are, I don't know. But God picked the trees pleasing to the site. Now the whole earth is covered with plants and trees. Species existing everywhere created on day three. But God took the best looking ones the most beautiful ones and the divine gardener made some choices that you could make a choice. I mean lets face it;

a horse is better looking than a warthog.

And an antelope is better looking than an alligator. And so there can be trees that are better looking than other trees. And God picked all the beautiful trees. Pleasing to the sight and then he picked that which was good for food. Oh, the amazing variety of trees, it's just amazing. I was a few days ago in Germany and it was the turning of the leaves. Right at the height of the turning of the leaves in the fall across Germany. And Germany is covered with forests. And I saw trees that I had never seen in my life that have names that I never heard in my life. And the beauty and the wonder of these trees was staggering.

First I was flying all over Europe all the time in an air bus seeing them from the air, then I was driving from place to place. And then on a couple of occasions I was walking through the woods while all the leaves were tumbling down around me. The variety is staggering, the variety and the mind of God to create all these kinds of trees is so amazing. And certainly some more beautiful than others. God chose to plant in his special garden. And then he selected what was the best to eat. Now I don't know if there was cauliflower, broccoli and lima beans in the garden. But if I were making a choice, there wouldn't have been.

There would have been a lot of strawberries and raspberries and apple trees and orange trees, who knows. But this was whatever God chose to be the best, to look at and to eat. These were the natural trees that he created. But there was also a supernatural tree there. End of Verse 9, "the tree of life also in the middle of the garden." And then another tree is mentioned, "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." Now all of a sudden in the midst of this amazing variety of trees which God has selected for the special home of man are introduced two trees that have properties that indicate they might not be natural trees.

Or they might be natural to look at and they might have a fruit that is natural in the sense that it is a real fruit. But there is a supernatural property at least to the first tree for certain. It is the tree of life in the midst of the garden. Now what that tells us is that it apparently had special properties to sustain life eternally in the one who ate from it. As long as one ate from that tree, they would live forever. This tree was placed right in the middle of the garden. Maybe right at the crown of that mountain of God. If indeed that was there in the garden. It was always readily available from any place because it was in the very middle.

And it was so powerful, listen to this, "this tree was so powerful in sustaining life eternally that even after Adam fell and Eve fell, even after they became sinful, mortal dying people, if they had eaten of that tree, they would have continued to live eternally." And so according to Chapter 3 in Verse 22, "they had to be thrown out of the garden, less man stretch out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat and live forever, therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden."

That would be a worse fate than death. To live forever as a sinner. But that tree of life had the power to sustain the life even of a fallen sinful, mortal, dying human. The tree of life sustained life. Among the Jews, the tree of life became a phrase used a number of times. It's used at least four times in the book of Proverbs. And it's used to express life's best joys. Life's greatest delights. When the Jews said that is a tree of life, they were loading it with their highest regard.

There was that tree that they could enjoy. That could sustain their already sustained eternal life. But it had such power. Once they sinned, they had to be removed from it. Less they would live forever in a sinful condition, better to die and be transformed, right? Into an eternally holy condition.

Now there's another tree in the garden, Verse 9, it's called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This is an actual tree and it had actual fruit on it. We don't know what kind of tree it was. A lot of times in pictures you see Eve or Adam eating an apple, we don't have any idea what kind of fruit this was or what kind of tree it was. But it was a real tree. And also the indication here is that it was in the middle of the garden. In the middle of the garden was the tree of life and in the middle of the garden was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

It would have been a good tree. It would have been because everything else was good, right? It had good fruit. It was not a poisonous tree. It wasn't a tree with toxic fruit. There was no toxic anything in the perfect creation of God. There was no poison; there was nothing in the fruit of that tree that somehow altered genetics. There was nothing in that tree that somehow killed some principle of life in an individual. Dealing some deadly blow to his soul. That was a good tree and the fruit was perfectly good because everything God made was good, everything.

There was nothing harmful in the tree itself. There was nothing harmful in the fruit of the tree. Like everything else, it was very good. But eating from it was very bad. Because eating from it produced the knowledge of evil. Man already knew good; that's all he knew was good. He didn't know anything but good.

But he would know if he ate of that good and evil. And as soon as he ate of that tree, he would die. Verse 16. "The Lord God commanded the man safe from any tree of the garden you may eat freely, but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat for in the day that you eat from it, you shall surely die." So it would do two things to him. It would show an evil and it would kill him. Now eating could only occur under one premise. The only way man could possibly eat of that tree was if he directly disobeyed God.

And if he didn't disobey God, he would never know evil. But as soon as he disobeyed God, he would experientially have come to the knowledge of evil. Because evil is disobedience. The tree was a test, it wasn't that there was anything in the tree that was toxic, the tree was just a test. And if man

ate the act of disobedience, would be the evil that he experienced. And God would then curse him for that disobedience. And he would die. So in the whole created earth, in the magnificent Eden, the garden of God, there was just one test.

One test. And we know the sad story. They had everything else, wasn't enough. The story will unfold for us in Chapter 3, "How that Satan who was that angel in the garden of God. Who was there in all his beauty had tempted Eve and she fell and Adam followed and they knew evil, experientially because they did it by disobeying God and death came into existence." See before they ate of that tree, they were like little children. They were like just little babies. They didn't know anything about evil. Remember in Deuteronomy, I think it's Chapter 1, Verse 39, where the Bible says, "Your children who this day had no knowledge of good or evil." That was just a term to say they were innocent. They didn't know anything about what they were doing.

But the day they ate, they would lose that innocence. And they would have the object of awareness of evil because they had just done it. When man was created, he was really he was like a baby. Like a day old baby who receives his food without any toil, doesn't work for his food, the baby doesn't work for his food. And he is man was happy in the garden that God made for him. And God gave him the most wonderful environment and fed him with the most credible array and loaded that garden up with the jewels and the wonders and the beauties of that place were staggering.

You see in the original creation, Adam knew God as generous. Generous. And that's why we taught through the years, God doesn't want you poor, God didn't make an earth full of riches so that everybody could be poor. But there's no particular virtue in that. God has created all things for us to be joyed. God loaded this little planet with so much wealth and so much wonder and so much beauty and gave man, made it his image the creativity to do the incredible things that man has done all the way from some of the magnificent architecture that you see all around the world to the most sophisticated ability to travel in to the space above us and land on the moon.

All of the wonders of science and medicine and art and music and all the creativity of God that put into the creation of man in his own image to make beautiful paintings and beautiful jewelry and beautiful garments and beautiful buildings and on and on and on it goes. All of this God gave us to enjoy, it was all there for Adam to enjoy with just one warning.

God had furnished him a garden and in it was everything he ever needed, everything. And he had no trouble and he had no anxiety for the future. And God gave him so many things to eat and so many things to enjoy and he just gave him one prohibition. Don't eat of that tree of the knowledge of good and evil. That tree was the test. But man transgressed the prohibition and like a child that disobeys his father, the father had warned him what was good for him but the child disobeyed and as children do, did harm to himself. Wasn't content with what the Father had given him, he desired something more. He didn't want to stay a child under the supervision of a loving and gracious Father. He didn't

want to be just dependent on God. He wanted to know the world around him himself and make his own choices.

He wasn't content with the blissful life. So he was banished from it as we shall see the whole human race was catapulted into tragedy as a result. But in Verse 9, we haven't gotten that far, all we know here is that there was every tree pleasing to the sight, good for food and the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of the good and evil. Now in Verse 10, we find more about the location. "A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden. And from there it divided and became four rivers. The name of the first is Pishon, it flows around the whole land of Havala, where there is gold and the gold of that land is good, the bedelion and the onyx stone are there. And the name of the second river is Gihon. It flows around the whole end of Kush. And the name of the third river is Tigris or Hidicel in Hebrew. It flows east of Assyria and the fourth river is the Euphrates."

Now that is quite a detailed account of the water supply in this garden. A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden. Again this goes back to Verse 6, the flow coming up from the subterranean water source is because there's no rain at this time. The hydrological cycle as we know it was not in existence until the flood. And so water springs up gushing up out of the ground. And it produces this great river.

The, it flows up, the term here is flowed and that is the way it should be translated over in Verse 6 rather than mist. This by the way, just if you want to do some interesting study, study Joel 4, Ezekiel 47, Zechariah 14 and you'll find that in the millennial kingdom the restored millennial earth is going to have an increased water supply when God creates rivers. Most likely flowing up out of the ground to water the earth and turn the desert into a blossoming garden.

Now this river flows up, it must have been an immense river. The garden is immense. I mean when you think of the garden, you're only thinking of your yard folks. This is a huge garden. It's immense. The flow comes up and goes through the garden and it then it says it waters the garden providing a high water table as well as surface water and from there it divides and becomes four rivers. This is such a huge flow that it becomes four rivers. And each of the four rivers is a large river and a long river. These aren't just little tiny streams; these are huge rivers.

And if that great Eden River comes out of the mount of God and flows down and then begins to fall into four rivers going in four directions, we understand the tremendous water supply that was provided to make this garden flourish with beauty. And productivity. And these rivers would flow and then at some point flow into the sea and then back down through subterranean channels and then resurface again at the head waters of the fountain of the main river in Eden and continue that flow out through those four rivers.

Now the four rivers are in two groups. The first two are Pishon and Gihon; the second two are the Tigris or Hidicel in Hebrew. And the Euphrates. And we don't want to get too caught up in this. Because you can't be real too dogmatic about these things. Pishon is a Hebrew root word that means to jump and run to and fro which certainly could describe a river, couldn't it? Just bounding and running to and fro.

And it says of Pishon that it flows around the whole land of Havilah where there is gold and the gold of that land is good. The bedelium and the onyx stone are there. Now I'm trying to discover exactly where this is, it's very challenging. I'll tell you why. Because this is before the flood, okay? And at the time of the flood, the surface of the earth was dramatically altered. So trying to find today some geography over there that can be precisely identified with the location of these rivers is really not possible. But there are some indications here and they're general. And he says that the Pishon sort of flows around the land of Havilah. And Havilah is a land that is mentioned among the sons of Jaktan. It's mentioned Genesis 10, 1 Chronicles, Chapter 1.

The name Pishon is mentioned again in Genesis 10, Verse 7 and also in 1 Chronicles 1 and Pishon is named as one of the sons of Kush. Now I don't want to get too technical, but the land of Kush and the land of Jaktan which is also associated with a place called Opher where there is gold, have usually been identified as lands to the south of Israel and the south of the Mesopotamian valley. The valley today that we know of as Iraq and Iran and that part of the world, even down to Saudi Arabia. Although the configuration of land has changed I believe since the flood.

And these would be great river, the river Pishon would be a great river that moves that direction through the south. Further identified because of Verse 12 "the land where there is gold." As I said Jaktan is related to Opher and Opher is a place mentioned many times in the Bible. I won't go through all of it but you look up Opher in accordance or an index and look it up yourself. 1 James 22, 1 Chronicles 29, Job mentions it a couple of times, mention in Psalms and Isaiah. And Opher was associated with gold. We're not certain about the location of Opher, but there are some who again would put it near the kingdom of Sheba and 1 Kings, 10, 11 and 12 that's identified. Again in the southwestern part, so down by Saudi Arabia, moving toward Egypt. So that would be coming out of the garden. Just east of Israel or on the eastern border of Israel. This great river flowing down, it would form a river that flows to the south, a great river flowing clear down from Israel, clear down until it comes, somebody has even suggested that it could have connected at some point with the Nile River although we don't know that.

Now further identifying this land, there is gold there and the gold of the land is good. And it's not just any kind of gold. And by the way, the gold of Opher was synonymous with the best gold. So this is consistent with the land of Opher, known for having the high quality gold. I think it's 1 Kings 9, 28, "they went to Opher and took 420 pallets of gold from there and brought it to King Solomon." You know how much gold that is? 16 tons of gold.

They took out of the land of Opher. So this is, this again tells us the kind of world God made. This is the kind of richness God made. It's wonderful. There also was there in this area where the Pishon River went, bdellium, bedelium is a word that refers to a color actually. It's kind of it originally is gum rasin. A gum rasin was used as a fragrance. And people have always been concerned to smell good, hopefully. And in ancient times, people wanted to smell good; it's part of their culture. And so they would find things that God had put in his creation that are fragrant.

Isn't it wonderful that everything doesn't smell like sulfur? You know? I mean God has given us sweet smells everywhere. And bedelium was a gum rasin, very aromatic and it was used for its fragrance. So it may be a reference to the fact that by Moses time when he's writing here and he's trying to identify where these places are, well this river, the Lord reveals to him, went down toward the south, toward what is now Saudi Arabia, what is now Egypt, went down that way and this river went down by the land of Havilah, which is associated with Jaktan who is associated with Opher and it is good gold there and there was this bedelium and there was this aromatic substance, gum rasin it was used for fragrance and didn't they also because it was yellow in color, it could also refer to some yellow precious stone, some writers think that it has reference to bedelium not as a gum rasin, but borrowing its color as a precious stone.

But for sure we know the onyx stone is mentioned as being there. And the onyx stone is more familiar to us; gem used in the garment of the high priest was the onyx. And so here is just one of the four rivers proceeds down into these various lands where God has deposited such immense, immense wealth and beauty in his creation.

And I remind you of what we read earlier in Ezekiel 28, "that you are in Eden, the garden of God and every precious stone was there. Ruby, topaz, diamond, barrel, onyx, jasper, lapus lazuli, turquoise, emerald and gold." So that where those rivers went, the garden sort of went as well. There's a massive garden. And then in Verse 13, the name of the second river is Gihon. And it flows around the whole land of Kush. Some would suggest that Kush is modern Ethiopia so that this river would go further to the west. One goes to the south and one goes toward the west.

And it flows west of the Mesopotamian Valley toward modern Ethiopia which is directly west of Egypt. And then in Verse 14, the name of the third river is Tigris, Hidicel in Hebrew and Hidicel by the way is a name in some Assyrian monuments given to the Tigris River. And he tells us about it. It flows east of Assyria. It goes from the garden northwest and southeast. Northwest to southeast. The two other rivers are going south and southwest; this is going northwest to southeast, moving the other direction.

Of course the Mediterranean Sea is to the west. And so the rivers go east and the south. The Euphrates also mentioned nothing is said about it, but it runs parallel to the Tigris and empties into

the Persian Gulf. Now you cannot compare any current rivers with the pre flood rivers. These were great rivers flowing onto some pre flood sea and back in the subterranean ground. All of that simply to say this was an incredible garden. This was a massive garden that swept through that part of the earth and perhaps rose to a crown where the water gushed out of the ground to water this entire garden.

The point is a vast garden of water and trees and plants and gold and precious stones. All for man's joy. All for man's delight. That's what God has planned for man in his original creation. And he could enjoy it all and delight in it all as he lived in sinless communion with his God. So that's his location. Can I say a word about his vocation? There's just a word about it, Verse 15. "Then the Lord God took the man, put him into the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it."

Now after the little interlude describing the location, the story picks up from Verse 8 and we go back to man. In Verse 8 he placed the man whom he had formed in the garden. In Verse 15 picks it up, "He took the man, put him in the garden for the purpose of cultivating and keeping it." That was his vocation. A vocation is a noble thing. Even then God didn't just say he put man in there to hang around. He put man in there to kick back. It doesn't say that God put in the middle of a garden a big hammock.

Work has always been dignified. Even before the fall. To say well what did he do? Well it says what he did. He cultivated it is probably not the best translation. Because cultivating speaks of tilling the ground and he hadn't done that and he wouldn't do that until after the fall. It literally means serving. Serving and keeping. What did he do? He just did what a gardener would do, taking care of a magnificent garden. He would care for it. Whatever we can imagine that being, I'm not sure what it would be. But then again when we get to heaven, you know what we're going to do forever? We're going to serve the Lord, aren't we?

What will that be? What will we do? There won't be anything broken, so there won't be anything to fix. There won't be anything wrong, so there won't be anything to make right. There won't be anybody out of line, so there won't be anybody to talk too. Preachers will be out of business, teachers will be out of business, and so will Biblical counselors. But the same as in the garden, I don't know how to define it and I really don't want to make any attempt but I know that work is a wonderful thing because God does it. God created the universe.

Demonstrated the magnificent work of his hands. He is still working in the wonders of redemption. He upholds the whole of the creation by the word of his power. We will someday in heaven have a vocation somewhat like Adam had. A vocation which expends no energy. A vocation which never makes us weary. A vocation which always brings us delight and blessing.

Now he ate of the things in the garden so there would be some selective picking and perhaps some pruning of plants in a protecting kind of way as they all flourished and grew. So that those that produced the food could have the necessary extra space to grow I don't know what he did. But I could tell you this, even before the fall, work was a noble part of man's life vocation.

Well let's look lastly just very briefly at probation because we already commented on it. I'll just say it briefly. Verse 16, "The Lord God commanded." Op, there's the first time we ever seen that word in the Bible. Never before in Scripture. First command. "God commanded the man saying from any tree in the garden you may eat freely, but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you should not eat for in the day that you eat from it, you shall surely die." There in the middle of the garden was a test.

A test to determine man's love. To determine man's loyalty to determine man's satisfaction. Man could enjoy the fruit of all the trees in the garden including the fruit of the tree of life there was just one forbidden tree. And when he ate of it, he would have the knowledge of evil and he would die.

One restriction. It was a test for man. No reason not to be loyal to God. You had everything. No reason to disobey him, no reason to doubt his word. No reason to resent his sovereignty. Man when he sinned was truly inexcusable. And he already knew good; that's all he knew because everything was very good. But if he disobeyed he would know evil. Because that is what evil is, disobedience. And it didn't matter really what the fruit was, as I said it wasn't toxic, it was the act of obedience that experientially showed you what evil was. And catapulted man into death.

Soon as he disobeyed he would die, he would die spiritually at that moment he would be sentenced to eternal death at that moment and he would begin to decay toward death physically at that moment. And we know the sad story. You want to look at in detail. But at first it was all good and only good. Except for one thing, something was missing. Was that a relation for man? Creation, location, vocation, probation. Sorry, next week. Relation. Come next week and find out how he got his wife incredible story.

Well Father, what a joy to look into the word and to see the truth so many people who will not accept what you've revealed in Genesis 1 and 2. Believe all kinds of lies that steal your glory as the creator. Thank you for your true word. We thank you that you put us in such a wonderful, wonderful, wonderful environment. Even fallen this earth shows your love of beauty and your desire to create a world of enjoyment for your highest creation.

And you because you've given us Christ you've given us the privilege of enjoying all the best that this world yields and the hope of what it will yield and the glories of the millennial kingdom which we shall enjoy and then even beyond that the new heavens, the new earth. You are a God of goodness. You are a God of abundance, you are a God of bounty, you are a God who wants to please us with all

good things. And may we as we enjoy them, always give you thanks and not be like this world. Takes all that you have made in the creation and gives the credit to the evolution of the creature, not the creator. And never gives you thanks.

And thus experiences your wrath. Lord, we thank you for even the abundance of what we enjoy in a fallen world. We can only imagine what it must have been like when in that garden you made it the way you really wanted it to be for man. And Lord we long for the day when Jesus comes and recreates this earth into its millennial glory and we can enjoy what will be paradise regained. And then we long for what is ours in eternity, the joys of that eternal glory. We thank you father again for all that you've done in our lives through this your day for which we praise you, Amen.

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