

97-10-19a

This is Sunday, the 19th of October, 1997. And as we prepare to worship and study together in the Word of God, let's begin by asking God's blessing on us, and seek the ministry of God the Holy Spirit, shall we pray? Father, we thank you for this day of worship. We thank you that our society has given us some days free from the requirements of our employment and so forth, so that we can gather together and spend time in the study of your Word and in worship and in fellowship with one another.

We pray that as we continue our study of the first book of the Old Testament this morning, that God the Holy Spirit will enlighten us. We pray that our worship, our instruction, our fellowship will reflect your glory and bring praise to the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ. In his name we pray, amen.

For our scripture reading this morning, turn with me to Ezekiel chapter 28. Ezekiel chapter 28. This passage will be significant in a couple of ways this morning.

One of the more interesting passages in the Word of God as far as interpretation goes, we're going to be looking specifically at the lamentation for the king of Tyre, which begins in verse 12. This has been traditionally understood, even though it is addressed to the king of Tyre, we seldom spend much time thinking about the king of Tyre. We like to think about Satan and his initial lapse.

Of course, lapse, I guess, is about as mildly as you can put it. His fall, his sin, and his separation from God and the subsequent course of angelic and human history that flowed out of that. But it's amazing how many things come up for review.

And they should. We shouldn't just accept things because they are traditional or because that's what we have always thought. It's good to question and to probe.

We have done a lot of that in our studies. In recent times, I attended a pastor's conference about ten years ago where the speaker came to this passage and said that we should not be reading Satan into it. Or in Isaiah 14, that this is pretty much just a paragraph about the king of Tyre and that we're reading too much into it.

There's no foundation for assuming that there is more here than meets the eye. Would the original recipients of this have seen Lucifer or Satan in it and so forth? And it brings to mind the difference between an academic approach to Scripture and an approach that is academic and at the same time sensitive to the way God communicates. If you stick strictly to academic rules of interpretation, you can't prove that this passage talks about Satan.

You can't prove a lot of things in Scripture if you are going to use logical proofs. They're not provable. You may gain insight into a Scripture passage.

You might look at the construction of the Ark of the Covenant out of acacia wood overlaid with gold. There's nothing in the Bible that says that's a picture of Jesus Christ. It is what we hope is an inspired deduction or an inspired, at least a spirit-guided interpretation and understanding.

But if you ever get very deep into a passage and start looking in commentaries and checking the scholarly opinion on a passage, you'll find a wide range of things that you would never have thought of. You just go to a passage and you say, well, it seems pretty clear what this is talking about. And many times God in the Holy Spirit gives us insight and gives teachers and pastors especially who have a lot of time to spend and meditate and compare Scripture to Scripture, gives them insight that you can't go back and document.

You can't footnote it. You can't build a solid legal case for it. And many times these non-documentable conclusions may differ.

I may go to a passage and see one thing and some other interpreter may go to a passage and not see it at all and think that it's wrong. So how do we know when we come to a passage whether we have arrived at the truth of that passage? The scholarly approach says if you can't prove it, you're not there. If you can't document it and show sufficient Scripture, then you can't take that as proof.

We are given the ministry of the Holy Spirit for a reason. And He, as Jesus told the disciples, the Holy Spirit would lead them into all truth. And each of us has been given the ministry of God the Holy Spirit to make us sensitive to, aware of, remind us of the truth, and to confirm in our hearts the truth.

And it is an inherently subjective process. It is not verifiable. I can't say, well, you know, I'm just so convinced in my heart that God the Holy Spirit has revealed this to me and now I'm telling you.

And you say, well, gosh, the Holy Spirit told it to Sam. It must be true. Each of us is responsible before God for identifying and adhering to the truth.

And it becomes more and more important if that truth forms a part of the fundamentals, if it is an essential. It is a non-essential which rivers you might identify in the Middle East that might have been the rivers that surrounded the Garden of Eden. Somebody might think it's the tigers in the Euphrates or the Nile or the Red Sea and so forth.

Those are non-essentials. When it comes down to things like the deity of Jesus Christ, the basis of salvation, and some of the essential truths, we have to be sure that there is no error on our part. But people say, well, you can't have a hermeneutic like that where it's basically subjective and you can't really prove it, you can't footnote it, you can't cross-reference it, you can't write it down in a book and publish it and have nobody disagree

and that sort of thing.

And that, I think, misunderstands the nature of our relationship with God and the nature of God's revelation to us. We will see as much as we want to see and we will come to understand as much as we want to understand in the Word of God. And we don't all make the same progress in the same areas.

So a seminary professor who has spent 40 or 50 years studying prophecy may be great on prophecy, but maybe he hasn't taken a close look at the doctrines of the Church. He may have ideas about the way pastors and elders and deacons are organized and so forth that aren't necessarily the views of someone who is going to spend a lot of time on that. So you can't say, well, because someone got this passage wrong or because I now understand it properly and somebody else doesn't understand it that way.

They're spiritually immature or whatever. Any given passage, any given topic, any given doctrinal area, we're going to have varying degrees. I may understand a lot about a New Testament subject and be woefully off the mark on an Old Testament subject and a guy sitting next to me may be just the opposite.

What it boils down to is, and this is what has happened a lot, people say, well, I want to find the teacher who is the best qualified, has the most years of the original languages, and I'm pretty much going to accept whatever he says because he's a lot more qualified than I am. And if he says it and he's got 10 years of Hebrew and 7 years of Greek, well, then it must be so. We can't delegate our responsibility for identifying the truth to a pastor or to a teacher either because there is no academic qualification that you can name that is going to make you foolproof and right every time.

And this has happened a lot. We've said, well, here's a person that's got these qualifications. When I stand before the judgment seat, if God says, why did you believe this? I'm going to point over there.

And we can't do that. We have to each stand on our own understanding of the Word of God because we each have the ministry of the Spirit. If God only gave the Spirit to pastors and teachers, now that would be different.

But he gives it to each one of us, and one of the things that it does is make us individually responsible. And that's why the Scriptures say, and Jesus said, ask and it shall be given, seek and ye shall find, knock and it will be opened to you. It may not be given right away.

It may not open immediately. It may not be found on the first or second or third or tenth attempt. But if we claim God's promise and if we are hungry for the truth, it's just like the illustration that Jesus gave.

If you ask him for bread, he's not going to give you a rock or a snake or a scorpion. And

our truth comes to us by faith and becomes the object of our faith. And it's not guaranteed because I tell it to you or because some very well-respected teacher, pastor, scholar tells it or writes it in a book or says it on the radio or on a tape.

We are responsible to evaluate and digest and estimate the value of everything that we receive by way of biblical teaching. And we will get exactly what we need. Now sometimes people develop a great curiosity like, well, what about the end times? And they may not get much in that area because God knows what we need.

It's like children who come to the table. If they had their choice, all they would eat is chocolate chip cookies and ice cream. Well, as parents, just because they want it isn't necessarily what you give them.

You give them what they need to be nourished and to have the energy and the nutrients for growth and so forth, good health. That's what God does for us. So just because we're curious doesn't necessarily mean that we're going to get the answer either.

But there's no fooling God's system. There's no way to beat the system or to deceive God into giving you something. God looks in our hearts and knows if we're interested, if we're hungry, if we're seeking and asking and knocking, He will give us what we need.

It may not always be what we want, but it will be what we need. And we have to trust Him for that. And we will know in the same way that if you eat a meal and it disagrees with you.

I ate the closest geographical eating place to where I work. It sits on a corner. I can see it out my office window.

And I went there once and got a hamburger and ate it because I was under pressure and didn't have much time for lunch. And that hamburger sat in my stomach like a lump of wet concrete for the whole rest of the day and into the evening. And I felt bad until the following day.

And so I don't go eat there anymore. Well, that doesn't take any great stroke of brilliance. The same is true if you sit under a teaching ministry.

You either get fed or you don't. You either see the pieces of the puzzle slowly fitting into place. You find yourself stimulated to fresh meditation on God and His Word and His plan or you don't.

And it isn't even necessarily a comment on the teacher or the pastor because different people have different personalities. They learn in different ways. Some people respond and thrive under a conversational approach.

Other people like a very structured, point-by-point, disciplined approach. Other people

get most of their truth in conversation with other people after the lesson is over. They don't necessarily get it directly from the horse's mouth, as it were.

Some people do great studying on their own. Some people have a teaching gift and so forth. Our responsibility to God is to find that way of identifying and learning the truth that produces results.

Whatever it is. It may be tapes. It may be face-to-face.

It may be a combination of all of the above. But God will provide in our periphery. If we are hungry, just think about that illustration that Jesus gave.

If you being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Heavenly Father give good things to those who ask Him? In one place it says He'll give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him. In the Old Testament age where Jesus was teaching, that was a prerequisite for understanding the Word of God, as it has been in every age. We couldn't understand the Word of God without the Spirit.

In the Old Testament days, someone who was hungry and seeking, God would give a ministry of His Spirit so that they could learn and grow and be men of faith and of righteousness, men and women. So I say all of that to say that I cannot prove to you that Ezekiel 28 is talking about Satan. I can't prove to you that Isaiah 14 is.

There are a lot of things that if I were to write them down in a seminary paper and submit them, I would get a lot of red ink back. Where's your support? Where's your footnote? Who said this before you type of thing? In my heart, I come to understand and teach things that I believe are true based on my best efforts and my belief that God is going to let me know if I'm very far out of line. I will mess things up and teach things wrong.

But if I persevere, I trust God's promise that He will eventually, when it's important especially, lead me in the right path. And so you may hear me say something from time to time that doesn't gel, that doesn't make good sense, that you don't feel a sense of affirmation in your soul, and that's fine. The important thing is to persevere in asking and seeking and knocking.

And you may find someone else who has studied that more completely and is an expert in that area and has a better answer. And I urge you, take that answer. If that is what you find to be true, and we're not talking about relative truth and everybody has their own truth, but we are saying that it is more important to be a seeker than it is to be a knower.

You don't have to have all of the right answers, but it is exceedingly important that we be a seeker after right answers. And to those who seek, God will give. So, this man who presented this, who is a very well-qualified scholar, well, I disagree with him.

I think there is Satan here, and we're going to see this morning why. But let's, for our Scripture reading, with that rather lengthy introduction, look at Ezekiel chapter 28, beginning at verse 11. Now, in Ezekiel, I guess you could say this is part B of my introduction here.

In Ezekiel, as in many of the prophets, there are often these songs of woe, these songs of not necessarily lament. It says, take up a lamentation. But this is more of a warning song.

This is a woe song. Woe unto you. Prophets were famous for this.

The term prophet of doom comes out of passages like this. But this is a reproach. This is a statement of crime and sentence in many ways.

Moreover, the word of the Lord came to me, saying, Son of man, take up a lamentation, or a woe song, for the king of Tyre, and say to him, Thus says the Lord God. You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God.

Every precious stone was your covering, the sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald, with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created. You were the anointed cherub who covers.

I established you. You were on the holy mountain of God. You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones.

You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you. By the abundance of your trading, you became filled with violence within, and you sinned. Therefore, I cast you as a profane thing out of the mountain of God, and I destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the fiery stones.

Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty. You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor. I cast you to the ground.

I laid you before kings that they might gaze at you. You defiled your sanctuaries by the multitude of your iniquities, by the iniquity of your trading. Therefore, I brought fire from your midst.

It devoured you, and I turned you to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all who saw you. All who knew you among the peoples are astonished at you. You have become a horror, and shall be no more forever.

If you're interested, sometime I can explain to you how this gentleman explained away all of these rather obvious references to Satan, as far as cherub, and mountain of God,

and garden of Eden, and so forth, in terms of the religious significance of the king in Tyre in these ancient days. He was not only the king, but he was also sort of the high priest. And if you go back and study the religious rituals and ceremonies in Tyre, this business of walking among fiery stones and so forth starts to take on some significance.

What that tells me is that, like much of God's communication, this is poetic and is very rich in its significance, not only to the original recipient, but also in a grander sense as an illustration and an echo of God's dealing with Satan. There are some references in here that are inexplicable. People have tried to explain them, but the explanations just don't hold up.

It's very clearly, like Isaiah 14 and several other passages, refers to an aspect of the fall of Satan. I would submit to you that these songs throughout Ezekiel and Isaiah, especially many of them, many more than just these two, we commonly go to Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28, but many of these reflect aspects of the conflict between God and Satan and the history that has issued forth from that. I would like to point out two or three things to keep in mind here before we go back to Genesis.

First of all, right away we have in verse 12 and 13, the seal of perfection, full of wisdom, perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God. These precious stones that form his covering.

He was on the holy mountain of God, in verse 14, and walked back and forth in the midst of the fiery stones, perfect in his ways. It says twice that he was created, both in verse 13 and verse 15. And all of these hark back to anybody in Israel who read this would immediately think of the language of Genesis chapter 1. Perfection, beauty, precious stones, creation, everything coming perfect from the hand of God, and then iniquity showing up.

If the king of Tyre was a pagan, as we can easily imagine, since he was the leader of the pagan worship in Tyre, remember Tyre and Sidon, which are up there now in what is modern day Lebanon, was outside of Israel. The king up there is not a believer. He's one of the enemies of Israel that these woe songs are sung to.

But this sort of language, God creating him and so forth, obviously it begs to be seen in a higher dimension. Also, notice that when he is condemned, it says twice as well that this idea of trading or commerce is at issue. In verse 16, you became filled with violence within and you sinned.

And we tend to think it's the five I wills that Satan committed that constituted his sin and his fall. It says again in verse 17, In verse 18, So your negotiations, your commerce, your interaction with others who seem to be at or near your own level is the idea here. But what is that all about? We talked last week about the conflict between God and Satan, what has been called the angelic conflict, the issue that at least one of the purposes of

human history is to demonstrate God's righteousness and justice in fulfilling this sentence that was passed on Satan and his followers before human history began.

We know that the lake of fire has been prepared for the devil and his angels. Well, why aren't they in it? What is the reason for the delay? And obviously, just as in our legal system, there is sometimes an appeal or there is a reason to justify or demonstrate that the sentence is fair. In this case, we have the nature of the offense spelled out, and it has to do with commerce and trading with others.

Well, what was the designated function of this individual? Especially if we understand this to be Satan, he is in the presence of God. He's in the garden of God. He's on the mountain of God.

He's walking among the fiery stones, which in many passages in both the Old Testament and in Revelation characterized the surroundings of the throne of God. He was the anointed cherub who covers. He is the honor guard cherub.

That's his function. He hasn't been assigned the function of negotiating and interacting and transacting business with others. What sort of business would he be transacting? Well, what typically happens in the high realms of government when someone who is entrusted with a security function or a great responsibility goes astray? What do they do? Well, they barter information or they barter influence.

They barter favor for something in return. You give me your allegiance and I'll give you this. You follow me.

You stick with me. You give the right kind of testimony. You make the right kind of decisions.

You implement the right kind of policies. I will give you this in return. It inevitably compromises whatever your position is.

You deal. You make a deal. That's what trading and commerce is.

You make a deal. Come with me and I will scratch your back just like you scratch mine. Something is exchanged, usually in secret, and usually that compromises the function that someone has been assigned.

So what would Satan in this scenario be exchanging? Well, when you go to Isaiah 14 and some of the other parallel passages where you do have the five I wills, what does Satan say? Among other things, he says, I will be like the Most High. I will raise my throne above the stars of heaven. What does that mean? He wants to run an alternate society, a society that doesn't have at its top and at its pinnacle God on his throne.

Satan wants to be like that. He wants to be at the top of his own food chain. He wants to

be at the top of his own system of government, perhaps even system of worship.

But the idea of a throne above the stars, the stars representing angels, is that he says we'd like to have an alternate society that doesn't involve God. We'd like the top of the pyramid to end with me instead of with God. So how is he going to achieve that? Well, he thinks he can do it, first of all, because he's impressed with his own beauty and with his own wisdom.

He thinks he's got the charisma and the personality and so forth to the horsepower to pull this off. That's why it says in verse 17 here, your heart was lifted up because of your beauty. You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor.

I want to be at the top of the pyramid. I want these angels doing my beckoning. We can do these things independent of God.

And this is his commerce. This is his trade. And it is in the lifting up of the heart, which is pride.

And also what was the purpose of it? What was the expression of that pride? It was, I will be like the most high. I will be at the top of my own little pyramid of creatures. He doesn't pretend that he can create universes and bring sentient beings into existence and so forth.

He's not going to be God. He wants to be like God in some respect. Well, in what sense can a creature be like the creator? He can be a ruler.

He can be a policymaker. He can be a judge and jury. And that's what Satan wanted to do.

And he has negotiated with apparently one-third of the angels. If we look at Revelation and the dragon's tail, it drags one-third of the stars again from heaven. So the defiling that takes place here is departure from God, rejection of God, abandonment of God, rebellion against God, and setting oneself up in God's place.

And this is exactly what every unbeliever does. Everyone who refuses salvation, everyone who refuses relationship with God, basically says, I don't need God. I can do it myself.

This is exactly what Satan and his followers have concluded. This sheds great light not only on Genesis, but on the Bible and on our lives and human history in general because it begins to tell us what the point is. What is the point of human history? Some of the great questions that are asked in every age and seldom answered are, why does God allow suffering? Why does God allow evil? Why did God allow the Holocaust? Why doesn't God be more proactive in human history? Why does he seem to just let the thing run and we don't see God's mighty hand? Why doesn't he do now what he did in Old Testament

days? What is the point of human history? The conclusion that most have drawn in our age, of course, is, well, we've just got to win the world for Christ.

We've got to go evangelize everybody, and that's the point. That's not the point. The point is to demonstrate the validity, the essential nature of relationship with God.

And that's not demonstrated by handing out tracts and trying to drag people kicking and screaming into the kingdom. It is demonstrated by ourselves responding to God at the point of salvation and then continuing to respond to God in faith, to be an asker and a seeker and a knocker, to care about God day by day by day, to reflect it in our priorities, to reflect it in our thought life, to reflect it in our pursuit of understanding of God's Word and pursuit of relationship with God through his Spirit, so that eventually, as Jesus describes, we will enjoy the indwelling of the Father and the indwelling of Jesus Christ because we love him and we keep his words. That's the point.

That's the reason we're here. It's such a tragedy that evangelism... Recently, we had an event take place in Washington, D.C., sort of a Christian Million Man March. And like anything else, you can look at any sort of a Christian activity.

God can find a way to work things together for good. And I am sure that there are a lot of people that have benefited, that have had their spiritual fire reignited, and praise God for that. But the overall concept of that event was, let's make a moral change.

Let's make a societal change. Let's call people back to responsibility, call people back to keeping their promises. Well, that's great, and that's a wonderful goal, but it doesn't happen by a Million Man March on Washington.

It happens by individual believers not just committing and not just promising each other and putting peer pressure on one another and pumping one another up with rallies. It comes by daily priority setting, by daily attention to who we are and why we're here, pursuing God's words, seeking the ministry of God's Spirit. And if a rally gets your fire lit, that's great, but the rally's not going to sustain it, and the fellowship of other men is not going to sustain it.

It's personal decision, personal priority. Satan was surrounded by every other angel that God created and was in the presence of God himself, and that wasn't enough to keep him from going his own way. And it certainly isn't going to be enough to keep us from going our own way.

We choose, we decide, and we're held responsible. And that principle makes God's point in this great historic conflict and in this case and judgment against the angels. God is demonstrating day by day, look at this individual.

They are a product of their choices and their decisions. Inherently, relationship with God tends toward growth and blessing and all of the good things that are part of God's

presence and God's plan. Separation from God, even for a believer, tends toward corruption, disintegration, entropy, the second law of thermodynamics.

Left to itself, every system will disorganize. And that's true. It's a true law of God's universe.

Well, what is it that keeps entropy from happening? What is it that keeps, as Paul Simon put it, what keeps everything that's put together from falling apart? You have to act on it with an outside agent. Well, God is that ultimate agent. He is the actor that brings life and eternal life into the picture.

So this passage here in Ezekiel chapter 28 is exceedingly important for that perspective. And as we see back in Genesis, where we now return, it also gives us some insight into the passage that we find before us in the end of chapter 2 and in chapter 3. I've read the last part of, or actually the middle part of chapter 2 several times and I haven't really explained verses 10 through 14. And it's mainly because I was still working on it, trying to figure it out.

I don't really have trouble with why God would insert these five verses about the river parting and becoming river heads. And you've got the gusher and spouter here, Pishon and Gihon, and this gold and onyx and so forth. And I actually had to work on this a few weeks to figure out why this is even here.

So if you've noticed that I sort of skimmed over those verses, well, that's why. I had no idea. But I have turned up some interesting observations about this, which I will offer you and you can draw conclusions along with me.

And I want to do that before we get to the next part because it actually sheds some light on what happens in chapter 3. As you recall, in chapter 2, verse 10, a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it parted and became four river heads. And, you know, we go right on into the details here. But if you stop and think about this, this is just exactly backwards of nature, isn't it? What usually happens with rivers? You have elevations.

You have heights, snow-capped mountains and so forth, and springs up in the hills and so on that issue forth water. You have rainwater coming off the water table and running into gullies, which become creeks. And these creeks all flow into rivers, and the rivers flow downward and join together into larger rivers, which eventually empty into the sea, right? So you have your sources, small, flowing together and making the big main river, and that river dumps into the ocean.

Well, this is backward, isn't it? You have one great big gigantic river with its source in Eden that runs through the Garden of Eden, and then it parts and becomes four rivers, which go out and water the rest of the continent, apparently. And that's just backwards.

We don't see any analogy to that today in nature.

And it reminds us that this was a different environment than what we see around us now. This is the single continent sitting in the midst of the waters. The waters have been divided from the waters.

And science today has recognized, by the movement of the tectonic plates, just saw a special on PBS this past week talking about volcanoes and earthquakes, and they showed these very same graphics of how the plates move. And if you run that movement backwards for a sufficient length of time, you find that South America and Africa fit right together, and all forms one continent back in the past, which they called Pangea, P-A-N-G-A-E-A, I believe it is. G-E is the primitive root that means earth, and pan means all, so all the earth, one big continent, Pangea.

So we noticed this, and we've seen in the last week or two the other references to the river. It's kind of like that Robert Redford movie that came out a few years ago that was called A River Runs Through It. Well, there's sort of a river that runs through the whole Bible.

It starts here in Genesis, and we find that river ultimately in Revelation in the last few chapters issuing forth from the throne of God, and going forth from there and dividing, just as it says here, into a river that provides life and health for all of those who are near it. And we documented that. I won't go back through those.

But it says in verse 11, The name of the first is Pishon. It is the one which skirts the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. I puzzled and puzzled.

Why do we need to know about Havilah? Where is Havilah? Why does Genesis tell us there's gold there? Is this a clue? If you want to be a prospector, head over to Havilah with your pick and your pan and see what you can turn up. Well, first of all, Havilah does turn up other places in Scripture. You can see it, for example, this is where Ishmael is going to go live.

If you look in Genesis chapter 10, and verse 7, The sons of Cush are Seba, Havilah, Sabta, Ra'amah, and Sabtecha. And the sons of Ra'amah were Sheba and Dedan. A lot of these early regions received their names from the first inhabitants, the first descendants of Adam who populated that region.

And here we have a son of Cush, who is himself a son of Ham. So the Hamitic peoples would live in the land of Havilah. And in the symbolism or the illustrative value of these early men and their lines, the line of promise and the line of response to God seems to be in Shem's family.

Of course, the Shemites or Semites are where you get your Hebrews, your Israelites, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And so here we have what symbolically at least would reflect

in these early days the people who are not really interested in God. Ham's line, part of it is under a curse.

And Canaan in particular is going to be a cousin to the Cushites. And the Canaanites and the Cushites are generally pictured in Old Testament days as negative. This doesn't mean that everybody ever descended from them is an unbeliever and hopelessly lost or anything else.

It just means that their illustrative or symbolic value in the early Old Testament is to represent those who are not followers of God. It's a very simple thing for God to turn cursing to blessing in the presence of faith. So that's a reference that we have here.

And you'll find the same thing on down in verse 29 of this. There's another individual called Havilah in the line of Eber, who is a Shemite. You have Ophir, Havilah, and Jobob.

Sounds like it must have been in the south of Havilah there, Jobob. So these early names crop up. And as I mentioned in chapter 25, verse 18, you find that this is where Ishmael goes.

In verse 17, he breathes his last and died and was gathered to his people. They dwelt from Havilah as far as Shur, which is east of Egypt as you go toward Assyria. He died in the presence of all his brethren.

So, if you want a few other references, you can look in 1 Samuel 15, 7. And 1 Chronicles 1. There's twice in that chapter, verse 9 and verse 23. 1 Chronicles 1. Generally speaking, this region appears to correspond to Arabia or the Arabian Peninsula. And especially judging from the reference there in 25.18 of Genesis.

So, this has led some people to try to identify the Pishon River as perhaps somehow running where the Red Sea and some of those bodies of water are. We're going to see that it's pretty well impossible to identify the pre-flood topography because of the flood itself and the vast changes that took place in the landscape. The separation of the continents.

Many of the things that Noah and his descendants saw when they emerged from the ark. It's kind of like people that came to America. Why do you have so many place names that start with New? You've got New York.

Why? Well, because it was a York in England and people came to America, picked out a spot and said, well, this is New York. There's a place in England called Hampshire. Well, they came to America and said, we're going to have New Hampshire.

And on and on and on. It reminded them or they wanted to hark back to days of yore when they had happy times in York and Hampshire and so on. Well, the same thing happened when they came out of the ark.

So, they named things with familiar names, but it doesn't mean that they were necessarily the pre-flood rivers or places even. But what it does tell us here is that the gold of that land is good. And in isolation, we can't really understand that by itself.

But it also tells us that Bdelium and the Onyx Stone are there. Well, why are we told about gold, Bdelium and the Onyx Stone in reference to the land of Havilah? What could this possibly be significant of? Well, I'm going to make you wait a little longer because we're going to pause here and take our break. And when we come back, I will share with you some observations.

Like I say, I do not claim to have fully understood this, but I can give you some observations that I think lend significance to this reference. And it also will help us as we move forward in our next session in Genesis 3. Let's pause and take a break.