

Genesis 2:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold;

Analysis

The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there i... This passage continues the detailed account of Eden, human creation, and God's design for human flourishing. Genesis 2 complements chapter 1 by providing intimate details about human origins, the garden setting, marriage institution, and humanity's vocation as priest-kings in God's sanctuary-garden.

The narrative emphasizes God's personal involvement, careful preparation of human habitation, clear communication of covenant requirements, and provision for human needs including work, rest, relationship, and worship. The garden of Eden represents perfect environment where heaven and earth intersect, God dwells with humanity, and everything needed for life and blessing exists.

Key theological themes include human dignity as divine image-bearers, work as divine calling (not curse), marriage as covenant partnership, moral freedom with accountability, and the necessity of obedience for blessing. The detailed geography and placement of Eden in historical space-time (rivers, lands) presents this as real history, not mythology. These foundational truths establish the pattern for understanding humanity's purpose, relationships, and destiny throughout Scripture.

Historical Context

Genesis 2 provides a detailed account of human creation and Eden's establishment, using different literary style than chapter 1. Ancient Near Eastern parallels include the Sumerian Paradise myth and the Gilgamesh Epic's plant of life, but Genesis transforms these motifs within strict monotheism. The garden sanctuary with its rivers, trees, and divine presence parallels ancient temple theology where gods dwelt in sacred spaces.

The geographical references (Pishon, Gihon, Hiddekel/Tigris, Euphrates) ground the narrative in historical space-time rather than mythological timelessness. While the exact location of Eden remains debated, the inclusion of identifiable rivers presents this as real geography, not allegory. The Mesopotamian setting connects to humanity's ancient origins in that region, confirmed by archaeology.

Ancient audiences would have recognized marriage's divine institution as countercultural, elevating women beyond their typical status as property. The intimate account of woman's creation from man's side presented revolutionary equality and partnership. The garden-temple imagery established patterns for Israel's tabernacle and temple, where God would again dwell with His people in sacred space requiring holiness and obedience.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does understanding this verse shape our doctrine of humanity, sin, or salvation?
2. How can we apply the principles from this passage to contemporary challenges in family, work, or church?

3. What connections can we trace from this verse to Jesus' life, death, and resurrection?

Interlinear Text

שֵׁם	דָּבָר	בְּאָפָּעַ	וְיִשְׁפַּחַת	הַוְאָ	פִּישׁ	וְיִשְׁפַּחַת	בְּהַסְּבָּבָה	כָּל	אַתָּה
The name	of the first	is Pison	that	is it which	compasseth			H853	H3605
H8034	H259	H6376	H1931		H5437				

אַרְץ	הַמִּילָה	בְּאָשָׁר	שֵׁם	פִּזְבָּבָה:
the whole land	of Havilah	where	H8033	there is gold
H776	H2341	H834		H2091

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 25:18 (Parallel theme): And they dwelt from Havilah unto Shur, that is before Egypt, as thou goest toward Assyria: and he died in the presence of all his brethren.

Genesis 10:29 (Parallel theme): And Ophir, and Havilah, and Jobab: all these were the sons of Joktan.

1 Samuel 15:7 (Parallel theme): And Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah until thou comest to Shur, that is over against Egypt.

Genesis 10:7 (Parallel theme): And the sons of Cush; Seba, and Havilah, and Sabtah, and Raamah, and Sabtecha: and the sons of Raamah; Sheba, and Dedan.