

## “THE RIVER OF LIFE”

### GENESIS 2:10-14

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#### INTRODUCTION

God has abundant spiritual refreshment and invigorating blessing for every child of God. Moreover, that child of God is to become the source for abundant blessing upon others. All of this is viewed under the figure of “waters.” The Psalmist says:

“As the deer pants after the water brooks, so my soul pants for Thee, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God/ when shall I come and appear before God?” (42:1-2)

From the very beginning of His creation God provided such spiritual and even natural refreshment, and He will continue to do so for His children through all eternity!

**YOU MUST FIND YOUR SATISFACTION IN THE LORD, AND NOWHERE ELSE!**

Now, as we look at the Garden of Eden we note a very special feature; “A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divided and became four rivers.” *Who ever heard of a river like this one?*

- Rivers always have tributaries that flow into it and form it.
- This river is the source of tributaries. It originates in Eden and flows through Eden.
- God is its source, and it is never ending and never dries out—like the water out of the rock in the wilderness for Israel (Ex. 17:6; Num. 20:11).

I. THE MAIN RIVER—guaranteeing the garden’s fruitfulness and freshness

II. THE FOUR RIVERS

Only the last two rivers can still be identified; but even their present flow is likely different.

- They no longer spring from one source, though the sources of the Tigris and Euphrates in the Armenian highlands are only 2,000 paces apart.
  - Extensive changes in the Earth’s topography took place during the Flood.
1. Keil says that Pishon is the *Cyrus* or *Kur* and the Gihon is the *Araxes* or *Aros*; but no solid proof exists for this position.
  2. Some older expositors identifies the Pishon with the *Ganges* and the Gihon with the Nile; but these are too far removed from the other two.
  3. Delitzsch said that the two rivers were canals connecting the Tigris and Euphrates; but canals are not rivers and such canals arose much later.
  4. Some say that the Gihon is the ocean from the Persian Gulf to the Dead Sea; but, the description of vv. 10-14 hardly fits this!
  5. Some say that the main river was the Persian Gulf; again this is not what the text states.
  6. Others state that the description of the text is mistaken; hardly! The geography has changed since the time of creation. Moses wrote through divine inspiration; God made these rivers.
- A. Pishon—flows around the land of Havilah, i.e. meanders through it and forms a sort of outer boundary.
- Havilah means “sandy land.”
  - Most think that this land is in the Arabian Desert.
  - However, Gen. 2:11 could be in a different location, as is the land of Cush.

1. The land has good quality gold.
  2. It also has bdellium—likely a kind of precious gum, looking similar to the “manna” given later (Num. 11:7).
  3. It had the Onyx stone—whose identity is uncertain; some think the beryl or chrysopros.
  4. All of these localities and substances were familiar to Moses’ original readers.
- B. Gihon—flows around the land of Cush
- Cush here is likely **not** Ethiopia.
  - Compare Num. 12:1—Moses’ wife, Zipporah, was from there and it earlier is called land of Midian—part of Arabia.
  - Also, a region near Babylon seemed to carry this title “Cush”—maybe as the home of the Cassites, east of the Tigris. Then maybe the Pishon was further east.
- C. Hiddekel—Tigris (the Hebrew rendering of the Assyrian word for Tigris)
- V. 14 states that it is “east of Assyria.”
  - This means east of the ancient city of Ashur, which was west of the Tigris. Later the Assyrian Empire was mostly east of the Tigris.
- D. Euphrates—so well known that no additional identification was needed.

Where then was the Garden of Eden? **Most likely it was either in southern Mesopotamia or in the Armenian highlands.**

### III. FUTURE RIVERS

#### A. Millennium

Man’s Fall ruined his opportunity to eat of the tree of life and to partake of the water of life. But, in the millennium, the River of Life will again flow from the Temple in Jerusalem. One stream flows to the East to purify the Dead Sea.

Another stream flows to the West to purify the Mediterranean Sea

- See Ezek. 47:1-11 [to the east—Dead Sea]; Zech. 14:8 [both mentioned]
- At that time, Israel is restored and becomes the source of life to all people during the Millennium, since God will be in their midst.

Also, there will be trees on each side of the river (Ezek. 47:12) providing:

Fruit for food

Leaves for healing

God is the source of life and health.

#### B. New Heavens and New Earth (Rev. 22:1-2)

1. It is God’s Paradise (2:7).
2. The River of Life flows from the throne of God (Rev. 22:1).
3. The Tree of Life is there (2:7)—on each side of the river.
  - 12 different crops of fruit, alternating (22:2)
  - Leaves of the tree for the healing of the nations

### CONCLUSION

Jesus said, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life (Jn. 14:6).

Once you experience Life in Christ, you may drink freely of His spiritual water of refreshment, and become spiritual refreshment to others.

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