

Where Was The Garden Of Eden?

The other day¹ I came across an article that claimed the Garden of Eden was probably located in what's now Iraq. I've seen this claim made numerous times, and since it doesn't appear to be going away I decided to address it. The record needs to be set straight: there's no Biblical reason to believe that the Garden of Eden was in Iraq – or anywhere else in the Middle East, for that matter.

The first thing we need to understand is that the famous garden that God made was actually put in a country called Eden. The reason it was called the Garden of Eden is because it was the garden *that was in Eden*. Eden was the name of the country, not the garden:

Genesis 2:8-9: “And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.”

The Lord planted a garden *in Eden*. So what do we know about this country of Eden, and why do people mistakenly believe it was Iraq?

Well, the Bible says that a river came out of the land of Eden. That river divided into four other rivers, one of which was the Euphrates river:

Genesis 2:10-14: “And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. The name

1 In 2013, when this was originally written

of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone. And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia. And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates.”

Some people read this and think “Oh! That must be talking about the Euphrates River that's in the Middle East. So that's where the Garden of Eden was located!” This seems very clever until you realize that *there was a worldwide Flood that destroyed the entire world*. The whole purpose of the Flood was to destroy everything, and that's exactly what it did. It was so devastating that it even altered continents. After the flood waters subsided the world was radically different. The topography of the planet had been changed forever.

The modern Euphrates River isn't the same one that's mentioned in Genesis 2. It's not one of four rivers that all come from the same source! That tributary system was destroyed by the Flood. After Noah and his family left the Ark and began repopulating the world they named a new river after a river that had existed before the Flood. It's just like how the American city of New York is named after the old English city of York.

It's impossible to know where the old land of Eden was located because it was completely destroyed in the Flood. It could have been anywhere on the globe – including in an area that's now covered by oceans. There's no compelling reason to think it was located in the part of the world that's now the Middle East.