

Old Earth Creation Science

Where Was the Flood of Noah?

by [Greg Neyman](#)

© Answers in Creation

First Published 12 May 2007

One of the items that old earth creationists disagree about is the location of the Flood of Noah. Many have proposed various locations, and we are far from coming to a consensus on this issue. If we wish to reach people for Christ, and show them that an old earth fits with the Bible, then this issue is of utmost importance.

In this article, I will review the proposed locations of the flood, and discuss their weaknesses. Then, I will present a solution for the location, which appears to fit all the requirements for Noah's Flood.

Requirements for the Location of the Flood

The site of the flood would have to meet three requirements. First, it would have to be capable of containing the waters of the flood. In order to do this, we need a basin, with no outlet to the sea. If there were an outlet, the water would simply run out of the area.

Second, the flood would have to fit the parameters mentioned in the Bible. The source of the waters is not in question. The only point that matters here is that Noah believed that the world was flooded, and that all the mountains were covered with water. Therefore this would require that the basin for the flood be large enough for Noah not to see the mountains from the center of the basin where the ark was floating. Thus, we need to calculate the minimum width of the basin, based on the curvature of the earth. Although this is a simple calculation,¹ we do have an unknown factor. What was the height of the nearest land mass that was not underwater? Thus, we will look at several possibilities.

Our starting point is Noah. He was on the ark, which had a height of about 45 feet. Accounting for a 20 foot draft for the ark, Noah was perhaps 25 feet above the water's surface. If he were six feet tall, Noah would be about 6.82 miles from the horizon. By contrast, the horizon for a 100 foot tall hill would be about 12.25 miles. Adding these two horizon distances together, Noah would have to be 19.07 miles from a 100 foot tall hill in order not to see it. Other landmass heights are calculated below.

Reference Point	Horizon	Horizon + Noah's Horizon
Noah (31 Feet tall)	6.82 miles	-
100 foot hill	12.25	19.07
1,000 ft hill	38.74	45.56
3,000 foot hill	67.1	73.92
One Mile Hill	89.03	95.85

Thus, for a one mile high mountain, the ark would have to be at least 95.85 miles away in order for Noah not to see the mountain. This gives you an idea of the size requirements of the basin. Of course, this does not account for atmospheric conditions, which would definitely lower these distances.

The final requirement is this: Does the proposed location agree with the geography mentioned in the Genesis account? It would have to flood the areas populated by mankind. We don't have many clues as to the extent of the geographic area. However, it would appear to include the area around the Garden of Eden, and east of the Garden. When God drove them out of the Garden, he placed a cherubim at the east of the Garden (Genesis 3:24). This would indicate that Adam and Eve went east out of the Garden. We also have another clue in Genesis 4:16. Cain was sent away, and he settled in the land of Nod, which was east of Eden. Therefore, if we know the location of the Garden, we know the location of the Flood, since it had to cover the lands east of the Garden.

There is one other requirement, which we don't need to address in detail. The ark landed on the mountains of Ararat. Note that the Bible says mountains of Ararat, and not "on Mount Ararat." The Ararat range is several hundred miles long, so the ark could be anywhere along this range. Although the taller mountains in the range are to the east, mountains extend westward all the way to the Mediterranean. All of the proposed locations support this requirement.

Where Was Eden?

In order to evaluate the proposed locations, we must approximate the location of the Garden of Eden. There are several proposals that lie within the areas proposed by old earth creationists.²

Mesopotamia

Many have proposed some location within Mesopotamia. These proposals vary from deep within Iraq, all the way to the mouth of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers at the Persian Gulf.

Jerusalem

Jewish tradition places the Garden in Jerusalem. This also provides great symbolism for Jews and Christians.

Turkey

The Taurus Mountains of Turkey is proposed by some as the location of Eden. These mountains lie in the southern part of Turkey bordering with Syria. They would be included as part of the "mountains of Ararat."

Iran

The latest proposal comes from archaeologist David Rohl, who proposes that based on archaeological evidence, the Garden is in north-west Iran, near the city of Tabriz. Here is a summary of this location:

According to him, the Garden was located in a vast plain referred to in ancient Sumerian texts as Edin (lit. "Plain", or "Steppe") east of the Sahand Mountain, near Tabriz. He cites several geological similarities with Biblical descriptions, and multiple linguistic parallels as evidence. In the Sumerian texts, an emissary is sent north through "Seven Gates", also known as Mountain passes in ancient texts. Hebrew lore includes references to Seven layers of Heaven, the 7th being the Garden of Eden, or Paradise. Just beyond the seventh gate, or pass, was the kingdom of Aratta. The region today is bound by a large mountain range to the North, East and South, and marshlands to the west. The eastern mountain region has a pass leading in and out of the Edin region. This fits with the Biblical geography of Eden containing marshlands to the west, and the Land of Nod to the east, outside the Garden. Geographically speaking, it would form a "wall" around the Garden, conforming to the definition of the Persian word pairidaeza (paradise) and the Hebrew word gan (garden), both of which mean a "walled garden or park". Additionally, this location would be bound by the four biblical rivers to the West, Southwest, East and Southeast.³

The location in Iran is compelling, but not conclusive. Of the locations mentioned, it is the only one which contains detailed evidence supporting the claim, and I believe this is the best probable location of Eden.

Proposed Flood/Eden Locations

Now we will consider the various old earth proposals for the location of the local Flood of Noah.

Mesopotamia

The most popular, and most common claim, is that the flood was in Mesopotamia, or present day Iraq. This view is proposed by Dr. Hugh Ross of Reasons to Believe. Unfortunately, Dr. Ross gives little scientific evidence to support this location. He glosses over the subject, expecting his readers to accept this as the location. For example, here are his references to the Flood location in his book *The Genesis Question*:

On page 144, he says "God would need to flood only the Mesopotamian plain and perhaps some adjacent territories. On page 146, he mentions that God used wind to remove the flood waters. He states that "This removal technique perfectly suits the requirements of water removal from a gigantic flat plain such as Mesopotamia. On page 166, he shows a map with the location of the Flood.

The map shows the elevation line of 600 feet above sea level in present day Iraq. It does look like a plausible theory, however, the major problem this theory has is that the entire area drains into the Persian Gulf. There is no possible way to contain the flood waters, and a flood of this magnitude would never have occurred here. The rain waters would simply run away into the ocean. The only way to make this work is to have God perform a miraculous event at the southern end, making an invisible wall, or barrier, to keep the flood waters within the region. There is no indication in the Biblical text that this occurred.

Geologist and old earth creationist Glenn Morton also disputes the Mesopotamia flood scenario. As he points out, the ark would have been carried along by the currents towards the Persian Gulf, and away from the mountains of Ararat. The only way to deposit the ark in the Ararat range would be to have the water run uphill!⁴

Concerning the other flood requirements, the size of the Mesopotamian region would be sufficient, and some theologians place the Garden of Eden in the Mesopotamia region. The only problem with this theory is with physics, as water runs downhill, not uphill, due to gravity. Since we have no indication of a special condition such as a supernatural retaining wall, this theory fails.

The Jordan Valley, Mediterranean Sea, and Jerusalem

There are two possible scenarios with the flood in the vicinity of Jerusalem. The smallest possible flood would be the flooding of the Jordan Valley, which includes the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee, and the associated drainage basin. You have the same problem with this scenario as we saw in Mesopotamia. The valley drains into the Red Sea, thus it would require a "supernatural wall" on the south end.

The drainage basin does extend mostly east of the valley ([click here](#), and scroll down to the *General Basin Layout Map* to see the basin). If Noah were well east of Jerusalem, this scenario could work (if you believe in the supernatural wall, of course). Some place the Garden of Eden in Jerusalem, although this is not the most likely location. While the symbolism is great, the archaeological and geographic evidence is non-existent.

The other scenario is the one proposed by Glenn Morton.⁵ He places Adam and Eve at about 5.5 million years ago, with the Flood occurring in the Mediterranean basin. The Mediterranean was a dry basin prior to this time. In this scenario the filling of the basin at 5.5 million years ago was due to Noah's Flood. Jerusalem is at the far eastern edge of this basin, so the area east of this (east of Eden was the land of Nod where Cain settled) would not have been flooded. This scenario would require the Garden of Eden to be located somewhere in the Mediterranean Sea. The ark could still come to rest on the mountains of Ararat in southern Turkey. This theory is plausible and makes sense, and it remains a possibility. The main complaint about this theory is that it would mean Adam and Eve were not modern hominids, but Australopithecines. The theory appeals to theistic evolutionists, but not to other forms of old earth creationism.

The Black Sea

In the 1990's two geologists proposed a flood in the Black Sea, that occurred about 7,600 years ago. This location has numerous problems. The total rise in water was only 400 feet, which moved the shoreline 24 miles. It would be no problem for people to flee this flood. Also, the Garden of Eden has never been proposed for a location near the Black Sea. In addition, the timing is wrong (see [Dating Biblical Events](#), which puts the flood at least 35,000+ years ago).

A Theory Revisited

This leaves us with the final location that I would like to propose. In the past, some have proposed the Caspian Sea as the location of the Flood. I believe this is the best location based on our current understanding of Genesis.

The map below shows the Caspian sea, and the part in yellow shows the drainage basin.⁶ Since this is a closed basin, we could fill up the entire area in yellow. What is important to note is that in the lower left portion of the drainage basin we find the city of Tabriz, which is one of our locations for the



Garden of Eden. When Adam and Eve left the Garden, they probably went east, out through the mountain pass that archaeologist David Rohl mentions. This would place all of mankind east of Tabriz, probably in the fertile lands on the shores of the Caspian, between present day Lankaran and Rasht.

There are some rather tall mountains on the south and west side of the Caspian, the tallest of which is about 18,600 feet. The width of the Caspian sea, from Lankaran to Turkmenbasy, is about 245 miles. If you add the portions in yellow, there is a potential width along this same line of about 645 miles.

Using our horizon calculations, Noah would have to be 167 miles from a mountain that was 18,600 feet tall. Given a potential width of over 600 miles, it is clear that Noah would see no land, even tall mountains, if he were in the center of the Caspian. Even in today's Caspian Sea, if you were in the middle of the southern portion, you would be over 180 miles from the tallest mountain, thus you would see no mountains.

The requirement for the ark to land on the mountains of Ararat is met, because the mountains on the west side of the southern portion of the Caspian are within what is considered the Ararat range. In fact, Mount Ararat itself is within the drainage basin. However, given the elevation on the west side of the Caspian, it would not be possible to float the ark all the way to Mount Ararat. However, it could easily land on the slopes of the mountains to the east of Mount Ararat.

There is one other important point worth mentioning. Given the elevation of Tabriz, it is unlikely that Eden itself was underwater. The Tabriz airport is listed as 4,459 feet above sea level. Since the Caspian Sea itself is slightly less than 100 feet below mean sea level, the waters would have to rise over 4,500 feet. Thus, Eden may have been destroyed by the torrential rains of the flood.

The Caspian Sea scenario meets all the requirements. However, there is one more issue we must discuss. Glenn Morton, a fellow old earth creationist, has dismissed the Caspian Sea as a location for Noah's Flood. His criticisms are this:

1. The basin has no geological deposits which would qualify as flood deposits.⁵ Morton himself answers this in another of his articles. In critiquing the Mesopotamian flood scenario, Morton states that "To completely erode flood sediments takes more than 20,000 years. In the progressive creationist time frame for the flood, it could not have occurred prior to 35,000 years ago. Most likely it was about 50,000 years ago. Thus, we have twice the amount of time that Morton allows for completely eroding away any flood sediments. Given this vast amount of time, we cannot expect to find any flood sediments from Noah's Flood.

2. To cover the high mountains in the Caspian basin would require covering the entire earth to a depth of 3,000 feet.⁵ However, we don't have to cover all the high mountains. So long as Noah floated on a body of water that was several hundred miles wide, he would not be able to see the high mountains on the sides of the flood region. All Noah would see would be water in all directions. Hence, from his perspective all the high mountains were covered.

Some young earth creationists have pointed to the statement in Genesis 7:20, where the flood waters covered the tall mountains to a depth of 15 cubits (about 20 feet). Noah could make this claim because the ark cleared all land forms and did not bottom out, thus the water had to be at least 20 feet deep. This is simply a reference to the draft of the ark.

Conclusion

The Caspian Sea scenario for Noah's Flood fits all the parameters. It is a large enough basin so that Noah would be unable to see any land masses. Based on the latest archaeological research, the Garden of Eden is included inside this basin. And, the ark could come to rest on mountains on the west side of the sea that are part of the Ararat range. It can work both within the framework of progressive creationism and theistic evolution.

Is this evidence conclusive? No. However, it is the best fit that we have based on the evidence available to us. Since the sediments from such a flood would mostly be eroded away, we will never be able to prove it conclusively.

I believe this model gives progressive creationism something that it hasn't had before...a plausible scenario that fits all the necessary parameters for the local flood of Noah. Up until this time, our best guess has been the Mesopotamia region, despite its problems. I believe we now have a scenario with no problems.

I welcome [any feedback](#) you may have on this article.

- 1 Using the Theorem of Pythagoras
- 2 [Suspected Locations of the Garden of Eden](#)
- 3 Summary from [Garden of Eden](#)
- 4 [Why The Flood Can Not Be In Mesopotamia](#)
- 5 [A Theory for Creationists](#), by Glenn Morton
- 6 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Caspianseamap.png>