

Where Was The Garden of Eden?

And a river went **out** of Eden to water the garden, and from there it was divided, and became four heads. The name of the first is **Pishon**: it is the one surrounding all the land of Havilah where gold is; the gold of that land is good; there is bdellium gum resin, and the onyx stone. And the name of the second river is Gihon. It is the one surrounding all the land of Cush. And the name of the third river is Hiddakel; it is the one going east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates. (*Genesis 2:10-14*)

The Bible says that a single river flowed "out" of Eden and then does something that most rivers DO NOT do. Specifically, split into four separate "rivers" downstream all fed from a common single river source. Almost all rivers start from a single source or are fed by multiple sources (tributaries). So the "names" of rivers are an arbitrary thing, usually denoting only a portion of a greater complex stream system, with one stream flowing into another, which in-turn, may flow into yet another. This pattern of rivers, as observed in nature, is just the opposite of what the Bible describes about the river of Eden.

For that reason, nobody has been able to look at modern maps of the regions mentioned in Genesis and figure out exactly where the Garden of Eden was, at least by the present topography of the lands of the Middle East. Only one river of the four, the Euphrates, is known by the same name in modern times. It presently originates in the mountains of Turkey and terminates when it flows together with the Tigris river near the Iraq/Kuwait border region. Many have speculated that the Tigris is the river Hiddekel.

This has led to speculation that the Garden of Eden was located somewhere in Turkey. This is assumed because the present headwaters of the Euphrates River originate in Turkey, as do the headwaters of the Tigris.

You will notice that the present day headwaters of both the Tigris and Euphrates rivers originate very close to each other in mountainous terrain. Logically, one would assume that if two of the rivers started there, the other two must have done so, as well, if Turkey was the location of Eden. Neither the Pison or Gihon rivers are ever mentioned again in the Bible.

First, let's identify the geographical region of the Pison River. The Bible says: "**Pison**: that is it which compasses the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold" and gives us two good clues. There is a recently discovered "Fossil River" that runs from the western mountains of Saudi Arabia towards Kuwait. This now dry riverbed was detected by satellite imaging. Many believe that this may be the ancient Pison, as it has been dry since between about 3,500 to 2,000 BC.

Although Saudi Arabia could marginally qualify for the land of Havilah, the fossil riverbed that flows across it had its origins in the mountains bordering the eastern side of the present day Red Sea, south of Israel.

It should be pointed out that those mountains are mirrored by another range of mountains on the western side of the Red Sea. The Red Sea is a tectonic spreading zone (red) and part of the Great Rift system that runs from northward in Turkey, down through the Dead Sea, the Red Sea, and southward deep into the African continent. Obviously, when that mountain range was split by the Rift the source waters of the proposed Pishon [sic] River dried up.

If this was, indeed, the Pison River, one of four that flowed out of the main one rising in the Garden of Eden, it does not correspond with the present-day headwater source of the Euphrates or Tigris up in Turkey. What's more, the geography of the last remaining river, the Gihon, further complicates the problem.

The Gihon is spoken of as: "Gihon: the same is it that compasses the whole land of Ethiopia" which is the African land area west of the Red Sea and southward. Of course, the political boundaries of what we call Ethiopia today were certainly different in Biblical times, but the general area is correct. And if a river formerly flowed down what is now the Red Sea basin and southward into Africa at the Afar Triangle, it would certainly fit the description of a river that "compasses the whole land of Ethiopia." (Genesis 2:13)

If we have correctly identified all four rivers, we now have 2 rivers (Euphrates and Tigris) originating today out of Turkey and another running down what was is now the Red Sea south of Israel and deep into Africa, following the path of the present-day Great Rift system. And the fourth, the previously discussed "Fossil River" running through Saudi Arabia.

All 4 of these rivers have one thing in common: All are connected to the Great Rift system. And that is the key to the mystery. Two rivers presently originate out of Turkey to the north and two other fossil rivers flowed south of Israel. The geographical "center" of these four points of flow is neither Turkey nor Kuwait; the center is somewhere near present day Israel and Jordan.

The Bible itself lends further credence to Israel as the location of the Garden of Eden.

Assuming this postulation is correct, that the source of the four rivers was somewhere in Israel, the interconnection of the river systems would need to be somewhat like the map below:

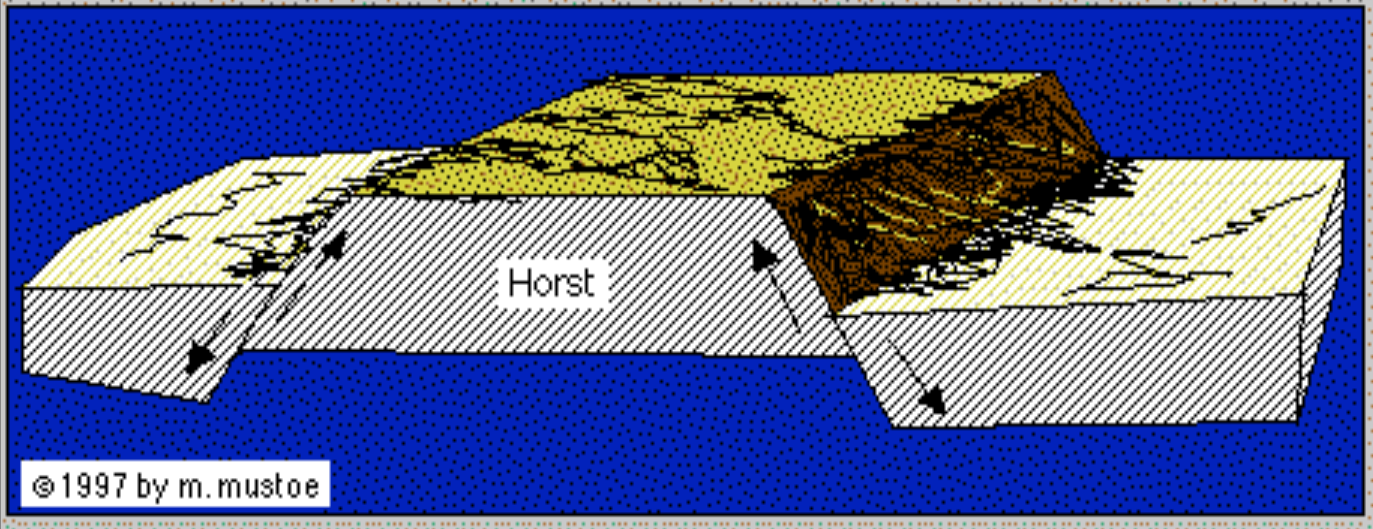
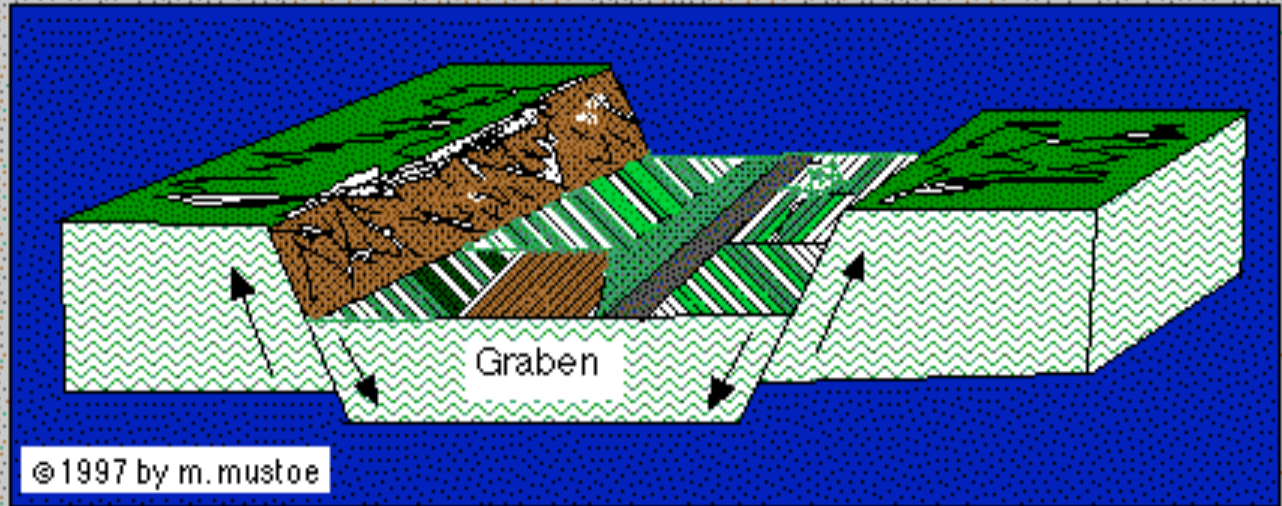


What roughly emerges, if all four rivers are connected to the Great Rift fault system, is a complex river network emerging from a common point of origin that flows both north and south, with each north and south extension splitting into two separate streams, for a total of four rivers.

It is highly possible that there could have been older main tributaries previously flowing from Lebanon which were, at that time, the main headwaters of those two rivers. Keep in mind that the course of rivers around and through the vicinity of the Great Rift fault system may have changed or dried up because of block faulting all along the Rift zone.

Certainly Horst and Graben faulting along the Rift could, and would, change the surface topography. Horst and Graben faulting is defined as "elongate fault blocks of the Earth's crust that have been raised and lowered, respectively, relative to their surrounding areas as a direct effect of faulting. Horsts and Grabens may range in size from blocks a few centimeters wide to tens of kilometers wide; the vertical movement may be up to several thousand feet."

Landforms Associated With Normal Type Faulting



But when did this happen? The most likely time frame would be in the years immediately following Noah's Flood. Keep in mind that the Bible says there was a significant geologic event that happened 101 years after Noah's Flood (The "Earth was divided" during **The days of Peleg**). And the Bible also describes what was probably tectonic/volcanic activity in Abraham's days (the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah - see Genesis 19:28).

Imaging of the Dead Sea indicates that, at one time, the river bed of what is now the Jordan River once flowed across the land surface that is now at the bottom of the Dead Sea.

This suggests that there was Horst and Graben faulting at the southern end of the Dead Sea which abruptly terminated the former flow of that river southward, which river was probably the feeder channel to the ancient Gihon River running down the floor of what is now the Red Sea into Ethiopia through the Rift basin of the present Red Sea. Coincidental evidence for this is the fact that fish way down in the African Rift Valley river and lake systems are very similar to those found in the Jordan River system:

Beyond the Red Sea, which stretches for several hundred kilometers and has not a single affluent river, the aquatic life of the African lakes and rivers belongs to the so-called Ethiopian

zoogeographical region. According to Annandale "the explanation of the Ethiopian affinity of the fish fauna of the Jordan is that the Jordan formed at one time merely part of a river system that ran down the Great Rift Valley. The Jordan was one branch of this huge river system, the chain of lakes in East Africa represents the other; and together they opened into the Indian Ocean."

See R. Washbourn, "The Percy Sladen Expedition to Lake Huleh, 1935," Palestine Exploration Fund, Quarterly Statements, (1936), p. 209. (Source website: [The Great Rift and the Jordan](#))

Now, returning to the general area of Israel as the Biblical location of the Garden of Eden and the water source for the four rivers, let us take a look at the present day geology and topography of that area. A topographical map will show a great deal of block faulting in the area of Lebanon just north of modern day Israel.

You will note from the topographical relief that, had waters once flowed out of this area, they would naturally flow northward into the Euphrates Fault system river basin. At the time of the Garden of Eden the main headwaters of the Euphrates could have come from that direction. If the water flow, at that time, continued northward along the path of the Great Rift, it would also intersect the present-day Tigris River basin.

The prominent bodies of water along the Rift zone are the Dead Sea (bottom) and Sea of Galilee (top). They are connected by the Jordan River which flows south. Before the Earth was divided by the Rift, the mountainous land on both the Israeli and Jordanian sides were joined. You are looking at "ground zero" of what was once the Garden of Eden.

Here is another important point to remember. The Bible says that the river flowed out of Eden, but nowhere does the Bible given a geographical size for exactly what constituted the entire area of Eden. Therefore, the actual source of the waters could have been south of Lebanon. More specifically, those waters could have originated in present-day Israel, in Jerusalem.

Now, what exactly do those spiritual realities have to do with the location of the river of Eden? In the future, when Yahshua establishes His Kingdom and Righteous Temple in Jerusalem, the Bible speaks of a river flowing from below the Temple. The prophet Ezekiel spoke of seeing this in a vision:

Eze 47:1 *And He made me turn back to the opening of the house. And, behold, water came out from under the threshold of the house eastward. For the face of the house is east, and the water came down from under the right side of the house, at the south from the altar.*

Eze 47:2 *And He led me out by way of the north gate, and led me around the way outside to the outer gate, by the way facing east. And, behold, water **was** dropping out of the right side.*

Eze 47:3 *When the man went out eastward, and the line in his hand, he measured a thousand cubits. And he passed me through the water, water **to** the ankles.*

Eze 47:4 *And he measured a thousand and passed me through the water, water **to** the knees. And he measured a thousand, and passed me through water **to** the loins.*

Eze 47:5 *And he measured a thousand, **and there was** a torrent which I **was** not able to pass, for the water had risen, water to swim **in**, a torrent that could not be passed.*

Eze 47:6 *And he said to me, Have you seen, son of man? And he led me and made me return to the lip of the torrent.*

Eze 47:7 *When I returned, then, behold, on the lip of the torrent **were** many trees on this side and on that side.*

Eze 47:8 *And he said to me, These waters go out toward the eastern circuit, and go down into the Aravah, and enter the sea. They are brought out into the sea, and the waters shall be healed.*

(And this corresponds with what John said about the New Jerusalem:

And he showed me a pure river of water of life, bright as crystal, coming forth out of the throne of YAHWEH and of the Lamb. In the midst of its street and of the city, on this side and that side of the river, was a tree of life producing twelve fruits: according to one month each yielding its fruit. And the leaves of the tree were for healing of the nations. (*Revelation 22:1-2*)

Since the original "Tree of Life" was in the Garden of Eden, does it not make sense that, when Yahweh makes all things new, that the future "Tree of Life" would be restored to its proper place. And that place is in Israel. The same place, upon the mountains of Moriah (Jerusalem), where Abraham was told to sacrifice Isaac (see Genesis 22:2); where Solomon was told to build the house of the Yahweh (see 2 Chronicles 3:1); and where the Yahshua was crucified; where the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world (See Revelation 13:8 and Genesis 3:21). All these things fit, in Scriptural type.

Yes, the Bible clearly indicates that the River from the Garden of Eden originated in Jerusalem and, from there, became four heads. A forensic study of the region's geology does, indeed, tend to support the theory over the alternatively proposed locations of Turkey or Kuwait.

We can highly assume that the block faulting along the Great Rift zone, that has changed the courses of rivers and created the Dead Sea basin and its present southern aquaclude, has also disrupted the main aquifer(s) that once were the underground source for the fabled river of Eden. Only a remnant of this water system remains today. There is the Spring of Gihon over the old temple mount and there are historical accounts of past springs and pools in and near Jerusalem in the Scriptures.

Keep in Mind that Jerusalem sits just west of the Great Rift valley. It is quite possible that legendary River of Eden originated from a massive artesian aquifer, the source of which has long since been disrupted by block faulting along the Rift. We know for a scientific fact that there is a considerable amount of "fossil" water under the Middle east in the deep-rock sandstone aquifers of the region such as the Nubian sandstone aquifers and equivalent formations. Many artesian wells have been found in the Israeli desserts.

Keep in mind that, in the days of Adam and Eve, a "mist" went up and watered the face of the Earth within the Garden (Genesis 2:6). Fountains of waters, or underground waters under pressure gushing upwards, would certainly be a logical source for the generation of such a mist and would be a logical feed-source for such a river. Certainly, we can not exclude this possibility.

In summary, The available data appears to suggest that present-day Yerushalayim was the central location of the Garden of Eden.

Congregation of YHWH Jerusalem PO Box 832 Carteret NJ 07007
www.coyhwh.com