

Addendum To Noah's Flood

Dr. Bertram L. Comparet



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Editor's Note: The distinguishing mark of a real scholar is a continuing desire for additional knowledge and a willingness to cast aside previously held concepts the moment they are found to be false; and the honesty to acknowledge such changes in understanding is most commendable. When Dr. Comparet wrote the foregoing article on Noah's Flood, he placed the Garden of Eden near the headwaters of the present Euphrates River; in other words, in northern Mesopotamia. But he subsequently learned that the Garden of Eden was more likely located in the Pamir Plateau of central Asia, immediately west of the Tarim Basin, and now accepts the views of Frederick Haberman on the subject as being entirely correct: the views expressed in Mr. Haberman's interesting and authoritative book called **TRACING YOUR ANCESTORS** - and the following is taken from pages 11-14 of that book:

"Our next problem is to discover where the Adamic or Aryan race originated. According to Scripture it began in Eden. But where was Eden? Concerning the location of Eden we read in *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 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 bdelhum 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.' Because the Euphrates is mentioned here, people have assumed that Eden must have been located on the banks of the historic Euphrates river in Mesopotamia; but as the Euphrates and the Tigris merge into one river, the situation in no wise corresponds to the description given in Genesis, which states that one river went out of Eden and divided into four heads. If we wish to accept the Bible statement as descriptive and authorita-

five, we are compelled to look elsewhere for a group of four rivers originating from one source.

"Such a location of four rivers starting from one source we find on the Pamir plateau in Central Asia, between the Tian Shan mountains on the north and the Hindu Kush on the south. Kush is the original word for Ethiopia and is a word older than the division of languages. From the lakes of that plateau issue four great rivers: the Indus, the Jaxartes, the Oxus, and the Tarim. The Oxus is still called by the natives the Dghun or Gihon; the Chitral branch of the Indus answers the description of the Pison; the Jaxartes is the original Euphrates; and the Tarim going toward the east is in all probability the Hiddekel.

"Concerning this identification, Prof. S. H. Buchanan on Pages 125 and 126 of his work, *The World and the Book*, quotes the great French Orientalist, M. Renan: 'If we search to determine the country which best satisfies the geography of the first chapters of Genesis, it is necessary to avow that all conducts us to the region of the Imaus, where the most solid inductions place the cradle of the Aryan race. There is found, as in the Paradise of Genesis, gold, precious stones, bdellium. This point is that of the world of which one is able to say with the most truth that four rivers issue from the same source. Four immense currents of water: the Indus, the Helمند, the Oxus, and the Gaxartes, take there their rise, flowing in directions the most opposite. The second chapter of Genesis presents to us a traditional geography which has no connection with the ordinary geography of the Hebrews; but which on the contrary, offers the most astounding resemblance with the Turanian system. The Pison, which issues from the Garden of Eden, situated in the East, is very probably the high Indus, and the country of Havilah, seems well to be the country of Darada towards Chachmises, celebrated for its riches. The Gihon is the Oxus, and it is without doubt by substitution of more modern names that we find the Tigris and the Euphrates at the side of the other rivers indicated. Thus, all invites us to place the Eden of the Semites at the point of the separation of the waters of Asia; at the umbilic of the world, toward which, as with an index finger, all the

races seem to point as that recognized in their most primitive traditions.'

"Sir Gaston Maspero, late director-general of Egyptian Antiquities in his *Ancient History of the Orient*, also identifies the Pamir plateau as the location of the Garden of Eden. His quotation is also taken from Prof. Buchanan's book, Pages 124-125:

"All have preserved, mixed with the vague legends of their infancy, the memory of a primitive country where their ancestors had lived before their dispersion. This was a high mountain, or better, an immense plateau of a square figure, and so elevated that it seemed as if suspended between the heavens and the earth. From the interior flowed a great river, which soon divided itself into four arms or canals, spreading out over the four surrounding countries. There was the umbilic of the world and the cradle of humanity. The people settled between the Mediterranean and the Tigris located this legendary country in the East. The people of ancient Persia and India conceived its situation in the North. The moderns have succeeded in determining its site more exactly than the ancients had done. They have placed it in the mountains of Belurtag, near the point where the chain unites with the Himalaya. There in effect, and there only, is found a country which satisfies all the geographic descriptions preserved in the sacred books of Asia. From the Plateau of Pamir, or better, from the mountain mass of which this plateau is the center, four great rivers issue, the Indus, the Helمند, the Oxus, and the Gaxartes, which flow in directions the most diverse corresponding sufficiently to the four rivers of tradition.'

"This plateau of Pamir all the people Asia consider to be the original Eden and the central part of the world as Prof. Renan tells us, quoted by Buchanan, Pages 123-124: 'Thus everything invites us to place the Eden of the Semites (Aryans) in the mountains of Belurtag, at the point where this chain unites with the Himalaya, toward the Plateau of Pamir...We are conducted to the same point, according to Brunoff, by the most ancient and authentic texts of the Zend-Avesta. The Hindu traditions also contained in the Mahabharata and the Pura-

nas, converge to the same region. There is the true Meru (Ararat) (of the Hindus), the true Albordj (of the Persians), the true river Arvanda, from which all rivers take their source, according to Persian tradition. There, according to the opinions of almost all the populations of Asia, is the central point of the world, the umbilic, the gate of the universe. There is the uttarakura - 'the country of happiness' - of which Magesthanes writes. There is, finally the point of common attachment of the primitive geography, both of the Semitic and the Indo-European races.'

"The Pamir plateau of today is of course a different place from what it was five or six thousand years ago. At that time the whole of Asia was lower than it is today; at that time a large inland sea covered the steppes of southern Siberia, of which the Caspian Sea and the Aral Sea are remnants; and over the now frozen steppes of northern Siberia roamed the mammoth and the sabre4oothed tiger. All the indications are that northern Siberia then had a semi-tropical climate, and ideal conditions prevailed on the Pamir Plateau. A study of our map shows that this plateau occupies a unique position; it is called 'the roof of the world' and forms the watershed of Asia. The plateau itself has today an altitude of 15,000 feet, and upon it stand peaks 10,000 feet higher. Four great rivers derive their waters from the valleys or *pamirs*, the lakes and glaciers of that region. The main branch of the Amu Dana or Oxus forms an outlet to Lake Victoria, several others of its tributaries flowing also from the plateau.. The Oxus is still called by the natives the Gihun. Both the Chitral and the Gilget branches of the Indus have their origin close to Lake Victoria on the southern side of the Pamirs, and so also has the Yarkand River, which together with the Kashgar forms the Tarim River. The Tarim river, as will be seen, has no outlet towards the sea, but disappears in the Tarim Basin at a place that is five hundred feet below sea level. This Tarim Basin is the greatest sinkhole in the world, although it is surrounded by the highest mountain peaks in the world; yet its floor lies in many places below the level of the Indian Ocean, indicating that a great cataclysm tore the earth here in a bygone age.

"The northern branch of the Tarim, the Kashgar River, flows out of the Alai valley on the northern end of the Pamir Plateau and not far from where a branch of the Oxus originates. From the same valley also flows in a northerly direction a branch of the Syr Dana, or Jaxartes River, whose name indicates that it is probably the original Euphrates of the ancients. The Helمند, which Renan and Maspero identify with the Hiddekel does not have its origin on the Pamir plateau, but starts several hundred miles south of it in a valley of the Hindu Kush; but it is probable that the Kashgar river is the original Hiddekel, flowing towards the East.

"Only the Pamir Plateau answers to the geographical conditions described in *Genesis 4:10*, 'A lake also sprang up in Eden to supply the Garden with waters, and from there it divided and became four rivers' (Fenton translation of the Bible). Such a condition exists nowhere else in Asia, four streams coming from one group of Alpine lakes, which may once have been one lake; and all the people of Asia look with awe to the 'forbidden Pamirs' as the place of the original Paradise. There on the 'roof of the world' is located the mythical Taurus or Alai mountains, the legendary Chinese *Qucs Kiu* or Lake of Stars and the *Rang Kul* or Dragon's Lake, from which the Serpent is said to have come.

"Today the Pamir Plateau is uninhabited. Its high altitude of 15,000 feet or more makes it too inhospitable a place to live in: and, covering a territory of about 180 by 180 miles, it forms a blank and mysterious spot on the map of Asia.

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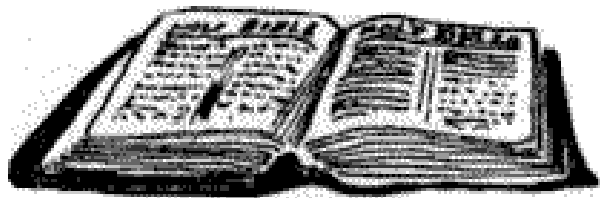
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