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Where Is the Garden of Eden?

Author(s): Joseph Fielding Smith

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Abstract: This article discusses modern revelation on the location of the garden of Eden.

YOUR QUESTION

ANSWERED BY
PRESIDENT
JOSEPH FIELDING SMITH
OF THE COUNCIL
OF THE TWELVE

WHERE IS THE GARDEN

Question: "I am a stake missionary, and recently an investigator asked me the following question:

"I have found a contradictory statement in your teachings. The Bible says the Garden of Eden was in the Eastern Hemisphere, and the teachings of the Latter-day Saints say it was in the Western Hemisphere, in Missouri. How do you explain this?" I told her I would do some more checking and get an answer. You are no doubt familiar with the Bible quotation in Genesis 2:10-14, and I have checked the best I can but have not come up with anything definite enough to satisfy this investigator. Is there any geographical point that I could get that will bear this, our doctrine, out."

Answer: It is an error to say that the Bible states that the Garden of Eden was on the Eastern Hemisphere. The fact is that there is no place that can be definitely pointed out where the Garden of Eden was. There have been great changes on the face of the earth since the days of Adam. The Latter-day Saints would not know if the Lord had not revealed it to them. Such knowledge is beyond the skill of mortal man to discover without the revelation from the Lord. Strange as it may seem there is a popular view that the Garden of Eden was in the Mesopotamian Valley, not many miles from Mt. Ararat where the ark landed. This view is inconsistent and contrary to the known facts as well as with the Bible. Some of these inconsistencies may be pointed out. The reason for the flood, as stated in the Bible, was to cleanse the earth of its iniquity which had become so great that the entire human family, excepting those who were saved in the ark, were destroyed. Another reason for the flood, as taught by revelation to the Church, is that the earth, like mankind, had to be baptized and purified by water. The scriptures state that the Lord opened the "fountains of the great deep" and "the windows of heaven," and caused it to rain incessantly until the entire earth was covered. The Latter-day Saints believe that this was the baptism of the earth. One or two quotations are given covering this point:

"The first ordinance instituted for the cleansing of the earth, was that of immersion in water; it was buried in the liquid element, and all things sinful upon the face of the earth were washed away. As it came forth

from the ocean flood, like the new-born child, it was innocent; it rose to newness of life. It was its second birth from the womb of mighty waters—a new world issuing from the ruins of the old, clothed with all the innocence of this first creation. (Orson Pratt, *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 1, p. 333.)

"The earth, in its present condition and situation, is not a fit habitation for the sanctified; but it abides the law of its creation, has been baptized with water, will be baptized by fire and the Holy Ghost, and by-and-by will be prepared for the faithful to dwell upon." (President Brigham Young, *ibid.*, 8:83.)

Just where Noah built his ark is not known, but we are informed that it floated on the flood until the mountains were covered. It must have traveled a great distance from where it was built, for it would not remain still, and it was one hundred and fifty days at least floating before it settled at Mt. Ararat, in the upper country of Armenia. Now the ark no doubt was driven by the fierce winds which accompanied the flood. Out of the country where it rested, there flowed a river; it has been given the name Euphrates, but this river does not in the least correspond to the river by that name in the Garden of Eden. It was the most natural thing for Noah or some other ancient person, to name the river after the one which they had known, but this river flows in the wrong direction. We call the river which flows from Utah Lake into the Great Salt Lake, the "Jordan," but that does not make it the river in Palestine, and what would be more natural than that the pioneers would call this stream, "Jordan?"

It should also be remembered that this good earth has passed through a great many changes since the days of Eden. The Bible teaches us that in the beginning all the water was in one place. Therefore all the land must have been in one place. (Genesis 1:9.) There *were not* an Eastern and a Western Hemisphere at the time of Adam. It is very strange, but nevertheless true, that some of the greatest events that have occurred on the face of the earth, have been passed over in the Bible with the slightest mention; for example, in Genesis 10:25, we read:

"And unto Eber were born two sons; the name of one was Peleg; for in his day was the earth divided." This is a very brief statement of one of the greatest

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events that ever occurred on the face of this terrestrial globe, yet there is scientific evidence that this very thing happened. In the beginning the land surface was one vast continent; there came a time when it was divided, and other continents were formed and the Western Hemisphere came into existence, but this was long after the time of Adam.

Speaking of this great event Dr. Immanuel Velikovsky, in his book, *Earth in Upheaval*, makes the following comment:

"The theory of drifting continents, debated since the 1920's has its starting point in the similarity of the shape of the coastlines of Brazil and Africa. This similarity (or better, complementation) plus some early fauna and floral affinities suggested to Professor Alfred Wegner of Cruz in the Tyrol that in the early geological age these two continents, South America and Africa, were one land mass. But since animal and vegetable affinities, could also be found in other parts of the world, Wegner conjectured that all continents and islands were once a single land mass that in various epochs divided and drifted apart. Those who do not subscribe to the theory of continental drift continue to explain the affinity of plants and animals by 'land bridges' or former land connections between continents and also between continents and islands." (P. 118.)

This, of course, has little to do with the Garden of Eden, but it does show that there have been great changes on the earth's surface since the days of Adam.

Another scientific writer, Reginald Aldworth Daly, has written a large volume with the title *Our Mobile Earth* in which he argues that there have been great movements in the earth, and opposite page 260, he gives a diagram—three pictures—showing how at one time the land surface of the earth was in one place and how the scattered continents and islands could be brought back to one body of land, and how the continents "migrated" and separated from each other. If one should take a map showing the Western and the Eastern hemispheres, and study them, one would see clearly how today they might be fitted together. Well, that day will come, for, as the earth was divided, so shall it in the restoration be brought back to its original form again, with all the land surface in one place. There are many prophecies in the Bible bear-

ing on this union of continents and islands again. Here are a few of them:

"For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee nor rebuke thee.

"For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." (Isaiah 54: 9-10.)

"For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken. Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel;

"So that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground." (Ezekiel 38:19-20.)

"And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found." (Rev. 16:20.)

Then also the Lord revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith the following in full accord with what is written in the Bible:

"And he shall utter his voice out of Zion, and he shall speak from Jerusalem, and his voice shall be heard among all people;

"And it shall be a voice as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder, which shall break down the mountains, and the valleys shall not be found.

"He shall command the great deep, and it shall be driven back into the north countries, and the islands shall become one land;

"And the land of Jerusalem and the land of Zion shall be turned back into their own place, and the earth shall be like it was in the days before it was divided." (D&C 133:21-24.)

We should be grateful to the Prophet Joseph Smith because of the revelation which the Lord gave to him pointing out the place of the Garden of Eden, and to give us the information that when the earth is restored, as it surely will be, the great city New Jerusalem will be in the place where Eden was.