



1 Turkey: Directions to Eden, Please? [part one]

When I was young and summer days grew warm and long, I used to swim in the cool of the Maitland River, fish in its murky shadows, and canoe under its leafy canopy. The Maitland River isn't well known, so you've probably never heard of it. But perhaps you have heard of these four well-known rivers from the beginning of time, written of in Genesis 2:10–14 (NASB): *“Now a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it divided and became four rivers. The name of the first is Pishon.... The name of the second river is Gihon... The name of the third river is Tigris... And the fourth river is the Euphrates...”* There are children today who do indeed read in the Bible of the river that streams just outside their house! Wouldn't you catch your breath if you read that verse in the Bible and realized, “That's the very river I swim in on summer afternoons!”? The stories of the Bible happen in real, actual places on earth. God's story, through the ages, is rooted in **geography**. The words of Scripture are firmly rooted in the ground of our world, places you can see and touch and experience today. I can't wait to experience those rivers and mountains and lands with you!

Of course, geographers pack their bags before embarking on a Holy Land exploration, but the most important elements of a journey simply cannot be tucked into a suitcase. Firstly, wise travelers have observing eyes that are focused to truly see the sights. Secondly, astute adventurers nurture strong memories to net their adventures and keep them as their own. And thirdly, sensible geographers carry with them a healthy faith. A growing faith gives our heart the eyes to see the evidence and glory of God everywhere we travel. With our trio of essentials, let us depart!

geography: comes from the Greek language meaning “to write about the earth”

The Bible begins with the story of geography: the story of earth and its creation... and it begins with a garden. The Bible reads, “*Then the LORD God planted a garden in Eden in the east*” (Genesis 2:8; NLT). This is the first mention of an exact, geographical location on our earth. It speaks of a real garden that once existed: the Garden of Eden. If I cracked open my Bible, could I find a map that told me where the Garden of Eden is today? No! No modern map can show us where to find the ancient Garden of Eden. Genesis 6 and 7 tell us of a global Flood and a man of faith named Noah who was saved along with his family and the many animal kinds. This event changed the surface of the earth and the actual site of the Garden of Eden.

Perhaps we could, however, gather some ideas regarding its location from the Bible and its clue of those four rivers: “*Now a river flowed out of Eden... and became four rivers...*” (Genesis 2:14; NASB). Since Eden means “delight” in Hebrew, we will need to look for a place of delight! Let’s begin in a place where children today can eat a candy called “Turkish Delight.” These children live in the Middle Eastern country of Turkey...and one of the rivers that flowed through the Garden of Eden begins in that country. Do you think earth’s very first inhabitants, created masterfully by God’s

own hand, walked through the dark green valleys of this country in the beginning? What was it like before and just after the Flood? Why don’t we hop on a helicopter to see this beautiful country and along the way see if we can gather clues about where the Garden of Eden might have been?

Hold a globe in your hand and spin it until you find where God has intersected the Mediterranean Sea and the continents of Europe and Asia; there you will pinpoint Turkey. Now that you’ve landed, let’s make our way to the crowded Turkish Grand Bazaar in the city of Istanbul. (Can you locate Istanbul in the northwest corner?) A **bazaar** is the Persian word for market, and it is here in the Grand Bazaar of Istanbul that we would find an ornate Turkish carpet called a **kilim** [KEE-lim]. Here, in alleys so narrow one can

Bazaar: the Persian word for "market"; is a market lining a street with shops and stalls, especially in the Middle East

Kilim: a brightly colored Turkish rug, woven with geometric designs





hardly squeeze through, stringing along more than 65 streets, merchants from over 4,000 shops shout out to passing shoppers, trying to sell their colorful wares. Some shopkeepers of the Grand Bazaar grab our arms, tugging us into their stalls, while others tickle our ears with whispered prices especially negotiated for us. In one shop selling carpets, I imagine our fingers reaching out to feel the dark hues and naturally dyed colors. Perhaps the shopkeeper, Ahmet, may roll the kilim out for us, chuckling, “Evet, evet” (“Yes, yes” in Turkish), teasing us that our carpet, like others in popular myths and fiction stories, may float away, sweeping us up over the Grand Bazaar and all of the city of Istanbul. The helicopter is definitely a safer and more realistic ride!

With your eye on your globe and Turkey far below, what image can you form out of the shapes you see? I imagine a strange creature with the Sea of Marmara as an eye. Can you pinpoint where Istanbul and the Grand Bazaar might be?

Turkey covers an area of 302,535 square miles (783,562 sq km), which is about the size of the states of Texas and Virginia combined. While we may have an easy overview of the entire country from our helicopter, Turkey actually spans about 1,000 miles (1,609 km) from end to end. We’d have to start driving before the sun rose and drive long after sunset to cross the entire country.



Sea of Marmara



Black Sea



Aegean Sea



Mediterranean Sea

From your perch in the sky, you would surely have noticed the four great bodies of water bordering Turkey: the Mediterranean Sea, the Aegean Sea, the Sea of Marmara, and the Black Sea. What makes these bodies of water seas and not oceans or lakes? A **sea** is a stretching expanse of salty water that is usually a reaching arm of ocean, butting into a **continent** of land. If you look carefully, you'll find that the Mediterranean Sea, for instance, is really just an arm of the Atlantic Ocean that God has allowed to reach into the lands of Africa, Europe, and Asia. Out of the Mediterranean

Sea stretches another arm, the Aegean Sea... and out of the Aegean Sea extends the arm of the Sea of Marmara... which reaches out even farther as the Black Sea. This arm of seas from the Atlantic Ocean is a long-reaching arm indeed! (Our travels will lead us to seas that are not connected to oceans at all but are entirely surrounded by land, called **landlocked seas**. Such a body of water is nearly always a body of salty water. An exception is the Sea of Galilee. A **lake**, on the other hand, is a large body of usually fresh water surrounded by land.)

Wave-tossed by this quartet of seas, the country of Turkey is actually like a bridge between the two continents of Asia and Europe. Yes, all that separates these two continents is a sliver of water — with the city of Istanbul on either side of the ribbon of blue waves. Istanbul, Turkey's largest city of just over 15 million people, is the most famous city in the whole wide world that is known for being built on two continents. (You may have heard of Istanbul's ancient name, Constantinople, in your history studies.) That thread of water, which separates the city into East Istanbul and West Istanbul and separates Europe from Asia, is one of the most important trade waterways in the world: the Bosphorus Strait. It is the connecting waterway for ships from the Black Sea to sail out to the Sea of Marmara, then to the Aegean Sea, on to the Mediterranean Sea, and out into the Atlantic Ocean.

sea: The continuous body of salt water covering most of the earth's surface

continent: One of the principal land masses of the earth (The seven continents are Africa, Antarctica, Asia, Australia, Europe, North America, and South America)

landlocked seas: Seas that are not connected to oceans but are entirely surrounded by land.

lake: A large inland body of fresh water or salt water

strait: A narrow channel joining two larger bodies of water

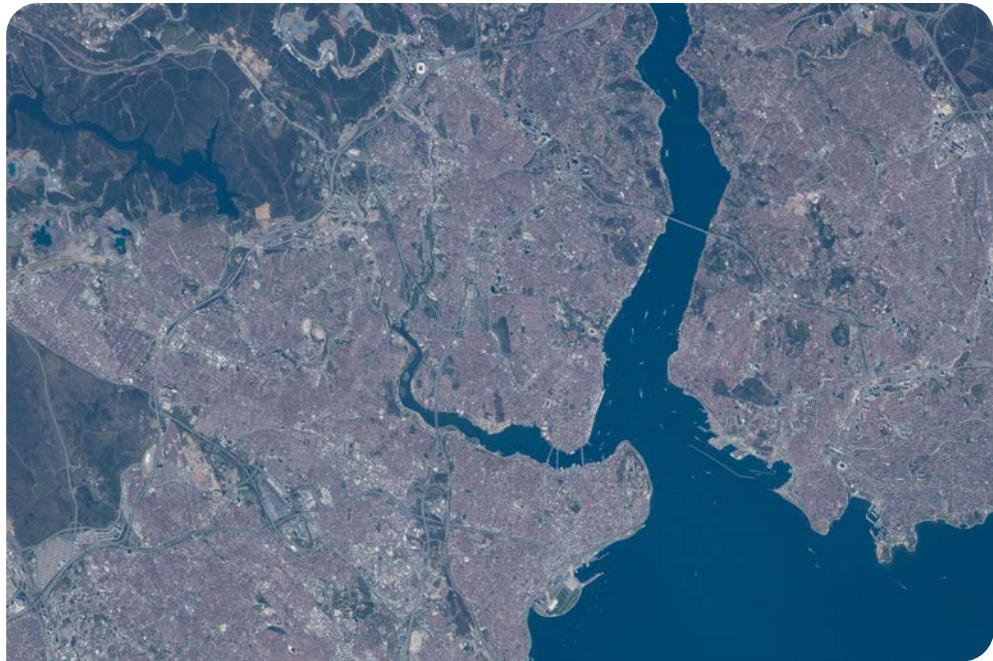


Although the Bosphorus is a strait of water, that doesn't mean it flows perfectly straight without winding around bends and curves. Actually, the word **strait** has nothing to do with "straight" lines but means it is a narrow channel of water that God put in place between two landmasses.

This narrow strait joins two larger bodies of water. Try

thinking of it this way: Have you ever squeezed on a long, thin balloon? Just as a skinny balloon bulges out into large shapes when you squeeze it in the middle, so the strait of water "squeezed" by the two landmasses swells into two larger bodies of water on either side! Looking at your globe or map of Turkey, can you determine which two larger bodies of water bulge out of the squeezed (only 0.5 to 2 miles [800 to 3,200 m] wide!) Bosphorus Strait? Yes, the Sea of Marmara and the Black Sea!

Recall that little Maitland River that I used to play in? Big old Hereford cattle use to wander down its banks to lap up the thirst-quenching cool water or sometimes splash across to the other side of the river. The Greeks had a myth about the false god Zeus supposedly hiding a cow in the silvery, narrow waters of the Bosphorus Strait. Thus, in the Greek language, Bosphorus means "the cow crossing-place." (That makes it rather easy to remember that the Turkish city of Istanbul is on the Bosphorus Strait — the cow passage!) You are not likely to see any cows swimming down there in the Bosphorus Strait, but you will probably see streams of cars crossing over the strait on the Bosphorus Bridge, the twelfth-longest suspension bridge in the world. This stretch of steel allows you to drive from the continent of Europe right into Asia.



The Bosphorus Strait separates the continents of Europe and Asia. A 4,593 foot [1,400 m] rail tunnel, running 180 feet [55 m] underneath the Strait, opened December 20, 2016, connecting Europe and Asia. Photo courtesy of NASA Earth Observatory.

Memory Joggers

What an amazing start to exploring the country of Turkey! We even learned about Adam, Eve, the Garden of Eden, and the Great Flood. 1 What important place from the Bible might have been located in Turkey? 2 What are three essentials that a geographer brings to every exploration? 3 What does the country look like from above? 4 What bodies of water border Turkey? Which continents? 5 What are seas? 6 What is a strait? What are the bodies of water the Bosphorus Strait connects? 7 What kind of bridge spans the Bosphorus Strait?

Adventure Challenge I

name _____

Fill-in-the-Blank

Read the following verse and fill in the missing words.

Genesis 2:10-14 (NASB 1995)

Now a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it divided and became 1. _____ rivers. The name of the first is

2. _____; it flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. The gold of that land is good; the bdellium and the onyx stone are there as well. The name of the second river is 3. _____; it flows around the whole land of Cush. The name of the third river is

4. _____; it flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the

5. _____.

Euphrates
Pishon
Tigris
Gihon
four

Word Connections

Draw lines to match each word to its meaning.

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| 1. Hebrew word “Eden” means | bazaar |
| 2. A kilim is a | Turkish carpet |
| 3. Turkish for “yes” | evet |
| 4. The Persian word for “market” | delight |
| 5. The Greek word for the “cow crossing-place” | Bosporus |



Map Clues!

This is the oldest known map of the city of Constantinople, now known as Istanbul. It was drawn in the year A.D. 1422 before it was conquered by the Ottomans in A.D. 1453. Look at the map closely — the image details let us know a little more about this ancient city. What are 5 things you have discovered about this ancient city by looking at the map?

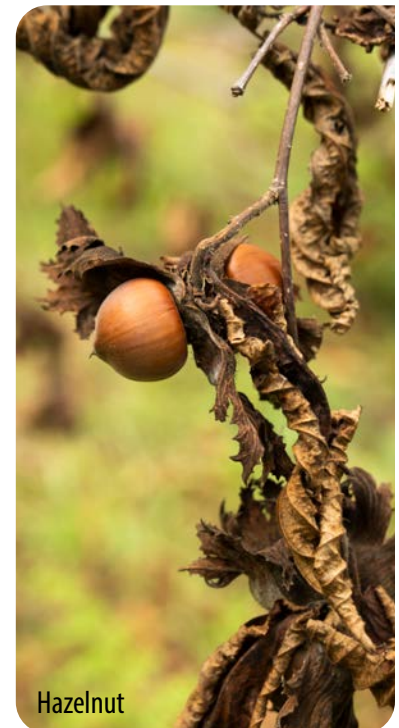


1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

→ While you may not see any cows crossing the Bosphorus Strait, if you look across Turkey, can your keen eyes determine where you might find cows in this country? Cows in Turkey like to chew exactly what cows along the banks of my little Maitland River like to chew: lush, green grass. Rich green grass is waiting for us if we soar east from Istanbul up along the northern coast of Turkey. You will notice how the skies are gray with rain clouds here, but the coastal mountains below us are deep green. Indeed, here along the Black Sea, you may actually see many cows grazing to produce Turkey's very best milk and butter. The **climate** of this area of Turkey is what we call **temperate**. Climate is the meteorological conditions, including temperature, precipitation, and wind, that characteristically prevail in a particular region. So a temperate climate is an area with weather that is not too cold and not too hot — but just right! In temperate regions — like here on the Black Sea coast of Turkey — changes between seasons are not extreme, with searing hot days followed by freezing cold days, but subtle, with moderately warm days giving way to moderately cool days.



Green meadow fields and hazelnut trees at the highlands of Ordu, Turkey



Hazelnut

As the warm air blowing in off the Black Sea rises over the north coast of Turkey, rain clouds are formed, which creates rainfall year-round. This area of Turkey gets almost 8 feet (2.4 m) of rain during a year, which is four to six times the rainfall in other regions of Turkey. (That amount of rain is about as high as you sitting on your dad's shoulders!) The rain clouds that God sends off the Black Sea make these steep mountain slopes verdant and lush with grass and crops. Imagine looking over this mountainous northern coast, where workers bring in harvests of cherries from what some believe to be the world's oldest cherry orchards, and gather billions of hazelnuts and expansive tea and tobacco on local plantations. Four in every ten Turks live by working in God's land, growing crops or grazing herds of livestock such as goats or cattle. Imagine working here, deeply inhaling those aromas of teas, cherries, and hazelnuts drifting in on the sea breezes up through this garden-like area of Turkey; we can't help but sing praise to our God, who owns *"the cattle on a thousand hills"* (Psalm 50:10; NIV) and who *"care[s] for the land and water[s] ...enrich[ing] it abundantly"* (Psalm 65:9; NIV)!



The landscape of the Hasankeyf region.
Ancient residential area in Anatolia, Turkey



The dark canyon and the road over Euphrates River

Speaking of fertile, lush gardens, can you spot the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers down there in the southeast part of Turkey? Recall these words from God’s Word: “Now a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it divided and became four rivers... The name of the third river is Tigris... And the fourth river is the Euphrates” (Genesis 2:10, 14; NASB). Today, we know very little of the rivers of Eden. We do know there are two rivers with the same name found today, the Euphrates and Tigris. The name Euphrates itself comes from a root word that means “to gush forth,” and we can see that it does just that as the river winds and meanders its way through steep canyons and gorges. As you gaze down on the Euphrates, one can imagine how Abraham must have felt when God said to him, “Unto thy seed have I given this land... unto the great river, the river Euphrates” (Genesis 15:18; KJV). This great river is the northeastern boundary of the Promised Land and the site of great historical events such as the battle between Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylon and Pharaoh Necho II of Egypt in 605 B.C. (Jeremiah 46:2).

The Tigris River, on the other hand, comes from a word that means “the river that goes,” which it certainly does, coursing throughout Turkey faster and with a greater volume of water than the Euphrates. The Euphrates and Tigris Rivers both begin high up in a rugged region of Turkey called Anatolia. (Can you locate the Anatolian Plateau stretching across the center of Turkey?) From






way up in space, we see this vast central region of the Anatolia as dry and rolling. Thus, we aren't surprised that in the Greek language, Anatolia means "land of the mother sun." The Anatolia is what geographers refer to as a plateau.

A **plateau** is like a mountain without a peak. Similar to a mountain, the Anatolian Plateau of Turkey rises high into the air, but unlike a mountain, God creates plateaus with a relatively flat top. A plateau can be regarded as a flat-topped mountain or an oversized table of land rising up out of the landscape. Think of the Anatolian Plateau as a table rising up out of the central interior of Turkey, a tableland, where the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers begin and course down through its rugged terrain.



View of River Euphrates near Erzincan, Turkey



 Mesopotamia is the land between the Tigris and the Euphrates Rivers, crossing three countries: Turkey, Syria, and Iraq

The lands that lie in between the winding Tigris and Euphrates Rivers are known as Mesopotamia. **Mesopotamia** literally means “the land between two rivers.” Sometimes, Mesopotamia is also referred to as the “Cradle of Civilization.” I picture this part of Anatolia as having two arms, the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, which cradled some of earth’s earliest towns, farms, and societies here in Mesopotamia, “the land between the two rivers,” following the great Flood detailed in the Book of Genesis.

Are these two rivers of Turkey the same rivers of the biblical Garden of Eden? Probably not. The Tigris and Euphrates Rivers of Turkey today flow on top of thousands of feet of fossil sediments believed to be from Noah’s Flood. Thus, it is argued, these two rivers are not the same rivers of the Garden of Eden. Then why do they have the same names, you ask? The Maitland River that coursed near my house was named after a long-ago governor, Sir Maitland. And it may be that the families who settled this part of Turkey after the Flood named these two rivers after the long-ago rivers they remembered flowing out of the Garden of Eden. The original Tigris and Euphrates Rivers of the Garden of Eden fed and watered Adam and Eve’s paradise, just as the modern Tigris and Euphrates Rivers do today for great areas of Turkey.



Take a look down there at the southeastern Anatolian Plateau, where some believe Noah's descendants may have built homes after the Flood and cultivated farms. Ever since, this sweeping Anatolian Plateau has been the site of a chain of civilizations and peoples whom God has used in mighty ways to write the world's history. The Hittites of the Bible lived here. The Persians, Romans, and Byzantines ruled here.

Copper, one of the first metals used by mankind, is still mined here in Turkey, near the Tigris River. When we read in the Bible of how Adam and Eve's son was a farmer and that their great-grandson's great-grandson worked with metal, we wonder if the very first people ever to walk the dust of this earth, Adam and Eve, lived in the Turkish Mesopotamia, between the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers. In all truth, we simply do not know. The global Flood of Noah's day dramatically and catastrophically changed the landscape of our world.



Copper mine in Siirt, Turkey

Peer out the helicopter's window, and perhaps you may see a young girl dipping her pail in the Euphrates or watch two boys watering their cattle at the river's edge and another man netting mullet fish. Since the creation of the world, water has been necessary for living. All rivers, like the meandering Maitland River or the great Euphrates and Tigris Rivers, provide drinking water for livestock and people, irrigation for crops, a means to transport goods, travel waterways, and a source of food. Thus, all throughout history before and

The Ataturk Dam Reservoir on the Euphrates River in southeastern Turkey



after the Flood, humans have built towns, which have grown into prospering cities, close to where God has provided running water.

Industrious beavers often built dams of sticks and mud across my Maitland River. But what we see as we gaze carefully down from above are definitely not beaver-built structures stretching across the rivers. Nor were these here in the day of Adam and Eve. Do you see the massive concrete **dams** spanning the width of the rivers? More than 20 such dams are built over both rivers to generate electricity for the Turkish people and to irrigate over 17 million square miles (44 million sq km) of Turkey's land in need of water. While the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers may be dammed up to benefit families in Turkey, dams actually leave less water for other families down river.

dam: a barrier built across a waterway to control the flow or raise the level of water

How God created our earth — geography — weaves through the stories and peoples of the past, powerfully affects where and how people live on this globe today, and influences the family of humanity's future. The God-designed geography of Turkey, with its Bosphorus Strait, Anatolian Plateau, temperate coastlines, and the course of its rivers, determines where families live, what they eat around their tables, how they work, and what they do. God formed humanity out of the dust of the earth, and for all of our days, we are intimately connected to the dust under our feet, to the geography of earth.

We've explored some of the highlights of Turkey's geography, but we have yet to visit Turkey's highest — and most secretive — point, its whirling dervishes, its underground cities to crawl through, its magnificent churches, and its camel wrestling to shake your heads over. So hold on! Our journey will soon continue!

Memory Joggers

I can't wait to hear your memories and field notes from our first flight over Turkey! Tell me...

- 1 What is the climate of the Black Sea region?
- 2 What is grown there?
- 3 Do you remember what the names of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers mean?
- 4 Where do they begin?
- 5 Why do you think these rivers have the same names as the rivers near the Garden of Eden in the Bible?
- 6 How do the rivers help the people of Turkey today?
- 7 What does its name Mesopotamia mean?
- 8 What else is it sometimes called?
- 9 Can you name some of the people groups that lived here?
- 10 What is a plateau, or tableland?
- 11 What famous plateau lies in the center of Turkey?

Adventure Challenge 2

name _____

Multiple Choice

Circle the letter of the correct answer.

- The name Euphrates comes from the root word that means
 - “the river that goes”
 - “land of the mother sun”
 - “to gush forth”
 - “land between two rivers”
- Another name for Mesopotamia is:
 - The Promised Land
 - Anatolian Plateau
 - Black Sea coast
 - Cradle of Civilization
- What item wasn't mentioned as being grown in Turkey?
 - Teas
 - Avocadoes
 - Hazelnuts
 - Cherries
- The word “Anatolia” means:
 - Mesopotamia
 - Land of the mother sun
 - Boundary of the Promised Land
 - Rivers of Eden
- The Black Sea coast has a climate that is very
 - Temperate
 - Tropical
 - Polar



Short Answer

- List several things mentioned in this chapter that rivers help provide for people.



The Turks are known for their brilliant colors and intricate geometric designs in textiles and tiles. One beautiful town named Bursa is known for its

hand-painted tiles that became popular during the Ottoman Empire.



Tile wall in Harem of Topkapi Palace, Istanbul, Turkey



Tile wall in Harem of Topkapi Palace, Istanbul, Turkey

Color Tiles!

Can you color a Turkish tile? Make a pattern and repeat it as close as you can in each square. Use your favorite colors and share your project with someone when you are done!

name _____

Mapping It Out!

Turkey is very interesting! Now, let's work on your map skills. First, we will make an outline of the shape of Turkey in this box. Here is a sample of its shape. Drawing it will help you remember it better. Your map doesn't have to be perfect, but do your best. Make it large enough to write in the labels of the places below. Be sure to use your reference map from page 395. Hint: Notice the difference between the names of cities and the names of lakes or seas.



Label the following places on your map:

Istanbul

Bosporus Strait

Sea of Marmara

Tigris River

Black Sea

Aegean Sea

Euphrates River

Mediterranean Sea



name _____

Geographers write what they've seen in order to share the adventure with others — and so they can revisit the places in their memories! On your travel log, record two important sights you want to remember from your tales of Turkey.

Blank lined area for writing a travel log.



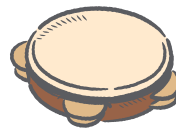
Music captures so much of a land and people. Research how each of these traditional Turkish instruments sound — ask your parent for permission before searching. Circle the instrument that most interests you.



bağlama: a stringed, long-handled lute



kaval: a flute which has two types— with and without a reed



tef tambourines

Black Sea fiddle, *kanun*: which is held on your knees when played

