

## Where did Noah live?

Noah almost certainly lived in Mesopotamia, the land situated between and around the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. The Greek word Mesopotamia literally means “in the midst of the rivers” or “between the rivers.” The territory generally applies to the entire Tigris-Euphrates Valley, including the area in between and bordering those two rivers down to the Persian Gulf.

Today, the northern reaches of Mesopotamia are called Al-Jazira, the Arabic word for “island.” This region of the Middle East makes up part of northern Iraq and extends to eastern Turkey and the extreme northeast of Syria.

Mesopotamia plays a considerable role in Old Testament history, including the story of Noah. Much of the densely packed narrative in the first eleven chapters of Genesis focuses on this region. The Garden of Eden, where civilization began, was in this general vicinity. Two of the rivers in Eden are identified as the Euphrates and the Tigris (Genesis 2:10-14).

Some of the ancient flood narratives that most closely parallel the biblical record of Noah’s flood come from Mesopotamia. The Gilgamesh Epic, Eridu Genesis, and Atrahasis are all Mesopotamian compositions that contain striking similarities to the Bible’s flood story.

After the flood, the Bible states that the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat (Genesis 8:4), a mountainous region located in modern-day Turkey. The mountains of Ararat sit at the northern edge of Mesopotamia. So it is likely that Noah and his family lived in Mesopotamia after the flood, as well.

The first king in Mesopotamia after the flood was Nimrod, the grandson of Noah's son Ham (Genesis 10:8). Nimrod's empire spanned all of Mesopotamia, including what would later be Babylonia and Assyria. The account of Nimrod is contained in the history of most Middle Eastern cultures, and not just that of the Hebrew people.

While we cannot know for sure where Noah and his family settled after the flood, Noah's descendants founded several cities, such as Babylon, Calah, Erech, and Nineveh, all located in Mesopotamia (Genesis 10:10-31). Mesopotamia was also the birthplace of Abraham (Genesis 11:27-12:4). The best deduction, based on the biblical evidence, is that Noah lived in or near Mesopotamia.