

**INTO THE
FORBIDDEN VALLEY**

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Introduction

“Firstly, you should be aware that there is an ongoing war between the Turkish Security Forces and Kurdistan workers’ Party (PKK) guerrillas.

“People are being killed on the streets by unidentified murderers and none of them was unidentified or arrested. Therefore it is really risky and dangerous to travel in Kurdistan.

“There is a strong possibility that security forces will arrest or detain you if they see your travel visa issued by any Kurdish organisation. Therefore you should not show your visa to any Turkish official.”

So warned the FAX message sent to me with my Kurdish “visa”.

* * * * *

It had been a scary week.

And now our bus had just been stopped by Turkish police.

“Everyone out. We’re going to search your baggage.”

The uniformed Turkish officer was coming along the line. He would soon reach my baggage.

Stuffed inside my sleeping-bag cover was my safe-passage document issued by the outlawed Kurds. If the Turks found it, we were finished. I had to do something now.

Looking quickly to see if anyone was watching me, I thrust my hand inside the cover of the sleeping-bag, pulled out that document, and nervously stuffed it behind my belt at the back of my trousers.

Only then did I look up – and realised someone was watching. And while they watched... the piece of paper slid down my legs back on to the ground.

1 The grave markers

Place names are a record of history. And, according to local place names, the eight human survivors of the Great Flood settled here, in eastern Turkey, in the Valley of Eight.

This is a wild region... with a sharp, dramatic landscape.

American archaeologist Ron Wyatt went exploring this valley, down from the alleged Ark site.

In a bowl depression he came upon a village – Kazan – which had long been known as “The Place of Eight”.

Across the road from the village were some very old, deserted relics. There were sections enclosed with ancient stone fences, once animal pens. Amidst them were the remains of several structures... a house, another building, and two stone markers. Beyond all these, there extended a line of hills. The most central of these low hills was shaped into a natural amphitheatre.

Within this sound bowl stood an ancient altar. The altar itself was massive: 12 feet wide by 12 feet deep by 12 feet high. At the rear was a giant step, just one big step, halfway up. Too big for any of us to use simply by lifting the foot. And one would be tempted to ask, How tall was the man who used this altar?

In this natural sound bowl, anyone speaking could be heard at a great distance.

Here was plenty of room for appointed gatherings, when a patriarch could have addressed his descendants and offered the animal sacrifices.

Ron's two sons went exploring...

“Hey, Dad, just look at this!” shouted Danny. The other two men came running.

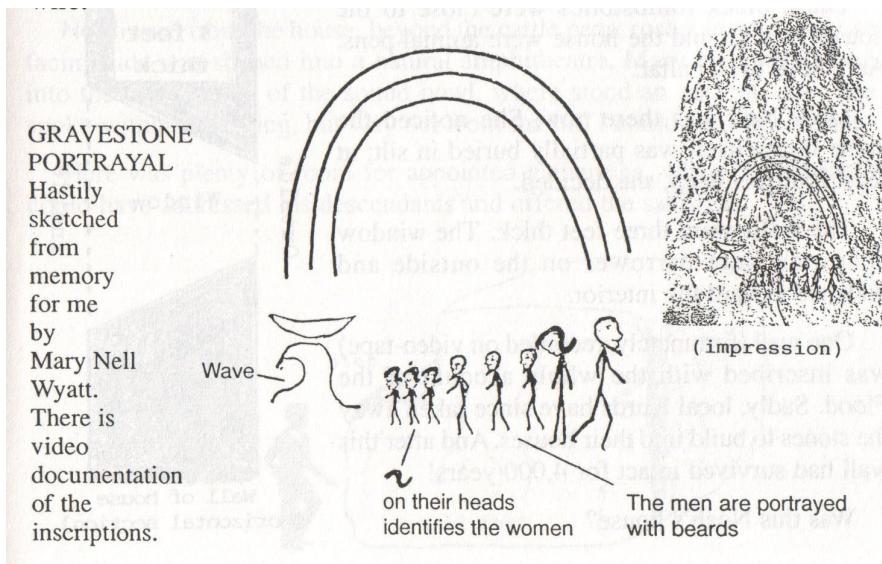
Danny was rubbing an old, weathered marker. There was lichen over it. But under the crust, there were clear incisions.

"Here's another one, lying on the ground," added Ronny. "These must be grave markers."

Ron had his camera running. And the inscriptions were unmistakable.

Yes, the iconographs identified the graves. If the inscription meant anything, then what they had stumbled upon was – dared they say it? – probably the first post-Flood grave marker on this planet, that of Noah's wife. And nearby, that of Noah himself!

The two grave markers bore the eight-cross symbols of Noah and his family above an ancient, petroglyphic portrayal of Noah's death on one marker and that of his wife on one marker and that of his wife on the other. These grave markers were in the front of a very ancient stone house.



Below the rainbow (associated with the Flood account), on the left was the crest of a wave, and atop the wave a boat. To the right of this were eight stick characters. It was clear who they were. Two larger figures (male and female), accompanied by three smaller men (their sons) and behind them three women (their sons' wives). According to Genesis, the eight human survivors of the Great Flood were Noah and his wife, their three sons Shem, Ham and Japheth, and their sons' wives.

The inscription showed the woman crouching. Her head was bowed and her eyes closed. And the other seven were walking away from her. She must have been the first of them to go.

Although we cannot be certain, there is good scientific reason to suggest that Mrs Noah's skin was more brown than white.

In front of the village was an ancient wall faced with tiles. Engraved on the tiles was a sequence of pictures portaying an event.

Firstly, animals were shown entering the Ark. There were eight people shown.

Then were portrayed the faces of other people, around the Ark.

Then the Ark was shown, riding on a wave.

A God was depicted, with water flowing from His feet.

And eight people were depicted under a rainbow.

After this was discovered by the archaeology team, the local villagers broke up the wall to sell the tiles to tourists. At least one tile ended up in a villager's house..

The most exciting find was the two grave markers.

2 Robbery

Let me ask, could you keep such a discovery secret? Ron was exploding. He wanted to shout it to the world!

“That’s incredible,” gasped [we shall not name him]. “Simply incredible!” The man was an Ark-search colleague. “Ron, I must see this!”

Trembling with excitement, Ron drove the man out to Kazan. You might call Ron naive. He trusted that his friend would feel the same awe that had moved him. A reverence, if you like.

Mehmet, the village mayor, looked both ways down the street, then yanked the visitor inside. The pact was sealed with a drink and the visitor crept out into the darkness and sped off with no lights

Within hours, the two graves were dug up.

“Mr Wyatt, we want to find out if you have any knowledge of who could have done such a thing.” The Turkish authorities were most concerned. They informed him that over 100 million U.S. dollars worth of gold and gemstones had been stolen from the graves. One item, a bodice around her waist, with large stones in it, had sold on the black-market in Istanbul for \$75 million dollars! Of course, it had to be quite an incredible piece, and the description of this one item was more than a person could comprehend.

You may ask, how did the Turkish authorities know that the vandals had robbed the grave of many precious jewels and golden artefacts if it had never been opened before it was vandalised?

The Turkish authorities tracked down the source of the artefacts through their intelligence on activities in the Black Market – but the perpetrator himself eluded capture.

However, the chief of the village near the gravesite – Mehmet – has been identified as an accomplice. His share of the proceeds, it appears, has

enabled him to buy his way out of trouble with authorities. There is corruption at high levels in all countries.

Even as I write, Turkish authorities are seeking to recover these precious artefacts. They are aware of the identity of the man most likely to have committed this outrage. He dropped from the Ark search and from the public eye shortly after the theft from the two graves.

3 “They’re trying to kill us!”

Back in the hotel in which we stayed, it was close to midnight, when Ron heard a commotion outside. A mob of people was gathering. He quickly awake the boys.

“Danny, wake up! We’ve gotta get outta here. Some of the villagers are trying to kill us! Into Ronny’s room, quick!...

“...Barricade the door... .The bed first... .Now ram the chest between the bed and the wall.”

Their minds raced, trying to comprehend what was happening.

It was a hot night, and sultry. Hard enough to sleep. And now... They could hear the pummelling of heavy feet rushing up the stairs. Now they were just outside. Somebody was trying to use a pass-key in the lock. The door appeared to strain from the weight of a wild mob in the corridor. This was not room service! Would the door hold?

“Let’s go, boys. Grab what you can and outta the window. On to the roof!”

They tied sheets and blankets together, tied one end to the bed and tossed them out of the window. Then they slid down two floors to a room below, and escaped into the street for their lives.

Their mouths and throats were parched. The Erzurum Hotel in Dogubayazit, eight miles from the “Ark” site, had seemed safe... until now.

This was not the sort of place you would go for a holiday!

Some time later, members of the team were on the road heading south. Just as night fell, they were kidnapped by Kurdish guerrillas.

Their captors marched them by night through the rugged mountains the Turks called Black Hell. By day they were hid at gunpoint as helicopters and 4,000 ground soldiers searched for them, without success.

After three weeks as prisoners, the men sensed that they were about to be killed. At the right moment, they made a dramatic escape.

Such experiences serve to underline the ever-present dangers of working at these sites. The discoveries we are sharing with you in this book have been secured at a high cost and often at enormous personal risk.

In the Valley of Eight, at the Village of Kazan where the grave stones were found, Ron overheard the village chief, Mehmet, plotting a little surprise.

“...take him into the hills ...get rid of him...”

Fortunately, Ron knew enough Turkish to get the gist of the conversation and he and his taxi driver quickly got out.

4 The warnings

It was now late 1993. My heart was set on getting over to Kazan. Out there were some of the first anchor stones to be dropped from the Ark as it was coming in to land. There the Noah family built a house, tilled the ground, and there, finally, Noah and his wife had been buried. That place was the ancestral home of us all.

I confided my plans to Dr Allen Roberts, a former member of the team.

“Don’t go, Jonathan,” he warned. “It’s too dangerous. People disappear.”

I spoke to Ron. “Keep away from Kazan,” he urged. “They’ll kill you.”

Yes, Ron’s discoveries had catalysed the grave robberies there.

Subsequently, the chief had plotted Ron’s death. The concern was valid.

But how deeply I longed to go in and document what was there! After all, this was place of our roots – of all of us on this planet. This was an important discovery. This was where it all began. I just had to go in there and record it.

Nevertheless, I had been well appraised of the danger.

Yet this whole thing kept nagging at me. And I had grown to trust the One who is over all. I had cultivated a close friendship with Him. So I laid this matter before Him. He knew my deep longing to record these things and to use them only to vindicate His cause. It was now over to Him.

I determined to take all possible precautions. Over several months, I contacted the representatives of the Kurdish guerrillas for a letter of safe passage into their rebel region of Turkey.

Perhaps naively, I hoped that if in danger of being kidnapped, I could show this document to any hostile band and gain release.

Ultimately, this illegal “visa” arrived. But the outlawed Kurds warned me: “Don’t let the Turks see this Kurdish visa. It could be the end of you.”

Now I was ready to head for eastern Turkey. Again, I discussed my proposed expedition with Ron.

“Jonathan,” he warned, “whatever you do, don’t stay overnight at Dogubayazit. That’s where we almost lost our lives at the hotel. It’s better that you fly to Erzurum (five hours away from Dogubayazit) and stay there. When you get off the plane, go in search of a certain taxi driver. He’ll be at the airport. He’s a tall man, with greying hair. When you think you’ve found him, ask him if he’s the one who drives for Ron Wyatt. Then introduce yourself.

“You can trust this man. He’ll take you to a hotel in Erzurum. And he’ll awaken you at 3 am in the morning for the five hour trip to the Ark site.

“As I said, this man you can trust. But don’t ask him to take you to Kazan village. That’s too dangerous. And in any case, he probably wouldn’t take you. He was there when they tried to kill me. And he would have been killed as well. God be with you.”

5 Investigated!

... I landed at Erzurum, sought out the Turkish driver and found him occupied with other people.

“I’ll be with you soon,” he promised.

Trevor Prestige, a friend who had flown in from Australia to accompany me, waited there with me. And as the crowd finally dispersed, we looked for the driver. He had vanished.

“No way we’ll ever find him now,” I sighed. “Looks like we’ll have to go it alone.”

“No worry,” replied Trevor. “We can stay the night here.”

“And tomorrow catch a bus to Dogubayazit,” I said.

“You mean we’ll make Dogubayazit our base?” frowned Trevor.

“Well, yes, we’ll have to. It’s the closest town to the Ark site. And now we’ve lost this man, there’s no one else here in Erzurum we can trust to get us early enough to the Ark site each day.”

“Dogubayazit’s in the middle of the Kurdish war zone!” exclaimed Trevor.

“Well, we shall have to get a Kurd there to help us,” I replied. “And since we’ll now have to find our own way around, we shall need maps.”

So that afternoon we trekked across town to the travel bureau and asked the attendant for a map of the Dogubayazit region.

“No maps,” was the response.

The next morning, two plain clothes detectives came to the hotel, to examine our passports. Asking for a map of a war zone was just not done!

We boarded a bus at about 1.30 pm. The trip would take about 4 ½ hours. It was the last bus, scheduled to arrive at Dogubayazit by 6 pm. To leave later would be to risk ambush by guerrillas. As it was, we had to negotiate a narrow pass. High up, I glimpsed armed men atop the overhanging rocks.

Now we were entering the Region of Eight. And ahead, on that mountain range, ahead to the right, rested the remains of the ancient Ark.

That night I prayed concerning our dilemma. Here we were strangers in a hostile valley, without the one man we could trust to get us to where we wanted to be.

I prayed, “Lord, you know we are not in a safe place. Will you please provide us with the right man who can help us reach the Ark site – one who can understand English and will follow instructions.”

6 The offer

Next morning, we came out of the hotel, turned right and strolled in the first side street. Here I approached a pedestrian.

“Do you know someone with a car, who speaks English?” I asked. He looked at me, blankly.

At that very moment a shout rang out. Away up the street, I saw a young man running in our direction.

“Can I help you? Can I help you?” he called. He was too far away to have heard my request. But soon he was upon us.

“My name is Sayim,” he panted. “Can I help you?”

“We need to go into the mountains,” I said. “To Noah’s Ark.”

His face lit up with recognition. “Yes,” he said, “I can get you there. Come.”

We followed him to a beaten up contraption that seemed held together with sheer sweat, determination and chewing gum. But the engine spluttered into life.

And it survived the rough, dusty roads into the mountain villages.

Beautiful people, were these Kurdish villagers. But the war was ravaging them.

... Then on to the remains of the old Ark.

We worked here, trying to scrape away some of the encrusting mud. We examined some things found by the local children. And meanwhile, Sayim was becoming like a brother.

Ultimately I showed him a photo of one of the anchor stones. Sensing its significance, the young Kurd grew excited.

“Where is this?” he asked.

“This one is at Kazan,” I replied.

“Kazan!” he exclaimed. “Kazan! My mother’s family from that village! We go there!”

Can you believe it! This was the very place I had been told was too dangerous to get into.

I had been careful not to suggest this. But he was offering to take us! Would you call our acquisition of this young man mere chance?

Now I saw it. Losing our Turkish driver – far from being a setback – must have been in God’s plan. That Turk could not have got us into Kazan, the Place of Eight. Instead, our Lord had now provided us with this one English-speaking driver who could get us there. (And remember, he had come running to us.) I believe, the Lord had it all planned for us from the start! The prayer of many months was now to be answered!

7 Arrested!

The next morning, we set out along the road toward Kazan. But as we turned off the bitumen on to the dirt side road, we ran smack into a

Turkish military convoy. We learned that they were headed for that same remote Kurdish village – for target practice!

We were arrested, our passports confiscated. They took us back to military headquarters for interrogation.

When they announced they wanted to search our belongings at the hotel, my heart started to thump wildly. What if they should find my Kurdish “visa”? We could end up in a Turkish prison forever!

I glanced at Trevor. He looked devastated. I sent up a silent prayer. And they decided not to go to our hotel room.

What happened next may have been divine intervention. At least it seemed so. Soon we were at the mercy of a young officer who, being university trained, had been given high rank. I saw an opportunity to seize the initiative – and “interrogate” him. Where was his family’s home? How long was his term in the army? Did he miss his family? What was his normal occupation, when at home?

He loosened up and began to warm to us.

He told the soldiers to leave. Then, leaning forward, he said:

“I don’t like this war. I don’t want to be part of it. I’m on your side. I want to help you. I am going to try to gain your release.”

But those words... “try to gain your release”... struck like a sledgehammer. “Try”. Trevor glanced at me, his face pale. It had just hit him. We could be in such deep trouble, we might not be released. Here we were – foreigners – in a hostile land, where anything could now happen. The officer could only “try”.

He explained. “When the governor wakes up, I shall phone him and ask if he will let you go free.”

The hours crept by. Another officer entered the room, carrying some papers.

“Sign these and you can go,” he ordered.

“What do they say?” I asked.

“They say that if you get caught in the crossfire between us and the Kurds, then we will not be held responsible.”

The documents were in Turkish. We could not read them. For all we knew, we could be signing away our lives. But if we hoped to be set free, there was no option but to sign them. We signed.

8 Into the forbidden valley

Soon we were outside. “All right,” suggested Sayim, “you two go back to the hotel. And later I shall drive out to Kazan, to find out if it is safe.”

Hours later, our Kurdish friend was back “Let’s go,” he smiled.

On the way out to Kazan, Sayim stopped to pick up a man who introduced himself as the village chief.

Trevor nudged me. “He looks sinister.”

The man gave another name, but I recognised him as Mehmet, the man against whom Ron had warned me.

(Here we see Sayim, then the village deputy, and Mehmet.)

He accompanied us to some anchor stones lying near the village.

Some of the village children eyed us from a distance.

We wandered over to a rise, where two of the anchors were now being used upside down as grave markers.

Then we headed for a hill about a mile west of the village.

From here we could look back toward the village, set in a bowl depression.

As we ascended the hill, I kept noticing holes in the ground. It turned out that since finding valuables in Noah's wife's grave, the villagers had been digging up other graves in the area, in the hope of finding more treasure.

An ancient altar rested on the ground nearby. One could see the nich where the animal's head was fitted, ready for the slaughter.

On another rock, a picture of Noah's Ark had been engraved, but now the incision was difficult to see.

I took another look at the altar, before continuing up the slope.

On top of the hill lay another anchor stone, dropped, evidently, when the Ark sailed over this peak. The cable hole on this anchor was broken.

... For an hour Mehmet and his deputy guided us over the Valley of Eight, to anchor stones (better known as drogue stones), altars and inscriptions. But my eyes kept scanning for the spot I had really come to see. All these other things were, of course, interesting – but the site of Noah's house and grave – that was why I was really here. Though I was careful not to be seen by Mehmet to be looking for them.

Then eventually, from the summit of this hill, I recognised the location, to the north of the village.

Back near the village itself, our hosts were knocking stones from a wall to show us an old inscription.

Mehmet announced that team member David Fasold had once been out here and photographed this. And he wanted me to do the same. Mehmet brought out David's book with pictures of the anchor stones – and a picture of Mehmet. Dave had given him the book and although Mehmet could not read it he proudly displayed that picture.

Although Mehmet had wanted to eliminate Ron, he was still kindly disposed to David, who had not played any role in the Noah's grave discovery and Mehmet's looting of it.

9 Turning point

It was now or never. The risk had to be taken. Dangerous it could be if the chief discovered what I really knew of Ron, himself and the grave robbery. Better to feign ignorance, throw in someone else's name.

Swallowing hard, I drew a sketch of Noah's gravestone.

"David Fasold saw this?" I queried, pointing to the sketch. "Is this somewhere around here?"

Mehmet instantly recognised it. Agitation showed. "No, not David Fasold!" he snapped quickly. Then he paused, weighing his words. "On my land – over there."

I did not know it at the time, but this man carried a gun under his jacket.

Now, instead of taking us to the place we wanted to go, where I knew the house and the grave sites to be, Mehmet and his henchman skirted that area, then drew us away from it.

We passed the giant 12-foot altar which overlooked it all ... and kept going!

Up on the hill, beyond the big altar, Ron had seen human bones – and a skull with hair still on it – which dogs had been devouring. This man, Ron believed, was a killer. It was up this same hill that Mehmet was now luring me.

"How far is it?" I asked.

"Just 100 metres" was the reply

We covered that distance and I grew suspicious. There was a rock with some marks on it, but the grave marker would not have been brought up here.

"How far now?" I pressed.

"Come," he said.

“How far? You said 100 metres. How far is it?”

“Just one kilometre more,” said the man. “Come.”

I recalled the plot to get Ron into the hills and kill him.

It was time to act – fast. I turned to Sayim.

“Tell him the sun is getting low. We must turn back.”

I wheeled around. Having been toward the rear of the party, I was now in front, racing down the hill, back toward the 12-foot altar.

Trevor was waiting further down. Meanwhile, back at the car, the children of these grave robbers were pilfering my bag.

In the open, I felt a little safer. Shooting with my camera, I headed straight into the area that Mehmet had avoided taking me – the site of Noah’s house and the two graves. I turned and took another shot, looking back.

The mound in the centre of my vision was all that now remained of the house. It had been deliberately vandalised.

The stone walls of the house had, over the centuries, become partially buried in silt; probably about four feet deep in it.

These walls were three feet thick. The window apertures were narrower on the outside and widened toward the interior. On the inside, that gave privacy, but also permitted a wide range of vision, looking out.

Within minutes, Sayim had caught up.

As Trevor and I quickly got into the car, the village man accosted Sayim. There ensued a vicious, heated argument. Deeply distressed, Sayim leapt into the car and we sped off.

10 Giant bones

Later, another team member, Bob Murrell, showed me a portion of a granite bowl from Noah's house. Mehmet had given it to him some time earlier.

(I learned that the earliest dishes were of granite.)

Back in Dogubayazit, at the reception counter of the Erzurum Hotel, the proprietors showed a giant human jaw bone. It was so big you could just about fit your head into it. It showed up about the same time that they dug up Noah's wife.

Apparently, the Turks have recovered her sarcophagus. Made of polished marble, it is 18 feet long. It is now in a back room of an Ankara museum. (It would not be an unreasonable assumption that she was about 12 feet tall.) All who survived the Flood were giants compared to mankind today.

The fossils preserve evidence of a pre-Flood world of giant trees, plants and animals.

A vapour canopy around the planet not only facilitated a gently, terrarium like climate from pole to pole, but blocked out harmful cosmic rays.

During the Great Flood, this canopy collapsed. Turbulent waters washed through the soil, redepositing highly nutritional elements into the seas.

The post-Flood world was a wreck. It had lost the protective canopy, the soil was impoverished, the climate harsh and more stressful. Rapid deterioration of life set in. But the original era of longevity and giants survived in our racial memory in the form of historical traditions, as well as in the Bible.

By the way, in my Newsletter (available by subscription) I bring out regular news of discoveries around the world, or the remains of ancient giants.

C o n c l u s i o n

... Oh, about that baggage search.

In case you were wondering...

I still have the piece of paper that I stuffed down behind my trousers, and that fell to the ground... that visa from the outlawed Kurds.

And in case you are wondering what that other passenger did when he saw me hiding it and it fell to the ground, I think he must have been a Kurd, because he didn't tell the Turkish police what he had seen occur.