

THE RED SEA CROSSING SITE

June 1, 1997

I. Moses' choice.

- A. Moses' adoption as "the son of Pharaoh's daughter" qualified him to the throne of Egypt in his fortieth year.
- B. Yet his positive volition aroused his sympathies for his people, the enslaved race of the Hebrews, and he began to plan their promised deliverance (Ex.2:11; Act.7:23; Heb.11:24-26).
- C. One day he avenged the mistreatment of one of his brethren by killing an Egyptian who was beating a Hebrew (Ex.2:11,12; Act.7:24,25).
- D. Moses was forced to flee Egypt, and he went into exile in Midian (Ex.2:15; Act.7:29).

II. Where is Midian?

- A. Midian was the territory of the Midianites, located just east of the Gulf of Aqaba in Arabia (see map).
- B. The Midianites (Arabians) were descendants of Abraham through Keturah (Gen.25:2).
- C. By fleeing to Midian, Moses was out of harm's way, as the Egyptians were in control of the Sinai Peninsula (they had forts and temples, and inscriptions tell of their mining operations there).
- D. Forty years later, God appeared to Moses in the burning bush and told him that he was to bring Israel out of Egypt to the very mountain where he was tending his sheep (Ex.3:2,12 "...when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain"; Act.7:30).
- E. Notice that Moses was told to lead his people **back to a mountain in Midian, to the mountain where God first spoke to him.**
- F. This mountain is called Horeb (Ex.3:1; 33:6; 1Kgs.19:8, etc.) and Sinai (Ex.16:1; 19:1,2, etc.).
- G. This mountain is not, therefore, located in the so-called Sinai peninsula, but in Arabia (see Gal.4:25; cp. 1:17).
- H. Sinai is the most misplaced mountain in history, and the traditional Mt. Sinai (with its St. Catherine's monastery) is a phony tourist attraction!
 - I. The "Sinai Peninsula" is also a misnomer.
 - J. The true Mt. Sinai is the 8,000 foot Jebel al Lawz (Mountain of the Law) located near the eastern shore of Aqaba in Midian/Saudi Arabia.
 - K. It was a safe area for Moses to go, as there is no evidence of Egyptian occupation there.
 - L. Since the Biblical Mt. Sinai lies in Saudi Arabia, then the crossing through the sea had to be across the Gulf of Aqaba arm of the Red Sea, and not the Gulf of Suez, as commonly thought.

III. Route of the Exodus.

- A. Where was Rameses, from which Israel left (Ex.12:37 "*Now the sons of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, aside from children*")?
 - 1. There was a city with this name (Ex.1:11).
 - 2. Rameses was also the name of the Delta region, the land given to Joseph's family to live in (Gen.47:11).
 - 3. A portion of this region (eastern delta) was called Goshen (Gen.47:27).
 - 4. When it came time for the Exodus, the slaves left their homes in Rameses (Goshen) and proceeded to leave Egypt "proper".
- B. Where was Succoth (see Ex.12:37; 13:20; Num.33:5,6)?
 - 1. "Succoth" was the assembly area for this tremendously large group of people and their livestock.
 - 2. Egyptian documents mention a border station known as "Tjeku" and "Tharu" located along the ancient Suez Canal which connected the Gulf of Suez and the marsh lakes with the Mediterranean Sea (this canal is known to have existed based on satellite photos).
 - 3. At the border, the point where one would leave Egypt proper and go into the Sinai desert, there was a fort.

4. In this area was a line of fortifications intended to keep the Bedouins out of Egypt.
5. The great fortress Tharu was in this area, and is often mentioned as the assembly point of the great military expeditions to the north.
6. Here, Moses organized this great mass of people and their possessions (carts and animals) for the march out of Egypt.
7. This was no simple task, and Moses used his organizational skills to organize the hundreds of thousands, as he had military expeditions (Act.7:22 "*And Moses was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians, and he was a man of power in words and*
8. *deeds*").
9. Here, at Succoth/Tharu, he organized the largest army he had ever assembled (it took some time).
10. The result is stated in Ex.13:18: "*Hence God led the people around by the way of the wilderness to the Red Sea; and the sons of Israel went up in martial array from the land of Egypt*".
11. The term "*went up in martial array*" is the Qal.pass.pt.m.p. of the verb חָמַשׁ (*chamush*) and means "to arrange in multiples of five", and refers to a well organized march, and not a mob of fleeing refugees.

C. Where is the next location, Etham (Ex.13:20 "Then they set out from Succoth and camped in Etham on the edge of the wilderness")?

1. God prohibited Israel from taking the direct route to Canaan, which was the coastal "northern route", called "*the way of the land of the Philistines*" in Ex.13:17.
2. Rather, they were told to take the "southern route" to Canaan, called "*the way of the wilderness to the Red Sea*" in Ex.13:18.
3. This was the longer route, but was a well traveled caravan and military road running almost due east through the northern Sinai Peninsula.
4. Etham was a region in the mid to northern edge of the Gulf of Aqaba.
5. And how do we know this? Because they were in Etham BEFORE they crossed the Red Sea (Ex.13:20), and were in it AFTER they crossed the Red Sea (Num.33:6-8).

D. The "detour".

1. Israel did not continue on the highway to Canaan, but were told by God "*to turn back* (simple verb שׁוּב, *shub*, "to turn/turn back") *and camp before Pi-hahiroth, between Midol and the sea*" (Ex.14:1,2).
2. This maneuver was a ploy to lure Pharaoh into God's trap (Ex.14:3).
3. Pharaoh figured that the Hebrews were "wandering aimlessly" (Niphil.pt.m.p. בִּזְזִי, *bukh*, be disoriented) in the wilderness, and considering the path they were committed to, they were "shut in" (Qal.pf.3m.s. סָגַר, *sagar*, close/shut up).
4. This latter verb suggests that the surrounding terrain hemmed in the Jews, and that is exactly the case, as the new proposed crossing site will demonstrate.
5. What we have studied thus far and what we will see demands a crossing site somewhere along the shore of the Gulf of Aqaba.
6. There is a beach of tremendous size on the eastern Gulf of Aqaba at Nuweiba (noted on modern maps) and the only passage to it is through an eighteen mile long wadi (dried riverbed) system.
7. From their previous camping site (on the edge of the region called Etham) they turned south and entered a wadi (Wadi Watir) that must have seemed like an endless maze to them, with rugged mountains on their left and on their right.
8. The only path out of that wadi empties onto an enormous beach (it can be clearly seen on satellite maps) that could accommodate two million people (7km X 3km).
9. On the north end of the beach are the remains of an Egyptian fortress, which is no doubt

Pi-hahiroth ("House of the goddess Hathor").

10. Midgol may be a reference to a watchtower atop one of those mountains (it is documented that they flashed messages from tower to tower using reflected light; this is how Pharaoh was kept abreast of their movements), or it may refer to a specific mountain (the noun means "tower" or "fortress").
11. On the opposite shore (eight miles), in Saudi Arabia, precisely across from where they camped by the sea, is another ancient structure which may be a Midianite fortress dedicated to Baal, called Baal-zephon (see Ex.14:2).
12. The phrase "*opposite* it" seems to mean in respect to that body of water (cp. Deut.32:49 "*the land of Moab opposite Jericho*").
13. Of course, Moses knew this country like the back of his hand.

IV. What is the Red Sea (*Yam Suph*)?

- A. The Red Sea is quite large, extending from Ethiopia and Yemen in the south, and it separates northern Africa from Arabia.
- B. At its northern end, it splits into two arms: the Gulf of Suez and the Gulf of Aqaba.
- C. A verse that unequivocally demonstrates that the Aqaba branch is a part of the greater "Red Sea" is 1Kgs.9:26: "*King Solomon also built a fleet of ships in Ezion-geber, which is near Eloth on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom*".
- D. Scripture indicates that the water they crossed was DEEP (Isa.43:16,17 "*a path through the mighty waters*"; 51:10 "*Was it not You who dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep; Who made the depths of the sea a pathway for the redeemed to cross over?*"; 63:11-13a "*Who led them through the depths?*"; Ps.77:19,20 "*Your way was in the sea, and Your paths in the mighty waters, and Your footprints may not be known. You did lead Your people like a flock, by the hand of Moses and Aaron*"; Ex.15:10 "*You did blow with Your wind, the sea covered them; they sank like lead in the mighty waters*").
- E. The crossing place was not a shallow "sea of reeds", as liberals and conservatives have for so long affirmed!
- F. From speculation that the Israelites had crossed the Gulf of Suez, names from the Exodus account were inserted on maps (Bible) by guesswork.
- G. Charts show the Gulf of Aqaba to be a trench/canyon 5,000 feet deep.
- H. The western shoreline drops steeply underwater into this canyon at a slope of **45 degrees**, which is too steep for people to cross over.
 - I. However, at the precise location of the Nuweiba beach, the deep trench is spanned by an **underwater land bridge** (diving forays have confirmed this fact).
 - J. The pathway through the sea has been estimated at **900 meters** (about 2,700 feet) in width.
 - K. And from the Egyptian shore, it slopes at a gentle angle of **6 degrees** underwater until midway across the sea it is some **300 meters** (1,000 feet) below the surface of the sea. It then gradually rises to the opposite shore.
 - L. Midway across on each side, the **WALLS OF WATER** were up to 1,000 feet high. Skyscraper height!

V. The physical requirements of the crossing site.

- A. A suitably large staging area is met by the Nuweiba beach.
- B. The way to the site was through the Wadi Watir, which could accommodate the multitude and Pharaoh's pursuing army (the wadi is now a hardtop road).
- C. The topography "*shut them in*" (Ex.14:3), as there were mountains all around them.
- D. The undersea land bridge is both wide enough (about 2,500 ft.) and gentle enough in slope to accommodate all parties.

VI. Some other questions answered.

- A. Wasn't the site too far from Egypt?

1. Answer: The distance from the Suez Canal to Nuweiba is about 210 miles, which is not

unreasonable considering Ex.13:21: "*And Yahweh was going before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead them on the way, and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night*".

2. The Hebrews were in excellent physical condition considering their life in Egypt under forced labor.
3. Israel had a significant head start on Pharaoh's army.
4. Illustration: In 1967, Moshe Dyan marched his troops from this very spot, Nuweiba, to Suez in just 6 days, camping at night.

B. Why this detour?

1. Answer: To draw Pharaoh into God's trap (Ex.14:3).
2. Answer: To bring glory to Yahweh (Ex.14:4).
3. Answer: To bring Israel to the mountain where Moses was called (Ex.3:12).

C. How long to cross?

1. Rabbi Sherwin Wine, founder of Humanistic Judaism, claimed on TV that the event never happened. "It would have taken them weeks to cross," he sneered.
2. Crunching the numbers: Width of underwater bridge at 2,500 feet. Allowing 5 feet per person, side to side, would give space for 500 persons abreast. With the length of the crossing at 8 miles, and travelling 2.5 miles per hour, it would take 3 hours for the front row to cross over. Allowing for half of these persons to be driving an animal and a quarter of the people to be in possession of a cart would require a procession of 9.6 miles, or 4 hours walking time behind the front row. The final row would leave the western shore some 4 hours after the departure of the front row, and would take 3 to 4 hours to make the crossing.
3. Result: Total crossing time for 2 million people, plus animals and carts, would be 7 hours (even if these figures require some adjustment, it is safe to say that the time needed to make the crossing was by no means excessive. One eight hour day would do nicely).

You can't be in a place and complain that you left it.

D. Proof positive that Israel was NOT IN EGYPT before they crossed.

1. The people's panic induced words to Moses should settle the issue once and for all (Ex.14:11 "*Is it because there were no graves IN EGYPT that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you dealt with us in this way, bringing us OUT OF EGYPT; and vs.12 "*Is this not the word that we spoke to you IN EGYPT, saying, 'Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die IN THE WILDERNESS*").*
2. How in the name of all that is logical could they have thus spoken, if they were on the western shore of the Suez, which has always been considered the western border of Egypt?

VII. Details related to the Egyptian pursuit.

A. Pertinent Scripture is Ex.14:6-9,23.

1. Pharaoh (Koncharis) "*made his chariot ready*".
2. He "*took his people with him*" is probably a reference to members of the priesthood.
3. "*He took six hundred select chariots*", which were not enough to be a division, but were probably ceremonial chariots that "*his people*", the priests, rode in.
4. He took "*...all the other chariots of Egypt*", which is a reference to war chariots.
5. "*...with officers over all of them*" is a reference to his division commanders.
6. Cavalry ("*his horsemen*") and infantry ("*his army*") were also involved, according to Ex.14:9 (Egyptian armies never marched without its backbone, the infantry).
7. Estimates range from 20,000 (four divisions) to 250,000 men (Josephus).

B. The priesthood and the military linked.

1. The divisions of the army were named after the principal gods of Egypt.
 2. Elaborate ceremonies were conducted whenever the army departed for war, asking the gods for victory.
 3. Military victories that ensued were directly attributed to the favors of the gods.
 4. Booty from the war was then dedicated to the priesthood and temples of the gods.
 5. Priests would accompany the army to the battlefield.
 6. If the Egyptian army ever needed supernatural intervention by the hands of their gods, it was on this occasion.
 7. Pharaoh's watery defeat was yet a final slap at "*the gods of Egypt*" (cp. Ex.12:12).
- C. Pharaoh's pursuit was held up long enough for the Hebrews to cross the eight mile canyon (Ex.14:19,20).
1. The cloud theophany put darkness in the advance of the Egyptian forces in the Wadi Watir.
 2. The cloud supplied "*light at night*" (Ex.14:20) for Israel so they could see while God was parting the Red Sea "*by a strong east wind*" that blew "*all night*" (cp. Ex.14:21).
 3. The moment of truth came for the Egyptians when God supernaturally removed the wheels of the chariots, producing mass confusion and panic among the Egyptians (Ex.14:24,25).

No Tomb for Pharaoh

- D. Pharaoh Koncharis and his entire army drowned; not one man lived to tell about it (Ps.106:11 "*And the waters covered their adversaries; Not one of them was left*"; 136:15a "*But He overthrew Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea*").
1. Pharaoh led the charge, as was the style of the Pharaohs.
 2. This fact eliminates all proposed candidates for the Pharaoh of the Exodus, such as the Pharaohs of the 18th Dynasty (Thutmose III and his successor, Amenhotep II) and the 19th Dynasty Pharaoh (Rameses II).
 3. Their faces from their mummified remains can be seen on pg. 37 of Courville's *The Exodus Problem and its Ramifications* (Vol.1).
 4. No mummy or coffin has been found for the last Pharaoh of the 13th Dynasty, Koncharis.
 5. He was followed by the Hyksos (Amalekite) Pharaohs, who ruled Egypt until the reign of King Saul (the Egyptian "dark age").

What's Down There

VIII. Physical evidence on the floor of the Red Sea has been reported!!!

- A. Who? Ron Wyatt and his sons had been diving along other parts of the Red Sea (where others had looked to no avail for years), and began the search of Nuweiba (based on clues found in the book of Exodus), and in the first half hour found a chariot wheel in eighty feet of water.

B. What?

1. They found chariot wheels strewn all across the seabed.
2. Then they found chariot remains covered with coral.
3. They found chariot cabs, some with the wheels on their axles and some off.
4. They found several 6-spoked wheels, as well as an 8-spoked wheel.
5. And finally Ron found a gold chariot wheel, which is not covered in coral, but was in fragile condition due to the fact that the wood under the gold had decomposed (at last report it is still there, waiting to be carefully removed; it is located near the rear of Pharaoh's army and its ornamental nature suggests it might have been a priestly chariot, one of the "600 choice chariots"?).
6. He reports finding skeletal remains (hip bone, skulls, even a horse's hoof).

7. Ron reports finding a Phoenician style column (which the authorities have since moved across the road and set in concrete) lying at the southern end of the beach, partially in water with its inscriptions eroded (or chiseled) away.
8. This is identical to the one on the opposite shore, except this one had the inscriptions (Archaic Hebrew) intact.
9. It contained the words: Mizraim; Solomon; Edom; death; Pharaoh; Moses; and Yahweh.
10. It may be deduced that Solomon had erected the markers in honor of Yahweh (like our "the Chisolm trail crossed here").

C. The source.

1. Jonathan Gray (Englishman) on his web page.
2. Address: <http://www.serveonline.com/redsea.html> and [redsea2.html](http://www.serveonline.com/redsea2.html) and [sinaistory.html](http://www.serveonline.com/sinaistory.html) (it will take a while to load this due to all the images).
3. He also has a video for sale.

None of the above works if there is no evidence on the other side.

There is!
Will the Real Mt. Sinai Please Stand Up?

IX. Problems with the traditional site.

- A. The traditional site is unsuitable for so large a group of people to camp around.
 1. Von Haven, a member of the Danish Expedition of 1761-1767, quickly realized the impossibility of the site: "I have observed earlier that we could not possibly be at Mount Sinai. The monastery was situated in a NARROW VALLEY, which was not even large enough for a medium sized army to be able to camp in, let alone the 600,000 men that Moses had with him, who, together with their wives and children, must have come to over 3,000,000" (*Arabia Felix: The Danish Expedition of 1761-1767*, by Thorkild Hansen, Harper & Ros, NY, 1964, pg. 181).
- B. Since the Red Sea crossing was not carried out FROM EGYPT, but AFTER they left Egypt, this completely rules out the traditional site.
- C. How the traditional site was picked makes it suspect.
 1. The Roman emperor Constantine (c. 280-337AD) sent his mother, Queen Helena, to the Middle East in search of holy sites.
 2. Mount Sinai was one such location she visited and claimed was the mountain from which the Law was given.
 3. Two hundred years later a monastery was built there, the present Monastery of St. Catherine.
 4. Visions are no substitute for examination of the Biblical text.
- D. Much exploration has been carried out in the immediate vicinity, but no trace of Israelite presence has ever been discovered (graves, altars, etc.).
- E. Hence, the traditional Mt. Sinai (Jebel Musa) is a fake tourist site, with the REAL Mt. Sinai lying across Aqaba in the land of ancient Midian.

X. Clues pointing to the true Mt. Sinai.

- A. Mount Sinai is closely connected with the land of Midian in the Bible.
 1. Moses fled FROM EGYPT to MIDIAN (Ex.2:15).
 2. He was at Mt. Sinai/Horeb when he received the call from the burning bush (Ex.3:1ff).
 3. God told him that the ultimate sign that God was with him would be when he returned to

this very same mountain with the Hebrew people (Ex.3:12).

4. It was the mountain to which he returned with over two million people (Ex.18:5; 19:1,2).

B. Galatians 4:25 says it (Sinai) was in Arabia.

C. The name "Horeb" survives, as a detailed map of the area has a Wadi Horeb (or Hurab) in the foothill region of Jebel el Lawz ("Mountain of the Law").

D. Local traditions of Moses and Jethro persist in the area.

E. "From here my guide and I climbed up the cliff to visit the 'circles of Jethro' on the summit of Musalla ridge, from which we climbed down quite easily to our camp on the far side...A cairn marked the spot where Jethro is supposed to have prayed, and all around it are numerous circles" (H. St. John Philby, *The Land of Midian*, pg. 222).

XI. Jebel el Lawz: the perfect candidate.

A. Right location: On a map, the mountain is located slightly south and east of the Nuweiba crossing site.

B. Right size: At 8,000 feet, it is the tallest mountain in the region.

C. Right surrounding terrain: Aerial photography shows that the mountain is an almost semicircular shape, enclosing an area of 5,000 acres which is large enough to accommodate two million people and their herds.

D. Blackened top: The entire top of the mountain is blackened as if charred by some tremendous heat.

1. This is the only summit so marked.

2. Is this evidence of God's presence on the mountain (Ex.19:18)?

E. Elijah's cave: There is one cave on the mountain (see 1Kgs.19:8).

F. An Ancient Brook: On the face of the mountain there extends an ancient stream, which satisfies the requirement of Deut.9:21 (see).

G. Evidences of Israelite presence include:

1. The barrier (so that the people would not approach the mountain): At the foot of the mountain are 18-foot diameter columns extending along a north-south line (these cannot be readily seen, as they are covered with 3,400 years of dirt; cf. Ex.19:12).

2. The altar of the golden calf: About a mile from the base of the mountain, just outside the holy precinct (area inside the boundary markers), is an ancient altar (6' X 4') with twelve petroglyphs of cows and bulls of Egyptian style, representing the gods Hathor and Apis (Ron Wyatt confirmed their origin by asking an archaeologist from the university of Riyadh. He also found evidence of gold in the vicinity of the altar).

3. The twelve pillars (*matstebah* denotes a one-piece, standing stone pillar) of Ex.24:4: In the holy precinct, to the far right (looking westward), there is a semicircle of twelve large granite boulders.

4. White marble shrine: This structure was round, made of pure white polished marble, and had a domed top. The speculation is that Solomon had the shrine built. Ron Wyatt found a piece of white marble with an inscription on it in archaic Hebrew, which he buried when the Saudis arrested him and confiscated all his physical evidence.

H. A most remarkable monument: The rock in Horeb (Ex.17:6).

1. Tracking Israel's route from the Red Sea to Sinai in Arabia, there is a place that perfectly fits the description of Rephidim.

2. Here in the wilderness of Sin(ai), Moses was told to go to "[*the rock in Horeb*](#)" (Ex.16:1; 17:1,6; Num.33:11; undoubtedly, a well-known, prominent rock).

3. On the western side of the Horeb range (the encampment at Sinai was on the east), in the midst of the plain (satisfying the terrain requirements for the battle in Ex.17:8ff), is a hill about 110 feet high.

4. Atop this hill towers a mighty rock, about the size of a five-story building; the total height of this formation is about sixteen stories.

5. This rock is split through the middle, and the split is large enough for a man to walk through!
6. Here is the remarkable part: Water erosion channels come from the TOP of the hill, OUT OF THE ROCK!
7. There is evidence that numerous streams came forth in several directions.
8. Today there is no water in the region anywhere.
9. Erosion channels continue out into the plain below to attest to this miracle.
10. About 200 meters from this rock is another altar, similar to the one in the holy precinct, which satisfies Ex.17:15.

BE ENCOURAGED!!

Reviewed: March 22, 1998