

**INTRODUCTION:**

In this part of our study we will focus on possibly the greatest event in human history—the parting of the Red Sea and destruction of the Egyptian army as God physically leads and delivers His people out of Egypt. Because of a lack of archeological evidence to verify the biblical account, the location of the Red Sea (or Reed Sea) crossing has never been verified, nor have most of the locations mentioned in the story including the location of Mt. Sinai (also known as Mt. Horeb). Most locations have been derived from logical speculation based on the traditional and assumed location of Mt. Sinai in the lower part of the Sinai Peninsula. Although there has been an exhaustive search no archeological evidence has ever been found to support the traditional location. In fact, the only verifiable reason that the traditional site is designated “Mount Sinai” at all is because a Roman mystic designated it and Helena, mother of Constantine I, anointed it as the true Mount Sinai early in the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD. In this study we will carefully examine the Scriptures for clues to the actual location of Mt. Sinai and the Red Sea crossing, as well as recent archeological discoveries that may provide evidence which both verifies the story and newly proposed locations. It is hoped that this examination and evidence will help us verify the truth found in the Scriptures and reinforce our faith.

**THE LOCATION OF MT. SINAI (MT. HOREB) AND RED SEA:**

Scripture does not place Mt. Sinai on the Sinai Peninsula but east of the “Red Sea” which we know today as the Gulf of Aqaba in what was Moses’ time the Land of Midian but today is Saudi Arabia. The following Scriptures provide evidence to these claims.

***(Mt. Sinai/Horeb: Located in the Land of Midian)*****Exodus 2:11; 3:1, 12**

(2:15) When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he tried to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the presence of Pharaoh and settled in the land of **Midian**, and he sat down by a well...

(3:1) Now Moses was pasturing the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of **Midian**; and he led the flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to **Horeb, the mountain of God**...

(3:12) And He said, "*Certainly I will be with you, and this shall be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain.*"

**Comments:**

As is evident on Map-1 on page-3, the **Land of Midian** is located east of the eastern fork of the Red Sea (modern Gulf of Aqaba) in an area today known as Saudi Arabia. The entire Sinai Peninsula was at the time of Moses under Egyptian control and Moses fled Pharaoh to the Land of Midian to escape the reach of the Egyptian Pharaoh. Per Exodus 3:1, he settled on the west side of Midian near Mt. Horeb, and per Exodus 3:12, this is the same mountain he was instructed to lead God's people back to in order they worship Him. Some scholars extend the land of Midian into the eastern portion of the Sinai Peninsula based solely on the presumption that the traditional location of Mt. Sinai was in the Sinai Peninsula. No ancient maps or texts extend the Land of Midian into the Sinai Peninsula.

***(Mt. Sinai/Horeb: Located relative to Mt. Seir and Kadesh-barnea)***

**Deuteronomy 1:2**

(2) It is eleven days' journey from **Horeb** by the way of **Mount Seir** to **Kadesh-barnea**.

**Comments:**

As is evident on Map-2 on page-4, **Mt. Seir** is southeast of **Kadesh-barnea** and would be very much “out of the way” if traveling to a **Mt. Sinai (Mt. Horeb)** located in the southern tip of the Sinai Peninsula. On the other hand, Mt. Seir could be considered “on the way” to a Mt. Sinai if located in northwestern Arabia or the Land of Midian. As a matter of fact, it would be about an eleven day journey.

***(Mt. Sinai/Horeb: Located in Arabia)***

**Galatians 4:25a**

(25) Now this Hagar is **Mount Sinai in Arabia**...

**Comments:**

In contrasting the descendants of Hagar (the bondswoman) with the descendants of Sarah (the free woman), the Apostle Paul denotes **Mount Sinai as being in Arabia**. Hagar came

from Egypt but would be the mother of Ishmael who would be the father of twelve predominately Arab nations. Paul clearly sees Mt. Sinai located in Arabia and not Egypt.

***(Red Sea: Location same as modern Gulf of Aquaba)***

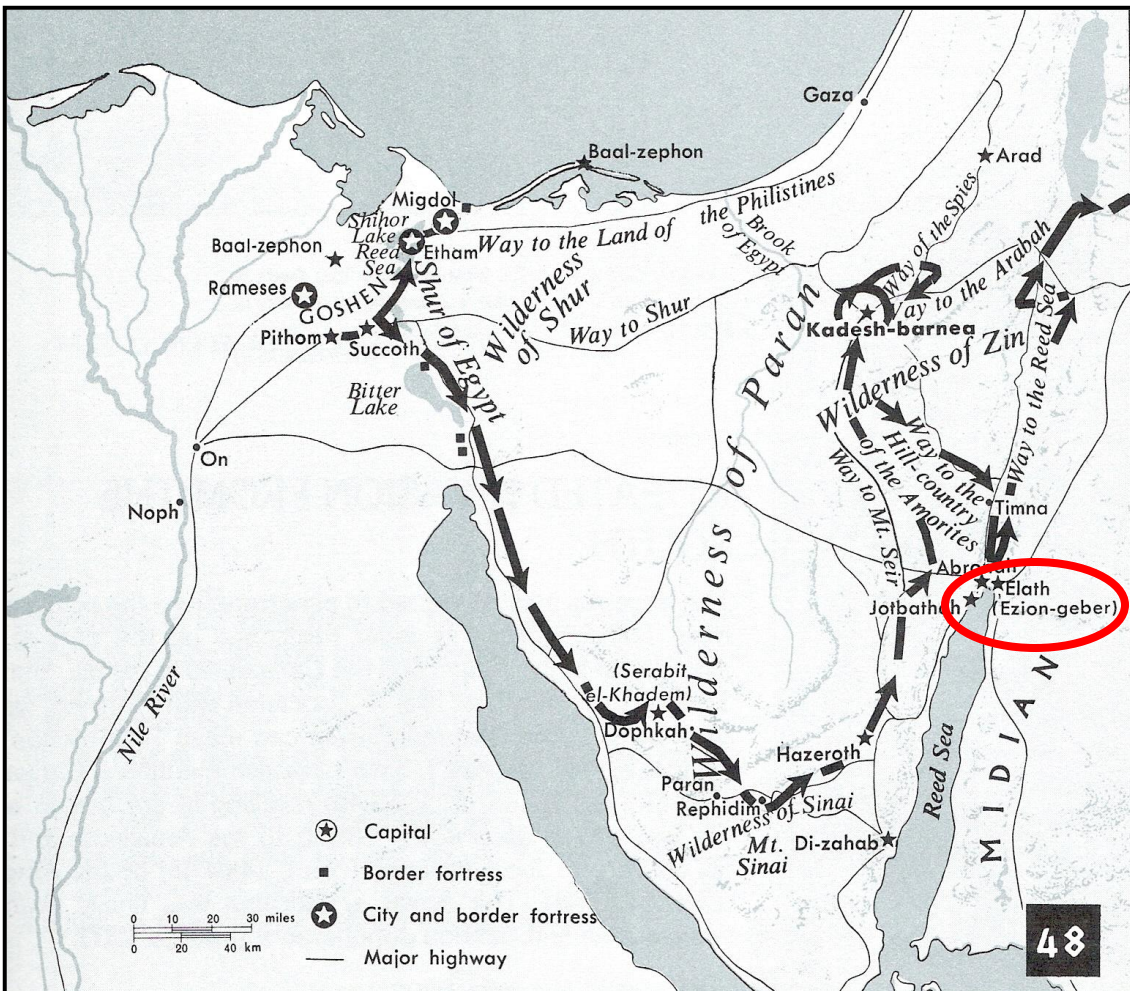
**1 Kings 9:26**

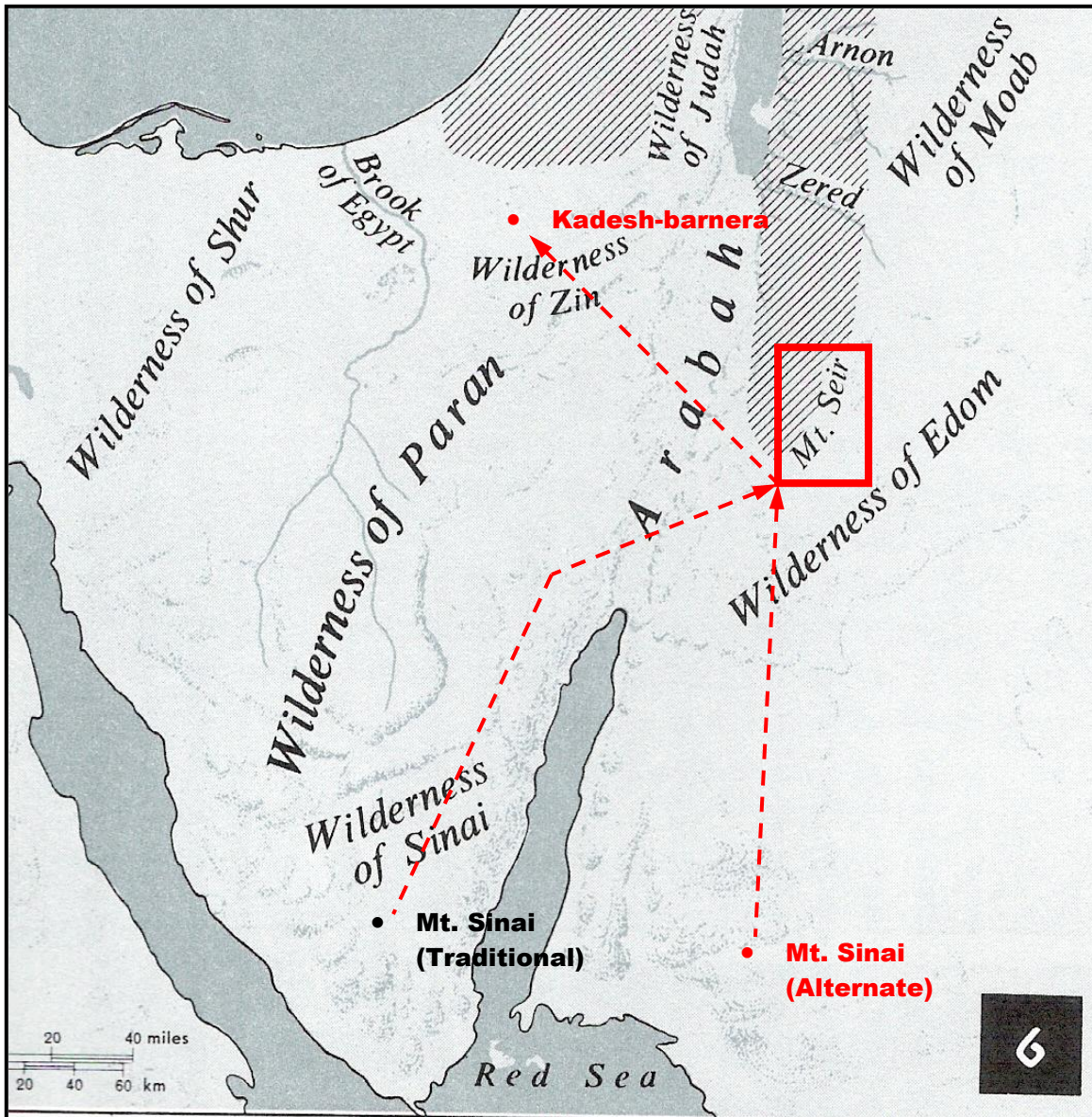
(26) King Solomon also built a fleet of ships in Ezion-geber, which is near Eloth on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom.

**Comments:**

As can be seen on Map-1 below, **Ezion-geber** near **Eloth** are located on the northern tip of the eastern branch of the Red Sea known today as the Gulf of Aqaba. This passage would identify the “Red Sea” as one and the same as the Gulf of Aqaba and thus supports the conclusion that the Exodus crossing was across the Gulf of Aqaba.

**MAP-1**



MAP-2THE PATH OF DEPARTURE

There are two primary accounts of the path in which God led His people out of Egypt and to Mt. Sinai (Mt. Horeb). One is found in the Book of Exodus (chapters 13 through 19). The other is in Numbers 33:1-49. We will follow this path and compare the traditional and new alternative view of these locations, and examine their supporting archeological evidence. Scholars have placed the traditional locations of the places listed in the Scriptures based on the assumption that Moses led His people across the “Red Sea” or “Reed Sea” marshlands located between the Nile delta and the northwester corner of the

Sinai Peninsula, and then traveled to a Mt. Sinai in the southern tip of the Sinai Peninsula. The two primary problems with these assumptions are that it is difficult to understand how Pharaoh's army would have been drowned in shallow marshland, or how crossing this sea would represent an escape from Egypt since the Sinai Peninsula was also Egyptian territory. The alternative view, supported by newly discovered archeological evidence, proposes that the “wilderness” crossed on the way to the “Red Sea” was the Sinai Peninsula itself, and the “Red Sea” which was parted to allow the Israelites to escape and drowned the Egyptian army was the eastern finger of the Red Sea known today as the Gulf of Aqaba. Thus, in crossing the Gulf of Aqaba the Israelites would have crossed over into Midian (modern Saudi Arabia), both escaping the lands of Egypt and entering the region where Mt. Sinai (Mt. Horeb) was located per Exodus 3:1.

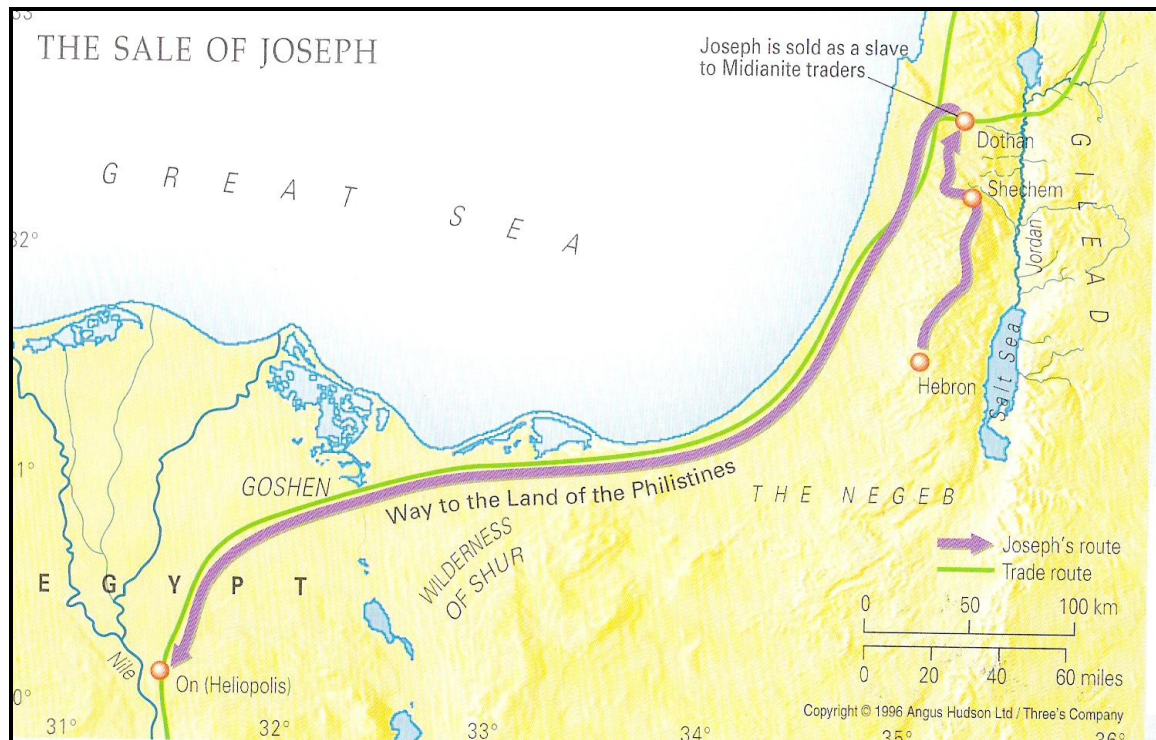
***(God Leads the People by way of the wilderness to the Red Sea)***

**Exodus 13:17-22**

(17) Now when Pharaoh had let the people go, God did not lead them by the way of the land of the Philistines, even though it was near; for God said, *"The people might change their minds when they see war, and return to Egypt."* (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. (19) Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had made the sons of Israel solemnly swear, saying, *"God will surely take care of you, and you shall carry my bones from here with you."* (20) Then they set out from Succoth and camped in Etham on the edge of the wilderness. (21) The LORD 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. (22) He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.

**Comments:**

Map-3 on page-6 illustrates “the way of the land of the Philistines” which would have been the closest path to God's Promised Land in Canaan. God realized that His people needed to take the long path in order to learn to trust and depend on Him. Rather than taking the short path He leads them on a path that will provide opportunities for testing and teaching in order that they learn to be the people of God. He leads them in “martial” array, which is an organized military array, as a pillar of cloud by day and fire by night.

**MAP-3****Numbers 33:1-6**

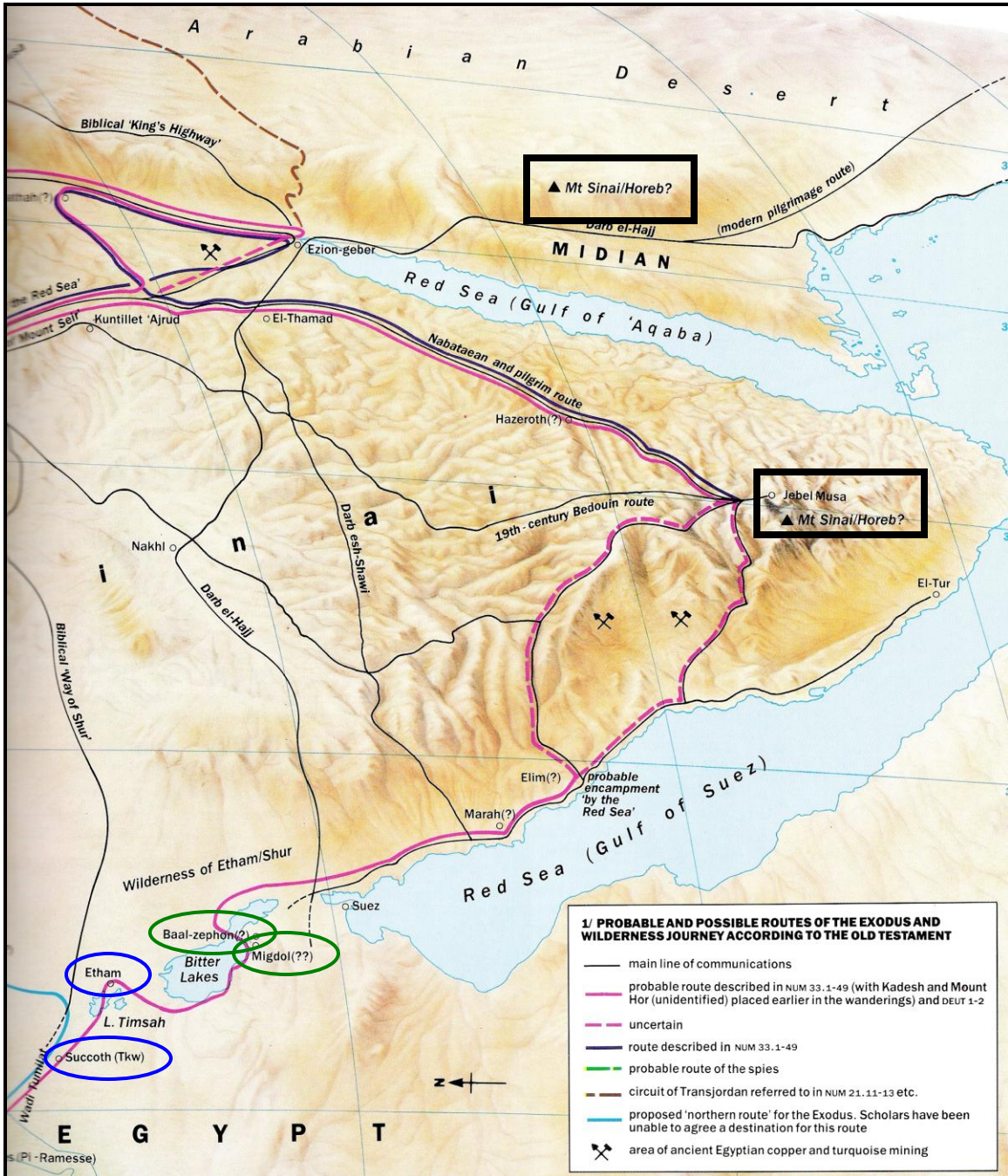
(1) These are the journeys of the sons of Israel, by which they came out from the land of Egypt by their armies, under the leadership of Moses and Aaron. (2) Moses recorded their starting places according to their journeys by the command of the LORD, and these are their journeys according to their starting places. (3) They journeyed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the next day after the Passover the sons of Israel started out boldly in the sight of all the Egyptians, (4) while the Egyptians were burying all their firstborn whom the LORD had struck down among them. The LORD had also executed judgments on their gods. (5) Then the sons of Israel journeyed from Rameses and camped in Succoth. (6) They journeyed from Succoth and camped in Etham, which is on the edge of the wilderness.

**Comments:**

The sons of Israel set out from Rameses to Succoth, which is located to the southeast, as depicted on Map-1 on page-3 and Map-4 on page-7. The actual location of **Etham** is unknown and debated among scholars. While Map-1 depicts it to the north of **Succoth**, Map-4 shows it to the southeast on the edge of the wilderness of the Sinai Peninsula.

Map-4 also illustrates both the traditional location of Mt. Sinai/Horeb on the Sinai Peninsula and the alternative location in Midian adjacent to the Arabian Desert.

**MAP-4**



***(Pharaoh in Pursuit.)*****Exodus 14:1-9**

(1) Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, (2) *"Tell the sons of Israel to turn back and camp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea; you shall camp in front of Baal-zephon, opposite it, by the sea.* (3) *For Pharaoh will say of the sons of Israel, 'They are wandering aimlessly in the land; the wilderness has shut them in.'* (4) *Thus I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will chase after them; and I will be honored through Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD."* And they did so. (5) When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, Pharaoh and his servants had a change of heart toward the people, and they said, *"What is this we have done, that we have let Israel go from serving us?"* (6) So he made his chariot ready and took his people with him; (7) and he took six hundred select chariots, and all the other chariots of Egypt with officers over all of them. (8) The LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and he chased after the sons of Israel as the sons of Israel were going out boldly. (9) Then the Egyptians chased after them with all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, his horsemen and his army, and they overtook them camping by the sea, beside **Pi-hahiroth, in front of Baal-zephon.**

**Numbers 33:7**

(7) They journeyed from Etham and turned back to Pi-hahiroth, which faces Baal-zephon, and they camped before Migdol.

**Comments:**

The locations of **Pi-hahiroth**, **Migdol** and **Baal-zephon** are unknown and have been speculated to be in many locations. Map-1 on page-3 places them in extreme northern Egypt near the shore of the Great Sea (Mediterranean Sea) while Map-4 on page-7 depicts them with “?” marks showing alternative locations for each. The northern location seems suspect considering it falls on “the way to the land of the Philistines” which Exodus 13:17 clearly illustrated was not the path chosen by God. Both sets of locations assume that the crossing of the sea occurred in the marshland region between the Mediterranean Sea and the northern tip of the western finger of the Red Sea which today is the Gulf of Suez. The references to “turning back,” “wandering aimlessly” and



the “wilderness shut them in” might support the fact that the crossing of the sea is very close to the location from which they started but the Hebrew phrases can also be an indication that the route was twisted and entangling as indicated in the King James text which translates “wandering aimlessly” as “entangled” in the land. The Wadi Watir (river valley) winds its way across the Sinai Peninsula and opens onto an enormous beach at Nuweiba on the western shore of the eastern finger of the Red Sea (Gulf of Aqaba). There is an ancient Egyptian fort or watch tower at the extreme north end of the beach which may have been **Migdol**, which means “**tower.**” The remains of a village are also found on the north end which could have been **Pi-hahiroth** between Migdol and the sea. As can be seen on the photo below of the Wadi Watir below, its path is indeed winding. (See also photo of Nuweiba Beach on page-10).

#### **WADI WATIR AND NUWEIBA BEACH**



If one does not assume that Mt. Sinai is in the Sinai Peninsula and places it in Midian on the east side of the Gulf of Aqaba, then one does not have to limit their search for a sea

crossing site to the marshlands between the Gulf of Suez and the Mediterranean Sea. This allows the locations of Etham, Migdol, Pi-hahiroth and Baal-zephon to be farther east near the Gulf of Aqaba. Some scholars would argue that God’s people could not have traveled across the Sinai Peninsula that quickly to arrive at the Gulf of Aqaba before Pharaoh’s attack. But an examination of the Scriptures suggests this very fact. God had commanded His people to gird their loins, put on sandals and prepare unleavened bread because their departure would be “in haste.” He also told them that for seven days they would eat unleavened bread, which is called the bread of haste because there is no time to wait for it to rise when you are traveling. Thus, it could be assumed that God is telling them to be prepared for seven days of travel without camping. Note that in Exodus 13:20 it says, ***“they set out from Succoth and camped in Etham on the edge of the wilderness.”*** In other words, Etham was the first place they stopped and camped after perhaps a seven days journey. Also note what is written in verse 21: ***“And the Lord 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.”*** Yes, they clearly were traveling day and night for a period of time. So how after all these days of travel could they still be at the marshlands so close to where they started? But if Etham is located on the eastern “edge of the wilderness” of the Sinai Peninsula then it all makes sense. If then we also consider the locations of Migdol and Pi-hahiroth as being in Egypt on the western shore of the Gulf of Aqaba, then the “turning back” and “entanglement” phrases take on new meaning. For instead of Moses and God’s people proceeding northeastward over the northern tip of the Gulf of Aqaba and escape into the Land of Midian as Pharaoh probably expected, at God’s instruction, they turned south toward Migdol and Pi-hahiroth and deeper into Egypt. Map-5 on the next page illustrates a more scripturally accurate depiction of the probable route. The first phase would have been a long march across the Sinai Peninsula from Succoth to Etham (here shown on the eastern edge of the wilderness). At God’s specific command they then turned south, or “turned back” from escaping over the northern tip of the Gulf of Aqaba into the Land of Midian. They then followed the Wadi Watir to Nuweiba Beach where they found themselves “cut off” and trapped. This caused panic and doubt among God’s people and so they complained to God and Moses.

**MAP-5**

***(Fear and Doubt Grip God's People.)***

**Exodus 14:10-12**

(10) As Pharaoh drew near, the sons of Israel looked, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they became very frightened; so the sons of Israel cried out to the LORD. (11) Then they said to Moses, *"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? (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."*

**Comments:**

In the photo of Nuweiba Beach below it is easy to see why the sons of Israel would have been so concerned about Pharaoh's approach with his army. The location has only one entrance through the Wadi Watir river valley and no escape. There are mountains to the

south and the north that reach to the sea. Also to the north may have been the Egyptian fortress or watchtower Migdol. Their only escape is through the Red Sea. Supportive of this location the great Jewish historian, Josephus, wrote: *“For there was [on each side] a [ridge of] mountains that terminated at the sea, which were impassable by reason of their roughness, and obstructed their flight.”* (*Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 2, 15-3).

### NUWEIBA BEACH



***(Moses' Response.)***

### **Exodus 14:13-14**

(13) But Moses said to the people, *"Do not fear! Stand by and see the salvation of the LORD which He will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see them again forever.* (14) *The LORD will fight for you while you keep silent."*

### **Comments:**

Moses responds with faith and confidence, knowing and trusting that God is about to deliver His people and destroy the Egyptian army.

***(The Sea Is Divided)*****Exodus 14:15-31**

(15) Then the LORD said to Moses, *"Why are you crying out to Me? Tell the sons of Israel to go forward. (16) As for you, lift up your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, and the sons of Israel shall go through the midst of the sea on dry land. (17) As for Me, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them; and I will be honored through Pharaoh and all his army, through his chariots and his horsemen. (18) Then the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD, when I am honored through Pharaoh, through his chariots and his horsemen."* (19)

The angel of God, who had been going before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them. (20) So it came between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Israel; and there was the cloud along with the darkness, yet it gave light at night. Thus the one did not come near the other all night.

(21) Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD swept the sea back by a strong east wind all night and turned the sea into dry land, so the waters were divided. (22) The sons of Israel went through the midst of the sea on the dry land, and the waters were like a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. (23) Then the Egyptians took up the pursuit, and all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots and his horsemen went in after them into the midst of the sea. (24) At the morning watch, the LORD looked down on the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and cloud and brought the army of the Egyptians into confusion. (25) He caused their chariot wheels to swerve, and He made them drive with difficulty; so the Egyptians said, *"Let us flee from Israel, for the LORD is fighting for them against the Egyptians."*

(26) Then the LORD said to Moses, *"Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the waters may come back over the Egyptians, over their chariots and their horsemen."*

(27) So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its normal state at daybreak, while the Egyptians were fleeing right into it; then the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. (28) The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen, even Pharaoh's entire army that had gone into the sea after them; not even one of them remained. (29) But the sons of Israel walked on dry land through the midst of the sea, and the waters were like a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

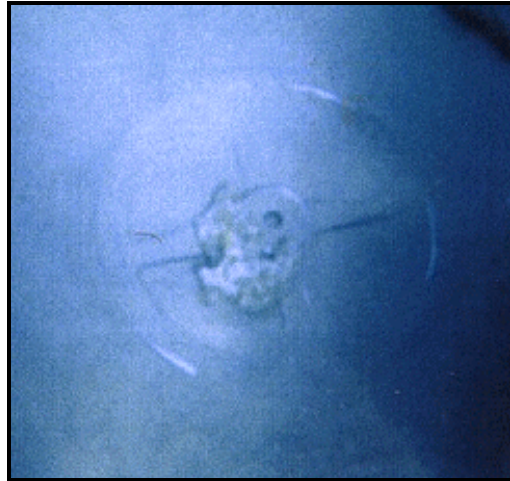
(30) Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. (31) When Israel saw the great power which the LORD had used against the Egyptians, the people feared the LORD, and they believed in the LORD and in His servant Moses.

**Comments:**

It is easy to see how the angel of the Lord as a pillar of fire could very effectively block the entrance to the beach by positioning Himself at the mouth of the Wadi Watir. There is also significant newly discovered archeological evidence to suggest that the crossing of Red Sea occurred at Nuweiba Beach. While the eastern finger of the Red Sea (Gulf of Aqaba) is extremely deep (up to a mile deep in some locations), there is a shallow ridge about ¼ to ½ mile wide than runs across it adjacent to Nuweiba Beach like an underwater highway. The incline is gradual from both shores but on either side of the ridge the water quickly drops off to 3,000 and 5,000 feet deep respectively. The photo below shows the raised underwater ridge across the Red Sea. The lighter colored areas indicate shallower water and the darker areas indicate deeper water. While an exhaustive search has never found any archeological evidence of the crossing in the marshlands or the western finger of the Red Sea (Gulf of Suez), a search of the Gulf of Aqaba crossing site has found mineralized horse and human bones and gold gilded chariot wheels of the exact style as depicted on Egyptian drawings dating from the time of the Exodus.

**CROSSING ROUTE AT GULF OF AQABA**



**EGYPTIAN CHARIOT WHEEL****WHEEL ON SEA FLOOR**

The gold gilded chariot wheel shown above right was found by Ron Wyatt using a molecular frequency generator from his boat above, after he set the equipment to search for gold. The wood has rotted away leaving the gold gilding to retain the shape of the original wheel. The wheel exactly matches the four-spoke wheels of Egyptian chariots. Six-spoke wheels (also typical among Egyptian chariots of the same period but more common) with axles were also found on the sea floor on the Saudi shore. There are completely encased in coral but retain their shape. (See additional photos below).

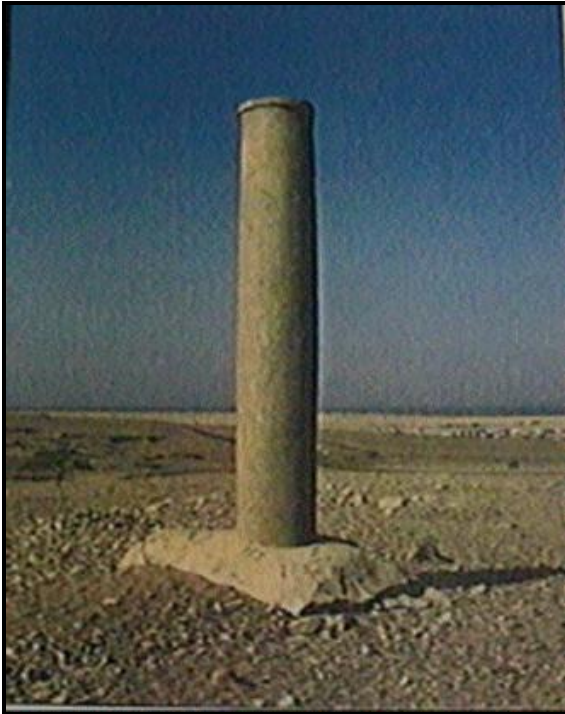
**CHARIOT WHEELS AND AXELS ON END ON SEA FLOOR**

Perhaps the most compelling evidence the Red Sea crossing of Exodus occurred at the beach of Nuweiba is the finding of large matching granite columns on each adjacent shore. The columns are not Egyptian but a Phoenician-style. One column was found on the Egyptian side at the southern end of the beach of Nuweiba, lying down and partially in the water. The inscriptions on it had eroded away, or possibly had been

purposefully chiseled away. This column or pillar may be the same one reference in Isaiah 19:19, which states: ***“In that day there will be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to the LORD near its border.”*** After its discovery during the Israeli occupation of the Sinai Peninsula the Israeli government re-erected the column in a concrete foundation as shown in the photo on the next page.

A second identical column was found on the opposite shore in Saudi Arabia (the Land of Midian at the time of the Exodus). This column was still standing and inscribed with Phoenician (Archaic Hebrew) letters. It contained the words: Mizraim (Egypt); Solomon; Edom; death; pharaoh; Moses; and Yahweh. Scripture provides evidence of stone pillars or column often being erected to mark important places and/or events. (Genesis 28:18, 22; 31:13, 45, 51-52; 35:14, 20 can be seen as examples of this). It is speculated in reference to 1 Kings 9:26 that King Solomon may have had the columns erected to commemorate the crossing of the Red Sea 400 years after the miracle had occurred. Solomon’s sea port at Ezion-geber indicates he viewed the present day Gulf of Aqaba as the “Red Sea.” A photo of the column on the eastern Saudi Arabian shore can be seen to the right on the next page. After the discovery of its possible historical significance, the Saudi Arabian government removed the column to an undisclosed location and replaced it with a marker denoting the original location. This should not be viewed as a sinister act to hide the location or evidence but is likely an attempt to preserve and protect the column from theft or vandalism. In any case, while the discovery of these two identical columns at these unique locations may not prove that this is the site of the Red Sea crossing, combined with the biblical account and new archeological evidence discovered at the site, it provides compelling evidence that this is indeed the site of the Exodus crossing. (See photos of columns on next page).



COLUMN ON EGYPTIAN SIDECOLUMN ON SAUDI ARABIAN SIDE

***(Excerpts from “The Song of Moses and Israel”)***

**Exodus 15:4-5, 8, 10**

- (4) *"Pharaoh's chariots and his army He has cast into the sea;  
And the choicest of his officers are drowned in the Red Sea.*
- (5) *"The deeps cover them;  
They went down into the depths like a stone.*
- (8) *"At the blast of Your nostrils the waters were piled up,  
The flowing waters stood up like a heap;  
The deeps were congealed in the heart of the sea.*
- (10) *"You blew with Your wind, the sea covered them;  
They sank like lead in the mighty waters."*

**Comments:**

The above verses from the “Song of Moses and Israel” do not depict the Red Sea as a shallow marshland but “deep” and “mighty waters” capable of drowning the Egyptian army. Likewise, the description of the parted waters is not that of a “tidal surge” of a few

feet which is often depicted as the cause of the drowning, but of waters that were “piled up” and “stood up like a heap.” The Gulf of Aqaba is ten miles wide and thousands of feet deep on either side of the narrow but shallow underwater ridge or pathway.

Assuming a literal view of the Scriptures, God heaped up the water like a wall on either side of the pathway creating dry land on which Moses and the sons of Israel would cross. When Pharaoh and his army pursued they found themselves trapped in the middle of the sea. When God commanded the sea came crashing back down around them. So far from shore and swept into such deep water they would have had no chance to escape, explaining their complete and utter destruction. The west wind described would have washed their bodies up on the eastern or Midian shore as described in Exodus 14:30.

**References:**

**Scriptures** from the New American Standard Bible.

**Maps** were taken from “The Macmillan Bible Atlas,” “The Atlas of the Bible and Christianity,” “The HarperCollins Concise Atlas of the Bible,” and “Holman Book of Biblical Charts, Maps, and Reconstructions.”

**Websites** references include: [www.arkdiscovery.com/redsea1.htm](http://www.arkdiscovery.com/redsea1.htm), [www.arkdiscovery.com/redsea2.htm](http://www.arkdiscovery.com/redsea2.htm), [www.arkdiscovery.com/red\\_sea\\_crossing.htm](http://www.arkdiscovery.com/red_sea_crossing.htm), [www.baseinstitute.org/Sinai\\_1.html](http://www.baseinstitute.org/Sinai_1.html), [www.baseinstitute.org/Sinaie\\_2.html](http://www.baseinstitute.org/Sinaie_2.html), , and [www.baseinstitute.org/Sinaie\\_3.html](http://www.baseinstitute.org/Sinaie_3.html).