

The Red Sea Crossing

The Crossing of the Red Sea by the children of Israel

Where did Moses and the children of Israel cross the Red Sea? Was it a shallow crossing? Is there any clear indication in Scripture where this took place?

Moses and Midian

Forty years before the exodus, when, Moses first left Egypt, he fled to Midian

Ex.2:15 When Pharaoh heard of this, he tried to kill Moses, but Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to live in Midian, where he sat down by a well. 16 Now a priest of Midian had seven daughters, and they came to draw water and fill the troughs to water their father's flock.

He was hiding from Pharaoh and Midian would have been well suited for this.

The Sinai Peninsula would not have been because of the presence of the Egyptian military there. Egypt had copper and turquoise mines there.

Here he eventually encountered God on Mt. Sinai, also called Horeb, the mountain of God.

Ex.3:1 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to *Horeb, the mountain of God*. 2 There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in **flames of fire from within a bush**. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up.

That's where God tells Moses He wants him to free His people. God told Moses to bring the Israelites back to worship Him on this mountain.

Ex.3:12 And God said, "I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, *you will worship God on this mountain*."

AMP:Ex.3:12 "God said, I will surely be with you; and this shall be the sign to you that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain [Horeb, or Sinai]."

Ac.7:30, 38

30 "After forty years had passed, an angel appeared to Moses in the flames of a burning bush in the desert *near Mount Sinai*.

38 He was in the assembly in the desert, with the angel who spoke to him *on Mount Sinai*, and with our fathers; and he received living words to pass on to us.

So where is Mt Sinai? Today, a mountain called Mt. Sinai is on the Sinai Peninsula. However, the Sinai Peninsula was part of Egypt in Moses' day, just as it is today.

The traditional mountain that is called Sinai was established by some Catholic priests in the 3rd century AD who had been run out of Egypt proper. The whole Sinai Peninsula is Egypt.

There is even an ancient Egyptian fortress at the north end of the Nuweiba peninsula. This land was still considered Egypt even in that day.

The real Mt. Sinai could not possibly be in the Sinai Peninsula because Moses was tending the flock of Jethro in Midian when God spoke to him there (Mt. Sinai). We know where Midian is today. It's the same place as it was then: Western Arabia.

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Several pre-Christian Jewish documents place Mt. Sinai in Midian. When the Hebrew Bible was translated into Greek for the first time, “the translation of the Exodus account presupposed that Mount Sinai stood in the Arabian Peninsula.” “East of the Sinai Peninsula and south of Palestine”

Comparing the Old Testament passages with the New Testament passages, we can see that Sinai and Horeb are the same mountain.

Mt. Sinai in Arabia

Paul describes Mt. Sinai as being in Arabia.

Gal.4:25 Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children.

Josephus describes Mt. Sinai as the highest of mountains near the city of Madian. The Greek geographer Ptolemy identified Madian as being in the Arabian Peninsula; near the modern city of Al Baad.

The Israelites left Rameses

Many have the impression that Rameses was the name of Pharaoh at the time Moses demanded the release of the Children of Israel. For many people this may be due to the movie “The Ten Commandments,” in which Pharaoh’s name was Rameses. However, Rameses of Moses’ time was not a person.

Gen.47:11 So Joseph settled his father and his brothers in Egypt and gave them property in the **best part of the land**, the **district of Rameses**, as Pharaoh directed.

Ex.1:11 So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor, and they built **Pithom and Rameses as store cities** for Pharaoh.

Rameses is a location. The name Rameses is associated with a word that means “door of two roads.” From Rameses, travelers either went southeast to the desert passage toward Arabia, or northeast to Canaan. The road to Succoth was the southeast road.

Ex.12:37 The Israelites journeyed from Rameses to Succoth.

Num.33:5&6

5 The Israelites left Rameses and camped at Succoth. 6 They left Succoth and camped at Etham, on the edge of the desert.

Ex.13:17 When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them on the road through the Philistine country, though that was shorter. For God said, "If they face war, they might change their minds and return to Egypt."

When traveling across the desert, the Children of Israel traveled 7 days, 24 hours per day ... (Ex.12:38;13:6,8,21;Ex:19:4).

Ex.12:39 With the dough they had brought from Egypt, they baked cakes of unleavened bread. The dough was without yeast because they had been driven out of Egypt and did not have time to prepare food for themselves

Ex.13:6 **Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread**, and on the seventh day there shall be a feast to the LORD. 7 **Unleavened bread shall be eaten for seven days**; no leavened bread shall be seen with you, and no leaven shall be seen with you in all your territory. (ESV)

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Ex.13:21 And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, **that they might travel by day and by night.** (ESV)

Ex.13:21 and Jehovah is going before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them in the way, and by night in a pillar of fire, to give light to them, **to go by day and by night; them, to go by day and by night;** (YLT) —and— there is reason to believe God assisted their flight.

Ex.19:4 “You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. ...”

Pihahiroth for the glory of God

Ex.14:1-2

1 Then the LORD said to Moses, 2 “Tell the Israelites to *turn back and encamp near Pi Hahiroth*, between Migdol and the sea.”

The Bible indicates Moses was to take the Children of Israel off the normal path around the desert to an unexpected path so that God might be glorified. It also served the purpose of punishing the arrogant Pharaoh and his army.

Ex.14:4b “...But I will gain glory for myself through Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD.” So the Israelites did this.

Hemmed in...

Ex.14:3 “Pharaoh will think, ‘The Israelites are wandering around the land in confusion, **hemmed in by the desert.**’”

2-3 million people ...

Ex.12:37 The Israelites journeyed from Rameses to Succoth. There were about **six hundred thousand men on foot, besides women and children.**

...trapped at the shore of the Red Sea. It had to be a land parcel large enough to hold them, and yet with characteristics such that they were trapped by Pharaoh's army. Nuweiba is the only such parcel of land in that entire region that fits the bill.

Opposite Baal-zephon

NIV: Num.33:7 They left Etham, turned back to Pi Hahiroth, *to the east of (?)* Baal Zephon, and camped near Migdol.

I believe “to the east of” is an incorrect rendering.

NASB:Num.33:7 They journeyed from Etham and turned back to Pi-hahiroth, *which faces Baal-zephon*, and they camped before Migdol.

KJV:Num.33:7 And they removed from Etham, and turned again unto Pihahiroth, which is *before Baalzephon*: and they pitched before Migdol.

NLT:Num.33:7 They left Etham and turned back toward *Pi-hahiroth, opposite Baal-zephon*, and camped near Migdol.

YLT:Num.33:7 and they journey from Etham, and turn back on Pi-Hahiroth, which is *on the front of Baal-Zephon*, and they encamp before Migdol.

In Exodus, all translations indicate “across from” or “opposite.”

Ex.14:1 Then the LORD said to Moses, 2 “Tell the Israelites to turn back and encamp near Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea. **They are to encamp by the sea, directly opposite Baal Zephon**

Ex.14:9 The Egyptians—all Pharaoh's horses and chariots, horsemen and troops—pursued the Israelites and overtook them as they **camped by the sea** near Pi Hahiroth, **opposite Baal Zephon.**

Num.33:8 They left Pi Hahiroth and passed through the sea into the desert, and when they had traveled for three days in the Desert of Etham, they camped at Marah.

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Baal Zephon is on the east side of the Gulf of Aqaba, directly across from the Nuweiba Peninsula.

Criteria for the crossing site

So, we've got to find a place where

1. Pharaoh would think the Children of Israel were lost in the wilderness.
2. Where the Children of Israel were hemmed in by the sea.
3. A place that could trap 2-3 million people.
4. A place a minimum of 7 days travel from the starting point.
5. A place where the crossing would be opposite a known site of worshippers of Baal (not an Egyptian god).
6. A place where Pharaoh and his entire army could be drowned.

The Nuweiba peninsula meets those criteria precisely, as no other place does.

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Glossary:

Baal-zephon - Eastern side of the crossing of the Red Sea (Gulf of Aqaba). There is an ancient Midianite fortress there which may have been called Baal-zephon because it was dedicated to Baal.

Etham - the area around the north and to the east of the Gulf of Aqaba. It starts between the mountains and the desert, the point at which the normal travel route would turn northeast to go to Arabia. Once in Arabia, the area is still called Etham.

Jebel al Lawz - Blackened mountain, possibly Horeb, the real Mt. Sinai.

Nuweiba - Large sandy peninsula on the western side of the Gulf of Aqaba

Rameses - Goshen. Rameses means "door of two roads." From Rameses, travelers either went southeast to the desert passage toward Arabia, or northeast to Canaan. The road to Succoth was the southeast road.

Solomon's columns @ Nuweiba and Baal-zephon (Saudi Arabia), supposedly installed by King Solomon to memorialize the crossing. The one on the Saudi side has been removed and a marker put in its place.

Succoth - Probably Tharu (also spelled T'aru, or Takut) southeast of Rameses (or Goshen). There was a fortress here and a large bridge. It was the place from which many Egyptian military expeditions to the north were launched. This was the start of the journey for the Children of Israel

Wadi - A high walled canyon

Wadi Watir - A high walled canyon, 18 miles long that opens out at Nuweiba against the Red Sea (Gulf of Aqaba).

Yam Suph - Red Sea, not Reed Sea. For those who try to say that *Yam Suph* was a shallow "sea of reeds", consider that Solomon's shipyards were at *Yam Suph*.

NIV: 1Kings 9:26 King Solomon also built ships at Ezion Geber, which is near Elath in Edom, on the shore of the Red Sea.

YLT: 1Kings 9:26 And a navy hath king Solomon made in Ezion-Geber, that is beside Eloth, on the edge of the Sea of Suph, in the land of Edom.

(The same Hebrew words *Yam Suph* are used in this passage as in Exodus.)

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Sources:

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- Aerial photo of Wadi Watir and Nuweiba
- Aerial photo of Nuweiba
- Photos of chariot wheels
- Aerial photo of Jebel al Lawz

www.wyattmuseum.com

- Clearer Aerial photo of Nuweiba
- Photos from Wadi Watir looking out to the Red Sea
- Satellite photo of Wadi Watir and Nuweiba

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- Crossing photos
- Matching pillars on each side supposedly installed by King Solomon. The one on the Saudi side has been removed and a marker put in its place.

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- Inscriptions on the cliffs in Wadi Sidra describing the miraculous events of the crossing. — *The Signature of God*, Grant R. Jeffrey

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Technical Article

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