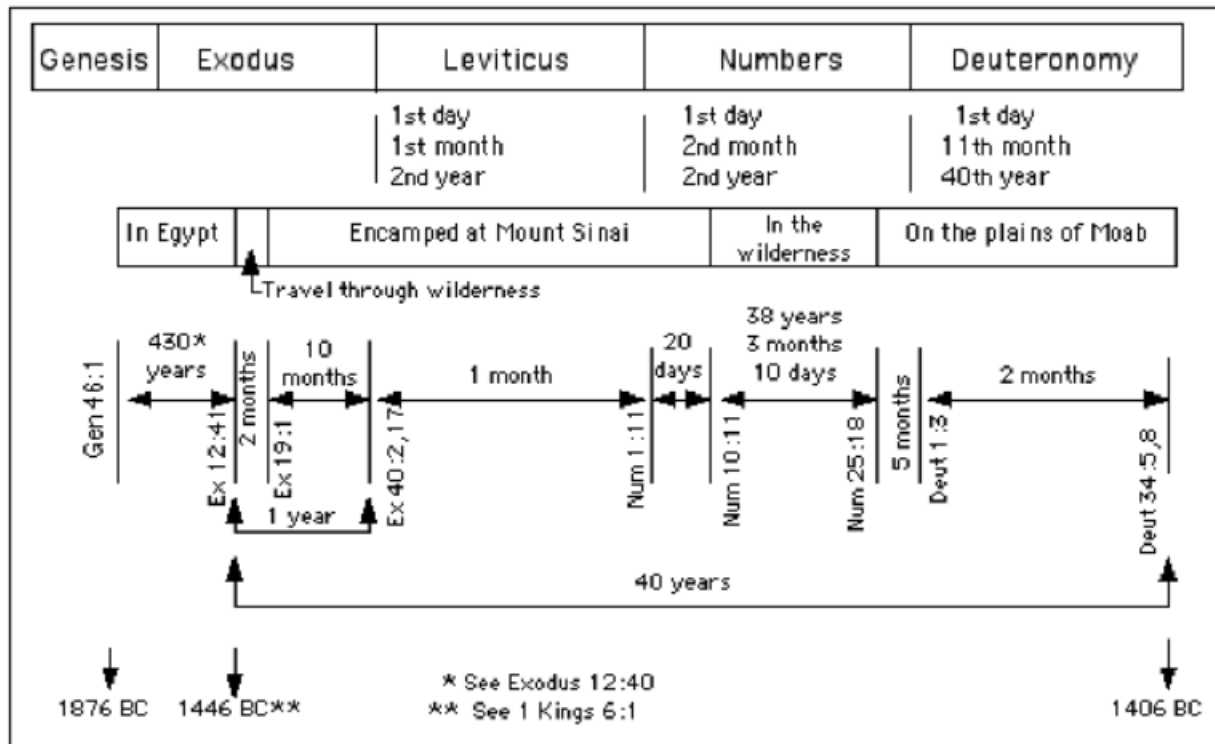


Exodus 19

Read Exodus 19:1-15: The children of Israel have been traveling 3 months now, and they have had a chance to settle into their new living conditions. They are leaving Rephidim, which means resting places. As you can see below, The exodus experience is a short duration, compared to the entirety of the wilderness encampment. The amount of ink devoted to biblical books does not have much to do with timeline durations.

Chart 3 Relationship of Geography and Time Events in Pentateuch



There has been a lot of confusion over where the real Mt. Sinai is located. The traditional location is not shown on the Sinai Peninsula, but that is probably incorrect. Bob Cornuke took the bible verbatim and followed the biblical narrative day for day, stop per stop, following the existing features of the geography and ended up finding what is called Jabal al Lawz. It is a mountain whose top is burned with fire...but there is no volcanic history. This is a different location than the traditional location.



Here are some comments on the real location of Mt Sinai by Bob Cornuke and Larry Williams, who covertly retraced the whole wilderness journey based on verse by verse literal interpretation. The location is off limits to the public. Below is their findings:

For centuries, Bible scholars and religious pilgrims have been seeking the location of Mt. Sinai. Today, most people are unaware that not one piece of hard evidence has been produced to verify that what is traditionally designated as "Mount Sinai" in the south central Sinai Peninsula is indeed the famed mountain of Moses and the Exodus. 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 4th century AD. (Helena also claimed she discovered the true "holy sepulcher" in Jerusalem and the true cross of Christ.)

Several other proposed sites for the true Mount Sinai have been suggested by biblical scholars, but, thus far, they have produced no archaeological evidence in support. If we are ever to discern a correct location for the historical events recorded in the biblical Book of Exodus, it's important to use the Scriptures as a guide, just as we would use any ancient documents that have previously been proven reliable.

In the New Testament, Paul wrote in Galatians 4:25, "Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia . . ." Although some argue that here the Roman designation of Arabia includes the Sinai Peninsula, Arabia in Paul's day encompassed a larger region that primarily designated the populated regions of ancient Midian, or modern-day Saudi Arabia. As a "Hebrew of Hebrews," Paul's

understanding of Arabia would have been one that was consistent with Old Testament passages like 1 Kings 10:15, 2 Chronicles 9:14, Isaiah 21:13, Jeremiah 25:24, and Ezekiel 27:21, in which Arabia is clearly identified with the region east of the Gulf of Aqaba, where “kings” ruled and the “Dedanites” co-dwelt with other nomadic peoples.

Even more telling, Exodus 3:1 plainly identifies Mount Horeb (Sinai) as being in Midian: “Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.” Here, there are two important issues. First, the region of “Midian” referred to here is undeniably the same as present-day Saudi Arabia. Second, at the traditional site of Mt. Sinai on the Sinai Peninsula, there is nothing that would cause it to be geographically identified with the “back” of a desert, in distinction from its surroundings. By contrast, the site proposed by BASE Institute is, indeed, on the far side or margin of a vast desert in ancient Midian.

However, can ancient Midian be identified with the Sinai Peninsula, which in the time of Moses, was considered a part of Egypt (although designated as the “wilderness” of Egypt)? It is apparent from Exodus 2:15 that the two were separate entities. After killing an Egyptian, Moses fled Egypt for safer ground: “When Pharaoh heard of this, he tried to kill Moses, but Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to live in Midian.” Egypt and its holdings would not have been safe for Moses under any circumstances. He would not have fled to the Sinai Peninsula, where archaeology shows that Pharaoh had multiple mining interests and military outposts. The Bible is clear that Moses went out of Egypt, to the land of Midian east of the gulf of Aqaba.

The Bible makes several references to Moses returning to Egypt from Midian, including Exodus 4:19 where we read, “Now the Lord had said to Moses in Midian, ‘Go back to Egypt, for all the men who wanted to kill you are dead.’” All passages associated with Moses’ stay in Midian point toward present-day Saudi Arabia as the area to which Moses fled, subsequently met God at the burning bush, and then returned with the children of Israel.

Many Bible references pointed away from the traditional Mount Sinai and toward Saudi Arabia as the location of the historical mountain of Moses. And archaeological evidence (or lack thereof) contributed to our belief that a site inspection was necessary to determine if other evidence could be found to support this theory. Saudi Arabia’s closed borders made it impossible for a team of scholars and archaeologists to enter the country. As a result, Larry Williams and I surreptitiously slipped into the country, traced what appears to be the Exodus route, and climbed the mountain which many scholars now consider to be the true Mount Sinai.

MT. SINAI - THE EVIDENCE

RED SEA CROSSING SITE

In 1 Kings 9:26, the Bible tells us, “King Solomon also built ships at Ezion Geber, which is near Elath in Edom, on the shore of the Red Sea.” This verse provides us with some compelling clues: First, Solomon had his port at Elath (modern Eilat) on the shores of the northern tip of the Gulf of Aqaba (which forms the eastern “finger” of the Red Sea proper). The NIV Study Bible references this verse as follows: “Red Sea. The Hebrew for this term, normally read as Yam Suph (‘sea of reeds’), refers to

the body of water through which the Israelites passed at the time of the Exodus. It can also be read, however, as Yam Soph ('sea of land's end'), a more likely reading when referring to the Red Sea, and especially . . . to its eastern arm, the Gulf of Aqaba."

This could well mean that the "sea of land's end," at the tip of the Sinai Peninsula, was the site of the Israelites' crossing. At the very least, the use of the same Hebrew term--both for the place where the Israelites crossed and for the Gulf of Aqaba at Elath--shows that the body of water in question is not an isolated lake, but includes the bulk of what we know as the Red Sea.

BITTER LAKES

Many scholars suggest that the actual crossing of the "sea of reeds" was in the Bitter Lakes region, north of the Gulf of Suez, where some observers have claimed that wind can cause the lake level to fluctuate several feet. However, this simply is not consistent with numerous other Biblical references. Such references include: 1) the account of an entire, Egypt-engulfing locust swarm being blown into Yam Suph (Exodus 10:19), 2) Solomon sailing a fleet of ships on Yam Suph (1 Kings 9:26), and 3) the description of the way in which Pharaoh's soldiers died at Yam Suph: "But You blew with your breath, and the sea covered them. They sank like lead in the mighty waters" (Exodus 15:10). The Bitter Lakes region is a marsh with no mighty waters. At the tip of the Sinai Peninsula, however, at the entrance of the Gulf of Aqaba, the "mighty waters" of the Red Sea can reach incredible fury and awesome depths.

TRADITIONAL MOUNT SINAI

Having visited the traditional Mount Sinai in the southern Sinai Peninsula, I have seen first-hand that the only place the Israelites could possibly have camped was a small, flat valley area adjacent to the mountain. This area would allow for only about one-square-yard per person (assuming that roughly 2 million people were involved in the Exodus). And despite extensive archeological investigation throughout the region, nothing has ever been found that can conclusively be tied to the Exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt, or can even argue for a large population of people ever having occupied the area.

UNDERWATER LAND BRIDGE

Following a theory that the route of the Exodus actually took the Hebrews past (not through) the bitter Lakes and then southward along the west coast of the Sinai Peninsula, we traveled to the tip of the Sinai. There, we explored the underwater topography (bathymetry) of the Strait of Tiran, where the Gulf of Aqaba is narrowest, between the Sinai Peninsula and Saudi Arabia. And we discovered an underwater land bridge existing there today that is so problematic for shipping that two separate routes or "lanes" are designated for northbound and southbound ships to pass through. Further correlation of the Bible's account of the route of the Exodus causes us to realize that this unusual submarine formation may well have been trod by the Hebrews themselves.

BITTER SPRINGS OF MARAH

Exploring the further possibility that the Israelites passed through the waters of the Red Sea at the Strait of Tiran, we picked up our search for landmarks on the Saudi Arabia side of the Gulf of Aqaba. There we started at the coastline on the eastern side of the Strait of Tiran and traveled the most natural route approximately 30 kilometers inland to a group of springs where the water in some of the springs was terribly bitter. Exodus 15:22-23 tells us, "So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea; then they went out into the wilderness of Shur. And they went three days in the wilderness and found no water. Now when they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they were bitter."

THE 70 PALMS AND 12 SPRINGS OF ELIM

As we traveled generally toward Jabal al-Lawz (the Saudi Arabian mountain that is held by generations of Bedouins to be the mountain of Moses), we next encountered a group of clear water springs, with a grove of palm trees adjacent to them. We marveled at the description in Exodus 15:27: "Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees; so they camped there by the waters."

CAVES OF MOSES

While at the springs, we discovered that some nearby caves were being excavated by Saudi archaeologists. A worker at the site said that writings found in the caves indicated that the prophet Musa (Moses) had come through this area with his nation of Hebrews.

CHARRED PEAK AND MELTED ROCK

Continuing to Jabal al Lawz, and after a great deal of maneuvering to gain access to the mountain, we found the top of the mountain to be thoroughly blackened, as if the rocks had been severely scorched from without. When we broke open the rocks, we found that they were actually granite rocks with a blackened "rind" that contained an untouched core of pure granite inside. We had already read in Exodus 19:18, "Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire"

BOUNDARY MARKERS

As we explored further around the base of the mountain, we discovered large piles of rocks arranged in a semicircle around the front of the mountain, spaced about every 400 yards. Measuring about 5 and 20 feet across, these piles could be the boundary markers set up by Moses, as he had been instructed by God: ". . . You warned us saying, 'set bounds around the mountain and consecrate it'" (Exodus 19:23).

More Evidence follows on the next page including information on the golden calf, the split rock at Horeb, the 12 pillars, Moses' altar and Elijah's cave.

Mt. Sinai - More Evidence

GOLDEN CALF ALTAR

In a flat area at the base of the mountain, we also discovered that large boulders had been placed together, creating an altar-like formation 30 feet tall and 30 feet across--quite possibly the altar where the golden calf was set up and worshiped by God's disobedient people. On the rocks were etched ancient drawings of a bull god, as described in Exodus 32:4, where Aaron ". . . received the gold from the hand, and he fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molded calf."

MOSES' ALTAR and the 12 PILLARS

At the foot of the mountain, we found a V-shaped altar, with each arm approximately 60 feet long and 20 feet wide. Next to it were several toppled pillars in sections measuring about 22 inches in diameter and 20 inches in length. Exodus 24:4 records that Moses ". . . built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel."

SPLIT ROCK AT HOREB

(Full credit for verification and documentation of the split rock at Horeb goes to Jim and Penny Caldwell, who conducted their research while living in Saudi Arabia.) One of the most startling discoveries at Jabal al-Lawz was a massive, prominent, split rock on the west side of Jabal al-Lawz, which showed evidence of gushing water from within--jagged rocks that had been smoothed off by an abundant flow of water. Exodus 17:6 records God's instructions to Moses when the Israelites were dying of thirst in the wilderness: "Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink."

CAVE OF ELIJAH

High on the mountain, was a cave by which Elijah may have stood to hear God's voice, as described in 1 Kings 19:8-9, 13b: ". . . and he went . . . as far as Horeb, the mountain of God . . . and he went out and stood in the entrance of the cave"

This expedition yielded the first of a wealth of compelling new evidence to suggest that the Strait of Tiran on the Gulf of Aqaba was the crossing point for the route of the Exodus, and that Jabal al-Lawz in Saudi Arabia is the true Mount Sinai.

The real significance in all this is that the Bible, once again, has apparently been shown to be true, reliable, and accurate, down to the smallest historical detail. Critics who claim that the Bible does not coincide with known history and geography are again shown to be wrong once the physical evidence has been examined. The account in the Bible is true, and the implications are incredible.

God descended on Mount Sinai in flames like a furnace. He spoke to Moses and gave him the Ten Commandments as the laws for the life of Israel. He communicated His love and mercy through the laws for sacrifice and atonement. And though we are unworthy, He gave us the opportunity to enter into a personal, caring relationship with the Eternal Father.

The exploits of the BASE Institute team may sound like a treasure hunt to some, but a more important adventure awaits those who would seek out the treasures of the Word of God. The Bible

reveals His plan for reconciliation, and the most important discovery any of us can ever make is to pursue a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. This is the best adventure of them all!

SUPPORTIVE QUOTES FOR JABAL AL-LAWZ

“A great many scholars are now coming around to the notion that Sinai is in fact in northern Arabia.”

Frank Moore Cross, Professor Emeritus, Harvard University,
The Associated Press
Saturday, February 19, 2000, The Sun Herald, Mississippi

“A reasonable guess, according to Cross, for the identity of Mt. Sinai is Jabal al Lawz, the highest peak in northwest Arabia...The tradition that Mt. Sinai was the highest mountain near Madian may point to Jabal al Lawz because it is clearly the peak that dominates the entire region.”

Bible Review Magazine, Volume XVI, April 2000
“Mt. Sinai – in Arabia?” Allen Kerkeslager, Bible Review, April 2000

“Jabal al Lawz [may also be] the most convincing option for identifying the Mt. Sinai of biblical tradition...Philo provides a probable witness from the Roman period to the Alexandrian tradition of locating Mt. Sinai in northwestern Arabia...Biblical and post-biblical evidence consistently suggests that most Israelite traditions identified Sinai with some location in northwestern Arabia east of the Red Sea rather than anywhere in the Sinai peninsula...Demetrius the Chronographer, who probably lived in Alexandria in the late 3rd Century located Mt. Sinai in northwestern Arabia near the city of Madyan.

Pilgrimage and Holy Space in Late Antique Egypt, by Dr. Allen Kerkeslager

“I believe what has been found is quite likely the real Mount Sinai. The circumstantial evidence for Jabal al Lawz as the real Mount Sinai is quite convincing.”

Dr. Robert Stewart, Ph.D., Professor of New Geneva Theological Center

“...the visible evidence is quite overwhelming that the location of the true Mount Sinai has been discovered [in] Saudi Arabia.”

Dr. Roy E. Knuteson, Professor of Biblical Archaeology

“Jabal al Lawz is the most likely site for Mount Sinai.”

–Hershel Shanks, Editor, Bible Archeology Review

“The evidence points to northwest Saudi Arabia as the location of the actual Mt. Sinai.”

Dr. Dean McKenzie, Professor Emeritus, University of Oregon

“You will be pleased to find that you have some good solid evidence for your views –‘Mt. Sinai in Arabia.’ ...a Jewish tradition dating to at least 250 BCE that ultimately identified Mt. Sinai with the highest mountain near ancient Madyan, which is the modern town of Al-Bad. The most likely candidate, I have concluded, is Jabal al Lawz. As far as I know, this is currently the most elaborate scholarly treatment of the evidence that would support an identification of Mt. Sinai with Jabal al Lawz.”

Allen Kerkeslager, Ph.D., Saint Joseph’s, Philadelphia’s Jesuit University.

Charles Whittaker, who has done in-depth, comprehensive work on the location of the real Mt. Sinai, has recently completed his doctoral dissertation on the subject. His findings are compelling and his comments recapping this work on the issues are as follows:

“For the past two years, I have been doing intense research regarding the Biblical significance of the Saudi Arabian mountain, Jabal al Lawz. The conclusion of my dissertation is that it is significant because I believe it is the best candidate for the Mt. Sinai/Horab of the Old Testament. I have labored to be objective in my study while considering the arguments of those who oppose this theory. There is an overwhelming amount of historical evidence that favors Saudi Arabia as a viable location for the mountain. I attempt to present a comprehensive study of the issue, researching the views of ancient scholars, geographers, historians, and scientists as well as the latest information coming out of Saudi Arabia on the site. The Saudi Deputy Ministry of Antiquities and Museums published a work late in 2002 called Al-Bid’ History and Archeology, which includes a site survey and excavation of the environs of Jabal al Lawz. My paper addresses these findings also. There is much debate on this issue, as you know; however, there is a growing number in the scholarly community who have begun to see Jabal al Lawz as the best candidate for Mt. Sinai.”

This is the same location of the burning bush that Moses had become familiarized with herding his father-in-laws' sheep. One reason that Moses mirrors the character of Jesus is that he seemed to be their only intermediary with God. Anyone who tried to go up the holy mountain at the wrong time would die. We cannot even approach our heavenly father apart from the work of Christ to deal

with our sinful nature. The 10 Commandments is greatly misunderstood. They are not the path to heaven. They are an impossible standard for heaven. We have to get in through a relationship with God instead of performance.

⁸ But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, ⁹ knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, ¹⁰ for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, ¹¹ according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust. ¹² And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, ¹³ although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. ¹⁴ And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. ¹⁶ However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life. (1 Timothy 1)

God tells Moses that the previous months was characterized as being carried on eagles' wings. The mother eagle pushes the eaglets out of the nest and lets them try to fly. She swoops down to catch them on her back as they initially fail. We are allowed to get in over our heads and fall to learn how God can save us. Remaining in our comfortable nests and resting places equates to zero growth, and spiritual diminishing. God is creating a holy nation. The Law is their civil code to protect the innocent and limit the abuses between men.

Read Exodus 19:16-25:

Moses brought the people to the base of the mountain to meet God. There was a very loud trumpet blast getting louder and louder, violent earthquakes, smoke, lightning, and thunder. God called Moses up the mountain. He told the people to not peek through the smoke and clouds. The idea was not to run away from God; but to see what makes him happy. Moses was used to meeting with God in a personal way, and they were friends talking face to face.

¹⁸ For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, ¹⁹ and the sound of a trumpet

and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore. ²⁰ (For they could not endure what was commanded: “And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned ^[1] or shot with an arrow.” ²¹ And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, “I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.”) ²² But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, ²³ to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, ²⁴ to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel. (Hebrews 12)