

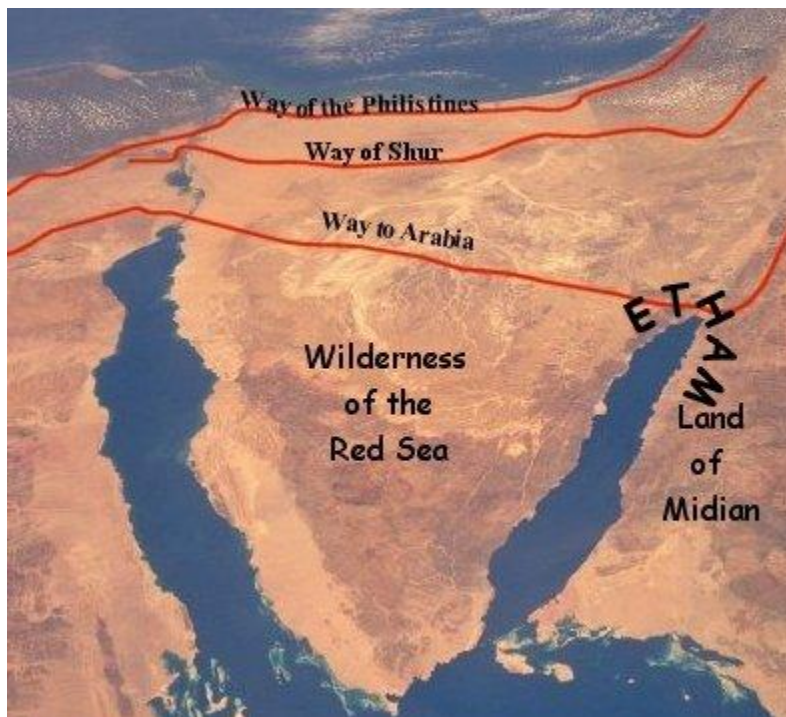
My notes on the Exodus i.e. the Red Sea Crossing and the case for Mt. Sinai being located in Arabia

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Location: <http://torahlawform.com/Documents/Red-Sea-Crossing-and-the-case-for-Mt-Sinai-being-located-in-Arabia-notes-on.doc>

This document is in the stage of being a collection of notes that may evolve into something a little more formal and cohesive.

<http://www.accordingtothescriptures.org/doctrine/redseacrossing.html>



Smiths Bible Dictionary says Etham comes "from the Coptic *atiom* , [meaning] "boundary of the sea,"". Perhaps then, Etham is that area known as the northern border of the Gulf of Aqaba, which wraps around the eastern and western coasts of the Gulf of Aqaba. After crossing the Red Sea, this would still have placed the children of Israel in the "wilderness of *Etham*" , which would literally be the "boundary of the sea".

As they were encamped by the edge of the wilderness in Etham, *"the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, **that they turn** and encamp before Pihahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baalzephon: before it shall ye encamp by the sea"* (Exodus 14:1-2). From the edge of the wilderness of the Red Sea bordering Etham, the route they would normally have taken to Midian would have been around the northern tip of the Gulf of Aqaba and down the eastern side, but here the Lord told them to **"TURN"** (Heb. **Shuwb**), which means to "return" or "turn back". If we look on a modern map (left) and see how



the modern highway system goes about the wadis in that region, we will see that there is an abrupt turnaround at "Ra's an-Naqb", which then proceeds south on the western side of the Gulf of Aqaba down to a resort village called Nuwaiba.

There have been various groups who have been trying to determine if this indeed could have been the exact place that the Hebrews crossed the Red Sea. In all of the Gulf of Aqaba, this would have been the only probable location that they might have crossed for there is a natural (supernatural) land bridge between the Sinai and Arabian peninsulas, under the water. As well, there are very interesting, and strange coral formations found there that are not found anywhere else in the Gulf of Aqaba that may be the remnants of Pharaohs chariots. As one diver observed, it looked like a junkyard with debris strewn throughout the sandy bottom. It should be noted that coral needs something that it can form on and will not stick to sand. This might suggest that at one time or another there has been something deposited on the sandy bottom for the coral to start forming there.

"They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in" (Exodus 14:3). Josephus recorded this event saying that the Hebrews were driven into "a narrow place", and that they were shut "up between inaccessible precipices and the sea; for there was on each side a ridge of mountains that terminated at the sea, which were impassable by reason of their roughness" (Antiquities of the Jews, Book 2, Chapter 15).

The Lord had redeemed them from the terrible hand of Pharaoh and delivered them from the bondage of Egypt. They were the people that God had "purchased" (Exodus 15:16), and the fame of this great deliverance was spread all the way to Canaan where they "heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt" (Joshua 2:10). Because of this, some believed and confessed "the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath" (v. 11), even Rahab the harlot who sought mercy from the Lord and was delivered from destruction. The Philistines had heard as well what happened to the Egyptians and were sore afraid when the Israelites were come nigh unto them saying "Woe unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods? these are the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness" (1 Samuel 4:8).

"So Moses brought Israel from the Red sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water" (Exodus 15:22). The "wilderness of Shur" is called "the wilderness of Etham" in Numbers 33:8, and they pitched there in Marah. From Marah they removed and "came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees: and they encamped there by the waters" (v. 27). Some have placed Elim in the modern township of Al Bad, where there are palm trees and several springs to be found.

"And they removed from Elim, and encamped by the Red sea" (Numbers 33:10). "And they removed from the Red sea" (v. 11), "and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt" (Exodus 16:1). It was thirty days earlier, on the eve of the Passover that they went out of Egypt in haste. From Egypt they traveled over 300 miles, which would have been an average of 10 miles per day.

It would be yet another 16 days before they would come to the mount of God (Exodus 19:1-2). Their path would take them out of the wilderness of Sin to Dophkah, then to Alush, then Rephidim which was to the west of Mt. Sinai, and finally to the wilderness of Sinai where was the mountain of God (Numbers 33:9-15). Due to the closed doors of the Saudi Arabian government to foreigners, it has made it difficult in locating some of these places. However, there have been a few who have obtained work visas or who have gained entrance otherwise and have made some amazing discoveries

Exo 15:22 KJV So Moses brought Israel from the Red sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water.

Exo 16:1 KJV And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which *is* between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt.

Outline of This Week's Parashah (Torah Portion):

- 13:17 The Route to the Promised Land
- 14:1 Pharaoh Hardens His Heart One Last Time
- 14:9 Israel Panics in the Face of the Egyptian Army
- 14:13 YHVH Reassures His People
- 14:21 The Parting of the Red Sea
- 14:23 The Water Crashes Down Upon the Egyptian Army
- 14:30 The Salvation of Israel From Their Enemies
- 15:1 A Song of Praise
- 15:20 Miriam and the Women Sing
- 15:23 Israel Tests YHVH at the Waters of Marah
- 16:4 The Miracle of the Manna
- 16:22 The Sixth Day: Preparation for the Sabbath
- 17:2 Israel Complains Again: Water From the Rock
- 17:8 The First Battle in the Wilderness Against Amalek

The Lord told Moses *"When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain"* (Exodus 3:12), but where is this mountain? As we have discussed, Moses had escaped the hand of Pharaoh into the land of Midian, which is on the eastern side of the Gulf of Aqaba. And if there is any uncertainty as to its location we need only listen to Paul who locates *"mount Sinai in Arabia"* (Galatians 4:25).

Gal 4:25 KJV For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.

From here the children of Israel left Rephidim and camped before the mountain of God (Exodus 19:1-2). They arrived there in the third month on the first day, making their journey a total of 46 days. Israel was to wash their clothes and to sanctify themselves that they might be ready against the third day, for on the third day the Lord was going to come down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai

Exo 13:20 KJV And they took their journey from Succoth, and encamped in **Etham**, in the edge of the wilderness.

Num 33:5-8 KJV And the children of Israel removed from Rameses, and pitched in Succoth. (6) And they departed from Succoth, and pitched in **Etham**, which *is* in the edge of the wilderness. (7) And they removed from Etham, and turned again unto Pihahiroth, which *is* before Baalzephon: and they pitched before Migdol. (8) And they departed from before Pihahiroth, and passed through the midst of the sea into the wilderness, and went three days' journey in the wilderness of Etham, and pitched in Marah.

I found this source very interesting.

<http://www.emfi.org/archaeology/redsea2.htm>

Before the Crossing - Order of Events

1. They left Egypt: It has been commonly assumed that the sea crossing was in the Gulf of Suez. But if this were so, the Hebrews would still be on Egyptian soil as they faced the Red Sea crossing. Egypt borders the entire western shore of the Gulf of Suez. Wherever they camped along that coast, they would still be in Egypt.

However, the book of Exodus tells us that before they came to the Red Sea crossing, they had ALREADY LEFT Egypt. The "children of Israel went up harnessed OUT OF the land of Egypt." (Ex.13:18) So, when they later arrived at the Red Sea and found themselves trapped, they complained to Moses, their leader: "Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness?" They asked why Moses had carried them forth "OUT OF Egypt?...we did tell thee IN Egypt, saying, Let us alone." (Ex.14:10-12). You'll notice, **this wilderness was not "in Egypt"**.

2. They travelled along the southern highway: From their homes in the Nile Delta (the region known as Rameses, or Goshen), the Hebrews had first assembled at Succoth, a military station on the eastern border of Egypt. Here they were "harnessed", or placed in ranks (Ex. 13:18).

From here, there were 2 highways to Canaan:

Route A - "the way of the Philistines" the shorter route (v.17)

Route B - "the way of the Red Sea" - the southern route (v.18)

They took the southern (and longer) route. Josephus, the Jewish historian, concurs that the Hebrews headed southward from Egypt.

3. Then through the desert: This southern route took them by the wilderness of the Red Sea - the area between the 2 arms of the Red Sea.

4. Turned off the highway: Next, they were instructed to "turn" and encamp by the sea (Ex.14:2).

Leaving the highway, the Hebrews turned aside - through the Wadi Watir, a wide and wild mountain gorge, a natural roadway from Egypt. They were "entangled in the land" (v.3), travelling through an area with mountains all around, which seemed to hem them in.

5. Camped "by the sea": It led them in one direction - to an enormous size beach. At this beach, they found themselves "shut in" (v.3).

Too Far?

Question: Isn't this site too far from Egypt?

Wouldn't it have taken a long time to get there?

Answer: The distance from the Suez Canal to Nuweiba is 336 km (210 mls). In 1967, Moshe Dyan marched his troops from this very spot, Nuweiba, to Suez (near ancient Succoth) in just 6 days. And they camped at night.

The Hebrews did not stop and camp every night, as Moshe Dyan's troops did - they travelled both day and night:

"And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night." (Ex.13:21)

With divine assistance, this huge mass of people travelled in an orderly manner both day and night, with great speed:

"Ye have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings."

The eagle is used to denote speed (e.g. 2 Sam.1:23 - "swifter than eagles"; Deut. 28:49 - "as the eagle flies"). We don't know precisely how long the journey took, but it was rapid.

Trapped!

Pharaoh's army entered from the same wadi, which is the only entrance on to the beach. This dry river gorge is located midway of the beach. Once the army entered the area, the Hebrews' only means of escape would have been to the south. But the mountains to the south extend all the way to the sea - they had **no way of escape**, or so it seemed.

Why this Detour?

Question: Why didn't they continue on the highway to Canaan? Why were they told to "turn" aside to this cul-de-sac?

Answer: The LORD told Moses:

"Pharaoh... shall follow after them, and I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, that the Egyptians may know that I am the LORD" (Ex.14:4) - and "that my name may be declared throughout all the earth" (9:16).

A showdown was looming that would vindicate the power of the Creator over the arrogance of the greatest human power on earth.

The Egyptian overtook the Hebrews "encamping by the sea, beside Pihahiroth, before Baalzephon" (14:9).

"And Moses said unto the people, Fear not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will show you today, for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you shall see them no more again forever." (v.13)

The Sea Opens

The cloud descended between the two camps, bringing darkness to the Egyptian force, but light to the Hebrew camp.

As night fell, a "STRONG" east wind blew upon the sea, dividing it into 2 walls. Between these 2 walls of water, the Hebrews ventured the 13 km distance to the opposite shore.

How Deep is Deep?

Question: How deep was this water over the crossing place?

Answer: If some people would only trust the Bible record - and take it literally - they could avoid later embarrassment. The crossing place was not a shallow "sea of reeds", as commonly speculated. The Bible describes it thus:

- **dried the sea, the waters of the GREAT DEEP (Isa. 51:10)**
- **a path in the MIGHTY WATERS (43:16,17)**
- **led them through the DEEP (63:11-13).**

British Admiralty charts show the Gulf of Aqaba arm of the Red Sea to be a 5,000 foot (1,600 metre) deep trench. **That's positively "DEEP"!** The western shoreline drops steeply underwater into this "canyon" at a slope of **45 degrees**. Our diving forays confirmed this fact.

However, at the precise location of the Nuweiba beach, the deep trench is spanned by an **underwater land bridge**. This pathway we have estimated at **900 metres** in width. And from the Egyptian end, it slopes at a gentle angle of 6 degrees underwater - until midway across the sea it is some 1,000 feet (300 metres) below the surface of the sea. It then gently rises to the opposite shore.

This bridge was formed by washouts meeting each other from 2 directions - from the western & eastern shores. I cannot shake off the feeling that in the closing stages of the Great Flood, God in His foreknowledge, divided the Gulf with this path across the sea, for the event He saw ahead.

Interestingly, Scripture alludes to this, with the Creator making a "path in the mighty waters" (Isa.43:16,17), a "path in the great waters" (Psa.77:19,20), "dividing the water" (Isa.63:12) of this deep trench.

How Strong a Wind?

"The LORD caused the sea to go back by a STRONG east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left." (Ex.14:21,22)

Midway across on each side the **CLIFF OF WATER** were up to 1,000 feet high! Skyscraper height. Only a MEGA HURRICANE could have exposed that deeply covered land bridge and pushed and held 2 walls of water 300 metres high. What else but a miracle could have done that?

How Could They Push Ahead Against Such A Hurricane?

Q:But a wind of that scale - wouldn't it surely have blown the Israelites away as they attempted to come through? Ans:Indeed so. Except for another factor, hidden in the Scripture, which changes everything. My answer is this: the walls of water eventually stood up **WITHOUT** the wind. Notice Exodus 15:8 - "...the floods stood upright as an heap, and the depths were **CONGEALED** in the heart of the sea." I found my dictionary defined "CONGEALED" thus: "To change from a fluid or soft to a solid or rigid state." Strong's Concordance notes that "congeal" comes from the Hebrew qapha (pronounced kaw-faw), which shrink, i.e. thicken (as unracked wine, curdled milk, clouded sky, frozen water)".

Two Examples:

* In a certain part of the hot Iranian desert, villagers have built 2 parallel stone walls close together, through which the wind will blow. Then, toward night, as the temperature drops, they pour water on the ground between the walls. The night wind freezes the water and provides natural refrigeration. * In the U.S.A., along the Arizona Interstate 40, south of Flagstaff, road signs point to "Ice Caves". Here, where water has seeped down a mountain into a natural tunnel and the wind blows through, in this hot desert country the water is turned to ice. Pioneers used these ice caves to refrigerate food. These minor examples of the effect of wind blowing on water merely indicate a law of nature in action. But at the Red Sea crossing, this was accomplished on a supernatural scale - where a "STRONG" wind blowing on walls of water as tall as skyscrapers **FROZE THEM SOLD**. This could be nothing less than a miracle! The LORD is in control of the forces He created. Once the water had "congealed" standing up solid, the wind could drop - and the Hebrews pass through.

How Long to Cross?

Objection:Rabbi Sherwin Wine, founder of Humanistic Judaism, claimed on T.V. that the event never happened. "It would have taken them weeks to cross," he sneered. Answer:Easy to say. But it does not take much effort to discover that this man forgot to sit down and do his arithmetic: * Width of underwater bridge: 900 metres. (But let's be cautious and say that only 750 metres/2,500 feet of this width was used.) * Allowing 5 feet (1,5 metres) per person side to side, would give space for 500 persons abreast. * With the length of the crossing at 8 miles (13 km), and travelling at 2,5 miles (4 km) per hour, it would take 3 (hours for the front row of persons to cross over. * With 500 persons abreast, and a total of, say, 2 million people, there would be queues 4,000 deep. * Allow a distance of 5 feet (1,5 metres) from person to person, one behind the other. Also allow for half of these persons to be driving an animal (at an extra 10 feet/ 3 metres average space for each animal). Allow also for a quarter of the people in possession of a cart (occupying a further feet/3 meters for each vehicle). All this would require a procession 9.6 miles/15.4 km in length. * Thus the final row of persons would be 9.6 miles/15.4 km, 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 (hours to make the crossing. * **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 still safe to say that the time needed to make the crossing was by no means excessive.

Pharaoh's Army Drowned

Then the cloud separating the Hebrews from their pursuers was removed, and the Egyptians saw their quarry escaping. They went down on to the sea bed after them - 600 chariots and 251,000 men (Josephus). Then with a heart-chilling roar, the 2 walls of frozen water (which we may assume had been thawing and thinning since the wind dropped) suddenly collapsed upon them. "The waters covered the chariots." (Ex.14:28) The monarch and the nation's army were in that place of fearful danger destroyed themselves!

Pictures

I agree with these pictures....

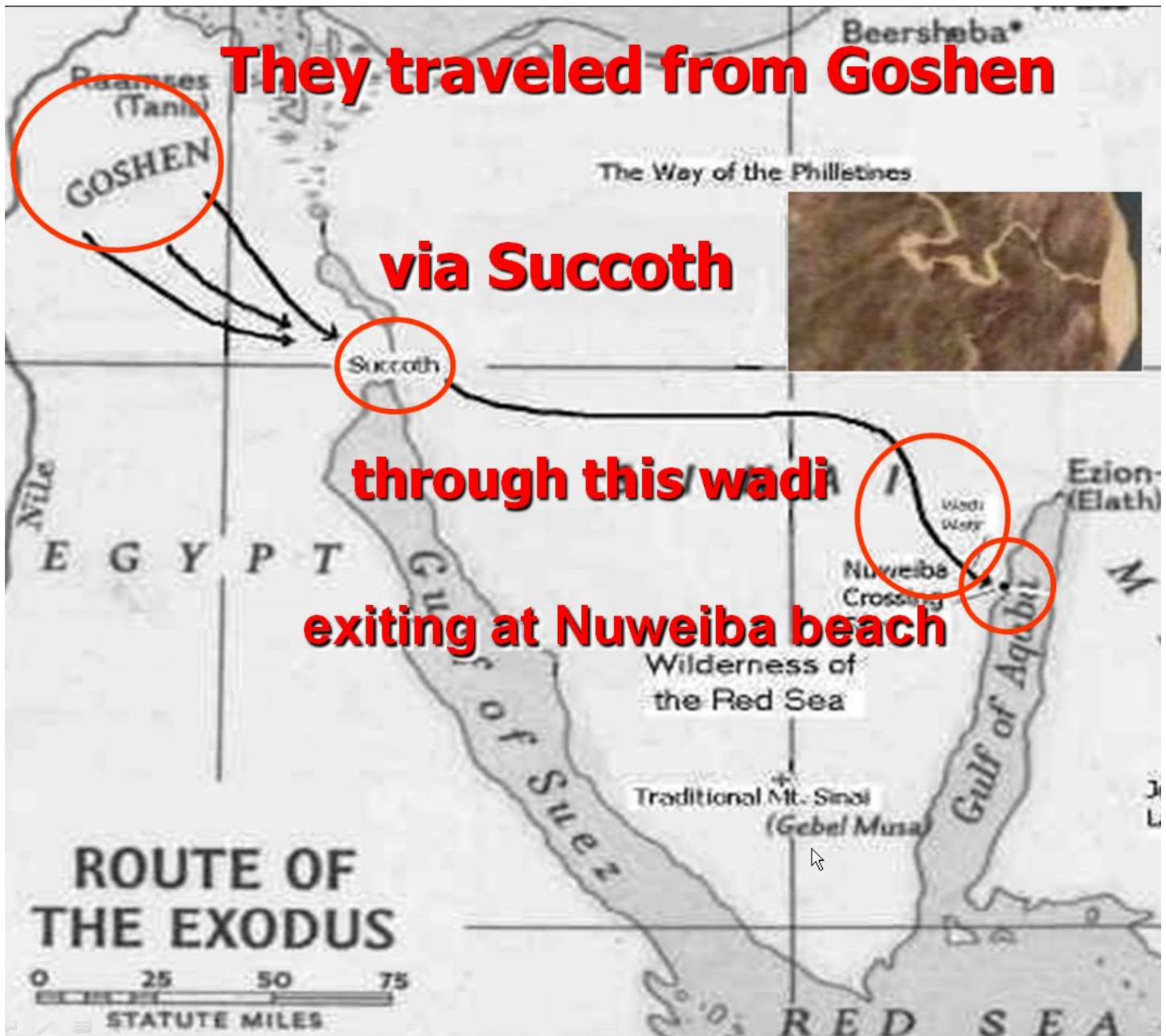




Figure 1: Satellite Picture of Nuweiba Beach (North is up)

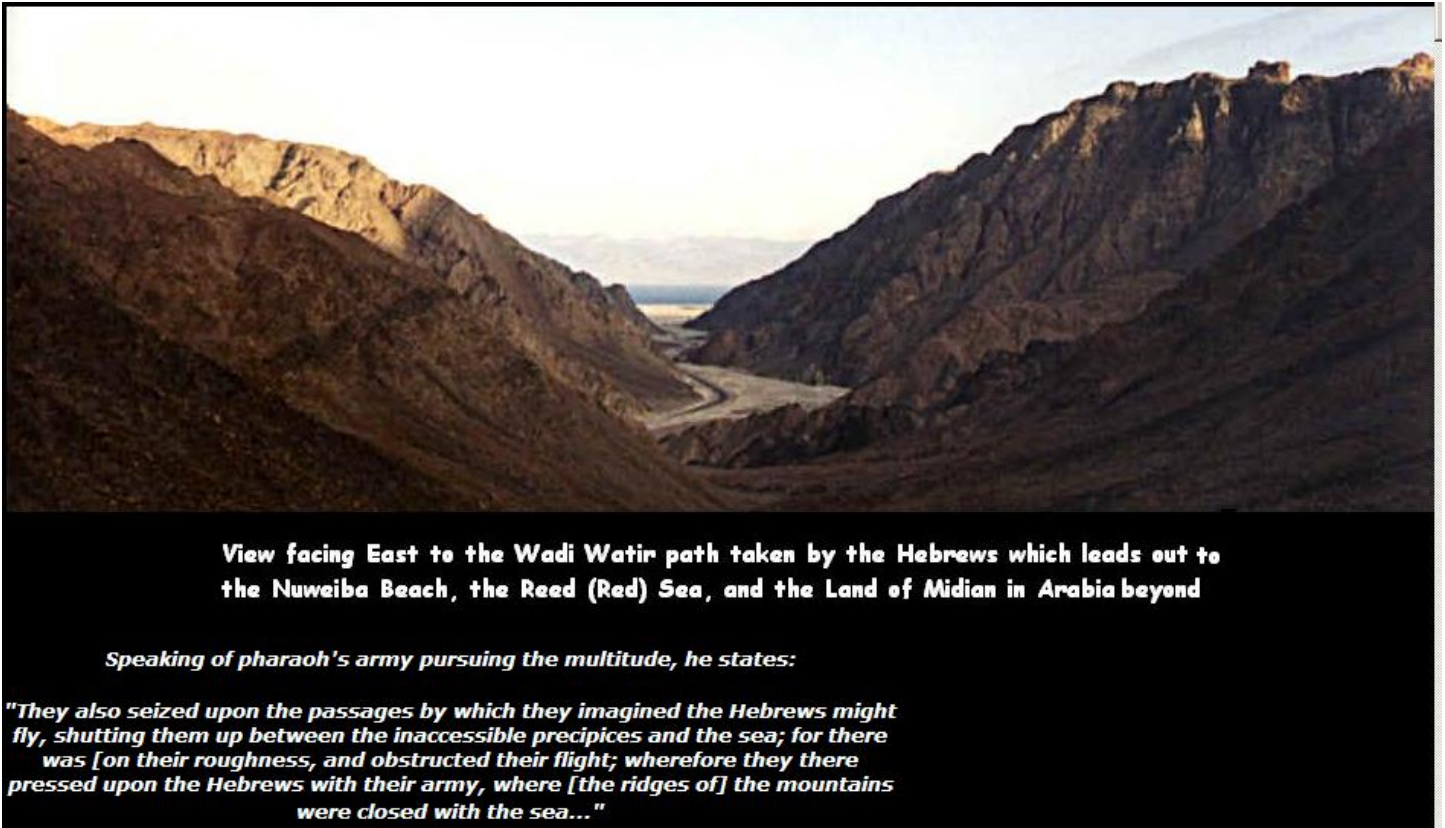


Figure 2: Looking East at Nuweiba Beach and the far side of the Red Sea which is the Midian/Arabian Side

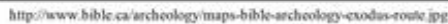


Figure 3: Ariel View Nuweiba Beach



The Sinai Peninsula is so named because it was long thought that Mt. Sinai was on the peninsula - this is now known to be false. Mt. Sinai is located in Midian of Arabia, just as the Bible said.

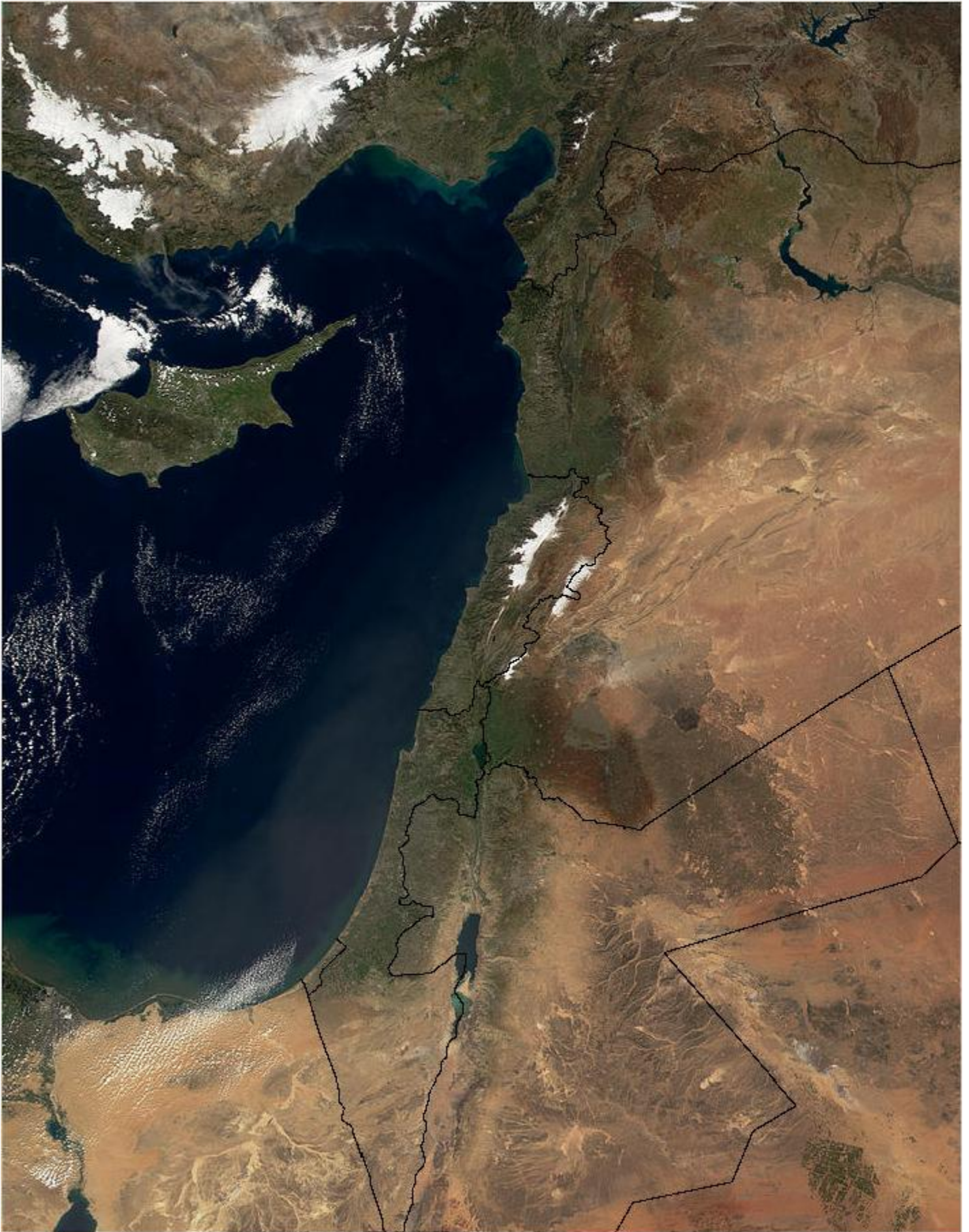
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Here is a similar map from above superimposed on a satellite picture.







For completeness sake, I included an e-sword map that show more traditional routes of the Exodus (which I don't agree with)...

