

Title:

The Exodus Route considering all Biblical Information, Part 1

Hendrik D Mouton, Department of Mechanical Engineering  
University of Cape Town



Abstract:

All biblical information, geographic information mostly with Google Earth Pro and some archaeological evidence were investigated to determine the exodus routes of Israel as accurately as possible. The plural “routes” is sometimes used because of the distinctive phases of the 40-year journey. Some archaeological evidence points to the Red Sea crossing to be in the Gulf of Aqaba and the mountain of Horeb or Sinai to be in Saudi Arabia, which are not only consistent with biblical information but is strongly suggested by the Bible. Comparing the exodus route information in different books in the Bible and with some identified Google Earth Pro locations also indicates the disobedience of Israel in the last year before entering Canaan by wanting to go their own route, but God forced them by calamities to ask for rescue and to turn around and travel along the border between Edom and Moab eventually to the east of the Jordan river. This article is divided in two parts.

Introduction:

If one searches the Internet, and many Bibles containing maps, it is clear there is no set answer for the details of the exodus route. The bigger problem is not that certain smaller places cannot be located with certainty; the problem is that major aspects of the route e.g., the Red Sea crossing location, even the particular peninsula of Mount Horeb, the location(s?) of Kadesh and the last part of the route relative to Edom, are not agreed upon. The approach was to first investigate all the biblical information to ascertain whether these major aspects can be determined, keeping distances and geography in mind. Secondly, it was to determine if archaeological evidence could help in pinpointing at least some of the places, but only if consistent with the biblical information. Much was learned and discovered in the process.

In the end, Numbers 33 was used as the base for this article, and all the deemed relevant parts from other biblical parts were inserted in between the verses of Numbers 33, so that the whole history can be seen.<sup>1</sup> The aim was to show that this proposal was consistent with all biblical information, and the hope is that other proposals will also comply with this aim.

Notes regarding maps:

The maps (Figures 1 to 3) given further on in this document show the main routes of Israel in red, the route of the 12 spies in green, Israel’s travelling in the regions of Kadesh and the Seir mountains for about 38 years due to their disobedience in purple, and the route Israel probably wanted to follow to the east of the Jordan river in the last part of the exodus route, in white. The white route through the middle of Edom is the guessed passage through Edom which Edom denied them, and the white route to the south of Edom is one that many think they actually took, but it is argued in this paper that it was not the route as instructed by God, and they eventually followed the red route between Edom and Moab to the east of the Jordan river. However, note that this last proposal has no bearing on the location of the Red Sea crossing nor that of Mount Horeb.

The names highlighted in yellow on the maps, are the names of places that could be found on Google Earth Pro, some with strong confirmation and others with weaker confirmation such as only on names on photos placed on Google Earth Pro.<sup>2</sup> The names that are not highlighted, could not be located, but their positions are reasonable guesses based on the names before and after them that could be located. It is important to indicate all given biblical locations because without doing so many published maps missed some important potential detours and insights in the route. An example of this is the possible disobedience of the Israelites after Mount Hor causing them to first travel south and then turn around north before crossing to the east of Moab.

Figure 1 gives the bigger picture, but the details of the routes will only become clear in Figures 2 and 3.



Figure 1: Where in the world

#### Important introductory findings:

Everywhere in the ESV Bible where the Red Sea is mentioned, the same Hebrew or Greek words are used as reference in the KJV+ as found on E-Sword.<sup>1,3</sup> The Red Sea is not small relative to the exodus distances travelled as can be seen in Figure 1, and the Israelites came to the Red Sea at different places at different times, but the Bible does not differentiate with another word for the Red Sea where the crossing took place. Those verses in the Bible referring to the Red Sea where the location is very clear, such as Exodus 23:31 and 1Kings 9:21, are very strongly pointing to the Gulf of Aqaba. Those where the location is not clear, are consistent with the possibility that they are referring to the Gulf of Aqaba. Exodus 10:19 declares that locusts were driven by a strong west wind into the Red Sea; this is consistent with being the Gulf of Aqaba because thereafter not a single locust was found in the whole country of Egypt, and Egypt's eastern border at that time was the Gulf of Aqaba.<sup>4,5</sup> The Great Bitter Lake was mostly dry before the Suez Canal was dug from 1859 to 1869 according to internet info from NASA, and would very unlikely be considered part of the Red Sea during the exodus.<sup>6</sup> Dr Glen Fritz confirmed this information regarding the area between the northern tip of the Gulf of Suez and the Mediterranean.<sup>7</sup> The question is thus whether the Red Sea crossing was through the proper Gulf of Suez or the Gulf of Aqaba. The peninsula between the Gulfs of Suez and Aqaba is today called the Sinai Peninsula, but this was a name given much later than the time of the writing of the Bible because of where more recent people thought the desert and mountain of Sinai should have been. Overall, strong archaeological evidence does not exist for this placement. It is significant that older maps showed that the geographers of even as late as the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries did not even know of the body of water at the Gulf of Aqaba, therefore putting Mount Horeb to the east of the Gulf of Aqaba was not even considered.<sup>8</sup>

The matter of whether the sea should be called the Red Sea as some Bibles do, is irrelevant regarding the location of the crossing because in those Bibles the Gulf of Aqaba is anyway always called the Red Sea.

Because Etham is mentioned as a place the Israelites passed through before and after the Red Sea crossing, it is assumed that Etham is the region surrounding the part of the Red Sea through which the crossing was. Etham is a word from Egyptian derivation with the meaning of "boundary of the sea".<sup>8,9</sup> The mountains on the west of the Gulf of Aqaba form a significant barrier to the sea, therefore calling this Etham does fit the evidence. Also calling the region to the east of the Red Sea crossing point Etham indicates that it was part of the larger wilderness of Shur, or Shur could have been another name for Etham. Shur means "wall",

therefore it has basically the same meaning as Etham.<sup>10</sup> Comparing Exodus 15:22 and Numbers 33:8 gives strong indication that Etham and Shur are the same wilderness.

The wilderness of Shur, as mentioned in Exodus 15:22, gives very strong indication of where the Red Sea crossing was. Israel went into the wilderness of Shur after crossing the Red Sea. Other verses in the Bible state the wilderness of Shur to be to the east of Egypt. Egypt's territory at the time of exodus, and for centuries thereafter, stretched up to the west gulf of the Red Sea that is now called the Gulf of Aqaba<sup>4,5</sup>. Therefore, the Red Sea crossing must have been at the Gulf of Aqaba. None of the other biblical verses contradicts the possibility that Shur could have been to the east of the Gulf of Aqaba and surrounding the northern end of the Gulf, therefore complying with it being the same as the wilderness of Etham.

The desert or wilderness Paran is a bit tricky to locate – it was probably adjacent to the desert Zin. Kadesh and Kadesh Barnea in the Bible were the same place, because the 12 spies were sent out only once, but from Kadesh also called Kadesh Barnea according to Numbers 13:26 and Deuteronomy 9:23. But Kadesh was in Paran and Zin according to Numbers 13:21 and 26, Numbers 20:1, Numbers 27:14, Numbers 33:36 and Deuteronomy 32:51. There is no strong indication in the Bible that there were two Kadeshes as some proposed, therefore the conclusion is made that the one and only Kadesh was on the border of the two deserts Paran and Zin, and therefore Kadesh was described as located in either of the two. Both Paran and Zin are found on Google Earth Pro, the Zin river lies to the north and west of the town Paran, and the Paran stream lies southwest of the town Paran, therefore putting the town Paran on the border. (The town Paran on Google Earth Pro can be found where Kadesh was placed in Figure 3.)

The Bible gives much information on Kadesh (or Kadesh Barnea), and because of all of this, Kadesh was put closely to the current town of Paran:

- Genesis 14:5-7 shows that the Seir mountains, El-Paran and Kadesh were probably not far apart, and Genesis 16:14 and 20:1 reveal that Kadesh already existed in the days of Abraham.
- Numbers 13:26 shows that Kadesh was in the desert Paran.
- Numbers 20:1, 27:14 and 33:36, and Deuteronomy 32:51 show that Kadesh was in the desert Zin.
- Numbers 20:14 and 16 show that Kadesh was close to, in fact on the border of Edom.
- Numbers 20:16 shows that Kadesh was a city, Israel's camp therefore should have been just outside the city.
- Deuteronomy 1:2 shows that Kadesh was close to the Seir mountain.
- Genesis 33:16 and Deuteronomy 2:4, 5 and 12 show that Esau and his descendants lived in Seir. Esau was also called Edom according to Genesis 25:30, 32:3 and 36:1 and 8. This confirms that Kadesh was close to both Edom and Seir, because the Edomites lived in Seir.

There were two Meribahs, the one at Rephidim and Horeb – called Massah and Meribah (here Moses hit the rock with his staff for water as he should), the other at Kadesh – called Meribah (here Moses should have spoken to the rock to get water, but he hit it twice with his staff).

The mountains Sinai, Horeb and the Mountain of God, are all the same mountain (Exodus 3:1, 19:11, 33:6 and 34:4). Strong evidence for the location of Mount Sinai is found in the New Testament:

- Gal 4:25 Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia; she corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children.

The argument, that in the time when Paul wrote Galatians, the Roman Empire governed the now called Sinai Peninsula as part of Arabia is incorrect. The Romans only conquered the Sinai Peninsula in 106 AD and then made it part of their province of Arabia, which is after the time of Paul's death. Sinai Peninsula was part of Egypt in the time of Hagar and her descendants the Ishmaelites, who became the Arabs, lived east and south of the Gulf of Aqaba. The Nabataeans took over the control of the trade routes in the north of the Sinai Peninsula about 100 BC from Egypt.<sup>5</sup> To refer to the southern mountainous region of the peninsula as Arabia, has no good base. There is evidence of Egyptians doing mining in that region and at Serabit al-Khadem in southwest Sinai is the remains of an Egyptian temple, called the largest of the Egyptian temples in the peninsula.<sup>11</sup> This implies there were even more Egyptian temples in that peninsula.

Eloth and Elath are the same place according to the Bible; today Eiloth and Eilath are adjacent on the northern side of the Gulf of Aqaba as part of Israel. Ezion-geber was possibly part of Etham as per the

proposal above, and later it was part of Edom, and it lied just to the east of Eloth/Elath; today it is the harbour city Aqaba in Jordan.

Biblical and geographical information:

Much more biblical information than above will be given in this section which is based on Numbers 33:1-49 but with important information from other books in the Bible inserted where applicable. This was important to get the full picture. Where necessary, clarifying explanations were added. Numbers 33 gives Moses' recount of Israel's journey just before they entered Canaan at the Jordan river. It is important to look at a few verses from Exodus before discussing Numbers 33 to clarify the setting.

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

Exo 3:2 And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed.

Exo 3:16 "Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, "I have observed you and what has been done to you in Egypt,

Exo 3:17 and I promise that I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, a land flowing with milk and honey.

Exo 3:18 And they will listen to your voice, and you and the elders of Israel shall go to the king of Egypt and say to him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us; and now, please let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.'

Exo 3:19 But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand.

Exo 3:20 So I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all the wonders that I will do in it; after that he will let you go.

Exo 3:21 And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and when you go, you shall not go empty,

Exo 3:22 but each woman shall ask of her neighbor, and any woman who lives in her house, for silver and gold jewelry, and for clothing. You shall put them on your sons and on your daughters. So you shall plunder the Egyptians."

From Exodus 3:1 can be seen that Horeb was the Mountain of God, and that it was most likely in or close to Midian. It is generally accepted that Midian was in the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>12</sup> Therefore this indicates that Mount Horeb was to the east of the Gulf of Aqaba. Israel had to ask for a 3 days' journey into the wilderness, to sacrifice at a location that is not specified in the Bible. But clearly this was not the goal in the end as indicated by God in verses 21 and 22 above and as directly spelled out in verse 17. This is important to note because some argue that Israel should have been able to get to Mount Horeb in 3 days, which is not stated in the Bible.

Figure 2 gives all the relevant routes with more names inserted in the figure to follow.

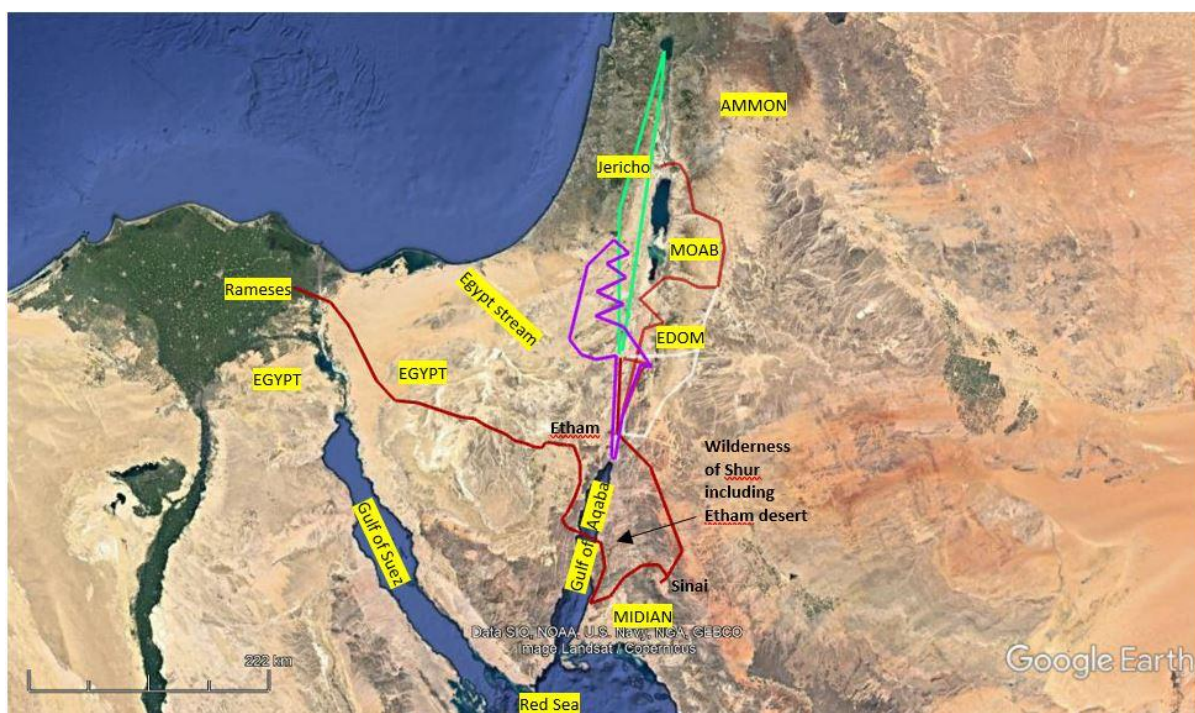


Figure 2: All the routes – Rameses to Jericho

Num 33:1 These are the stages of the people of Israel, when they went out of the land of Egypt by their companies under the leadership of Moses and Aaron.

Num 33:2 Moses wrote down their starting places, stage by stage, by command of the LORD, and these are their stages according to their starting places.

Num 33:3 They set out from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month. On the day after the Passover, the people of Israel went out triumphantly in the sight of all the Egyptians,

Num 33:4 while the Egyptians were burying all their firstborn, whom the LORD had struck down among them. On their gods also the LORD executed judgments.

Rameses was possibly Avaris in Egypt, nearby the modern Tell El-Daba.<sup>13</sup>

Num 33:5 So the people of Israel set out from Rameses and camped at Succoth.

Figure 3 indicates the route up to the 1<sup>st</sup> time of Israel at Kadesh. Succoth could have been closer to Rameses than indicated on the map because the day and night travelling of Israel is only mentioned from after Succoth (see Exodus 13:20-22).

Num 33:6 And they set out from Succoth and camped at Etham, which is on the edge of the wilderness.

The wilderness referred to in this verse can be behind or beyond them. Glen Fritz points out that “wilderness” is not necessarily a desert, and can mean a very mountainous terrain which is difficult to travel across.<sup>5ref</sup> The edge of the wilderness can therefore be the edge of the mountainous region surrounding the Gulf of Aqaba with steep slopes down to sea level. Because the wilderness of Etham is mentioned to be entered again in Num 33:8 after they have crossed the Red Sea, it is assumed that Etham is the region surrounding the sides of the Red Sea where they crossed.

Num 33:7 And they set out from Etham and turned back to Pi-hahiroth, which is east of Baal-zephon, and they camped before Migdol.

This “turning back” supports the interpretation that Israel did not follow the normal route through Etham passed Ezion-geber, but turned off to go to a specific location right next to the Red Sea. Travelling east would have taken them out of Egypt, but going here south as suggested on the maps of Figures 2 and 3, took them back into Egypt and right against the Red Sea with no natural escape route.

The name Pi-hahiroth can be linked to the meaning “mouth of gorges”.<sup>7</sup> At Nuweiba, the entrance to the beach area from inland is through a wide gorge with many branches. Baal-zephon is referring to an idol – there might have been an idol structure in that area. There was apparently more than one Migdol; they were supposedly guardian posts and sometimes even fortresses with postal pigeons who could get messages to the Pharaoh very quickly.<sup>14</sup> It makes sense because the

Pharaoh very soon got the information that Israel was trapped against the Red Sea, as he thought. Another possibility is that the mountains surrounding the beach area where they crossed, formed a wall like that of a fortress, therefore it was called Migdol.<sup>7</sup> This could have been near the current Nuweiba on the Gulf of Aqaba, because they travelled an unspecified number of days, day and night, according to Exodus 13:20-22. It was about 400 km from Rameses to Nuweiba. In 20 to 30 day and night journeys they could have covered 400 km, including a day or two camping at Succoth. Calculations below at Numbers 33:8 show that it took them about 22 days. The day and night travels for 22 days make the Red Sea crossing in the region of the Gulf of Suez too close to Rameses and thus unlikely.

Num 33:8 And they set out from before Hahiroth and passed through the midst of the sea into the wilderness, and they went a three days' journey in the wilderness of Etham and camped at Marah.

Note that it appears that the Israelites, from after crossing the Red Sea, did not travel day and night anymore, because the distance of 3 days' journey is mentioned here. Certain archaeological evidence supports the crossing to be at Nuweiba through the Gulf of Aqaba; this is given in the next section.

- Exo 14:21 Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided.

Note that this does not imply shallow water by arguing that a natural wind could only divide shallow water as some defend their view.<sup>13</sup> From the Hebrew in the KJV+ this verse can be translated as: Moses stretched out hand over sea, LORD caused sea to go, strong east wind all night made sea dry, waters were divided. This can mean that God split the sea in a short time, and then He used the east wind to dry the seafloor all night long, resulting in completely divided waters.

- Exo 14:28 The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen; of all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea, not one of them remained.
- Exo 14:29 But the people of Israel walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

Note that deep waters are implied by this description, not any shallow marsh, again making anything such as the shallow Great Bitter Lake impossible.

The following is a description in Exodus just after Israel crossed the Red Sea.

- Exo 15:22 Then Moses made Israel set out from the Red Sea, and they went into the wilderness of Shur. They went three days in the wilderness and found no water.

The latter is the wilderness of Etham according to Numbers 33:8 above. What then is this wilderness of Shur referring to? All the following Scriptures don't mention that Israel travelled into Shur after crossing the Red Sea; but they came to the deserts of Etham, Sin and Sinai, and still later to the deserts of Paran, Zin and Negeb – also see further on in Numbers 33.

- Exo 15:23 When they came to Marah, they could not drink the water of Marah because it was bitter; therefore it was named Marah.
- Exo 15:27 Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees, and they encamped there by the water.
- Exo 16:1 They set out from Elim, and all the congregation of the people of Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had departed from the land of Egypt.

This first location in the wilderness of Sin looks like the place at the Red Sea of Numbers 33:10, because there it is said that after camping at Elim, they camped at the Red Sea.

- Exo 17:1 All the congregation of the people of Israel moved on from the wilderness of Sin by stages, according to the commandment of the LORD, and camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink.
- Exo 19:1 On the third new moon after the people of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that day they came into the wilderness of Sinai.
- Exo 19:2 They set out from Rephidim and came into the wilderness of Sinai, and they encamped in the wilderness. There Israel encamped before the mountain,
- Exo 19:3 while Moses went up to God.

The wilderness of Shur lies to the east of Egypt according to numerous other Scriptures, for example Genesis 25:18, 1Samuel 15:7 and 27:8. Egypt's territory stretched eastwards up to the

Gulf of Aqaba at the time of the exodus. Combining this with Exo 15:22 implies that the Red Sea crossing must have been at the Gulf of Aqaba. The wilderness of Etham must therefore have been partly included by the wilderness of Shur, or Etham and Shur are the same.

- Gen 25:17 (These are the years of the life of Ishmael: 137 years. He breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people.)
- Gen 25:18 They settled from Havilah to Shur, which is opposite Egypt in the direction of Assyria. He settled over against all his kinsmen.

It is assumed that Havilah was to the south of Arabia. Travelling from Havilah to Assyria would require passing close to Egypt at the east of the Gulf of Aqaba through the wilderness of Shur.

- 1Sa 15:7 And Saul defeated the Amalekites from Havilah as far as Shur, which is east of Egypt.
- 1Sa 27:8 Now David and his men went up and made raids against the Geshurites, the Girzites, and the Amalekites, for these were the inhabitants of the land from of old, as far as Shur, to the land of Egypt.

The district over which the Amalekites ranged was south of Judah and probably extended into northern Arabia, therefore also complying with the location of Shur east of the Gulf of Aqaba.<sup>15</sup> There is also good timeline information in these verses in Exodus, specifically Exo 16:1 and 19:1. Israel came to the wilderness of Sin 30 days after starting the exodus. This makes it possible to approximately determine the period for them to get to the Red Sea crossing point. It was more or less: 30 – 2 (days at Pi-hahiroth) – 1 (day to cross the Red Sea) – 3 (days to get to Marah) – 2 (days to get to and stay at Elim) = 22 days. Exo 19:1 shows that Israel came to the wilderness of Sinai 60 days after starting the exodus. The KJV+ uses the words “the same day”, therefore it is assumed it is the same day when the exodus started, therefore 2 months, thus 60 days.

Num 33:9 And they set out from Marah and came to Elim; at Elim there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees, and they camped there.

Google Earth Pro shows on the east of the Gulf of Aqaba a site complying with this description of springs and palm trees.

Num 33:10 And they set out from Elim and camped by the Red Sea.

It's uncertain why Israel had to return to the Red Sea at this point, which would have made little sense if the Great Bitter Lake was meant, but would have been realistic if the Gulf of Aqaba was referred to, given the length of the gulf. It might have been that a better route existed from this point at the Red Sea to Horeb than from Elim.

Num 33:11 And they set out from the Red Sea and camped in the wilderness of Sin.

It is important to distinguish between the wildernesses of Sin and Zin; Zin was entered only later and is in another region. Manna and quails were provided to Israel as food before they came to Rephidim – see Exodus 16, specifically 16:35, and Exodus 17:1. Manna was provided all 40 years of the exodus, but not quails – see Numbers 11:4 where the Israelites complained because they had no meat.

Num 33:12 And they set out from the wilderness of Sin and camped at Dophkah.

Num 33:13 And they set out from Dophkah and camped at Alush.

Num 33:14 And they set out from Alush and camped at Rephidim, where there was no water for the people to drink.

Moses hit the rock at Horeb as commanded by God to get water. This place was called Massah and Meribah. Israel also fought here against the Amalekites and won while Moses' arms were held up by Aaron and Hur according to Exodus 17:6-16. Moses' father-in-law Jethro returned his wife Sipporah here to him, after he had sent her and his two sons to her father. This information is relevant because it indicates that Mount Sinai was close to Midian where Jethro lived and it was in the region where the Amalekites dwelled, both being supporting evidence for Mount Sinai being to the east of the Gulf of Aqaba.

Num 33:15 And they set out from Rephidim and camped in the wilderness of Sinai.

According to Exodus 19:1 and 2 Israel journeyed 60 days from Rameses to the wilderness of Sinai. Twenty-two days to the Red Sea crossing and then 38 days to Sinai, seem feasible. Many laws and regulations, including the Ten Commandments, were given here. The golden calf happened here, resulting in the smashing of the 1<sup>st</sup> set of the tables of commandments by Moses. The tabernacle, the ark, the altars and priestly garments were made, and then the 2<sup>nd</sup> set of the tables were made and the Ten Commandments written on by God. See Exodus 24:18, Exodus 25 to 30, Exodus 31:18, Exodus 32, Exodus 34:1-4, Exodus 35 to 40 and Deuteronomy 10:1-5. This

camp in the desert Sinai was at the mountain of Horeb, also called the mountain of Sinai and the Mountain of God. They stayed there for a long time according to Deuteronomy 1:6 and Numbers 10:11, consistent with all the events that happened there.

The extent of the promised land was also specified at Sinai. The Red Sea was specified as one of the boundaries.

- Exo 23:30 Little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you have increased and possess the land.
- Exo 23:31 And I will set your border from the Red Sea to the Sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness to the Euphrates, for I will give the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you shall drive them out before you.

There is no doubt that the sea in this last verse is referring to the Gulf of Aqaba. It is reasonable to think that the sea they have crossed a few weeks before, would have been called something else if it was another body of water. But it is not; the same words Yam Suph were used.

Num 33:16 And they set out from the wilderness of Sinai and camped at Kibroth-hattaavah.

According to Numbers 10:11 Israel left the wilderness of Sinai 1 year, 1 month and 5 days after starting with the exodus. They were thus 11 months and 5 days at the foot of Horeb, because they arrived at Horeb 2 months after the start according to Exodus 19:1 and 2. Between the wilderness of Sinai and Kibroth-hattaavah the Israelites complained at Taberah about their misfortunes according to Numbers 10:13 and 11:1-3. It displeased the Lord and He killed many of them with fire. At Kibroth-hattaavah the Israelites complained about meat, He then sent an abundance of quails, they handled it greedily and He again killed many of them (– see Numbers 11:4, 34 and 35).

Num 33:17 And they set out from Kibroth-hattaavah and camped at Hazeroth.

Miriam got leprosy at Hazeroth after she and Aaron criticised Moses for taking a Cushite wife and for him alone getting instructions from God – (see Numbers 12:1, 2, 10, 15 and 16).

Num 33:18 And they set out from Hazeroth and camped at Rithmah.

According to Numbers 12:16, they journeyed from Hazeroth to a place in the wilderness of Paran. It is likely that this place was Rithmah. This place also looks like Kadesh of Numbers 13:26 because Kadesh is also in the wilderness of Paran and according to Deuteronomy 1:2 it was possible to travel in 11 days from Horeb to Kadesh (note that they did not necessarily travel only 11 days; Moses is simply giving with the number of days an indication of the distance). It is unlikely that Kadesh mentioned later in Numbers 33:36 is the first time that Israel came to Kadesh given the 11 days and all the camping sites before they came to Kadesh as per Numbers 33:36. The first time at Kadesh could also have been at some of the places mentioned in Numbers 33 after Rithmah, but it could at the most only have been a few camps later, because of the possibility to travel it in 11 days.

According to Numbers 20:16 Kadesh was a city, and the reason why the camping site was called Rithmah, not Kadesh, was perhaps because they camped outside the city.





Figure 3: To the 1<sup>st</sup> time at Kadesh

#### Conclusion:

Looking at all the information in the Bible, a strong case can be made for Mount Sinai or Horeb to be in the current Saudi Arabia. Likewise, all the information points to the Gulf of Aqaba in the Red Sea to be the crossing point through the Red Sea rather than the Gulf of Suez, and even less so the Great Bitter Lake or any shallow marsh. The location of Kadesh could be determined reasonably well.

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