

*The Books of Moses:
Fact or Fiction?*

Session 9

*To Mount Sinai
and
God's Instructions*

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To Mount Sinai and God's Instructions

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'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself.

'Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'
Exodus 19:4 to 6

Introduction

In our last session we looked at the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, summarising the plagues which lead to their release by Pharaoh, then focusing on their rapid flight through Egypt to Nuweiba Beach and then crossing the Soph Sea (Gulf of Aqaba) to Baal Zephon in Midian. By the way, this area of what is today Saudi Arabia is still called Madyan, an Arabic version of Midian.

This session, which is our last one, will look at what the Bible records the Israelites doing after that, including some of their time at Mount Sinai. Then we will see if there are any residual archeological artifacts that would support the Biblical account.

Liberation in Midian

The last part of Moses' song, rejoicing in their liberation, shows us one of the ultimate goals:

“You in Your mercy have led forth the people whom You have redeemed; you have guided them in Your strength to Your holy habitation. The people will hear and be afraid; sorrow will take hold of the inhabitants of Philistia. Then the chiefs of Edom will be dismayed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling will take hold of them; all the inhabitants of Canaan will melt away. Fear and dread will fall on them; by the greatness of Your arm they will be as still as a stone, until Your people pass over, O Jehovah, until the people pass over whom You have purchased.

“You will bring them in and plant them in the mountain of Your inheritance, in the place, O Jehovah, which You have made for Your own dwelling, the

sanctuary, O Jehovah, which Your hands have established.

“Jehovah shall reign forever and ever. For the horses of Pharaoh went with his chariots and his horsemen into the sea, and Jehovah brought back the waters of the sea upon them. But the children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea.” Exodus 15:13 to 19

So Jehovah will take them to His sanctuary, and the inhabitants of the Promised Land will ‘melt away’.

Journeys in Midian

But first Jehovah needs to train them and teach them how to live properly and how to become a nation. During their time as slaves in Egypt, they had forgotten nearly everything that Abraham and their ancestors knew. And so the training begins:

So Moses brought Israel from the Soph 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. Therefore the name of it was called Marah. And the people complained against Moses, saying, “What shall we drink?”

So he cried out to Jehovah, and Jehovah showed him a tree; and when he cast it into the waters, the waters were made sweet. Exodus 15:22 to 25

The Wilderness of Shur was directly east of Baal Zephon. God took them there because they still needed to learn that they could trust Jehovah to look after them. As we see above, despite all the miracles that He had already done for them, they still had very little trust. Purifying the water for them at Marah was another example of a

miracle that God did to provide for them. Marah is perhaps somewhere near Alsharaf, about 28.928N 35.179E (See Figure 1). This location is roughly 43 kilometers from where they came into Midian, and so was an easy three day walk. Now that they are not being pursued by the Egyptian army, they no longer need to travel at record-breaking speeds.



Figure 1: Possible Route in red from Baal Zephon to Marah after crossing the Soph Sea (Gulf of Aqaba).

And what did Jehovah want them to do?

There He made a statute and a judgement for them. And there He tested them, and said, “If you diligently heed the voice of Jehovah your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am Jehovah who

heals you.”¹ Exodus 15:25 & 26

He gave them commandments and statutes, and told them that if they would obey Him, He would keep them healthy. Seems like a good reward, but what were these commandments and statutes? Was God asking too much from them? We will be able to answer that better later when we learn what these commandments and statues were. But what did they do next?

Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees; so they camped there by the waters. And they journeyed from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came to the Wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second new moon after they departed from the land of Egypt. Exodus 15:27 & 16:1

The Elim Oasis is almost certainly located at 28.3973N 34.7482E, at the bottom of Figure 2 and also in Figure 3.

This oasis, just inland from Port Mosque, Magna, is known throughout this region as the Twelve Wells and the Springs of Moses (Figure 4). They would likely have passed through Al Bad on the way, which was the largest Midianite town and is locally claimed to have been the hometown of Jethro and Zipporah, Moses' wife. The locals also claim that Moses lived in the caves during his forty years with them and/or Jethro's tomb is carved into the cliffs to the southwest of the town (Figure 5).² Numbers 33:10 says they also camped

¹ יְהוָה רָפָאָךְ: *Jehovah Rapha* in Hebrew.

² Though some archeologists think that these caves were made, or extensively modified, by the Naboteans about 100CE. Yet others think that the Elim Oasis may be at Al Bad (Cornuke and Williams, in *The Gold of Exodus*, pg 232-3. Yet others select the small oasis at 28.569N 34.833E, marked Alt-Oasis in Figure 2. However, this last oasis is too small to

beside the Soph Sea, which was just a short distance west of the Elim Oasis, as seen in Figure 3.



Figure 2: Possible Route to Elim, via Al Bad (in red). The green is their route from Al Bad to Mount Sinai.

support 2.5 million people and their stock, and the wadi is too narrow to provide camping space for them.



Figure 3: Probable Elim Oasis, known locally as the Wells of Moses. The Soph Sea (Gulf of Aqaba) can be seen to the north west.



Figure 4: One of the Twelve Wells of Moses at 'Elim'.



Figure 5: Caves to the south-west of Al Bad, locally claimed to have been dwelt in by Moses and his family when they lived in Midian.

The Israelites left Goshen on the fifteenth day of the first new moon, so they arrived at the Wilderness of Sin one month later. This is likely the wilderness to the north-east of Al Bad. As these locations are known, one can see that they have only travelled about one hundred and fifty kilometers in the three weeks since they crossed the Soph Sea.

The Sabbath Test

Then Jehovah tests the people again:

Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. And the children of Israel said to them, “Oh, that we had died by the hand of Jehovah in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat and when we ate bread to the

full! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.”

Then Jehovah said to Moses, “Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you. And the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in My Instructions or not.

Exo 16:5 “And it shall be on the sixth day that they shall prepare what they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.”

And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, “I have heard the complaints of the children of Israel. Speak to them, saying, ‘Between the evenings you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. And you shall know that I am Jehovah your God.’”

So it was that quails came up at evening and covered the camp, and in the morning the dew lay all around the camp. And when the layer of dew lifted, there, on the surface of the wilderness, was thin flakes, as thin as hoarfrost³ on the land. So when the children of Israel saw it, they said to one another, “Manna?”⁴ for they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, “This is the bread which Jehovah has given to you to eat.”⁵

And so it was, on the sixth day, that they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each one. And all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses.

Then he said to them, “This is what Jehovah has said: ‘Tomorrow is a Sabbath observance, a holy Sabbath to

³ Hoarfrost is a beautiful type of frost that can form largish flakes that protrude from the objects they form on.

⁴ *Manna* מַנָּהּ is Hebrew for “What is it?”

⁵ John 6:31, 1 Cor 10:2. Their livestock likely also ate manna each morning before it disappeared.

Jehovah. Bake today what you will bake, and cook what you will cook; and lay up for yourselves all that remains, to be kept until morning.”

So they laid it up until morning, as Moses commanded; and it did not stink, nor were there any worms in it. Then Moses said, “Eat that today, for today is a Sabbath to Jehovah; today you will not find it in the field. Exodus 16:2 to 5 and 11 to 15 and 22 to 25

So this test was to see if they would obey God's Sabbath commandment: to rest from their work on the Sabbath and have fellowship with Jehovah. As we saw in Session 3, God's Sabbath was instituted at the end of the six days of Creation, and is the first Holy Day that God Instructed us to keep. We have also shown how they may have rested on their weekly Sabbath during their flight through Egypt.

They soon learned to gather the correct amounts of manna on the various days. So food was no longer a problem for them. And they followed this routine for forty years.

The Water Test

But very soon, they were tested again by water:

Then all the congregation of the children of Israel set out on their journey from the Wilderness of Sin, according to the mouth of Jehovah, and camped in Rephidim;⁶ but there was no water for the people to drink. Therefore the people contended with Moses, and said, “Give us water, that we may drink.” And Moses said to them, “Why do you contend with me? Why do you tempt Jehovah?”

⁶ Hebrew for *Resting Place*

And the people thirsted there for water, and the people complained against Moses, and said, “Why is it you have brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?”

So Moses cried out to Jehovah, saying, “What shall I do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me!” Exodus 17:1 to 4

Once again, Jehovah had His solution ready:

And Jehovah said to Moses, “Go on before the people, and take with you some of the elders of Israel. Also take in your hand your rod with which you struck the river, and go. Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in the Desert,⁷ and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink.” And so Moses did in the sight of the elders of Israel.⁸ Exodus 17:5 & 6

We get more detail on this event in the Psalms:

He split the rock in the wilderness, and gave abundant drink from the depths. He brought streams out of the rock, and caused water to run down like rivers. Psalm 78:15 & 16

Jim and Penny Caldwell, in *The God of the Mountain*, recount their finding what is almost certainly this very split rock from which the waters flowed (pages 362-9). This Split Rock is located at 28.7267N 35.2363E. Figure 6 shows their proposed route from Al Bad to the Split Rock and Figure 7 shows what is likely this Rock.

⁷ The Hebrew is **חֲרֹב** *Choreb*, which literally means desert.

⁸ 1 Cor 10:1-4

The Israelites continue to have challenges thrown at them, as the Bible account records. They are attacked by Amalakites, and Moses sets up a hierarchy of Judges to settle their many disputes. But they are finally led to the Mountain where Moses saw the Burning Bush.

Arrival at Mt Sinai

On the third new moon after the children of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that day, they came to the Wilderness of Sinai. For they had departed from Rephidim, had come to the Wilderness of Sinai, and camped in the wilderness. So Israel camped there before the mountain. Exodus 19:1 & 2

To reach the east side of Mount Sinai, which is locally called Jebel Maqla, they had to journey north from Rephidim, then east and finally south. They could not travel directly east as this mountain range presents a steep escarpment along its western flank at this point. Their likely path is shown in green in Figure 8, going northwest from Split Rock back to Marah and then east and south to Mount Sinia.

And it is now the third new moon. Which means they have taken about forty-five days to travel to a destination they could have reached from the Baal Zephon beach in three days (Remember that Moses told Pharaoh they wanted to travel three days into the wilderness to worship Jehovah? This location is three days travel outside of Egyptian territory.) They took this long for two reasons: **1:** Jehovah was preparing them for His presentation of His Instructions, both as individuals and as a nation. And **2:** He wanted to present this to them on His next Annual Holy Day. In this case the Holy Day was Pentecost, which is always the fiftieth day after the Wave Offering, which is the day after the weekly Sabbath during the

Feast of Unleavened Bread (Leviticus 23). By the time they had spent several days camped near the base of Mount Sinai, the Day of Pentecost arrived.⁹ This timing process links Pentecost, also called the First-Fruits, to the Passover.¹⁰

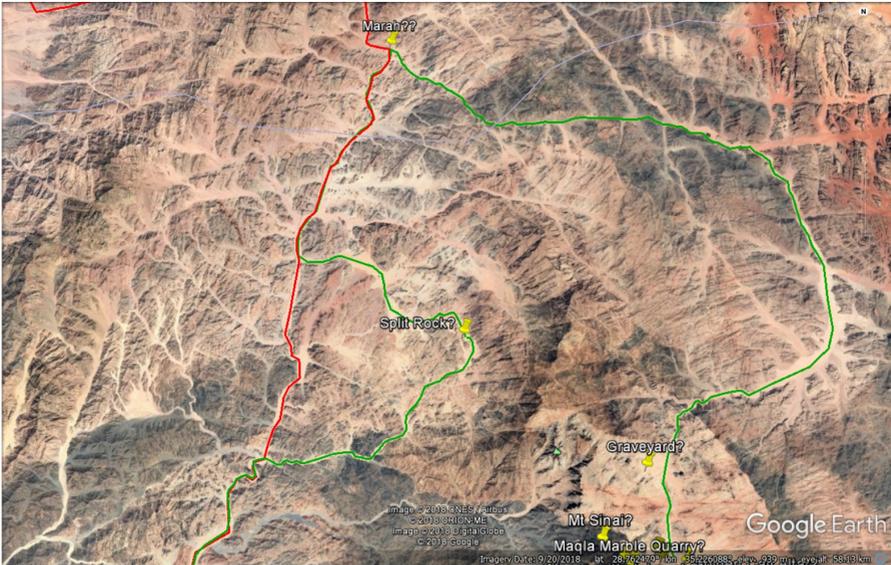


Figure 8: Proposed Route from Rephidim (near Split Rock) to Mount Sinai (Jebel Maqla), following major Wadis.

Now, let us look at some of the things that the Bible says happened

⁹ Note however that the Bible does not directly state that it was the Day of Pentecost when the Ten Words were given. But it is totally consistent with the Bible that it was on that day, and it is widely accepted by Jews that this happened on Pentecost.

¹⁰ This Holy Day is also called the Feast of Weeks, and the Firstfruits. See Leviticus 23:1-22 for more details. It is also the same Holy Day on which Jehovah gave the Holy Spirit to the Christian church, as can be seen in Acts 2:1 to 43. Our article *God’s Holy Days for Christians* makes all of this easier to understand.

there, and then see if there is any evidence which might confirm that this is the correct location.

Jehovah God at Mt Sinai

First, Moses approaches God and is given this message for the Israelites:

And Moses went up to God, and Jehovah called to him from the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: ‘You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to Myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’¹¹ These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.”
Exodus 19:3 to 6

So we see that God has a special plan for Israel. They are not to be just another nation, but they are to be holy and act as God’s priests. But to bear God’s message to the other nations, they first need to be absolutely clear on what that message is. Jehovah does this by speaking the Ten Words, also known as the Ten Commandments, directly to them. This way there can be no doubt whatsoever that these Instructions are from God:

Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the shophar was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp

¹¹ This promise made to Israel will finally be fulfilled as in Rev 1:6 and 5:10.

trembled.

And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain.

Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because Jehovah descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. And when the blast of the shophar sounded long and became loud and then louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by voice.

Then Jehovah came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain. Exodus 19:16 to 20

And God spoke all these words, saying:

“I am Jehovah your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

“You shall have no other gods before Me.¹²

“You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them nor serve them, for I, Jehovah your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me,¹³ but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

“You shall not lift up the Name of Jehovah your God in a worthless way, for Jehovah will not leave anyone who lifts up His Name in a worthless way unpunished.

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of Jehovah your God. You shall do no

¹² Luke 4:8

¹³ Gal 5:20

work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your livestock, nor your stranger who is within your gates.

“For in six days Jehovah made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore Jehovah blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it.¹⁴

“Honour your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which Jehovah your God is giving you.¹⁵

“You shall not murder.

“You shall not commit adultery.

“You shall not steal.

“You shall not testify a false witness against your neighbour.¹⁶

“You shall not covet your neighbour’s house; you shall not covet your neighbour’s wife, his male servant, his female servant, his ox, his donkey, or anything that is your neighbour’s.”¹⁷ Exodus 20:1 to 17

And so we have the underlying basics of God’s Instructions. As God’s Son Jeshua tells us, all of God’s Instructions are based on two principles:

Then one of them who knew the Instructions asked, testing Him, “Teacher, which is *the* great commandment in the Instructions?”

Jeshua said to him, “‘You shall love Jehovah your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind.’ This is the first

¹⁴ Gen 1:1-2:3, Exo 31:12-17, Mat 12:8, Heb 4:1-11

¹⁵ Deu 5:16, Mat 15:4, Mark 7:10, Eph 6:2-3

¹⁶ Mat 19:18-19, Mark 10:19, Luke 18:20, Rom 13:9

¹⁷ Jac 2:11, Rom 7:7, Rom 13:9

and greatest commandment.

“And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang the Instructions and the Prophets.” Matthew 22:35 to 40

And how did the people respond? Were they overjoyed to have Jehovah God, their Creator and Saviour, speak to them?

And all the people observed the thunderings, the flashes of lightning, the sound of the shophar, and the mountain smoking; and the people saw it, they trembled and they stood a long way off. Then they said to Moses, “You speak with us, and we will hear; but do not let God speak with us, lest we die.”

And Moses said to the people, “Do not be afraid; for God has come to test you, that His fear may be on your faces, so that you may not sin.”

So the people stood a long way off, but Moses drew near the thick darkness where God was. Exodus 20:18 to 21

So instead of rejoicing, they were filled with terror. Jehovah then gave many of His specific laws to Moses to pass on to them:

So Moses came and told the people all the words of Jehovah and all the judgements. And all the people answered with one voice and said, “All the words which Jehovah has said we will do.”

And Moses wrote all the words of Jehovah. And he rose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel.

Then he sent young men of the children of Israel, who

offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to Jehovah. And Moses took half the blood and put it in basins, and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar.

Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that Jehovah has said we will do, and be obedient."

And Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, "Behold, the blood of the covenant which Jehovah has made with you according to all these words." Exodus 24:3 to 8

Then Jehovah told Moses to come up the mountain again, and He would personally prepare two tablets of stone and write the Instructions on them:

Then Jehovah said to Moses, "Come up to Me on the mountain and be there; and I will give you tablets of stone, and the Instructions and commandments which I have written, that you may teach them."

So Moses arose with his assistant Jehoshua, and Moses went up to the mountain of God.

And he said to the elders, "Wait here for us until we come back to you. Indeed Aaron and Hur are with you. If any man has a difficulty, let him go to them."

Then Moses went up into the mountain, and a cloud covered the mountain.

So Moses went into the midst of the cloud and went up into the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights. Exo 24:12 to 15 & 18

During that time Jehovah told Moses he was to build an ark, a booth (and Sanctuary) to house it and various other holy items to be used in worshipping Jehovah.

And when He had finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai, He gave Moses two tablets of the Testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God. Exodus 31:18

A Faithless People

But the people proved to be unable to remain faithful for even forty days:

Now when the people saw that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, the people gathered together to Aaron, and said to him, "Come, make us gods that shall go before us; for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him."

And Aaron said to them, "Break off the golden earrings which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me."

So all the people broke off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them to Aaron. And he received the gold from their hand, and he fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a moulded calf. Then they said, "This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!"

So when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, "Tomorrow is a feast to Jehovah." Exodus 32:1 to 5

And so they reduced Jehovah, the Creator of our entire universe, to an inert lump of gold shaped like an ox.

And Moses turned and went down from the mountain,

and the two tablets of the Testimony were in his hand. The tablets were written on both sides; on the one side and on the other they were written. Now the tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God engraved on the tablets.

And when Jehoshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses, “There is a noise of war in the camp.”

But he said: “It is not the voice of those who shout in victory, nor is it the voice of those who cry out in defeat, but the voice of those who sing that I hear.”

So it was, as soon as he came near the camp, that he saw the calf and the dancing. So Moses’ anger became hot, and he cast the tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain.

Then he took the calf which they had made, burned it in the fire, and ground it to powder; and he scattered it on the water and made the children of Israel drink it. Exodus 32:15 to 20

Thus we lost the tablets that had been made by God and written with His finger. Some people claim, likely correctly, that this writing by God was done in the world’s first fully phonetic script, which God taught to Moses.¹⁸ Such a script makes literacy possible for the bulk of the people, for the earlier complex hieroglyphics remained the domain of the elite.

But even though Moses had destroyed their idol, the trouble in the camp was still out of control:

Now when Moses saw that the people were still unrestrained, for Aaron had not restrained them, to their shame among those who stood against them, then Moses

¹⁸ See *The Writing of God*, by Miles Jones

stood in the entrance of the camp, and said, "Whoever is on Jehovah's side, come to me." And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to him.

And he said to them, "Thus says Jehovah God of Israel: 'Let every man put his sword on his side, and go in and out from entrance to entrance throughout the camp, and let every man kill his brother, every man his companion, and every man his neighbour.'"

So the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And about three thousand men of the people fell that day. Exodus 32:25 to 28

The three thousand who died were not killed randomly. They were the ones who were leading the riot against Jehovah and Moses, and were angry that Moses had destroyed their 'god'. They were then buried in a large graveyard outside their camp, according to Israelite custom. Moses later had to make his own tablets and take them up to God, where God carved in the Ten Words into them and Moses wrote down the rest of the Covenant under God's guidance (Exodus 34).

Evidence for Jebel Maqla as Mount Sinai

Let us see if there is any evidence to support the idea that this is indeed the real Mount Sinai. And what evidence should we look for? After all, these things happened a bit over three and a half thousand years ago. In this regard, we have two things in our favour. First, this area is very dry, so it would take a long time for things to be washed away, and the sparse vegetation would not tend to cover over what was there. The second factor is related to this one: the desert conditions mean that this has always been an area that is very sparsely populated, so there have been few people there to interfere with what would have been left behind when the Israelites moved on. First, let us look at an overview of the proposed Mount Sinai site in Figure 9, with their route to it in green.



Figure 9: Overview of Mt. Sinai/Jebel Maqla area from the south-east, with various significant sites marked.

I, and many others, believe that Jebel Maqla, which means Quarry Mountain, is actually Mount Sinai.¹⁹ Its highest peak is 2368 meters and is at 28.5964N 35.3342E. This mountain is certainly an interesting one, as it is capped by black basalt, giving it a striking and imposing look. Some people have claimed that the black cap is due to God's fire burning the mountain, but that is at least mostly incorrect, as the band of basalt can be seen across several adjacent peaks in Google Earth.

¹⁹ Including Lennart Moller, Jim and Penny Caldwell, Glen Fritz, Sung Hak Kim and Ron Wyatt. A useful summary of much of this topic is available online at https://www.reddit.com/r/C_S_T/comments/83ls97/a_suppression_of_exodus_evidence/.

Some people claim that Mount Sinai is Jebel Lawz, which is 8.9 km (5.5 mi) to the north-west of Jebel Maqla. That claim is based almost entirely on the fact that it is a taller peak. But as we will see, it lacks all of the supporting archaeological finds on and before Jebel Maqla.

Jebel Maqla's southern peak, at 28.5838N 35.3486E and 2,284 m, is likely where Moses went to talk with God. The difference in altitude from it to the valley on its east is about 775 meters and 3.3 km horizontally, which again makes it quite imposing. The local Bedouin also believe this is Mount Sinai, and call it the Mountain of God.

Figures 10 and 11 give views up towards the mountain top from the valley, and from the top back into the valley. These photos give you a feel for how spectacular this location was.



Figure 10: View from Wadi up to Mt Sinai/Jebel Maqla



Figure 11: View down into Wadi from Mt Sinai

The valley is itself one of the requirements of Mount Sinai. The valley must be close enough, large enough and have a clear view of the mountain to fit with the needs of the Israelites and make it a good place to worship Jehovah. This long valley/wadi and its eastern flanks make a perfect assembly place. And it also contains the remains of many circular, low stone walls which could have been used to contain stock or strengthen the bottom edges of their tents, as shown in Figure 12.



Figure 12: Some of the numerous stone circles in the valley east of Jebel Maqla/Mt. Sinai. They were likely used to reinforce the people's tents and also as livestock enclosures. From *The Exodus Case*.

There are various other features and artifacts which also support this scenario. First, they would need a reliable and large water supply. This was alluded to when Moses threw the powdered idol onto the water. There are traces of a large brook which sometimes still flows down this mountain from springs higher up. One of the curious features of the mountain is an ancient almond tree growing on a spring between rocks high on one of the peaks of Jebel Maqla (Figure 9). This spring would have helped feed the brook (Figure 13).

The mountain also has a couple of flattish areas where Moses and the elders could have met with God. One of them is at 28.5853N 35.35E.

What would remain of the altar and pillars that Moses built? Surprisingly, there appears to be the remnants of a stone enclosure that could have been used to lead the sacrificial animals to the altar. It can be seen at 28.5848N 35.3785E. And near it is what could be

the last remains of the altar that Moses used. A short distance from that is the remains of hewn marble pillars. The white marble was cut further up on the mountain in a quarry located at 28.5806N 35.3546E, which is why it has been called Quarry Mountain. There would have been many expert stone masons among these Israelites, who had been trained to build cities for the Egyptians. These items can be seen in Figures 14 to 17. There is no evidence that anything apart from these pillars was ever quarried from this remote mountain.



Figure 13: Water Pool after a rainstorm near Jebel Maqla.

The Saudi government has tried to both protect these items and prevent people from seeing them by erecting a chain link fence around the mountain, setting up a sign which declares it as a protected archeological site and guarding it with armed soldiers. As these people were Israelites, it is possible that the Saudis do not want Israelis (and Christians) to know this is the real Mount Sinai and then claim this land is holy to them and demand access to it.



Figure 14: 'Moses' Altar', looking towards Mt Sinai.



Figure 15: The Holding Pens, looking back into the valley. From *The Exodus Case*.



Figure 16: Artist's Impression of Yards, Altar and Pillars. From *The Exodus Case*.



Figure 17: Remnants of the marble Pillars at Mt. Sinai.

There is also what appears to be the remains of the Golden Calf altar, which looks like it was placed on the top of a cluster of large boulders in the wadi/valley. This would make it visible to many

people in the valley at once. It is located at 28.5814N 35.3961E. Today the idol is gone, as the Bible states, but the boulders remain, many of which are crudely carved with images of Egyptian sacred oxen. This may have been done between the time that Moses destroyed their golden calf and the three thousand rebels were killed. The Saudis have also erected a fence around this area. These items are shown in Figures 18 to 20.



Figure 18: Mound of rocks on which the Golden Calf may have been placed.

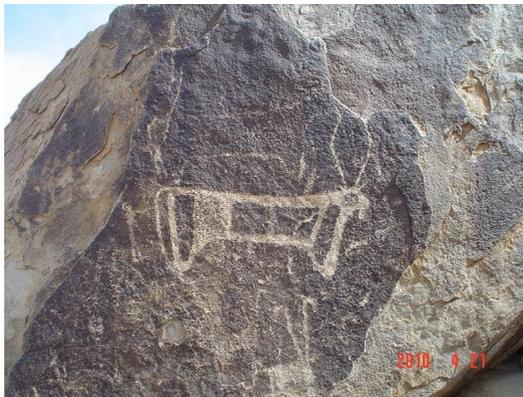


Figure 19: Egyptian style sacred cow carving in Mt. Sinai enclosure.



Figure 20: Other sacred cow carvings on these rocks.

And what about the graveyard for the rebels? There is a large graveyard to the north of the Israelite camp, which still has many standing stones remaining in it, which would have been erected as grave markers, as shown in Figure 21. The graveyard is located at 28.641N 35.37E. As this period of occupation by the Israelites is the only time this area had more than a very sparse population, there is no other reason for a large graveyard here.

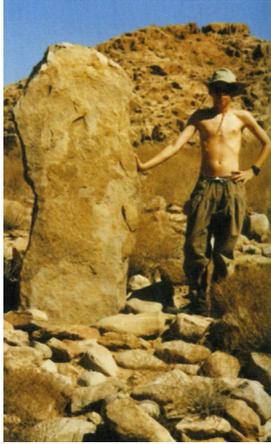


Figure 21: Graveyard standing stone near Jebel Maqla/Mt Sinai

In addition to these items, there is evidence of early Hebrew writing carved into the rocks, as well as at least one of God's seven-branched menorahs, shown in Figures 22 and 23.



Figure 22: Proto-Hebrew lettering and camel drawings on a rock near Jebel Maqla/Mt Sinai. (Sung Hak Kim)



Figure 23: Israelite menorah carved into Midian rock. (Sung Hak Kim)

Jabal Mousa and Sinai Peninsula

All of these locations are selected on the basis that Midian is on the east coast of the Gulf of Aqaba, which is also the Soph Sea where they crossed the Sea miraculously. Many people believe that Mount Sinai is located between the Gulfs of Suez and Aqaba. It's Egyptian name is Jabal Mousa, meaning Mountain of Moses, and is located at 28.539N 33.975E. This belief is why the Sinai Peninsula was eventually given that name.

But there are many problems with this belief. The most compelling problem is that this area is not—and never has been—Midian land. As we discussed in the last session, during the time of the Exodus, this area was territory that was under the control of the Egyptians. It was not land that the Israelites could safely flee to, it was only land they would flee through. Nor was it where Moses had seen the burning bush and been told that he would bring the Israelites back to that mountain to worship Jehovah. Nor is there a feasible path and Soph Sea crossing between Rameses to Jabal Mousa that they could have used which fits the Biblical account. It is also doubtful that the valleys near this mountain were close enough and large enough for the great multitude of Israelites to fit into them and serve God. Jabal Mousa was selected and named by Constantine's mother, who though she may have been trying to find the real locations of many Biblical events, was often misled. Though other mountains in the Sinai peninsula have also been proposed as the 'real Mt Sinai', they all have these fatal problems.

Various arguments against Mt Sinai being on the east side of the Gulf of Aqaba are made in the following website, which also contributed some of the illustrations in this presentation:

<https://againstjebelallawz.wordpress.com/jebel-al-lawz/>

Rohl's book *Exodus, Myth or History* presents similar arguments. However, most of their arguments are based on mistranslations of the

Bible and the rest on various misinterpretations. I remain convinced that the arguments in favour of Jebel Maqla as Mount Sinai are valid.

Were God's Instructions Known Before Mount Sinai?

In Genesis 26:5 Jehovah tells us that He has blessed Abraham and his descendants because he “listened to My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My instructions.”²⁰ Jethro, as a Midianite descendent of Abraham (Gen 25:1-6) and a priest, almost certainly was taught the same commandments, statutes, and Instructions and then taught them to Moses during the forty years he was with him.

What does Moses say about this?

And Moses said to his father-in-law, “Because the people come to me to inquire of God. When they have a difficulty, they come to me, and I judge between one and another; and I make known the statutes of God and His Instructions.” Exodus 18:15 & 16

Note carefully that Moses made this statement **before** they arrived at Mount Sinai. So it is clear that much of what was given at Mount Sinai was not new. But it was given to them in a spectacular manner, and the Ten Words came directly from God's mouth, so they had to acknowledge that it came from God and perhaps be more likely to follow Jehovah's Instructions.

²⁰ *Torah* תּוֹרָה in the Hebrew.

Conclusion

The Bible presents a clear and consistent account of what happened after they crossed the Soph Sea. This is reasonable, as it appears to be an account based on the testimony of Moses, who was a major participant in all of these events.

There also seems to be substantial evidence to support the claim that Mount Sinai is actually Jebel Maqla, and the Mount Sinai events outlined in the Bible really occurred there.

Thanks for participating in the Books of Moses series. I hope that every one of us have gained a better understanding of what the Bible claims happened, and of what evidence there is, and is not, in the world that would, or would not, substantiate such claims.

Postscript

The Bible translation used throughout is available free online at www.chcpublications.net. I believe it is the most accurate and readable English translation currently available.

Bruce Armstrong
M App Sci

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Books of Moses: Fact or Fiction Series

Origin of the Universe and Our Earth—How did Earth and our Universe Originate? Both the Biblical and Big Bang Models are presented. Evidence for and against the models is also presented.

Origin of Life—How did Life Originate on Earth? Both the Biblical Special Creation and Evolutionary Neo-Darwinian Models are presented. The Biblical Model covers the creation of plants and aquatic and flying organisms, while the Evolutionary model investigates the Origin of the First Cell. Evidence for and against the models is also presented.

Mankind and Evolution of Life—How did complex life, including humans, originate on Earth? Both the Biblical and Evolutionary Models are presented. The Biblical Model covers the creation of land animals and the first man and woman, while the Evolutionary model investigates what is required for their First Cell to evolve into complex organisms. Evidence for and against the models is presented.

The Fall of Creation—What is the Fall of Creation on Earth, and what was its Impact? The Biblical Account is presented, including sin, death and the banishing of Adam and Chavvah (Eve) from the Garden of Eden. Evidence for and against this account is presented.

The Great Flood, Part 1—Was there a Great Flood during Noah's life? The Biblical Account explains why there was a Great Flood, Noah's role in it and the extent of the Flood. This session ends with Noah and the animals leaving the Ark after the Flood.

The Great Flood, Part 2—What events followed the Great Flood during Noah's life? Where did the Ark land? It also looks at many of the objections to the Great Flood and shows evidence that it was a real event which shaped the world we live in.

Shinar, Nimrod and the Tower of Babel—What did mankind do after the Flood? Where is the Plain of Shinar and where was Nimrod's first Kingdom, including the location of the Tower of Babel? Why did God intervene and create a myriad of new Languages?

The Exodus from Egypt—Historical and Scientific information relating to the Israelites' Exodus from Egypt is presented, analysing several proposed pathways to Midian, including crossing the Soph (Red) Sea.

To Mount Sinai and God's Instructions—After crossing the Soph Sea, where did the Israelites go until their arrival at Mount Sinai, and where is this mountain? This article includes Jehovah God giving them His Instructions there. Historical and Geographical information is presented, some of it new and previously unpublished.

The Holy Bible CHCoG Translation—From the original Hebrew and Aramaic. It is accurate and readable, giving you a clear understanding of God's message.