

## Did the crossing of the Red Sea actually take place?

**The Bible gives an amazing account of Moses lifting up his staff and the Red Sea being divided so that the people of Israel walked through on dry land, with the water standing up like walls on each side of them. After they crossed, and as the pursuing Egyptian army passed along the corridor through the sea, the waters came crashing down, drowning everyone.**

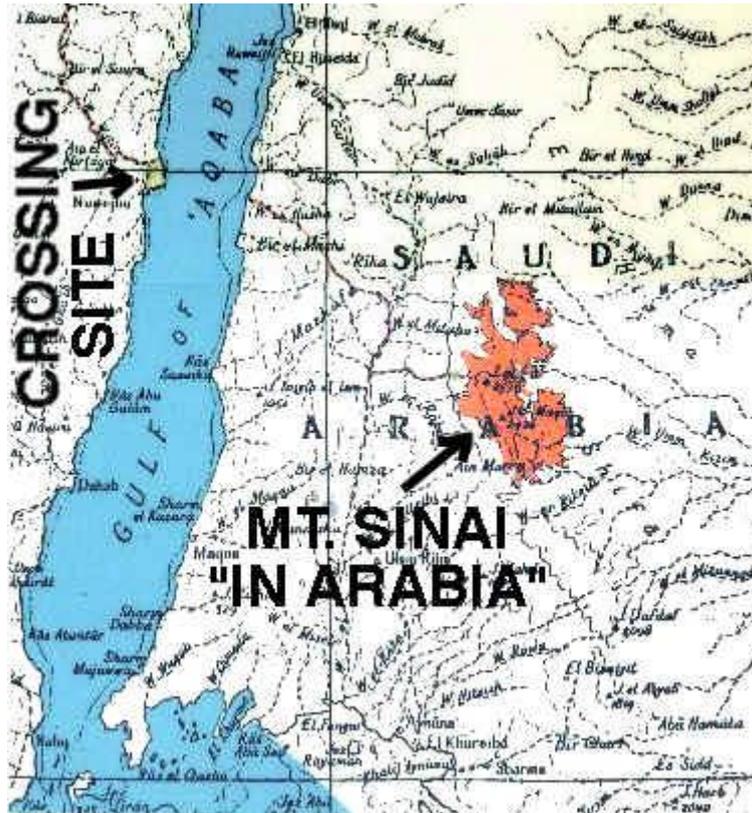
**Such is the account, but the real question is whether it is actually true, or whether it is merely some legend, embellished over the centuries. Is there any independent evidence outside of the Bible's own record that this really did happen? Have any remains ever been found of a slaughtered Egyptian army lying on some sea bed?**

The first question to ask is where we should hunt for such archaeological remains. People who doubt the biblical account have tended to look at a map of the Middle East and draw their own conclusions as to what route the fleeing Israelites took. The simplest was to draw the shortest way between Egypt and what was to become the land of Israel, and to look for water crossing sites that could be the historical place where an event occurred, that with time developed into the legend of the supernatural parting of the Red Sea.

Many looked to marshes near the top of the Gulf of Suez. The trouble is that this does not fit in with the biblical account, which tells of the Israelites heading not for Canaan initially, but to Mount Horeb, or Sinai. Also, the shallow marshes are an unlikely place to drown an Egyptian army, as they could have gone around them quicker than they could have gone through them. Moreover, the water is not very deep. From this perspective, the Israelites merely waded through shallow water while the tide was out, on their way to the Promised Land. The pursuing Egyptians would have then got their chariots stuck as the tide came in. No archaeological evidence has been ever been found of any sunken Egyptian army in this area.

However, if the biblical account is taken seriously then another body of water fits the descriptions far better, and this is the Gulf of Aqaba, part of the Red Sea. This is on route to where many think Mount Sinai is, and not to where Canaan was. The Bible tells us that God had commanded them initially not to go to Canaan, but to return to the mountain where God had spoken to Moses out of the burning bush and to worship him there (Exodus 3:12).

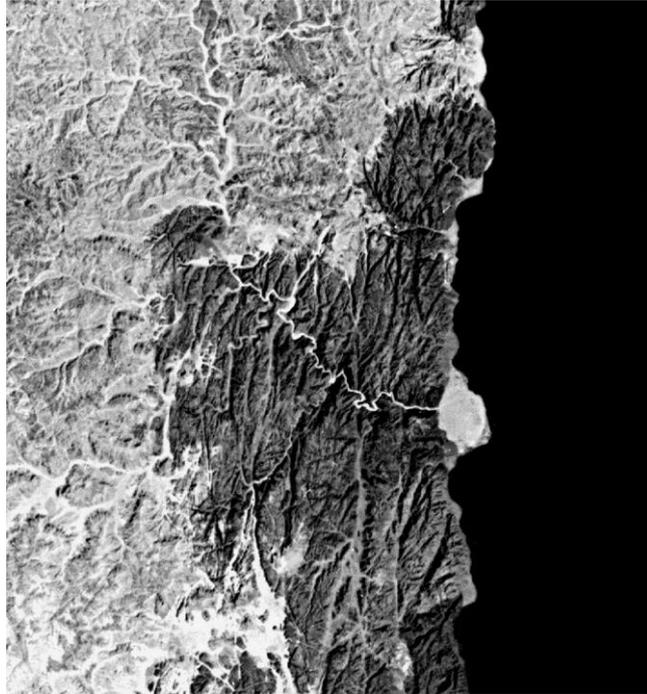




Also, as this waterway was on route for the territory where Moses earlier spent his years of exile, he was familiar with that area and it was where he would have naturally led the people. More than this, the Gulf of Aqaba is a waterway that was on the boarder of Egyptian territory, something the other waterways are not. The people of Israel wished to leave lands ruled by the Egyptians, so crossing this water is entirely logical.

And then there are express biblical statements that indicate the Israelites route of escape. 1 Kings 9:26 states: 'King Solomon built ships at Ezion Geber, which is near Elath in Edom, on the shore of the Red Sea.' This is at the head of the Gulf of Aqaba. So this area was called the Red Sea in biblical times, as well as what we call the Gulf of Suez. On top of this, Exodus 13:18 tells us, that, 'God led the people around by the desert road towards the Red Sea.' This is the most practical route, that is, without mountains, and the quickest way to reach the northern point of the Gulf of Aqaba. Moses had taken this route himself on several occasions and it was a known trade route. This route goes from near the head of the Gulf of Suez to near the head of the Gulf of Aqaba, across the desert of the Sinai Peninsula.

So, if the Gulf of Aqaba is the Red Sea that Moses and the Israelites crossed, the next thing we need to do is look for a likely crossing point. If we look on satellite pictures for a beach area large enough for 2-3 million people to encamp, there is only one candidate: Nuweiba.



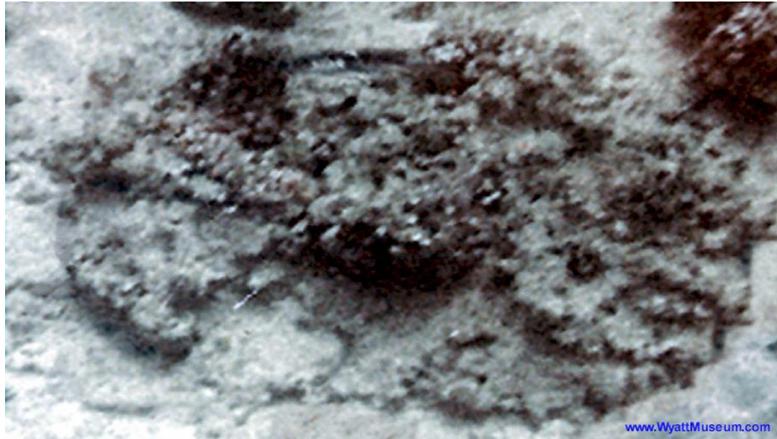
On each side of the Gulf of Aqaba are high mountains ranges up to 2,500 metres in height. The Gulf of Aqaba has two deep basins: the northern is approximately 900 metres deep, and the southern approximately 1,900 metres deep. Even if the Gulf was dried, crossing that seabed terrain would have been almost impossibly steep. However, at only one point, by the only beach that could have held the Israelites, the seabed is different. It so happens that at Nuweiba there is a flat underwater sand bridge across the Red Sea. Can this be explained by mere coincidence?



Archaeologists then led a diving expedition in the waters by this beach and along this sandbank, and they discovered under the surface of the water a mystery mass graveyard that may have originally contained over 100,000 soldiers.

Divers found chariot parts, as well as horse and human bones, dating back to ancient Egypt, all covered in coral. What is particularly interesting is that some of the artefacts have been taken to a Professor at Cairo University, and they have been dated at exactly the right period as the biblical account of the Israelites fleeing from Egypt.

Another fascinating discovery is a pillar found on the opposite beach, apparently placed there by King Solomon, with an inscription that indicates that this was the crossing point of the Israelites – and the mass graveyard of the Egyptian army.



When all this is put together a good case can be made that what we have here is external evidence, validating the biblical account. An Egyptian army has been found at just the most likely point we would expect it to be found if the biblical account is true.

