

Week #:	40	Text:	-----	Title:	Into the Desert: The Real Mount Sinai
Songs:	<i>God Will Make A Way</i> – Don Moen (4:20)				
	<i>Draw Me Close to You</i> – Hillsong (4:02)				
	<i>I Need You More</i> – Lindell Cooley (5:03)				
Videos:	<i>"Saudi Sinai: The Future of Israel's Past with Ryan Mauro"</i> – YouTube Channel: <i>A Road Awakening!</i> (36:49)				

Into the Desert: The Real Mount Sinai

The most commonly cited location of Mount Sinai or “Jebel Musa,” meaning the “Mountain of Moses,” is at St. Catherine’s in the southern part of the Sinai Peninsula in modern-day Egypt. While there are prominent proponents of the accuracy of that designation, many others find the evidence to be lacking and have chosen to either dismiss the Exodus account as a myth or to search for other possible locations.

The ability to make determinations about the historicity of the account and the possible geographic locations of the reported events has been hampered by the absence of a single, comprehensive source for an understanding of the cumulative theories and their associated research and evidences.

Over a dozen candidates for Mount Sinai in the Middle East have been proposed over time, with the candidates in Egypt offering the greatest access for excavation in search of supporting evidence.

Among the sites that have been thoroughly examined, the results have been—by most accounts—disappointing.

The debate over the location of Mount Sinai, including the debate over whether it should be in modern-day Egypt or elsewhere in the Middle East, is oftentimes unnecessarily heated.

According to the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, which is considered an authoritative source on Jewish theology and history, religious Jews should not interpret the debate as a suggestion that their beliefs are inaccurate.

“There is no Jewish tradition of the geographical location of Mt. Sinai; it seems that its location was obscure already in the time of the monarchy,” it reads. [The Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. 14, p. 1599]

However, one Rabbi has recently published a book titled *"Searching for Sinai."* Rabbi Alexander Hool believes that Mount Sinai is in Saudi Arabia, and not at the traditional location in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula.

A great deal of research and theory exists on this topic, and fully understanding it could take a whole lifetime. To facilitate research about the location of Mount Sinai and the reported Exodus events, this website intends to provide a wide-ranging review of some of the theories so that researchers can work from a common set of facts and arguments.

A new online documentary video has argued that Moses and the Hebrews went into Saudi Arabia during the Exodus, with the famous Mt. Sinai being in the Arabian Peninsula.

Ryan Mauro, a national security expert, director of the Clarion Intelligence Network and former professor at Liberty University, uploaded a nearly 25-minute long film to YouTube on Dec. 17.

Created with The Doubting Thomas Research Foundation, Mauro's film argues that Mt. Sinai is the modern day Jebel al-Lawz.

"For generations, we have been taught we had to believe the story of the Exodus on faith alone. We were taught that Mount Sinai was located in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, but there was barely any evidence found there to make the story of Moses and the Exodus believable," reads the video's description.

"A new theory has emerged in recent decades that the real Mount Sinai is actually in Saudi Arabia, along with other stunning evidences ... Now, unprecedented footage has been acquired from within Saudi Arabia, bringing the Exodus story to life as never before and potentially shaking up the Middle East."

Mauro narrates the video, interviewing multiple individuals ranging from a former member of a Jihadist organization to an American pilot who served in the Second World War, who argue that the Saudi Arabian mountain is the biblical Mt. Sinai.

He points to evidence such as a shallow underwater land bridge, called the "Nuweiba Land Bridge," leading from Egypt to the Arabian Peninsula that could have been used by the Hebrews when, according to the biblical account of the Exodus, the Red Sea parted.

Mauro also noted that the area around Jebel al-Lawz included some archaeological evidence indicating an ancient Jewish presence, such as artwork depicting a Menorah and calves.

According to Mauro, the area is fiercely guarded by Saudi officials and is hard to access. There are also plans by the Saudi government to construct a major city in the area, threatening the site and any further evidence that could be discovered.

"The Saudis are constructing a super-city that is planned to be 33 times the size of New York. If all of us don't take action, Saudi construction in the area may destroy key evidence and prevent excavation for the foreseeable future," Mauro said in the video.

Mauro has helped set up a website called SINAIINARABIA.COM, as well as a nonprofit, to spread awareness.

The claim that Saudi Arabia has the real Mt. Sinai has been around for the past several years, going at least as far back as the 1980s and has many critics.

Gordon Franz, a Bible teacher who holds an MA in Biblical Studies from Columbia Biblical Seminary, is one of the critics of the Exodus-Saudi Arabia theory.

In a paper published on Biblical Archaeology's website in 2007, Franz argued that "there is no credible historical, geographical, archaeological or Biblical evidence to support the thesis that Mt. Sinai is at Jebel al-Lawz in Saudi Arabia."

In his lengthy paper, Franz pointed to apparent contradictions between how the Bible described the Exodus and the features of the alleged Saudi Arabian site. He also noted chronological issues with some of the on-the-ground evidence purporting to show that Moses and the Ancient Israelites went into the area.

“First, the Sinai Peninsula was not part of Egypt proper, but “out of Egypt.” Second, Biblically, Mt. Sinai is not in the Land of Midian, yet Jebel al-Lawz is in Midian territory (northwest Saudi Arabia),” wrote Franz.

“The proponents also need to face up to the archaeological evidence at their site. The petroglyphs of bovine existed long before Moses ever lived. The so-called ‘Cave of Moses’ at el-Bad’ were not hewn until long after Moses lived.”

Franz also explained that the Nuweiba land crossing was problematic as the terrain of the underwater bridge would have been challenging for the Hebrews to cross, especially in the time explained by the Bible.

“From Nuweiba the land bridge slopes down to 850 meters (2,790 feet) but then comes up sharply on the east side as it gets to the shore of Saudi Arabia. This sharp incline would make the ascent extremely difficult, if not impossible for the Israelites to cross in one night,” noted Franz.

The Criteria for Biblical Mount Sinai

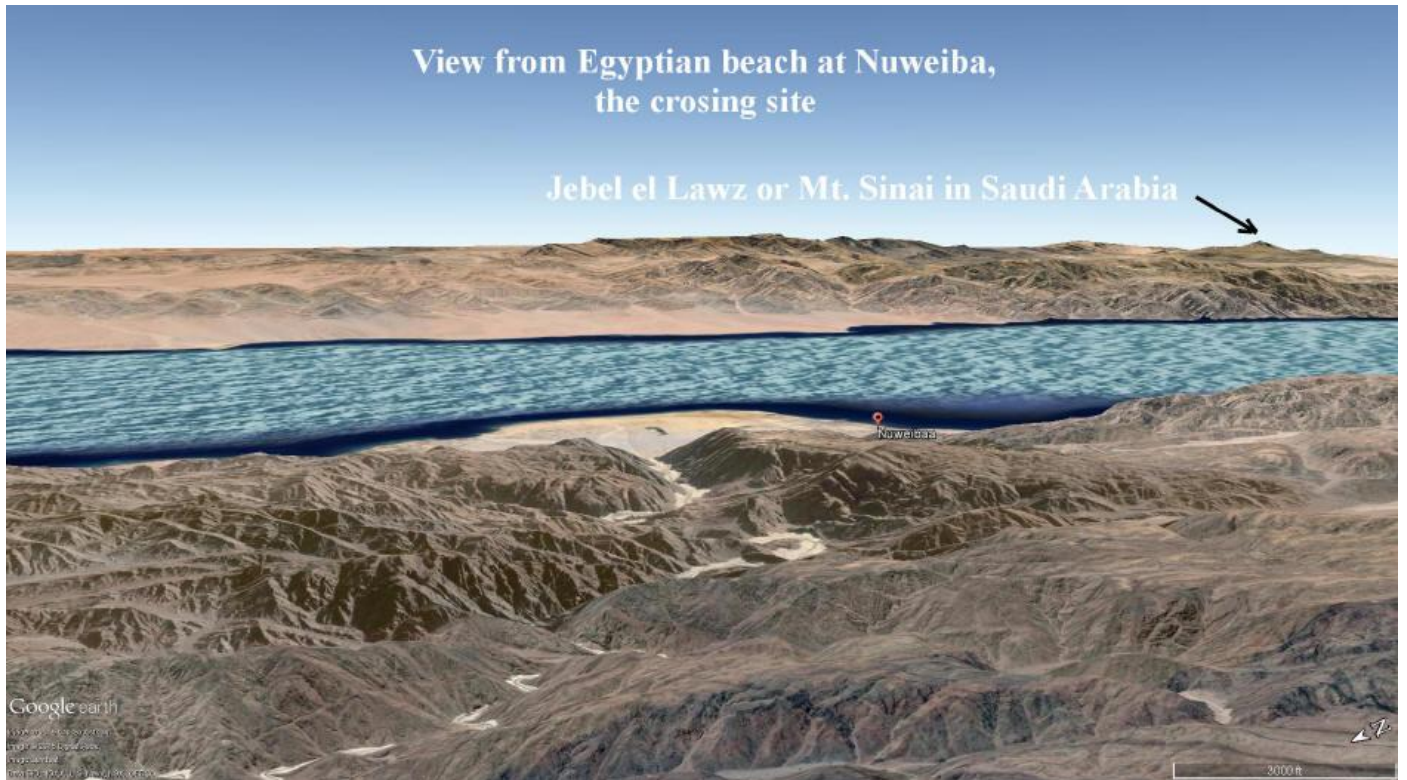
When considering which mountain is the true Biblical Mount Sinai, there are some important criteria to use as a guideline. The Bible and Jewish historians provide information that we can use to narrow down potential candidates.

1. The Bible uses the names Sinai and Horeb almost interchangeably. The various viewpoints are that Sinai and Horeb are alternative names for the same mountain; that they are two adjacent mountains, or that Mount Sinai is a peak/mountain within a broader range of mountains or land named Horeb.
2. Josephus describes Mount Sinai as the highest peak in the region, specifically near the ancient city of Madyan. It is possible that the entire range was referred to as “Mount Sinai” or “Mount Horeb” in his time.
3. Most researchers agree it should be in the ancient land of Midian, where Moses fled after killing an Egyptian who was beating an Israelite slave (Exodus 2, 18). It is debated whether Midian extended into the southern part of today’s Sinai Peninsula in Egypt.
4. There must be a cleft somewhere near the top of the mountain. This is the location where Moses saw God and received the Ten Commandments from God (Exodus 33-34).
5. There must be a plateau partway up the mountain’s slopes, in which Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the seventy elders could all comfortably fit (Exodus 24).
6. There must be a large, open area in which approximately 2-3 million Israelites and their flocks of animals could camp (Exodus 19).
7. There must be a noticeable cave at the mountain that the prophet Elijah could have identified and used as a place of shelter (1 Kings 19).
8. There must be evidence of water-flow coming down from the mountain, as the Bible describes (Deuteronomy 9).

9. Near the last encampment before reaching the mountain, there must be a large open plain where Israelites could have battled the Amalekites (Exodus 17).
10. Also near the last encampment, there could be a large rock with a split, matching the story of Moses striking a rock with his staff, resulting in a rush of water pouring forth to quench the thirst of the Israelites. (Exodus 17).
11. The mountain should be near the ancient city of Madyan, according to a line of historical sources. The city of Al-Bad in Saudi Arabia is believed to be where Madyan once was.
12. There should be evidence of a population communicating in petroglyphs and ancient proto-Hebrew inscriptions.
13. There should be evidence of an altar and/or stand where the golden calf was placed and worshipped (Exodus 32).
14. There should be evidence of a mass burial where the bodies of the Golden Calf worshippers were placed.
15. There could be something resembling an altar below the mountain made of uncut stones, according to specifications given by God to Moses in Exodus 20.
16. There could be evidence of 12 pillars near the altar (Exodus 24). It may be organized in three rows of four, as that was the pattern on the Israelite priests' breastplates.
17. There may be evidence of the fiery phenomenon at the top of Mount Sinai as described in the book of Exodus. Researchers disagree on the necessity of this criteria.

At this current point in time, the Doubting Thomas Research Foundation believes that Jabal Maqla (part of the Jabal al-Lawz mountain range in northwestern Saudi Arabia) is the most plausible location for the Biblical Mount Sinai based on the criteria.





Above: From Nuweiba we can see the real Mt. Sinai with its blackened peak over in Saudi Arabia.



Above we see the crossing site at the large beach, and we see the real Mt. Sinai in the lower right in Saudi Arabia, in Midian, named Jebel el Lawz.