

Pastor Jeremy M. Thomas
Fredericksburg Bible Church
107 East Austin
Fredericksburg, Texas 78624
830-997-8834 jthomas@fbgbible.org

C0617 – April 26, 2006 – The Exodus Revealed: Search For The Red Sea Crossing

This week we watched a DVD presentation of the research done by Medical Research Scientist, Dr. Lennart Moller of the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, Sweden. This video is a compilation of Dr Moller's research surrounding the location of Mt. Sinai/Horeb, the route the Israelites took when departing from Egypt, and ultimately, the location where they crossed the Red Sea. Following are my notes on this stimulating and interesting research. They are not comprehensive. The full evidence and argument should be viewed on the presentation itself. The DVD can be purchased from www.amazon.com for \$13.99. If you are a local part of our body you can borrow the video from me at your convenience.

1. EVIDENCE OF ISRAEL IN EGYPT

- In 1966 near Tel-el Dabah Asiatic remains of horseshoe dwellings found which were the same as those built in Israel centuries later
- This demonstrates that there was a population of Israelites in the Land of Goshen

2. EVIDENCE OF ISRAEL IN CANAAN

- The Amarna letters mention the *apiru* which is a word meaning “stateless individuals, a name that the Egyptians would use to describe the Hebrews
- Some scholars think *apiru* is the origin of the name Hebrew
- This evidence demonstrates that Israelites were in the land of Canaan by the beginning of the 14th century

3. THE SEARCH FOR MT SINAI/HOREB

- By ~ 350BC monks had identified Jabal Musa in the Sinai Peninsula as Mt Sinai
- St Catherine's monastery is now located at the base of this mountain and many make pilgrimages to this destination
- Of the more than 8,000 inscriptions found in the region only a handful are Hebrew or Aramaic in origin showing there is very little evidence of Israelite activity in the region

- In Moses' day the Egyptian military patrolled the Sinai Peninsula. This would make it highly unlikely that Moses would have wandered about there since he was wanted for murder in Egypt.
- Midian was on the other side of the east branch of the Red Sea (the Gulf of Aqaba) in the present day Arabian Peninsula.
- Evidence for Mt Sinai in the Arabian Peninsula is convincing:
- LXX translation of the Hebrew OT reflects that the translators thought Midian was on the east side of Aqaba.
- Philo said Midian was east of Sinai Peninsula and south of Mt Sinai in Arabia.
- Josephus said Mt Sinai was the highest mountain near the city of Madian.
- Ptolemy discovered the city of Madian
- The city was excavated outside the modern city of Al-Bad
- 15 miles east of Al-Bad stands the tallest mountain at over 8,000 feet called Jabal al Lawz.
- A strong local tradition calls the mountain range Jabal Musa.
- The top of this mountain appears scorched with fire in accordance with Dt 9:18.
- There is a large altar at the base of the mountain in accordance with Exod 32:5. Upon the altar are many hieroglyphics, some of which represent Apis bulls from Egypt.
- There is a plan of ~ 10,000 acres which could easily accommodate the encampment of Israelites.
- A rock nearby reflects Ps 105:41 which says that Moses struck the rock and water flowed out

4. THE SEARCH FOR THE RED SEA CROSSING (*YAM SUPH*)

- Suggested sites:
- Manzala
- Lake Timsah
- The Bitter Lakes
- Lake Balah
- Pharaoh's Bath
- All of these suggestions are quite shallow (~3-50feet)
- No evidence has ever been found of an Israelite crossing
- Beaches do not fit the biblical description
- The Bible says that the crossing took place "out of Egypt" (Exod 14:11). The other suggested sites were in Egypt.
- The suggestion that the crossed the "sea of reeds" contradicts the Bible which says it was a "great deep" and that they crossed the "depths of the sea" (Isa 51:10)

5. THE GULF OF AQABA

- This gulf is a part of *yam suph* (the Red Sea)
- Solomon kept his fleets here so it had to be quite deep (1 Kings 9:26-27)
- Aqaba is very deep, up to 1 mile deep

- It is surrounded by “rugged mountains”
- It is “out of Egypt” (Exod 14:11)
- Two possible crossing sites
- Straits of Tehran. It is five miles wide but the sea floor topography plunges nearly 1,000 feet just a mile off shore. Would have been virtually impossible for the elderly and children to walk across.
- Nueva Peninsula (70 miles north).
- There is a great beach here which could accommodate the Israelites.
- The wadi-watir which empties into Aqaba is closed in by the wilderness so that when Pharaoh and his armies arrived they would cut off the passes by which the Israelites might escape (Josephus). This wadi is 18 miles of sheer wall ascending 2,000 feet. There was no escape. This fits the description in the biblical record.
- The Bible says they camped at pi-hahiroth which literally means “mouth of the gorges” in Hebrew and adequately describes this location (Exod 14:9)
- The people got angry at Moses because they knew of no escape

6. EVIDENCE OF PHARAOH’S CHARIOTS IN AQABA

- Coral patterns are very different than the northern and southern ends of Aqaba.
- Small irregular shaped coral
- 1 distinct shape which looks like a chariot wheel and axle
- Dimensions and designs match 18th dynasty chariots
- Robotic cameras sent down to 90 meters to film what appears to be twisted wreckage fused together in piles all over the bottom
- Metal detectors were used to detect bronze which was used to reinforce the wheels.
- Some coral had metal within it. Some in the shape of 4 spoke and others in the shape of 6 spoke chariots wheels.
- 4 and 6 spoke chariot wheels were used simultaneously only in the 18th dynasty and no later than about 1400BC.

7. HOW COULD ~2 MILLION ISRAELITES CROSS AT NUEVA PENINSULA?

- A large rift valley extends more than 1 mile deep (deeper than the Grand Canyon) through the Gulf of Aqaba
- However, at the Nueva Peninsula a wide flattened ridge raises several thousand feet.
- It is very flat, there are no corrals, no rock, and the bottom is not mud but sand or silt which would be very easy for a large number of people to walk on if dry.

8. HOW WERE THE WATERS PARTED?

- For those who believe in miracles the biblical description causes no difficulty
- For those who reject miracles some natural explanation is given but none accord to the biblical narrative.
- Facts do not conflict with faith.

- A good theory explains a lot of data very simply. This theory does just that.

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