

# Jabal Al-Lawz – Mt Sinai?

## Pro Jabal al-Lawz/Jabal Maqla in Saudi Arabia

The Doubting Thomas Research Foundation has conducted in-person research at Jabal Maqla in Saudi Arabia to examine the evidence. **At this time, we believe that this is the most likely location for Mount Sinai.**

Jabal Maqla is sometimes described as a peak on the mountain range of Jabal al-Lawz in northwestern Saudi Arabia. Others refer to Jabal Maqla as an independent mountain.

Supporters of the Jabal Maqla/Jabal al-Lawz candidacy point to a multitude of topographical features that match the Biblical description of Mount Sinai, as well as archaeological findings in recent decades that appear to match what is described in the book of Exodus.

The findings have been argued to match the golden calf worship site, the altar and 12 pillars constructed by Moses at the foot of the mountain, inscriptions of allegedly proto-Hebrew authorship, and other findings along with a possible route from the Red Sea Crossing to the mountain.

Advocates of this candidacy point to a split rock along a possible northern route to the mountain that arguably matches the "Rock of Horeb" story in the book of Exodus where God instructed Moses to strike a rock, causing streams of water to pour out as a water source for the thirsty Israelites. There is also a location that proponents argue is a match for Elim with its 12 wells and palms.

Researchers who support Jabal Maqla as Mount Sinai disagree over the exact spot where the Red Sea Crossing is said to have taken place. The most favored candidate is Egypt's **Nuweiba Beach**, followed by the Straits of Tiran by Sharm el-Sheikh at the bottom of Egypt's Sinai Peninsula.

This site is the candidate that is currently most favored by the Doubting Thomas Research Foundation (DTRF), the non-profit educational organization that established this website. DTRF emphasizes that its assessment is subject to change as more is learned and discussed.

DTRF continually researches the historicity of the Exodus, along with other topics related to synthesizing Biblical history and science with current historical and scientific understandings.

### Criticisms

Like other candidates for Biblical Mount Sinai, Jabal al-Lawz/Jabal Maqla is not without some criticisms.

Yalkut Shimoni, a Jewish compilation of older interpretations and explanations of the Bible, states that Moses traveled for 40 days with Jethro's sheep before he reached Mount Sinai. This timeframe would reasonably lead one to believe that the mountain is a long distance from the city of Midian, and not in close proximity.

At Jabal Maqla, there is evidence of the golden calf stand and altar across from the mountain.

However, Rabbi Alexander Hool, author of Searching for Sinai: The Location of Revelation, believes that any evidence of the calf worship would have been destroyed according to the guidelines in Exodus 34:13.

Rabbi Hool also claims that the Rock of Horeb, which Moses struck to bring forth water for the Israelites, was not a large object, but a small one which the Israelites brought with them throughout all 40 years of the wilderness wanderings.

Two of the biggest opponents of the theory are Dr. Jim Hoffmeier and Gordon Franz. Hoffmeier defends the traditional site at St. Catherine's mountain in the southern Sinai Peninsula, and Franz believes Mount Sinai is Jebel Sin-Bishar in the Western Sinai Peninsula.

### Proponents

Doubting Thomas Research Foundation

Bible Archaeology, Search & Exploration (BASE) Institute

Dr. Glen Fritz, author of The Lost Sea of the Exodus and Fire on the Mountain

Joel Richardson, author of Mount Sinai in Saudi Arabia: The True Mount Sinai Revealed

Dr. Robert Stewart, Ph.D., Professor of New Geneva Theological Center

Hershel Shanks, Editor, Bible Archeology Review

Dr. Charles Whittaker, Louisiana Baptist University Last updated August 6, 2019

# Against Jebel al-Lawz

A Complete Debunking of the False Claims Supporting the Placing of Mount Sinai In Midian, and an Analysis of the Biblical Text Showing the Biblical Mount Sinai to Likely be in the South Sinai Peninsula, Preferably (Though Not Certainly), at Its Traditional Site at Jebel Ras Safsafah.

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From then on no revisions until November 1 through November 4, 2017

In this page I, E. Harding, known on this blog as pithom, have below de-bunked every support for an unsubstantiated hypothesis going around the Internets and the Churches: that a mountain called **Jebel al-Lawz** (“**Mountain of Almonds**”), in Saudi Arabia, is Mount Sinai. This hypothesis has been spread mostly by believers of the words of pseudo-archaeologists Ron Wyatt and Robert Cornuke.

It has become a popular hypothesis on the web, being spread by hundreds of websites, including [arkdiscovery.com](http://arkdiscovery.com), [beliefnet.com](http://beliefnet.com), [bibleprobe.com](http://bibleprobe.com), [baseinstitute.org](http://baseinstitute.org), the Exodus Conspiracy blog, [hope-of-israel.org](http://hope-of-israel.org), Kent Hovind, the Messianic Literary Corner, [pinkoski.com](http://pinkoski.com), [texasgopvote.com](http://texasgopvote.com), [throneofgod.com](http://throneofgod.com), [wnd.com](http://wnd.com), [wyattmuseum.net](http://wyattmuseum.net), and let's not forget the vitally important [bible.ca](http://bible.ca)!

So far, there have been few strong critiques of this hypothesis, those that exist were written by James Hoffmeier, Gordon Franz, Brad C. Sparks, Ed Babinski, Jeffrey J. Harrison and Bryant Wood, the most powerful ones against the Cornuke position being written before Cornuke's BASE Institute published its partially devastating rebuttals of Franz's and Sparks's critiques on its “More Research” page.

So far, no one has written a powerful, detailed, post-Franz critique of the Jebel al-Lawz position which has fully taken into account the “More Research” page, Charles Whittaker's excellent discussions of the physical remains in his “The Biblical Significance of Jabal al-Lawz“, the Biblical, Classical, and Archaeological evidence, and the satellite imagery shown by Google Earth. Until me.

**Charles Whittaker's** excellent discussions of the physical remains in his "**The Biblical Significance of Jabal al-Lawz**", the Biblical, Classical, and Archaeological evidence, and the satellite imagery shown by Google Earth.

Now, here are the pillars of the idea that Jebel-al Lawz was Mount Sinai and their refutations:

1. Paul of Tarsus said, in Galatians 4:25, that Mt. Sinai was in Arabia and corresponds to (lit. "stands in the same rank as") the present Jerusalem. Refutation: The foremost advocate of a Midianite Sinai in the scholarly community, Allen Kerkeslager, believes that "Arabia" was added into this verse as a marginal note sometime before c. 150 AD (Pilgrimage and Holy Space in Late Antique Egypt, pg. 186) for good textual reasons, most notably, redundancy and 3rd century textual evidence.

In any case, there is no indication that Paul (certainly any supposed second(?) century scribe)'s geographical regions have to have the same borders as they do in the Old Testament or today.

In Paul's day, Arabia was not just Saudi Arabia, but also, due to the Kedarite migration of the mid-1st millennium BC, which ended up with a 5th century BC Kedarite shrine at Tell el-Maskhuta, 30°33'11"N, 32°5'53"E, included the Sinai Peninsula.

This is why, in Greek history's first mention of Arabia, Herodotus, in the middle of the fifth century BC, who knew nothing of the Gulf of Aqaba and thought the modern day Red Sea (his Arabian Gulf, not his Erythraean Sea) to be the same thickness as the Gulf of Suez, considered the Red Sea to be entirely in Arabia, in his eighth and eleventh paragraphs of his second chapter of his "Histories", and Arabia to encompass later Trogoityca.

Even in the middle of the third century BC, the Jewish Septuagint translators of Alexandria considered all the land east of the Nile to be part of Arabia (LXX, Gen 46:34). Strabo, who lived around 15 AD, also considered all the land between the Nile and the Persian Gulf to be Arabia (Geo. 17.1.21, 30), but did not place the Red Sea entirely in Arabia (17.1.1).

The objection that Strabo and Herodotus's concept of Arabia was wrong because they did not know of the Gulf of Aqaba is fallacious because they put the border of Arabia at the Nile, not at any gulf, and, besides, Strabo did know of both gulfs (16.2.30, 17.1.25-26), even quoting Agatharchides at length, who, contra Rudd, put Poseideium, Palm Grove, and the Garindae country in the Southern Sinai Peninsula (<http://tinyurl.com/Agatharabia>). It therefore follows that all the land between Oman and the Nile was "Arabia" to Paul.

The argument that Josephus, who used political borders, considered the tribes of Simeon and Judah to border upon Egypt and Arabia in Antiquities 5:1:22 is faulty due to the fact that the Egypt of Josephus did not own the whole Sinai peninsula, but only North Sinai, extending from Arsinoe to perhaps Rhinocolura, that is, el-Arish. However, a more likely Egyptian border would be near Quseima, Nitsana, Haluza and Raphia.

Besides, Josephus does say Arabia is to the south of Judah in Wars 3:3:5, which the BASE Institute curiously ignores in its list of Josephus' mentions of Arabia. It also seems rather careless of Cornuke to write "Roman Idumea could only be said to border on Roman "Egypt and Arabia" if the "Sinai" peninsula was considered "Egypt," and the Arabah (Jordan rift) eastward considered "Arabia.", for I seem to recall, not just the Nabatean port of Dahab (28°29'39"N, 34°31'1"E), but, "The five Nabatean towns of Haluza, Mamshit, Avdat, Shivta, and Nitzana".

There is no evidence any of these cities paid any tribute to Egypt at any time. The South Sinai was still a part of Petraean Arabia, or could have been, perhaps, at most, a part of Geographical Arabia under the jurisdiction of Egypt, a hypothesis with no archaeological or textual support.

While a literal reading of the Paul's "sustoichos" does support Jebel al Lawz, near al-Bad, classical Madian, as Sinai, there is no clear necessity to read it geographically. In any case, reading it geographically would lead to Mount Sinai being at roughly the same longitude as the Split Rock, not at Maqla (blackened peak) or Lawz (see Section 5).