

WATCHMAN'S TEACHING LETTER

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TO THOSE WHOM THE COVENANT BELONGS

A NON-UNIVERSAL CULTURE AWARENESS INSTRUCTIONAL PUBLICATION

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A MONTHLY TEACHING LETTER

This is my one hundred and fifty-first monthly teaching letter and continues my thirteenth year of publication. Since lesson #137, I have been presenting a series entitled *The Greatest Love Story Ever Told*. I had given a general overview before starting the seven stages of this story, which are as follows: (1) the courtship, (2) the marriage, (3) the honeymoon, (4) the estrangement, (5) the divorce, (6) the reconciliation, and (7) the remarriage. In the last lesson we concluded with Yahweh's prenuptial agreement with the twelve tribes of Israel in preparation for their eventual marriage. In this letter, we'll take up the subject of Moses taking Israel (the bride) hand-in-arm and walking her down the aisle to where her marriage to her intended husband Yahweh will take place. Those who have been following this series to this point will remember that I have continually referred to Israel as Yahweh's Cinderella 'bride-to-be'. And isn't it an appropriate metaphor, as all the twelve tribes of Israel, as a people, were a slave-girl in Egypt!

THE GREATEST LOVE STORY EVER TOLD, Part 15

"THE MARRIAGE" continued:

ISRAEL'S TRACK OF THE EXODUS FROM RAMESES TO WHERE THE WEDDING WAS TO TAKE PLACE, MT. SINAI:

To get a good start on this topic, I will have to repeat some excerpts from a brochure I wrote entitled, *Ron Wyatt, Honest? Or Deceitful Fraud*, #5. If you want to fully comprehend these excerpts, it would be advisable to get a copy of that paper:

If you thought the problem with the eight-spoked chariot wheel was detrimental, wait till you hear that Wyatt and associates searched at the wrong location in order to find any archaeological evidence that Israel ever crossed the Sea of Reeds! So the reader will understand that I'm not just spouting empty words, I would point out that I have a book entitled *On The Track Of The Exodus* by Lieut.-Colonel C.C. Robertson, D.S.O., with a forward by Rev. E.H. Thorold, C.B., C.B.E., M.A., D.D., Chaplain-General to the Forces, a reprint of the 1936 edition by Gale & Polden, LTD. - London, was published by Artisan Sales, by the late E. Raymond Capt. Capt who was an accomplished archaeologist would have been quite careful not to handle any books that

would be misleading in his field of endeavor. So what I'm about to reveal, one might entitle 'E. Raymond Capt vs. Ron Wyatt'.

"From the Publisher's Forward we read in part: '*On the Track of the Exodus*, is a well-written book, deserving a wide readership. The author has studied the question of the Exodus in minute detail. He has succeeded in solving many difficulties and problems arising in respect to the traditional route of the Exodus and Mount Sinai. The result of his research presents the most probable location in which the Israelites sojourned during their long stay in the wilderness.'

"From the Author's Preface we read in part: '... My acknowledgments are due to the Admiralty, for permission to publish the sketch map of a section of the Gulf of Suez based upon British Admiralty Chart No. 757; and to the War Office for their reproduction of the map entitled Elim – Zin – Sinai, from a section of Sheet 4 of the 1/250,000 Sinai Peninsula series.

"'Mr. G.W. Murray, M.C., Director of Desert Surveys, Cairo, has given untiring help to questions regarding the physical geography of Egypt and Sinai. The topography of the country north of Aqaba is the subject of reports from the Assistant Director of Desert Surveys, Palestine, and the Director of Lands, Transjordanian.' ..."

"Now the British might do many things wrong, but one can be quite certain the British Admiralty will have up-to-date maps with every land topography properly named and located, as well as all navigation obstacles mapped-out perfectly to assure safe sailing. Knowing this, we can be quite sure that the author of this book has used only the best maps available to him. In quoting all of this from this book, you can understand my consternation when I compared Robertson's maps with those of Ron Wyatt's on his Internet website. Wyatt has errors all over his map.

"What Charles C. Robertson did in his research, which I am not aware of anyone else doing, was that he took into account the day-to-day movement of the 2½ to 3 million Israelites, and carefully identified potential campgrounds with Scripture, and then verified those locations by the topography of the area as best he could. When one contemplates these 2½ to 3 million Israelites moving along on foot with their cattle and pack animals, some pulling two-wheeled carts with the supplies they would need, the problem with logistics is mind boggling! For anyone who would want to simulate such an experience, I suggest that they plan to walk sometime to a nearby town about 25 miles away, with no rest stops or restaurants along the way.

"Now the body of water we often refer to as the 'Red Sea', if properly translated from the Hebrew, would be the 'Sea of Reeds'. Robertson, on his map, shows that in ancient times both the Gulf of Suez and the Gulf of Aqaba were designated as the Sea of Reeds. The traditional view, which was also the view of Wyatt, was that the Gulf of Aqaba was the Biblical 'Red Sea'. But Robertson, in his meticulous research, determined that it rather had to be the Gulf of Suez. The question at this point is: Upon what information has Wyatt concluded his estimate of where Israel crossed the Sea of Reeds?

At this point, I would invite everyone interested in this subject to obtain a copy of Robertson's book and compare the contents with the allegations of Ron Wyatt and come to their own conclusions! I will point out, however, if the Israelites crossed through

the Gulf of Aqaba at the location Wyatt identifies (according to his map), they could very easily have marched around the northern tip of the Gulf of Aqaba to the other side. On the other hand, if the Israelites crossed through the Gulf of Suez, as Robertson suggests, it was because they had no place where they could escape from the Egyptians, as the Biblical account verifies. The formidable 'Wall of the Ruler' divided Egypt from Arabia roughly along the line of the modern Suez Canal (*ANET*. p. 19). Hence, in short, under Wyatt's hypothesis, the Israelites were not trapped and could have escaped the Egyptians, but under Robertson's premise, the Israelites were trapped without any prospect of escaping the Egyptians, other than the intervention of Yahweh. Now I wouldn't suggest that Robertson is correct on every account, but he displays a whole lot more scholarship than Ron Wyatt!

Also, the factor of a 'strong east wind' at Exod. 14:21 is important, as it is compatible with the Gulf of Suez and incompatible with the Gulf of Aqaba. Robertson stated, p. 70: 'The Hebrews observed four points of the compass only – north, south, east and west. The east covered all bearings between north-east and south-east. A wind blowing straight up the Gulf of Suez would be termed an east wind. The 'strong east wind' of Ex. 14:21, may therefore have driven the sea up the gulf without affecting the coast lands.' In other words, an east wind at the Gulf of Suez would blow the water lengthwise up the channel, while at the Gulf of Aqaba, it would blow crosswise from shore to shore. A little detail Ron Wyatt and company completely overlooked! There are many other holes in Wyatt's story!"

Then in *Ron Wyatt, Honest? Or Deceitful Fraud, #7* I wrote:

With this paper we cover another phase of the intrigues of Ron Wyatt and company. With this issue we will consider that the Exodus from Egypt by the Israelites involved travel by both land and water. In fact, had there not been a nautical route as well as a land route, the whole expedition could not have happened! To demonstrate this, I will quote chapter 2 entitled 'The Nile Influence', from the book *On The Track Of The Exodus*, by Charles C. Robertson, which I purchased from E. Raymond Capt's Artisan Sales:

"The rise to power of the foremost kingdoms in early history, those of Egypt and Babylon, resulted from their similar control of a great river highway with its outlet to the sea. This is clearly expressed by F.J. Atkins' *How Europe Grew*, as follows:

"Water is the great carrier. The river stream floats loads which could never in early days have been moved by land. The paths traced out through hills and mountain ranges by rivers and their tributaries are the easiest paths through these barren regions. With the importance of water thus well in mind we shall turn naturally to great water-courses as the seats and centres of our oldest and most stable civilizations; and of all the rivers of the earth, none springs more readily to our minds than that great river of North Africa, the Nile.

"Commerce was then, as now, the main factor in national prosperity; and where trade was water-borne commerce flourished exceedingly. But the great river highways served more especially the purposes of national defence. By their means only could large forces be moved with rapidity over the whole extent of the kingdom, to meet attack at any threatened point.

“The rise to power of Egypt may be attributed to these two great sources of national prosperity, commerce and security, afforded by the Nile. But to further safeguard the kingdom, and to obtain access to the southern seas also for their commerce, a ship canal was constructed joining the Nile with the head of the Gulf of Suez.

“From the guide to *Egyptian Collections* in the British Museum (p. 386) – Necho (609-593 B.C.) – ‘He recut and enlarged the old canal which in the time of Seti I joined the Nile and the Red Sea.’

“The actual construction of the ship canal appears to have been one of the great works of the Old Kingdom.

“In Breasted’s *Records of Ancient Egypt*, vol. 2, p. 102, he deals with the voyage of Queen Hatshepsut from Thebes to Punt (c. 1494 B.C.) wherein the same ships which sailed from Thebes down the Nile appear also on the voyage down the Red Sea [*by way of the Gulf of Suez*]. Breasted infers the existence at this early period of the ship canal joining the Nile with the Gulf of Suez. [*inside of brackets mine*]

“In *Egypt and Syria*, by Sir J.W. Dawson C.M.G., LL.D. F.R.S., a clear appreciation may be gained of the value of Goshen to the Israelites: ‘The land of Goshen where Jacob and his sons settled extends eastwards from the Nile to the Red Sea [*sic Sea of Reeds or Gulf of Suez*]. One of the numerous branches into which the Nile divides in the Delta ran eastward along the Wady Tumilat [*through Goshen*].

“In this district the Israelites had not only a rich agricultural country but open pastures on either side and were in a position to control much of the trade and intercourse of Egypt with the East, and to act as carriers between the former and Palestine and Arabia.

“The recent surveys of the British Military Engineers also render it certain that this valley once carried a branch of the Nile, which discharged its waters into the Red Sea [*sic Sea of Reeds or Gulf of Suez*]. This branch, or a canal representing it, must have existed at the time of Moses.

“Goshen was separated to a great degree from the rest of Egypt, and was eminently suited to be the residence of a pastoral and agricultural people. At the date of the Exodus the Court of Pharaoh was in Zoan, or Tanis, about 30 miles north of Goshen.

“Moses and Aaron passed to and fro from Rameses to Zoan.

“It also seems certain that in the time of Moses a large volume of the Nile was, during the inundation, sent eastwards to the Red Sea [*sic Sea of Reeds or Gulf of Suez*].

“I attach much importance to the fact that the extensive deposits of Nile mud in the Wady Tumilat [*through Goshen*] prove the flow in ancient times of a considerable branch of the Nile eastward into the Red Sea [*sic Sea of Reeds or Gulf of Suez*]. This conclusion which I had reached independently from a study of the district my friends Col. Ardagh and Col. Scott Moncrieff, who are the best possible authorities, informed me they considered certain.

“But a very slight elevation or silting up of the Red Sea [*sic Sea of Reeds or Gulf of Suez*] would obstruct this arm of the Nile and impair the water communication, and

the fertility of the district. Of such results we have no evidence till the reign of Seti I, some time before [*sic after*] the Exodus, when it became necessary to cut a canal through the Wady Tumilat, and this canal had to be reopened and extended to the southward by successive rulers down to the Roman period, as the difficulty of maintaining it increased.'

“By their settlement in Goshen, the Israelites had access to the Mediterranean Sea by the Pelusiac branch of the Nile, now nonexistent. According to Prince Omar Toussoum, who has made a study of the ancient branches of the Nile, the Pelusiac branch crossed the line of the Suez Canal about 12 miles north of Kantara. (Memoire sur les anciennes branches du Nil – époque ancienne – ch. iii and plate xi.)

“Through communication was this possible between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, by means of the Wadi Tumilat Canal linking the Pelusiac Nile with the Gulf of Suez.

“The Israelites had every opportunity to develop a fishing fleet both in the Mediterranean and in the Gulf of Suez, of which the upper waters came within their territory. They were in a position to carry on overseas trade, north and south, to the full extent of what maritime enterprise they possessed [*during their period of freedom in Egypt*].

“Life on the Nile Delta meant for them a complete change from that of a nomadic people concerned mainly with flocks and herds. If the Israelites failed to become a great nation under such favourable conditions for expansion, the cause could not lie in any territorial disadvantage.'

“The interesting part of this story is about the voyage of Queen Hatshepsut from Thebes to Punt circa 1494 B.C., where the same ships which sailed from Thebes down the Nile appear also on the voyage down the Red Sea to Punt. Punt was located on the east shore of the Red Sea about 400 miles south of where the Gulf of Suez joins the greater body of the Red Sea. If there were no canal at the time of Queen Hatshepsut's voyage, she would have had to sail downstream on the Nile to the Mediterranean Sea, and then west to the present day Strait of Gibraltar; then turn south in the Atlantic Ocean to South Africa; around the Cape Of Good Hope; then northward up the east coast of Africa past present-day Somalia; enter the Gulf of Aden; enter the Red Sea and sail northward up to Punt. Either that, or she sailed on a magic carpet over the desert sands from Thebes to Punt. So, if it was a boat trip from Thebes to Punt, there must have been a canal! Inasmuch as the Nile is higher in elevation than sea level, it would be interesting to know how they controlled the flow of water in ancient days. When I was doing my research on Egypt, I remember reading about a canal, and there was some conjecture that it was built under the direction of Joseph, and even possibly named after him. I briefly mentioned that canal in *Watchman's Teaching Letter #33*. I will continue later in Robertson's book where he again comments on this theme, in chapter 15, entitled “Review From Tor” (a town on the east side of the Gulf of Suez where the Israelites probably crossed what was then known as the Sea of Reeds), pp. 78-79:

“‘*Water is the great carrier.*’

“‘The conduct of the Exodus from the land of Goshen north of the Gulf of Suez to the land of Midian north of the Gulf of Akaba (Aqaba) brings into prominence the fact that there is a perfectly good navigable waterway without interruption between Suez and Akaba. The distance by sea is 320 miles. By land, straight across the Sinai Peninsula, the distance is 200 miles.

“‘The problem of transport between Goshen and Midian may be considered apart from conditions of strategy. Let us suppose that no restrictions were imposed as to ‘the way of the land of the Philistines’ being barred; that there were [*at that time*] no Egyptians, Canaanites, nor Amalekites; and that Moses had nothing to consider beyond means of transport for the Israel migration from one country to the other.

“‘Having assembled the Israelites at the head of the Gulf of Suez, with the open choice of water or land transport for baggage and supplies, would Moses avail himself of the opportunity to make use of water as the great carrier? The alternative methods of transport were by camel, or wagon, and pack ass.

“‘Add to the Land Transport figures the extra transport for food for men and animals for a march of twenty days.”

“‘Then Robertson used a chart created by Captain A.H.F. Young, R.N.R., comparing the various methods of transportation in ancient times, which I won’t reproduce here, but only show his results which are beyond criticism by any reasonable, thinking person:

“‘The table is explained as follows: one sailing barge, suitable for river and canal work, length 73 feet, breadth 14 feet (depth 9 feet), will carry 90 tons weight of goods by water. The land transport required for the same weight of goods is 360 camels, or 45 ox wagons, or 900 pack asses.

“‘One sea-going sailing barge, length 90 feet, breadth 22 feet (depth 9 feet), takes 180 tons burden; for which 720 camels, or 90 ox wagons, or 1,800 pack asses are required.

“‘This table of water transport was kindly supplied by Captain A.H.F. Young, R.N.R., and is of utmost value in demonstrating the astonishing advantage of water over land transport. Nothing can be more convincing to prove how water is the great carrier, and if any doubt still exists as to whether water or land transport for supplies was adopted for the Exodus, it must rest solely on absence of direct statement in the narrative. But – given a flotilla of ships and barges at the head of the Gulf of Suez – there could be no necessity for great convoys of supplies by land.

“‘And, if the route west of the Gulf of Suez is accepted, then such a flotilla was a necessary factor for the transport of the migration to the east side of the gulf at the Tor crossing.

“‘It is not too much to say that, with regard to the great number of three million [of Israelites] under consideration, the transport of baggage and supplies would have been impossible had water transport not been available.

“‘In their eagerness to facilitate the departure of the Israelites, according to the narrative, the Egyptians would have [*previously*] placed all their available shipping at

Moses' disposal; to be 'returned empty' doubtless after the *[sea route]* disembarkation at Akaba.

“If passage is desired from Africa into Asia, this can only be effected *by land* across the line of the Suez Canal. If this is impracticable, then the sea *must* be crossed, either over the Gulf of Suez or the *[greater body of the]* Red Sea.

“The existence of shipping for the transport of the Israelite migration, though not apparent in the Bible narrative, was an absolute necessity and therefore an actual factor of the Exodus.

“In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, the conclusion is that Moses conducted the Exodus as a 'land and sea' operation; by taking advantage of the sea route, or the southern trade route, between Egypt and Midian.

“Of course, this is 'not in the Bible.' But why should it be? The transport of supplies and baggage was an auxiliary service, requiring no specific mention in the record of the migration.”

The reader will notice that I have slightly edited Robertson in order for a better understanding of his narrative. While we may not agree entirely with Robertson, we have to give him credit for showing us the logistics of moving 2½ to 3 million people 400 miles just to get to the location for crossing the Sea of Reeds (the Gulf of Suez). No doubt the Migdol-Tor crossing was the intended crossing, even had the Egyptians not pursued them to force them to return to Goshen. Now the Israelites didn't simply pack themselves a sandwich and a canteen of water and start marching off into the desert! Had they tried such a thing in our day, just think how many porta-johns they would have had to rent. Just consider what you might do if you were going to have 2½ to 3 million hungry mouths to feed three times a day for twenty days. Just sit down with pencil and paper and figure the grocery list you would have to shop for (and they didn't have any grocery stores back then). And how many camp stoves one might need to cook that much food (and they didn't have camp stoves back then). And while you are at it, figure how many camels, or ox wagons, or pack donkeys one might need to carry all of that food and water, plus the food and the water the animals would consume! Under these circumstances, wouldn't you, if possible, try to ship most of this by water? If you agree, then you need one more thing; a waterway beside the road you are going to take. And it was there in the form of a canal, two lakes and the Gulf of Suez. If Queen Hatshepsut could use that waterway, so could Israel! And if Israel did go that route, it rules out Ron Wyatt's Gulf of Aqaba hypothesis! Even at the Migdol-Tor crossing, Israel still had about 200 more miles to go! Not only that, but the proposed route by Wyatt would have left Israel out in the middle of the desert without anything to eat!

Now we shall investigate another serious problem with Ron Wyatt's theory of Israel's crossing the Gulf of Aqaba rather than the Gulf of Suez. I will cite pages 81-82 of Robertson's book, chapter 16 entitled 'From Tor To Akaba':

“The conclusion arrived at in this chapter may be stated at once: 'The Israel nation as a whole never penetrated the Sinai Peninsula' *[yet Ron Wyatt claims they did, C.A.E.]*.

“Their next objective was to establish the base at the head of the Gulf of Akaba (Aqaba). The same procedure could have been observed had the country been open;

the marching columns, pack and wheel transport, with the flocks and herds by land; the supplies flotilla by sea. But it can be confidently stated on the authority of the Director of Desert Surveys that the movement of large columns over the Southern Sinai country is impracticable. The case against the multitude of the children of Israel crossing Sinai could not be better stated than in Doughty, *Arabia Deserta*, p. 61: 'The breadth of our slow marching motley lines, in the plains might be an hundred paces. What may we think of the caravan of Moses? if we should reckon all Israel at 2,500,000 souls and four camels abreast, which, according to my observation, is more than might commonly pass in the strait valleys of Sinai encumbered with fallen quarters of rocks. The convoy of Israel should be four hundred times this Haj train, or more than two hundred leagues long; and from the pillar of cloud or fire to the last footman of Jacob would be more journeys than days in the longest month of the year.'

"From Mr. Murray's personal knowledge of every route, track and pass over the Sinai Peninsula there is only one practicable route for a cross-country march from Tor to Akaba; and this route, though possible for a marching column with the flocks and herds, would be difficult; and the movement of the whole Israel nation, with ox carts for the women and children, and vast supplies of food over this route an absolute impossibility.

"The only route considered passable leads from Tor by the plain El Gaa into the Wadi Feiran; and thence by the Wadi es Sheikh over a low pass into the El Hezin country, where the Wadi Zelega affords a route to the coast a few miles below the head of the Gulf of Akaba.

"On the western coast of the Gulf of Akaba the mountains come down abruptly to the sea. There is no shore road. An examination of naval charts shows no submerged shore line similar to that of the Gulf of Suez. The Israel migration as a whole could neither have traversed the Sinai Peninsula, nor could they have followed a coastal route.

"It becomes apparent that the second stage of the migration, from Tor to Akaba, was effected mainly by sea transport. Half the shipping required for supplies was now empty, and available for transport of personnel and vehicles. The voyage onward to Akaba could be completed by relays. The landward march formed a convoy for the flocks and herds by the route indicated.

"We have to follow the narrative as best we may, and it must be borne in mind that the records are very ancient; they are not an absolutely connected statement; the text is sometimes interrupted and resumed later after a digression on a totally different subject. Throughout Exodus, Numbers and Deuteronomy these difficulties occur and the student may well feel baffled at times in trying to make any sequence of events. Bits of history are mixed up with law and ceremony, which may give place for no obvious reason to a genealogical table. Repetitions of the same event are presented apparently by different writers. The whole construction is dealt with in *Literature of the Bible*, by Driver.

"Num. 33 gives an itinerary of marches which agrees generally but not exactly with the rest of the text.

“In certain passages a change of meaning has resulted from translation, and some Hebrew words or expressions lose their value entirely if rendered exactly into English. The expression, for instance, ‘three score and ten palm trees’ in Ex. 15:27, denotes a vast number, not the figure 70. In the same verse, ‘twelve wells of water’ is unfortunate. ‘Wells’ should be ‘springs,’ indicative of running water; and therefore of water courses. The passage denotes a well-watered and thickly wooded country.

“If the Bible is read with the exact text word for word, insisted on there is a loss in value. One commentator, writing on some spot in the desert he thinks must be Elim (Ex. 15:27), says: ‘There are only nine wells left, the others being filled up with drifts of sand. But the seventy palm trees have become a thousand.’ And what use would twelve wells be to the thousands of Israelites and great herds of cattle? ...”

The main paragraph to be noted from this last quotation is: ‘On the western coast of the Gulf of Akaba the mountains come down abruptly to the sea. There is no shore road. An examination of naval charts shows no submerged shore line similar to that of the Gulf of Suez. The Israel migration as a whole could neither have traversed the Sinai Peninsula, nor could they have followed a coastal route.’ [contrary to Ron Wyatt].

What is important for the reader to comprehend is the fact that had Israel taken the route proposed by Ron Wyatt of crossing the Gulf of Aqaba rather than the Gulf of Suez, when they supposedly would have arrived at the western shoreline, they would have had to be prepared immediately to climb mountains. Can anyone really believe that 2½ to 3 million Israelites, with all of their animals, could do such a thing? It is true that just a few short miles over those mountains to the east was the land of Midian, but the way the Israelites got there was by going around the northern apex of the Gulf of Aqaba rather than through it.

Sure, there might be roads there today, but in Moses’ time, they had no explosives to blast their way through the mountains! Not only that, but the chariots of that day could not maneuver over mountains, or even rough, rocky surfaces on the level!

For those who are on my U.S. Postal mail list for Sept-Oct 2010, I included a map from *On The Track Of the Exodus* by C.C. Robertson showing his view on the matter. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* by Walvoord & Zuck, who generally do well on Old Testament history but very poorly on prophecy, seems to support Robertson’s thesis where they state in Numbers:

“**33:1-5.** Among the records **Moses** kept **at Yahweh’s command** was a complete itinerary of the **journey** of Israel from **Egypt** to the plains of Moab. ... It is impossible to know if this list is absolutely comprehensive or notes only the places considered important in their travels. Also most of the place names can no longer be identified or correlated with modern names and places. They **set out from Rameses** (perhaps a later name for Tanis, the Hyksos city, Ex. 1:11; 12:37) in the Egyptian Delta **on the day after the first Passover** (Nisan 15) and made their first encampment **at Succoth**. This first stop was perhaps the present Tell el-Maskhutah, about 40 miles southeast of Rameses.

“33:6-8. They next went to **Etham, on the edge of the desert** (cf. Ex. 13:20). They **turned back** north to **Pi Hahiroth ... east of Baal Zephon**, and **Migdol** (‘tower’), where they **camped**. Here the Israelites seemed to be trapped by the Egyptians between the sea and the desert. Apparently they suddenly headed east or southeast, crossing one of the bodies of water (... ‘Reed Sea’ or ‘Sea of [Papyrus] Reeds,’) mistakenly called the Red Sea. ... After **three days ... they camped at Marah** in the **Desert of Etham** (or Shur, Ex. 15:22). Marah cannot be located precisely’.”

From *A Commentary* by Jamieson, Fausset & Brown, volume 1 of 6, p. 324, a little more light is shed on this incident:

“Exodus 14:1-4 God Instructs The Israelites As To Their Journey: **2. Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp** – The Israelites had now completed their three days’ journey, and at Etham the decisive step would have to be taken whether they would celebrate their intended feast and return, or march onwards by the head of the Red Sea into the desert, with a view to a final departure. They were already on the borders of the desert, and a short march would have placed them beyond the reach of pursuit, as the chariots of Egypt could have made little progress over dry and yielding sand. But at Etham, instead of pursuing their journey eastward with the sea on their right, they were suddenly commanded to diverge to the south, keeping the gulf on their left; a route which not only detained them lingering on the confines of Egypt, but, in adopting it, they actually turned their backs on the land of which they had set out to obtain possession. A movement so unexpected, and of which the ultimate design was carefully concealed, could not but excite the astonishment of all, even of Moses himself, although, from his implicit faith in the wisdom and power of his heavenly Guide, he obeyed. The object was to entice Pharaoh to pursue, in order that the moral effect, which the judgments on Egypt had produced in releasing God’s people from bondage, might be still further extended over the nations by the awful events transacted at the Red Sea.”

Within 20 miles south of the Bitter Lake, Moses had to decide whether to proceed south along the east shore of the Gulf of Suez, or continue south along the west shore, but Yahweh chose the west shore so the Egyptians would fall into a trap of their own making! This would suggest the Migdol-Tor crossing. In fact, there is no possible way for an incident such as this to have happened had the Israelites crossed the Gulf of Aqaba rather the Gulf of Suez!