

## The wilderness of Paran

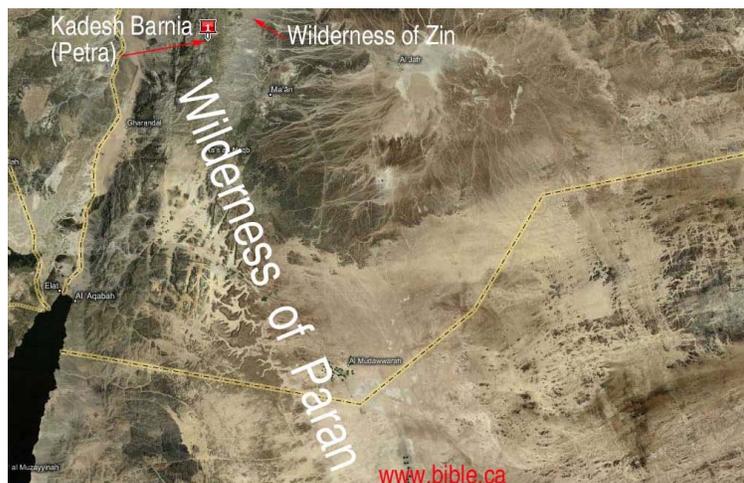
**The Great and Terrible wilderness from which God dawned upon Mt. Sinai! (Deut 1:19)**



### Mount Paran



**Here is where the wilderness of Paran is located:**



### Introduction:

1. The wilderness of Paran entirely transjordan, east of the Arabah Valley.
2. The wilderness of Paran is adjacent to the land of Midian: 1 Kings 11:18 The land of Midian is located at modern Al Bad in North Saudi Arabia. We may not be sure of where Paran is located, but we are sure where Midian is. The wilderness of paran is usually located in the modern Sinai desert near the modern egyptian/ Israeli border. This is no where near Midian and for this reason is wrong and must be rejected. This means that most modern Bible maps wrongly located the wilderness of Paran.
3. Scripture says that God "**dawned from Seir and Paran**" then descended on Mt. Sinai. This is a most fascinating detail clearly revealed in scripture but missed by most Bible students. As Israel sat waiting for God to come to Mt. Sinai, they saw Him come in glory from the north, like a small distant storm cloud that got closer and bigger until God hovered over Mt. Sinai and the "fireworks began".
4. Paran is a large wilderness area that extends from Petra (Kadesh Barnea) down to Midian, east of the Arabah valley.
5. Paran is three stops due north of Sinai (Mt. Lawz): Numbers 10:11-12, 33
6. The beginning of Paran is between Hazeroth and Rithmah. Paran begins south of Rithmah, includes Rithmah and continues to Petra. and is two stops after Mt. Sinai. Num 12:16; 33:17

7. The wilderness of Paran includes Kadesh Barnea: Numbers 13:26
8. Both the wilderness of Paran and the [Wilderness of Zin](#) included Kadesh Barnea
9. The wilderness of Paran is located south and east of Kadesh Barnea, whereas the Wilderness of Zin is located north and east of Kadesh Barnea.
10. The wilderness of Paran is where Ishmael settled: Genesis 21:21 and of course we know that Ishmael settled in modern north Saudi Arabia on the east side of the Arabah valley.

**A. Deut 1:1 is a key verse proves that the wilderness of Paran is does not extend west of the Arabah Valley and is entirely "transjordan":**

1. The book of Deuteronomy was revealed by Moses at wadi Zered on the way north to take possession of the promised land: Deut 1:1,5; 2:18. The wilderness of Paran was located transjordan, due south of the river Zered.
2. Notice that Israel was camped in the wadi Zered also called Ar, which is the border between Moab and Edom. As Israel was heading north to finally cross the Jordan and take possession of the promised land, Moses stopped and reflected on the historic significance of crossing the border between Edom and Moab. This discourse is recorded in between Deuteronomy 1:1 and Deuteronomy 2:18.
3. While camped in wadi Zered, at the beginning of Moses' discourse he gives the physical description of where the border between Moab and Edom are located: "These are the words which Moses spoke to all Israel **across the Jordan in the wilderness, in the Arabah opposite Suph, between Paran and Tophel and Laban and Hazeroth and Dizahab.** ... Across the Jordan **in the land of Moab**, Moses undertook to expound this law ... **Today you shall cross over Ar, the border of Moab.**" Deut 1:1,5; 2:18



4. Deut 1:5 tells us Moses was in the land of Moab and at the end of Moses' discourse he states they are camped on the border between Edom and Moab: "From there they set out and camped in Wadi Zered." Numbers 21:12
5. "'Now arise and cross over the brook Zered yourselves.' So we crossed over the brook Zered. "Now the time that it took for us to come from Kadesh-barnea until we crossed over the brook Zered was thirty-eight years, until all the generation of the men of war perished from within the camp, as the Lord had sworn to them." Deuteronomy 2:13-14
6. The key is to notice the following places Moses used as reference points:
  1. across the Jordan (transjordan), in the wilderness (wilderness of Moab Deut 2:8), "in the Arabah" or valley plain (distinct from the Arabah valley between the Dead and Red Seas), Between Paran (which was due south), and Hazeroth (south of Paran, two stops after Mt. Sinai. Num 12:16; 33:17) These three places are used only the Deut 1:1 and we have no idea where they are: Dizahab, Tophel, Laban.
7. So we can map this discourse at the Zered wadi.
8. Notice Deut 1:1 says this location where the book of Deuteronomy was given is near the wilderness of Paran!

**B. God came "Dawning from the north" and descended upon Sinai:**

This may surprise some and appear fanciful to others, but scripture places God's throne "in the north" and judgement of God always "came from the north". When we map Sinai at Mt. Lawz, and the wilderness of Paran in the territory of Edom, we find that when God descended on Mt. Sinai, He "dawned" from the Paran, which is due north. As the Israelites waited as instructed

the third day, for God to descend on Mt. Sinai, they suddenly looked due north 100 km and saw God in the wilderness of Paran. God "dawns from Seir" like a sunrise in its glory, until He is hovering directly over Mt. Sinai. The Israelites watched in wonder and were amazed at the beauty and splendor of God as He came closer and closer to them where they stood. One of the most interesting facts about the Wilderness of Paran, is its connection with God's appearing at Mt. Sinai. When Israel was encamped at the foot of Mt. Sinai (Mt. Al-Lawz), God thundered, in a volcanic level display that terrified the Israelites. But four verses explicitly tell us that God "dawned" (from the north) like a sunrise, or like Elijah's small cloud the size of a man's fist in the distance that became a storm (1 Kings 18:44). God dawned from Mt. Seir until he came to Mt. Sinai and made the mountain turn to fire before Israel. They were terrified. The four key verses that describe "dawning" from the north are: Deut 33:2; Isa 63:1-2; Judg 5:4-5; Hab 3:3. 40 years later, when Israel was at Mt. Seir, God gave the "go ahead" to finally start their way to the promised land by the command, "Now turn North". In fact Mount Seir is absolute due south of Jerusalem and absolute due north of Mt. Sinai in modern Saudi Arabia.

1. "For you have not come to a mountain that can be touched and to a blazing fire, and to darkness and gloom and whirlwind, and to the blast of a trumpet and the sound of words which sound was such that those who heard begged that no further word be spoken to them. For they could not bear the command, "If even a beast touches the mountain, it will be stoned." And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, "I am full of fear and trembling." Hebrews 12:18-21
2. "It came about at the seventh *time*, that he said, "Behold, a cloud as small as a man's hand is coming up from the sea." And he said, "Go up, say to Ahab, 'Prepare *your chariot* and go down, so that the *heavy* shower does not stop you.'" 1 Kings 18:44
3. "He said, "The Lord came from Sinai, And **dawned on them from Seir; He shone forth from Mount Paran**, And He came from the midst of ten thousand holy ones; At His right hand there was flashing lightning for them." Deuteronomy 33:2
4. "Lord, when **You went out from Seir, When You marched from the field of Edom**, The earth quaked, the heavens also dripped, Even the clouds dripped water. The mountains quaked at the presence of the Lord, **This Sinai**, at the presence of the Lord, the God of Israel." Judges 5:4-5
5. "**God comes from Teman, And the Holy One from Mount Paran**. Selah. His splendor covers the heavens, And the earth is full of His praise. *His* radiance is like the sunlight; He has rays *flashing* from His hand, And there is the hiding of His power. Before Him goes pestilence, And plague comes after Him. He stood and surveyed the earth; He looked and startled the nations. Yes, the perpetual mountains were shattered, The ancient hills collapsed. His ways are everlasting. I saw the tents of Cushan under distress, The **tent curtains of the land of Midian were trembling**." Habakkuk 3:3-7
6. "**Who is this who comes from Edom, With garments of glowing colors from Bozrah** (Capital city of Edom: Amos 1:11-12 Jeremiah 49:22), This One who is **majestic in His apparel**, Marching in the **greatness of His strength**? "It is I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save." Why is Your apparel red, And Your garments like the one who treads in the wine press? ... But **they rebelled And grieved His Holy Spirit**; Therefore He turned Himself to become their enemy, He fought against them. Then His people **remembered the days of old, of Moses**. Where is He who **brought them up out of the sea** with the shepherds of His flock? Where is He who put His Holy Spirit in the midst of them" Isaiah 63:1-2, 10-11
7. "The chariots of God are myriads, thousands upon thousands; The Lord is among them as at Sinai, in holiness." Psalm 68:15
8. "Then we turned and set out for the wilderness by the way to the Red Sea, as the Lord spoke to me, and circled Mount Seir for many days. "And the Lord spoke to me, saying, 'You have circled this mountain long enough. **Now turn north**," Deuteronomy 2:1-3

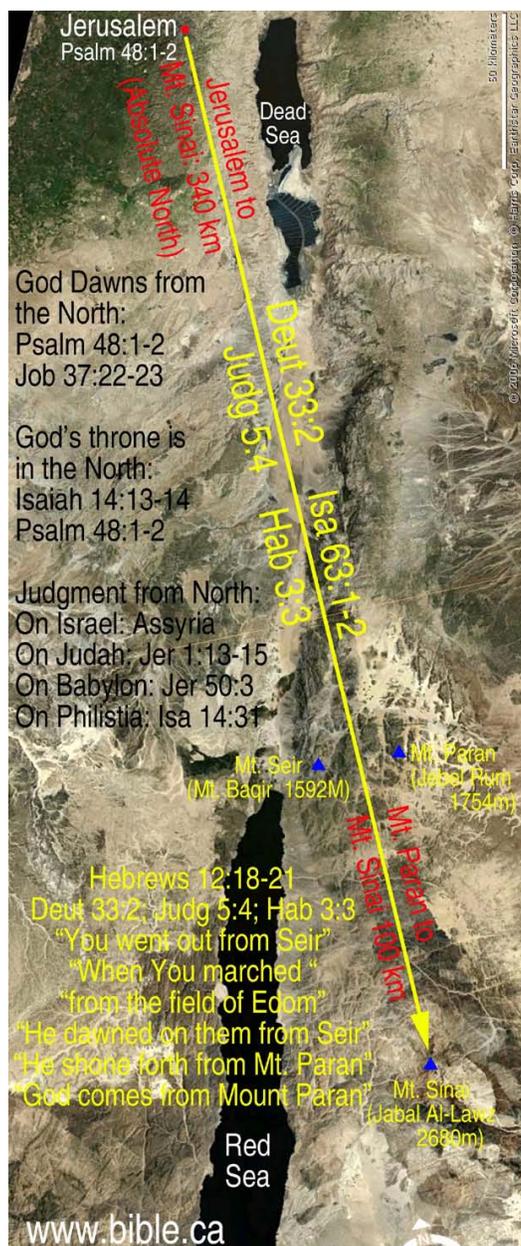
### **C. There is a consistent pattern in scripture where God "dawns" from the north and God's throne is in the north:**

There are several passages that repeat this pattern of God coming "from the North". Most notably is Ezekiel's vision where God came from a distant storm in the North finally to overshadow him. (Ezekiel 1:4) Job describes God as coming from the North in golden splendor. (Job 37:22-23) Lucifer, the king of Babylon describes God's throne as being in the far north. (Isaiah 14:13-14) Psalm 48:1-2 describes Jerusalem as being located in the "far north".

1. "**As I looked, behold, a storm wind was coming from the north**, a great cloud with fire flashing forth continually and a bright light around it, and in its midst something like glowing metal in the midst of the fire." Ezekiel 1:4
2. ""**Out of the north** comes golden *splendor*; Around God is awesome majesty. "The Almighty—we cannot find Him; He is exalted in power And He will not do violence to justice and abundant righteousness." Job 37:22-23
3. ""But you said in your heart, 'I (King of Babylon- Lucifer) will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, **And I will sit on the mount of assembly, in the recesses of the north**. 'I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.'" Isaiah 14:13-14
4. "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, In the city of our God, His holy mountain. Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, **Is Mount Zion in the far north**, The city of the great King." Psalm 48:1-2

### **D. God's judgement always came from the north:**

1. Assyria was due north of Israel when the 10 tribes went into



extinction in 722 BC: "Israel is a scattered flock, the lions have driven *them* away. The first one *who* devoured him was the **king of Assyria**, and this last one *who* has broken his bones is Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon." Jeremiah 50:17

2. Israel's judgment in 586 BC came "from the north" through Babylon: "The word of the Lord came to me a second time saying, "What do you see?" And I said, "I see a boiling pot, facing away from the north." Then the Lord said to me, "**Out of the north the evil will break forth on all the inhabitants of the land.**" "For, behold, I am calling all the families of the kingdoms of the north," declares the Lord; "and they will come and they will set each one his throne at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem, and against all its walls round about and against all the cities of Judah." Jeremiah 1:13-15 and "behold, I will send and take all the families of the north," declares the Lord, 'and *I will send* to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, My servant, and will bring them against this land and against its inhabitants and against all these nations round about; and I will utterly destroy them and make them a horror and a hissing, and an everlasting desolation." Jeremiah 25:9
3. Babylon's judgment in 538 BC came "from the north" through Medo-persia: "For a nation has come up against her (Babylon) **out of the north**; it will make her land an **object of horror**, and there will be no inhabitant in it. Both man and beast have wandered off, they have gone away!" Jeremiah 50:3

9. Judgement on Philistia from the North: ""Wail, O gate; cry, O city; Melt away, O Philistia, all of you; For smoke comes from the north, And there is no straggler in his ranks." Isaiah 14:31
10. "**I have aroused one from the north**, and he has come; From the rising of the sun he will call on My name; And he will come upon rulers as *upon* mortar, Even as the potter treads clay.""" Isaiah 41:25

#### **F. What the Bible says about the wilderness of Paran:**

1. "Then **we set out from Horeb, and went through all that great and terrible wilderness which you saw** on the way to the hill country of the Amorites, just as the Lord our God had commanded us; and we came to Kadesh-barnea." Deuteronomy 1:19
2. "He led you through **the great and terrible wilderness**, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water; He brought water for you out of the rock of flint." Deuteronomy 8:15
3. "The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness; The Lord shakes the **wilderness of Kadesh.**" Psalm 29:8
4. "and the Horites in their Mount Seir, as far as **El-paran**, which is by the wilderness." Genesis 14:6
5. "He [Ishmael] lived in the **wilderness of Paran**, and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt." Genesis 21:21
6. "Now in the second year, in the second month, on the twentieth of the month, the cloud was lifted from over the tabernacle of the testimony; and the sons of Israel set out on their journeys from the **wilderness of Sinai**. Then the **cloud settled down in the wilderness of Paran**. ... Thus they set out from the mount of the Lord three days' journey, with the ark of the covenant of the Lord journeying in front of them for the three days, to seek out a resting place for them." " Numbers 10:11-12, 33
7. "Afterward, however, the people moved out from Hazeroth and camped in the **wilderness of Paran.**" Numbers 12:16

8. "So Moses sent them from the **wilderness of Paran** at the command of the Lord, all of them men who were heads of the sons of Israel." Numbers 13:3
9. "they proceeded to come to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation of the sons of Israel in the **wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh**; and they brought back word to them and to all the congregation and showed them the fruit of the land." Numbers 13:26
10. " These are the words which Moses spoke to all Israel **across the Jordan in the wilderness, in the Arabah** opposite Suph, between **Paran** and Tophel and Laban and Hazeroth and Dizahab." Deuteronomy 1:1
11. " Then Samuel died; and all Israel gathered together and mourned for him, and buried him at his house in Ramah. And David arose and went down to the **wilderness of Paran.**" 1 Samuel 25:1
12. "that Hadad fled to Egypt, he and certain **Edomites** of his father's servants with him, while Hadad *was* a young boy. They arose from **Midian** and came to **Paran**; and they took men with them from Paran and came to Egypt, to Pharaoh king of Egypt, who gave him a house and assigned him food and gave him land. " 1 Kings 11:17-18

By Steve Rudd: [Contact the author for comments, input or corrections.](#)



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