

Exodus 19

Verses 1- 3

On the first day of the third month after the Israelites left Egypt—on that very day—they came to the Desert of Sinai. ² When they set out from Rephidim, they came to the wilderness of Sinai and camped in the wilderness; and there Israel camped in front of the mountain. ³ Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel:

On the first day of the third month after the Israelites left Egypt—on that very day—they came to the Desert of Sinai.

See chart 1905 The 4th month

Exodus time line

Exodus	Event	Year 1 - 1446	Place
12:2	New Calendar	1-1-01	Egypt
12:3	Select a lamb	1-10-01	Egypt
12:37	The Exodus from Egypt	1-15-01	Rameses
14:21-22	Crossing of the Red Sea		Read Sea
15:23	Bitter water		Marah
15:27	12 springs and 70 palm trees		Elim
16:1	Manna and quail	3-15-01	The Desert of Sin
17:1	no water, Amalekites defeated		Rephidim
18	Judges appointed		Near the Mountain of God
19:1	Camped in front of the mountain	4th month	The Desert of Sinai
20	The ten commandments		The Desert of Sinai
21-23	Laws and regulations		The Desert of Sinai
24	Covenant confirmed	40 days and nights	The Desert of Sinai
25-31	Tabernacle envisioned		The Desert of Sinai
32	Golden Calf	Month 5 or 6	The Desert of Sinai
34	New stone tablets	Month 6 or 7	The Desert of Sinai
36-39	Building the Tabernacle	5 to 6 months	The Desert of Sinai

Israel left Egypt on 1-15- 01(1446 BC)

Determining the date of when Israel first came to Sinai will depend on which version of the bible you read or trust the most.

See chart 1907

Exodus 19:1		
Version	Scripture	Date
NAS	In the third month after the sons of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that very day they came into the wilderness of Sinai.	4-15
RSV	On the third new moon after the people of Israel had gone forth out of the land of Egypt, on that day they came into the wilderness of Sinai.	4-1
KJV	In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai.	4-15
NIV	On the first day of the third month after the Israelites left Egypt—on that very day—they came to the Desert of Sinai.	4-1
Septuagint	And in the third month of the departure of the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, on the same day, they came into the wilderness of Sina.	4-15

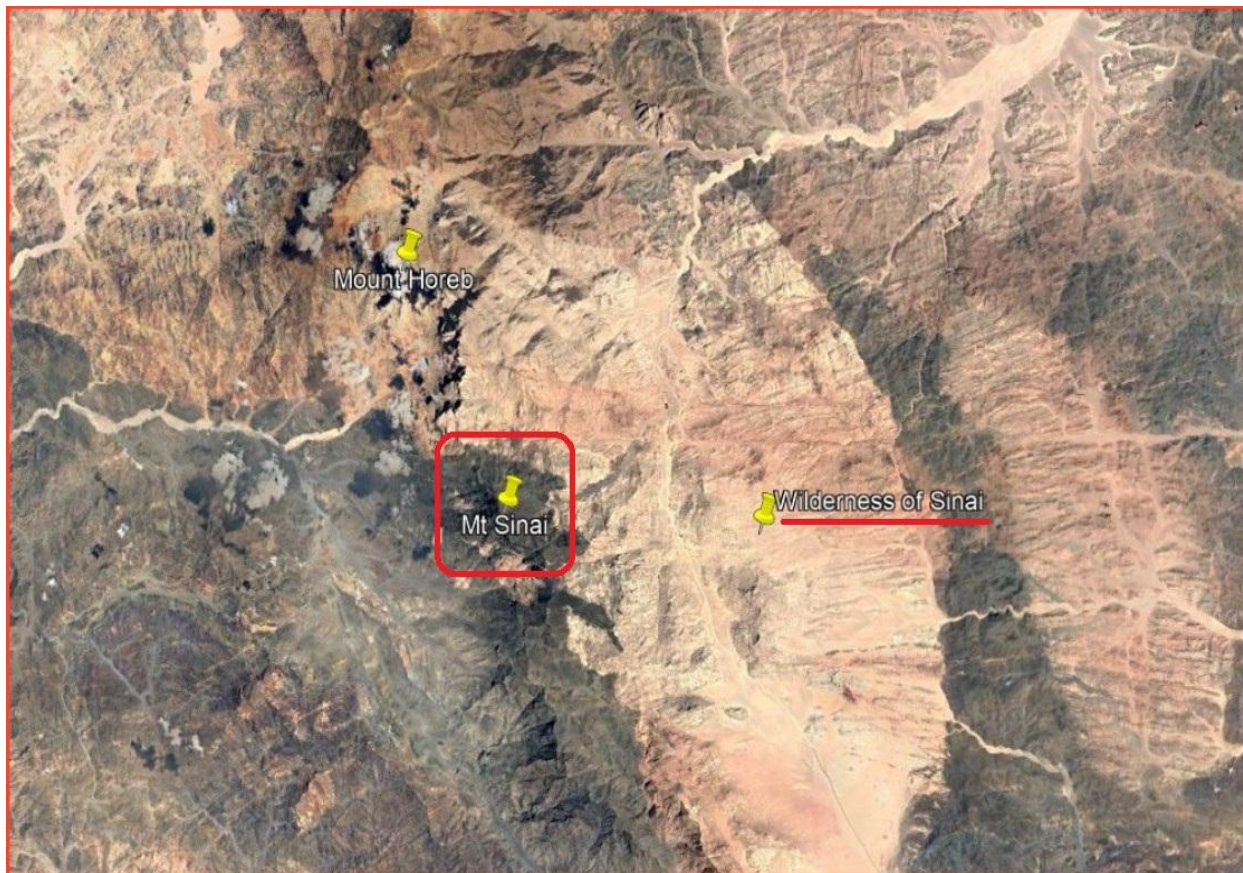
As you can see, two modern versions imply a date of 4-15 and the other two suggest a date of 4-1. The Septuagint (transcribed from the oldest manuscripts) implies a date of 4-15.

Those who translate the scriptures are typically highly educated, and are well aware of the disagreement on this matter. They may not agree on whether it was the 1st or the 15th of the 4th month but no one has suggested it was anything other than the 4th month.

Nevertheless, we should all keep our eyes open to other scriptures that might help us nail down this date. Sometimes clues pop up in unlikely places.

They came to the wilderness of Sinai and camped in the wilderness;

See pic 1910



The wilderness of Sinai was east of Mount Sinai. It was a massive area with plenty of room for the 2.5 million Israelites. The Israelites were comparable to the city Chicago in numbers (2018). Their camp may have been 20 miles long by 10 miles wide and they would stay in this area for almost 11 months.

²When they set out from Rephidim, they came to the wilderness of Sinai and camped in the wilderness; and there Israel camped in front of the mountain.

God had told Moses that Israel would worship God on this mountain. This was promised as a sign that Moses was sent by the Lord.

See Exodus 3:12

"I will be with you; and this will be your sign that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain."

See Pic 1915

Sinai



³ Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel:

God has a message that He wants Israel to hear, however, that message will come through Moses.

The message centers on God’s desire to make a covenant with Israel but a covenant (contract) has to be agreed upon by both parties and both parties have a responsibility to do their part or the contract is broken.

Verses 4 - 6

⁴ ‘You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and *how* I bore you on eagles’ wings, and brought you to Myself. ⁵ Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; ⁶ and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel.”

⁴ **‘You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings, and brought you to Myself.**

Israel became a nation because of what God did. God performed the 10 Plagues that made it possible for the slaves to leave Goshen and then He split the Red Sea at the Gulf of Aquabah so they could leave Egypt.

⁵ **Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine;**

The covenant between God and Israel was conditional so God stated it as an If –Then clause. **If** they do what God says and they keep the covenant, **then** they will be God’s people.

The Jews as a nation broke the covenant in many ways but God did not give up on Israel until they had delivered the prophet like Moses (Jesus the Messiah). However, 1400 years later the Jewish nation, in a final act of rebellion lost its privileged status as God’s people when they rejected the Messiah.

At that time God made a New Covenant with a remnant of the Jewish nation that believed in His son. This new body of faithful Jews and Gentiles became known as the church of Christ.

See 1 Peter 2:9

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.

⁶ **and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel.”**

This is what God had hoped for concerning the nation of Israel. Unfortunately, Israel was not ready or willing to do this and they will soon rebel by worshipping a golden calf. So God will give the priesthood to the tribe of Levi and only a remnant in Israel will become a kingdom of priests.

God wants all men to repent and come to Him thru Christ but we know that many religions do not recognize Christ as the son of God. And among those who do accept Christ as the Son of God many do not remain faithful till the end. However, God will decide who is worthy of His calling, and we should not pass judgment on others.

Verses 7- 9

⁷ So Moses came and called the elders of the people, and set before them all these words which the Lord had commanded him. ⁸ All the people answered together and said, “All that the Lord has spoken we will do!” And Moses brought back the words of the people to the Lord. ⁹ The Lord said to Moses, “Behold, I will come to you in a thick cloud, so that the people may hear when I speak with you and may also believe in you forever.” Then Moses told the words of the people to the Lord.

⁷ So Moses came and called the elders of the people, and set before them all these words which the Lord had commanded him.

With the people spread out over a huge area (10 by 20 miles) the communication went through Moses, to the elders, to the people. Most likely there were additional links between the elders and the people otherwise each of the 70 elders would have to get the message to 36,000 people.

⁸ All the people answered together and said, “All that the Lord has spoken we will do!” And Moses brought back the words of the people to the Lord.

The terms of the covenant were given to the people and they agreed. However, as we all know, saying we will do something and actually doing it is often two very different things. But faithfulness is not about being perfect because we all sin. Paul says nothing can separate us from God.

See Romans 8:38 - 39

³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The only exception to this statement is unbelief. Failing to live up to the standard that God has given us is not unbelief. It is a sin but we can be forgiven of our sin if we confess our sin and repent of it, no matter how long it takes. So what is the difference between those who believe and those who do not believe in God? Both are sinners, but the believer does not give up.

At this point in time all of Israel agreed to follow God; but many will forsake that commitment (give up) and revert back to old ways (their other gods).

⁹ The Lord said to Moses, “Behold, I will come to you in a thick cloud, so that the people may hear when I speak with you and may also believe in you forever.” Then Moses told the words of the people to the Lord.

God wanted everyone to know that the law came from Him and that God was using Moses as His communicator in chief.

God also wanted everyone to believe in Moses as the leader of His people. When things get difficult in life, people have to know that their leader(s) are trustworthy. Otherwise things break down and anarchy ensues.

Verses 10 - 15

¹⁰ The Lord also said to Moses, “Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments; ¹¹ and let them be ready for the third day, for on the third day the Lord will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. ¹² You shall set bounds for the people all around, saying, ‘Beware that you do not go up on the mountain or touch the border of it; whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death. ¹³ No hand shall touch him, but he shall surely be stoned or shot through; whether beast or man, he shall not live.’ When the ram’s horn sounds a long blast, they shall come up to the mountain.” ¹⁴ So Moses went down from the mountain to the people and consecrated the people, and they washed their garments. ¹⁵ He said to the people, “Be ready for the third day; do not go near a woman.”

¹⁰ The Lord also said to Moses, “Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments; ¹¹ and let them be ready for the third day, for on the third day the Lord will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people.

This was a very special event for Israel and God wanted them to be ready for it. Part of this meant wearing clean clothes since they were going to stand in the presence of God.

See Genesis 35:2 – 3

² So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, “Remove the foreign gods which are among you, and purify yourselves and change your garments; ³ and let’s arise and go up to Bethel, and I will make an altar there to God, who answered me on the day of my distress and has been with me wherever I have gone.

¹² You shall set bounds for the people all around, saying, ‘Beware that you do not go up on the mountain or touch the border of it; whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death. ¹³ No hand shall touch him, but he shall surely be stoned or shot through; whether beast or man, he shall not live.’ When the ram’s horn sounds a long blast, they shall come up to the mountain.”

The people were warned about not touching the Mountain; be it beast or man. We can assume this was a warning to keep their pets and other animals in a secure place. If any man or animal touched the mountain the people were instructed to put them to death without touching them (by stoning or by bow and arrow)

When the ram’s horn was given a long blast the people that were spread out over the desert area could come together and approach the mountain. With this large of a group many of the people would still have been some distance from the mountain.

¹⁵ He said to the people, “Be ready for the third day; do not go near a woman.”

In the culture of those days, there was a good reason for this injunction. Throughout Canaan their religious services included acts of sexual promiscuity, and God wanted to make sure that no such thing would be associated with this Holy Day.

Verses 16 - 20

¹⁶ So it came about on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunder and lightning flashes and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a very loud trumpet sound, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled. ¹⁷ And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. ¹⁸ Now Mount Sinai was all in smoke because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked violently. ¹⁹ When the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke and God answered him with thunder. ²⁰ The Lord came down on Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain; and the Lord called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.

¹⁶ So it came about on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunder and lightning flashes and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a very loud trumpet sound, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled.

God knew how to get their attention and this generation should have remembered this experience for a long time. But we know that was not the case for many of them. Because in 40 days many of them will forget this experience of standing in the presence of God and they will worship a golden calf that was crafted by the hands of Aaron. When we think about how far mankind has fallen it is hard to comprehend.

¹⁸ Now Mount Sinai was all in smoke because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked violently.

This was done to impress on the people that God is powerful and they should stand in awe of Him.

²⁰ The Lord came down on Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain; and the Lord called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.

Moses will make a number of trips up the mountain during the next few days. This is his first trip.

Verses 21 - 25

²¹ Then the Lord spoke to Moses, “Go down, warn the people, so that they do not break through to the Lord to gaze, and many of them perish.” ²² Also let the priests who come near to the Lord consecrate themselves, or else the Lord will break out against them.” ²³ Moses said to the Lord, “The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai, for You warned us, saying, ‘Set bounds about the mountain and consecrate it.’” ²⁴ Then the Lord said to him, “Go down and come up *again*, you and Aaron with you; but do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to the Lord, or He will break forth upon them.” ²⁵ So Moses went down to the people and told them.

²¹ Then the Lord spoke to Moses, “Go down, warn the people, so that they do not break through to the Lord to gaze, and many of them perish.

It's a natural reaction to edge forward to get a closer look, but in this case it could have been deadly.

²² **Also let the priests who come near to the Lord consecrate themselves, or else the Lord will break out against them.”**

Who were these priests? Abraham gave honor to Melchizedek, the priest of Salem (Jerusalem), long before God instituted the Tabernacle and the priesthood. During his journey to Haran, Jacob promised to give God 10% of his increase if God looked after him until he returned.

See Genesis 28:20

²⁰ **Jacob also made a vow, saying, “If God will be with me and will keep me on this journey that I take, and give me food to eat and garments to wear, ²¹ and I return to my father’s house in safety, then the Lord will be my God.**

Who did Jacob give this 10% to?

The Bible is a book of history, but it doesn’t give us every detail of what took place in the lives of the people it covers. There is much that we don’t know about the people and customs of that time but we were given what we need to know.

²³ **Moses said to the Lord, “The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai, for You warned us, saying, ‘Set bounds about the mountain and consecrate it.’” ²⁴ Then the Lord said to him, “Go down and come up again, you and Aaron with you; but do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to the Lord, or He will break forth upon them.” ²⁵ So Moses went down to the people and told them.**

Moses thinks everything is under control but God knows these people “a little better” than Moses and He tells him to go down and warn the priests and people one more time. God also tells Moses to bring Aaron with him when he comes back up.