

Numbers 10:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the children of Israel took their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai; and the cloud rested in the wilderness of Paran.

Analysis

The children of Israel took their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai (נָסַע nasa', to pull up tent pegs, journey)—After nearly one year camped at Sinai receiving the law, tabernacle instructions, and priestly ordination (Exodus 19–Numbers 10), Israel finally resumed the Exodus march. **The cloud rested in the wilderness of Paran** (אָנָן anan, cloud)—God's visible presence determined every movement. The cloud's stopping was as authoritative as its moving; Israel learned obedience through waiting and through walking.

Paran was the wilderness where Ishmael had settled (Genesis 21:21) and where the spies would soon launch their ill-fated reconnaissance (13:3). This departure marks the transition from revelation at Sinai to the testing that would delay Canaan conquest by 40 years. The journey from Sinai to Kadesh-barnea should have taken eleven days (Deuteronomy 1:2); unbelief stretched it to a generation.

Historical Context

Israel departed Sinai in the second month of the second year after leaving Egypt (10:11)—approximately May 1444 BC. They had camped at Sinai for eleven months, during which Moses received the law, built the tabernacle, and organized the camp. The wilderness of Paran lay between Sinai and Kadesh-barnea, the staging ground for Canaan invasion.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does Israel's year-long stay at Sinai before advancing demonstrate that knowing God's law must precede entering God's land?
2. What spiritual discipline is required to obey both when the cloud moves and when it stays put?
3. How does the cloud's guidance foreshadow the Holy Spirit's leading in the Christian life?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּסַּע ו	בְּנֵי	יִשְׂרָאֵל ל	לְמַסְעֵיהֶם	בְּמִדְבַּר ר	סִינַי י
took	And the children	of Israel	their journeys	in the wilderness	of Sinai
H5265	H1121	H3478	H4550	H4057	H5514
וַיָּשָׁב ו	הָעֶנָּה ו	בְּמִדְבַּר ר	פָּאֶרָן:		
rested	and the cloud	in the wilderness	of Paran		
H7931	H6051	H4057	H6290		

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 21:21 (Parallel theme): And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran: and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt.

Numbers 12:16 (Parallel theme): And afterward the people removed from Hazeroth, and pitched in the wilderness of Paran.

Deuteronomy 1:1 (References Israel): These be the words which Moses spake unto all Israel on this side Jordan in the wilderness, in the plain over against the Red sea, between Paran, and Tophel, and Laban, and Hazeroth, and Dizahab.

Numbers 13:3 (References Israel): And Moses by the commandment of the LORD sent them from the wilderness of Paran: all those men were heads of the children of Israel.

Numbers 1:1 (Sin): And the LORD spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tabernacle of the congregation, on the first day of the second month, in the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt, saying,

Numbers 9:5 (Sin): And they kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the first month at even in the wilderness of Sinai: according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so did the children of Israel.

Numbers 13:26 (References Israel): And they went and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh; and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and shewed them the fruit of the land.