

Numbers 33:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they removed from Alush, and encamped at Rephidim, where was no water for the people to drink.

Analysis

Removed from Alush, and encamped at Rephidim—Rephidim (רִפְדִּים, possibly "rests" or "supports") became one of Israel's most significant pre-Sinai encampments. The defining detail: **where was no water for the people to drink** (אֵין מַיִם לְשָׁתוֹת, *ein mayim la'am lishtot*). This water crisis (Exodus 17:1-7) provoked Israel to quarrel with Moses, asking "Is the LORD among us, or not?" Moses struck the rock at Horeb, and water gushed forth—a Christological type (1 Corinthians 10:4, "that Rock was Christ").

Rephidim also witnessed Joshua's first military leadership, defeating Amalek while Moses held up his hands (Exodus 17:8-16). The juxtaposition of water-crisis and warfare introduces key themes: God provides for physical needs and protects from spiritual enemies, but both require persistent dependence (Moses's upheld hands) and active engagement (Joshua's fighting). The site name "Rephidim" ironically means "rests," yet Israel found no rest without water—true rest comes only through trusting the LORD's provision.

Historical Context

Rephidim was the final major encampment before Mount Sinai, located in the Wadi Refayid area. The water crisis occurred approximately 2.5 months after the Exodus (Exodus 19:1 indicates Sinai was reached in month three). The rock-striking incident typologically anticipates Christ as the smitten Rock (Isaiah 53; 1 Cor 10:4).

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does Israel's question "Is the LORD among us?" expose the heart issue behind most anxiety and complaining?
2. What does the rock-striking at Rephidim reveal about Christ's death as the source of living water (John 7:37-39)?
3. Why does God allow His people to reach desperate situations (no water) where only He can provide relief?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּסְעוּ ו	מֵאֶל וַיֵּשׁ	וַיִּחַנוּ	בְּרֶפְדִּים	וְלֹא	הָיָה	שָׁם
And they removed	from Alush	and encamped	at Rephidim	H3808	H1961	H8033
H5265	H442	H2583	H7508			
מִיֵּם	לְעָם	לִשְׁתּוֹת:				
where was no water	for the people	to drink				
H4325	H5971	H8354				