

# Numbers 33:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they removed from the desert of Sinai, and pitched at Kibroth-hattaavah.

## Analysis

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**And they removed from the desert of Sinai, and pitched at Kibroth-hattaavah.** The departure from Sinai marks the end of Israel's formative year of divine instruction and the beginning of their journey toward Canaan. Leaving the place of God's visible presence on the mountain required faith to trust that His presence would accompany them in the tabernacle cloud.

**Kibroth-hattaavah** (קִבְרוֹת הַתְּאַאֲוָה, Qivroth HaTa'avah—"graves of craving" or "graves of lust") bears one of Scripture's most sobering place names. Here the people's craving for meat despite God's manna provision resulted in divine judgment—quail came in abundance, but plague struck those who lusted (Numbers 11:31-34). The name memorializes Israel's failure to trust God's provision and their longing for Egypt's diet over wilderness dependence.

This encampment illustrates that proximity to divine blessing doesn't guarantee spiritual faithfulness. Israel had just received God's law, witnessed His glory, and been given His presence in the tabernacle—yet they craved Egypt's provisions and complained against God's sustenance. The graves at Kibroth-hattaavah warn that ungrateful craving for worldly satisfaction while rejecting God's provision leads to spiritual death. Paul references this incident in 1 Corinthians 10:6 as warning against lustful craving.

## Historical Context

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Kibroth-hattaavah was the first major encampment after leaving Sinai (Numbers 11:34-35). The location remains unidentified, though it lay somewhere in the northern Sinai wilderness on the route toward Canaan. The incident at this site demonstrates how quickly Israel forgot God's miracles—only days after leaving Sinai, they complained about manna and demanded meat. The supernatural provision of quail followed by deadly plague served as severe warning about ingratitude and craving. This event occurred during the second year of wilderness wandering and significantly shaped Israel's subsequent journey. The rabbinic tradition saw Kibroth-hattaavah as epitomizing the danger of physical appetite overpowering spiritual devotion.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

## Study Questions

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1. How does the name "graves of craving" warn against allowing physical appetites to override trust in God's provision?
2. What modern forms of "craving for Egypt" tempt believers to long for worldly satisfaction over contentment with God's provision?
3. In what ways can proximity to spiritual privilege (like Israel near Sinai) fail to produce genuine faithfulness without heart transformation?

## Interlinear Text

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גַּם־בָּרְאָת תִּמְצָנֵן וְיִשְׁעָא  
And they removed from the desert of Sinai and pitched  
H5265 H4057 H5514 H2583 H0

בְּקָרְבָּת קְבָרָתָה:  
at Kibrothhattaawah  
H6914

## Additional Cross-References

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**Numbers 11:34** (Parallel theme): And he called the name of that place Kibroth-hattaawah: because there they buried the people that lusted.

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