

# Numbers 33:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they departed from Rimmon-parez, and pitched in Libnah.

## Analysis

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**And they departed from Rimmon-parez, and pitched in Libnah.** The continued movement from encampment to encampment during the wilderness years demonstrates God's ongoing direction despite the judgment of wandering. Even when His people walk in circles due to disobedience, God orders their steps and preserves them for His purposes.

**Libnah** (לִבְנָה, Livnah—"whiteness" or "pavement") may describe the site's geological features—white limestone rocks, white sand, or white salt deposits common in Sinai wilderness. The name evokes purity and brightness, contrasting with the spiritual darkness of Israel's rebellion that condemned them to wandering. Later, a significant Canaanite city bore the same name (Joshua 10:29-30; 12:15), conquered by Joshua during the conquest.

The symbolism of "whiteness" during Israel's judgment period is poignant—they camped at places of physical whiteness while needing spiritual cleansing from the sin of unbelief. This anticipates the greater cleansing Christ provides, whose blood washes believers "white as snow" (Isaiah 1:18). Though Israel walked in wilderness judgment, God's purpose remained to purify them and bring the next generation into covenant inheritance. Discipline serves purification, not destruction.

## Historical Context

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Libnah's wilderness location (distinct from the later Canaanite city) remains uncertain, likely somewhere in the Sinai or northern Arabian desert where Israel wandered during the thirty-eight year period. While geological features in this region include limestone formations, salt deposits, and white sand areas. The wilderness encampments listed in Numbers 33 provide fragmentary record of Israel's movements during the largely unrecorded wandering years—most of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy focus on events at Sinai, Kadesh, and Moab, with the intervening decades passed over in biblical narrative. This reflects that the wandering years were spiritually unproductive, a time of divine patience waiting for the rebellious generation to die before resuming the journey to conquest.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

## Study Questions

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1. How does the name "whiteness" during Israel's darkest period of judgment point toward God's ultimate purpose of purification rather than destruction?
2. What does God's continued guidance during the wandering years teach about His patience with believers undergoing discipline?
3. In what ways can periods of spiritual wandering in your life serve God's purifying purposes if you remain submitted to His direction?

## Interlinear Text

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בְּלִבְנָה: תִּפְצַע וְ תִּרְמַם | פְּנֵי תְּמִימָה וְ מִרְמָה |  
And they departed      H5265      from Rimmonparez      H7428      and pitched      H2583      in Libnah      H3841

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