

Numbers 33:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they removed from mount Shapher, and encamped in Haradah.

Analysis

And they removed from mount Shapher, and encamped in Haradah. The movement from beauty (Shapher) to what may indicate terror or trembling demonstrates wilderness life's varied experiences—Israel encountered both pleasant and difficult circumstances during their forty-year discipline.

Haradah (חָרָדָה, Charadah—"trembling" or "fear") suggests either frightening natural features (dangerous terrain, wild animals) or a site where Israel experienced fear-inducing events. The name may commemorate an incident of divine judgment, enemy threat, or terrifying natural phenomenon—though Scripture records no specific event here. The Hebrew root charad describes trembling from fear or terror, as when Sinai quaked at God's presence (Exodus 19:16).

The progression from "beauty" to "trembling" reflects the spiritual reality that God's people experience both comfort and discomfort, blessing and discipline, peace and fear. Israel couldn't remain permanently at Mount Beauty—the journey required moving through frightening places too. This anticipates Jesus's promise that in this world believers will have tribulation (John 16:33), yet even in fearful circumstances, God's presence sustains. The valley of the shadow of death produces fear, yet God's rod and staff comfort (Psalm 23:4).

Historical Context

Haradah's location remains unknown, presumably in the Sinai wilderness wandering route. The name suggests the site had associations with fear or trembling, whether from dangerous terrain, hostile encounters, or divine judgments. The wilderness included genuine dangers: venomous snakes and scorpions (Deuteronomy 8:15), water scarcity, extreme temperatures, and potential enemy raids. Israel's vulnerability in such harsh environment would naturally produce fear apart from trust in God's protection. The wilderness experience taught dependence on God precisely because the environment was inhospitable and threatening. God used Israel's fear-inducing circumstances to drive them to trust His provision and protection, preparing the next generation to enter Canaan with faith rather than the unbelief that condemned their parents.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does the movement from "beauty" to "trembling" reflect the reality that faithful following of God includes both pleasant and fearful experiences?
2. What does the name "trembling" teach about wilderness seasons designed to drive us to deeper dependence on God rather than self-sufficiency?
3. In what ways do your own fearful circumstances serve God's purpose of teaching you to trust His protection and provision?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּסְעוּ	מִהָרַר	שֶׁפָּרַר	וַיִּחַנוּ	בְּחֶרְדָּה:
And they removed	from mount	Shapher	and encamped	in Haradah
H5265	H2022	H8234	H2583	H2732

