

Numbers 33:25

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they removed from Haradah, and pitched in Makheloth.

Analysis

And they removed from Haradah, and pitched in Makheloth. Leaving the place of trembling for a new encampment continues Israel's pattern of continual movement through the wilderness. No single difficulty defined their experience—they moved through seasons of beauty, fear, provision, and testing.

Makheloth (מַקְהֵלוֹת, Maqheloth—"assemblies" or "congregations") is the plural form related to Kehelathah (verse 22). The name may indicate multiple gathering points or divisions within the camp, or it could commemorate multiple assemblies held at this location. Israel's large population required organized structure with tribal divisions, and certain locations may have accommodated better arrangement of these separate congregational units.

The recurrence of assembly-related names (Kehelathah, Makheloth) throughout the wilderness journey emphasizes that Israel maintained their covenant identity as God's qahal despite wandering in judgment. They didn't cease being God's congregation, didn't abandon worship and sacrifice, didn't dissolve into chaotic individualism. Even under discipline, God preserved their corporate identity and structured worship. This demonstrates that divine discipline doesn't sever covenant relationship—God corrects His children while maintaining His commitment to them. The church endures even when particular congregations suffer God's corrective judgments.

Historical Context

Makheloth's location is unknown, somewhere in the wilderness wandering route. The plural "assemblies" may indicate the site had features allowing Israel's tribal divisions to camp in distinct groupings while remaining unified as one nation. Israel's camp organization (detailed in Numbers 2) arranged the twelve tribes in specific positions around the central tabernacle, with Levitical families positioned closest to the sanctuary. Maintaining this structure during forty years of wandering required suitable encampment locations. Some wilderness sites offered better space and resources for such large-scale organized camping than others. The name may also reflect that multiple significant assemblies or gatherings occurred at this location, perhaps for judicial purposes, covenant renewal, or celebration of appointed festivals.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does the plural "assemblies" illustrate that God preserves corporate structure and identity among His people even during seasons of discipline?
2. What does Israel's maintained worship and organization during wandering teach about the church's calling to remain faithful in structure and practice even under judgment?
3. In what ways does maintaining regular corporate worship help believers endure seasons of divine discipline without losing covenant identity?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּסְעוּ	מִחֶרֶד הַ	וַיִּפְּחוּ	בְּמַקְהֵלֹת:
And they removed	from Haradah	and pitched	in Makheloth
H5265	H2732	H2583	H4722

