

Numbers 33:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they removed from Tarah, and pitched in Mithcah.

Analysis

And they removed from Tarah, and pitched in Mithcah. This final verse in the requested section continues the pattern of wilderness wandering encampments. Israel moved from Tarah (delay/station) to Mithcah (sweetness), suggesting that even delays in God's plan can lead to experiences of His sweetness and provision.

Mithcah (מִתְקָה, Mithqah—"sweetness") provides beautiful contrast to the judgment context. The name may commemorate sweet water discovered at this location (like Marah's bitter water made sweet, Exodus 15:23-25), or it could reflect Israel's experience of God's sweet provision even during discipline. Despite wandering under judgment, they still tasted God's goodness—sweet manna each morning, water from rocks, divine protection, and God's presence in the tabernacle cloud.

This illustrates the paradox of divine discipline: God's chastening is never pleasant in itself (Hebrews 12:11), yet it's accompanied by merciful provision that tastes sweet. Israel experienced both judgment's bitterness (forty years' wandering) and mercy's sweetness (daily provision and preservation). For believers, even God's rod of correction is wielded by a loving Father whose discipline aims at our holiness (Hebrews 12:10). The sweetness at Mithcah anticipates the ultimate sweetness of God's presence in the Promised Land and, eternally, in the new Jerusalem where God wipes every tear and makes all things sweet.

Historical Context

Mithcah's location remains unknown, somewhere in the wilderness wandering route. The name meaning "sweetness" suggests the site offered some pleasant feature—perhaps good water, vegetation, or hospitable terrain providing relief from harsher wilderness conditions. The contrast between judgmental wandering and sweet provision reflects Israel's daily experience: they suffered consequences for unbelief (no immediate conquest) while enjoying God's faithfulness (miraculous sustenance). The wilderness journey included moments of refreshment and blessing amid overall discipline. The psalmist later reflected on this period, acknowledging both God's judgment on Israel's sin and His merciful preservation: "Nevertheless he regarded their affliction... And he remembered for them his covenant" (Psalm 106:44-45). God's sweetness sustained Israel through decades of bitter consequences.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does the name "sweetness" demonstrate that God's discipline includes merciful provision even while administering necessary consequences?
2. What "sweet" experiences of God's provision have sustained you through bitter seasons of reaping consequences for disobedience?
3. In what ways does Mithcah's sweetness during wilderness wandering point forward to the ultimate sweetness of God's presence in eternal rest?

Interlinear Text

וַיַּעֲשֵׂה
And they removed
H5265

וַיַּעֲשֵׂה
from Tarah
H8646

וַיַּעֲשֵׂה
and pitched
H2583

וַיַּעֲשֵׂה
in Mithcah
H4989

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