

Numbers 33:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they departed from Moseroth, and pitched in Bene-jaakan.

Analysis

Departed from Moseroth, and pitched in Bene-jaakan—בְּנֵי יַעֲקָן (Benē Ya'ăqān, 'sons of Jaakan'). This station preserves the name of an Edomite clan (Genesis 36:27), indicating Israel's proximity to kinsmen-turned-enemies. Edom refused Israel passage (20:14-21), forcing the circuitous desert route.

The presence of Edomite settlements along Israel's path illustrates God's meticulous sovereignty—He could have given Israel military victory over Esau's descendants, but commanded restraint (Deuteronomy 2:4-5). Divine providence sometimes means the longer, harder road that respects familial ties, foreshadowing Christ's teaching on loving enemies.

Historical Context

Jaakan (also called Akan) was a Horite chieftain in Edom (1 Chronicles 1:42). Israel's interactions with Edom during the Exodus period were fraught with tension, as blood relations (descendants of Jacob and Esau) became political adversaries.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. Why would God command Israel to take the difficult route around Edom rather than conquer them?
2. How does Israel's restraint toward Edom inform New Testament ethics of non-retaliation?

Interlinear Text

וַיֵּסְעוּ	מִמֶּסְרָה	וַיִּחַן	בְּבִנְיָ	יִשְׂקָן:
And they departed	from Moseroth	and pitched	H0	in Benejaakan
H5265	H4149	H2583		H1142

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 10:6 (Parallel theme): And the children of Israel took their journey from Beeroth of the children of Jaakan to Mosera: there Aaron died, and there he was buried; and Eleazar his son ministered in the priest's office in his stead.