

Numbers 33:43

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they departed from Punon, and pitched in Oboth.

Analysis

They departed from Punon, and pitched in Oboth (וַיֵּצְאוּ מִפְּנֵן פָּנָן בְּאַבְתָּה)—The journey from Punon (perhaps meaning "darkness" or "perplexity") to Oboth ("water-skins" or "spiritists") marks a transition toward the final approach to Canaan. The Hebrew verb nasa (עַזָּת, "to pull up," "to journey") appears throughout this itinerary, emphasizing the constant forward movement of God's people despite forty years of wilderness discipline.

This stage represents one of the final wilderness encampments before Israel reaches Moab's plains. The progression from copper mines at Punon (where brazen serpent judgment occurred, Numbers 21:4-9) to Oboth signals movement from judgment to the threshold of promise. Each chanah (חָנַה, "pitched," "encamped") was temporary, reminding Israel that earth is not their permanent dwelling—a theme Hebrews 11:13-16 applies to all believers as "strangers and pilgrims."

Historical Context

This occurred during the 40th year of wilderness wandering (circa 1406 BC), as Israel circled Edom and approached Moab from the east. Oboth's location is uncertain but likely in the Arabah valley south of the Dead Sea. Moses recorded this detailed itinerary (v. 2) as a permanent memorial of God's faithfulness through every stage of Israel's journey.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How do the repeated cycles of "departed" and "pitched" in your spiritual journey remind you that this world is not your final home?
2. What significance do you see in God preserving the memory of every stage of Israel's wandering, including the seemingly insignificant stops?
3. How does moving from judgment (Punon/brazen serpent) toward promise (Canaan) mirror the Christian's journey from conversion to glorification?

Interlinear Text

וַיַּעֲזַב אֶל-עַמּוֹן וַיַּעֲשֵׂה כַּיִן בְּאֹבֹתָיו
And they departed from Punon and pitched in Oboth
H5265 H6325 H2583 H88

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 21:10 (Parallel theme): And the children of Israel set forward, and pitched in Oboth.