

# Numbers 33:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they departed from Succoth, and pitched in Etham, which is in the edge of the wilderness.

## Analysis

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**They departed from Succoth, and pitched in Etham**—Etham (אֶתָם, possibly from Egyptian khetam, "fortress") was **in the edge of the wilderness** (בְּקֶצֶה הַמִּדְבָּר, biqtseh ha-midbar), marking the boundary between Egyptian cultivation and Sinai wilderness. Exodus 13:20 notes this was where the pillar of cloud by day and fire by night appeared, providing divine guidance for the dangerous wilderness ahead.

Etham represents the threshold moment—Egypt behind, Red Sea and wilderness ahead. Israel was now beyond the protection of Pharaoh's infrastructure, dependent solely on God's presence. This liminal space tested faith: would they trust the visible cloud or panic at visible dangers? The mention of wilderness's "edge" emphasizes the transition from familiar slavery to unknown freedom under divine care.

## Historical Context

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Etham was likely located at the western edge of the Sinai Peninsula. This second encampment occurred just days after the Passover (Exodus 12), during the Egyptian's grief over their firstborn. The pillar of cloud/fire that appeared here guided Israel for the next 40 years until they entered Canaan.

## Related Passages

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**Psalm 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

## Study Questions

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1. What "edge of the wilderness" transitions have you faced where familiar security ended and faith-dependence began?
2. How does God's provision of the cloud and fire demonstrate His awareness of our need for visible assurance in uncertain seasons?
3. Why does spiritual growth often require leaving "Egypt" (comfort) for wilderness (testing)?

## Interlinear Text

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וַיֵּצְאוּ	מִמֶּסְכָּת	וַיִּחַן	בְּאֶתְמֹ	אֶשְׁרָ
And they departed	from Succoth	and pitched	in Etham	
H5265	H5523	H2583	H864	H834
בְּקֵצַה	הַמִּדְבָּר:			
which is in the edge	of the wilderness			
H7097	H4057			

## Additional Cross-References

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**Exodus 13:20** (Parallel theme): And they took their journey from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness.