

# Numbers 11:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me.

## Analysis

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Moses asks desperately, 'Whence should I have flesh to give unto all this people?' The question highlights impossible demand: the people wanted meat (verse 4), but Moses had no source for feeding millions in the wilderness. The phrase 'for they weep unto me' shows the people directed their complaint to Moses rather than to God, placing unfair burden on human leadership for what only God could provide.

The statement 'saying, Give us flesh, that we may eat' reveals the people's presumptuous demand. They didn't ask humbly but commanded imperiously, treating Moses as their servant rather than God's prophet. Their tears weren't repentant sorrow but manipulative pressure. This illustrates the difference between legitimate needs brought to leadership with humility and illegitimate demands made with entitlement.

Moses' question anticipates God's miraculous provision of quail (verses 31-32), demonstrating that what is impossible with man is possible with God. The people's demand exposed both their unbelief (doubting God could provide) and their ingratitude (despising manna). Moses' honest admission of inability contrasts with the people's arrogant assumption that they deserved better. This prefigures Christ feeding five thousand (John 6), where human resources proved utterly inadequate but divine power abundantly sufficient.

## Historical Context

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The question 'Whence should I have flesh?' reflects the real logistical impossibility of Moses' situation. The wilderness provided no herds, flocks, or wildlife in sufficient quantities to feed 2-3 million people. Even if they slaughtered their own livestock, these animals were needed for breeding stock, sacrifices, and long-term survival. The people's demand for flesh (meat) reflected nostalgia for Egyptian diet (verse 5: fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, garlic), showing they valued temporary gustatory pleasure over freedom and God's presence.

## Related Passages

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**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

## Study Questions

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1. How does the people's demand for flesh despite having adequate provision (manna) warn against allowing preferences to become demands and legitimate desires to become idolatrous cravings?
2. What does Moses' honest admission of inadequacy teach about the proper pastoral response when faced with demands beyond human capacity—bringing the impossibility to God rather than pretending competence?

## Interlinear Text

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לֹא	אֹכֵל	אֶנִּי	לְבַדִּי	לִשְׂאת	אֶת	כָּל	הָעָם
H3808	<b>I am not able</b>	H595	<b>alone</b>	<b>to bear</b>	H853	H3605	<b>all this people</b>
	H3201		H905	H5375			H5971
הֵן הִיא	כִּי	דָּבָר	חֲמִנִי:				
H2088	H3588	<b>because it is too heavy</b>	H4480				
		H3515					

## Additional Cross-References

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**Exodus 18:18** (Parallel theme): Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee: for this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone.