

# Numbers 11:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But even a whole month, until it come out at your nostrils, and it be loathsome unto you: because that ye have despised the LORD which is among you, and have wept before him, saying, Why came we forth out of Egypt?

## Analysis

The climax: 'But even a whole month' far exceeds the escalating progression of verse 19, shocking the hearers with the extent of God's provision-turned-judgment. The imagery 'until it come out at your nostrils' (Hebrew *ad asher yetse' me'apekem*, עַד אֲשֶׁר-יַצֵּא מִאֶפְקֵם) vividly describes revulsion—meat would become so excessive that it would induce nausea and disgust. What they craved would become loathsome. This demonstrates the principle that sinful desires, when granted without restraint, produce disgust rather than delight.

The phrase 'it be loathsome unto you' (Hebrew *vehaya lakemлезא*, וְהִיּוּ לְכֶם לִזְעָא) indicates the meat would become repulsive, an object of horror rather than desire. The transformation from craving to disgust illustrates how sin promises satisfaction but delivers emptiness. What appeared desirable becomes detestable when consumed in rebellion rather than received in faith. This pattern appears in the prodigal son's experience (Luke 15:16) and characterizes all idolatrous pursuits—the desired object, once attained, reveals its inability to satisfy.

The explanation 'because that ye have despised the LORD which is among you' exposes the root sin: not merely wanting meat, but rejecting God's presence and provision. The Hebrew *ma'astem* (מָאַסְתֶּם) translated 'despised' means to reject, spurn, refuse—strong language indicating deliberate repudiation. Their complaint wasn't about food but about God Himself. The phrase 'which is among you'

emphasizes God's immanent presence—Yahweh dwelt in the tabernacle among them, visible in cloud and fire, yet they despised Him. The final question 'Why came we forth out of Egypt?' summarizes their rebellion: questioning redemption itself, preferring bondage to freedom under God's leadership.

## Historical Context

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The month-long meat provision would be fulfilled through quail (verse 31-32), supernatural provision that became plague (verse 33). The historical account shows that many who ate died while the meat was still in their mouths (verse 33), demonstrating the severity of receiving sinful desires. The place was named Kibroth-hattaavah ('graves of craving,' verse 34), a permanent memorial to the danger of lust after what God has not granted. This event became a warning throughout Israel's history (Psalm 78:26-31; 106:14-15) about the peril of demanding rather than trusting.

## Related Passages

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**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

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

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

**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

## Study Questions

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1. How does the progression from craving to revulsion illustrate the inevitable disappointment that follows when we pursue desires in rebellion against God?
2. What does the accusation 'ye have despised the LORD which is among you' teach about how complaining against God's provision is actually rejecting God Himself?

## Interlinear Text

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וְעַד	חַדֵּשׁ	אֲשֶׁר	עַד	יְמֵי	זֶה	אֲנוּ	זֶה	אֲנוּ
H5704	But even a whole month	H3117	H5704	H834		Why came we forth	H3318	
	H2320							
מִאֲפָכֶם	לְכָמִים	וּבְנֵה	לִזְבָּחַ	עַל	כִּי			
at your nostrils	H1961	H0	and it be loathsome	unto you because	H3588			
	H639		H2214	H3282				
מִאָסָתְךָ	אַתָּה	יְהִי	אָשֶׁר	בְּקָרְבָּךְ	וְתַבְכֵּה			
that ye have despised	H853	the LORD	H834	which is among	you and have wept	H1058		
	H3988	H3068		H7130				
לִפְנֵי	לְמִהְמִים	זֶה	זֶה	מִמִּצְרַיִם				
before	him saying	H4100	H2088	Why came we forth	out of Egypt	H4714		
	H6440	H559		H3318				

## Additional Cross-References

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**Psalms 106:15** (Parallel theme): And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul.

**Numbers 21:5** (References Egypt): And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.

**1 Samuel 10:19** (References Lord): And ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations; and ye have said unto him, Nay, but set a king over us. Now therefore present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes, and by your thousands.