

Numbers 11:30

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Moses gat him into the camp, he and the elders of Israel.

Analysis

The gathering of 'the people' (Hebrew *ha'am*, הָעֵם) into the camp shows the quail-gathering was communal activity—the entire congregation participated in collecting God's provision-turned-judgment. The phrase 'all that day, and all that night, and all the next day' emphasizes the supernatural abundance and the people's insatiable greed. For thirty-six hours straight, they gathered quail compulsively, revealing hearts dominated by fleshly craving rather than grateful reception of provision. Their excessive gathering exposed that the problem wasn't hunger but lust.

The statement 'he that gathered least gathered ten homers' quantifies the abundance. A homer was approximately 220 liters (58 gallons), meaning even the person who gathered least had 2,200 liters—an enormous quantity for personal consumption. This wasn't gathering for need but hoarding driven by greed. The text implies others gathered far more, creating massive stockpiles of meat. Their behavior mirrored the manna-hoarding that produced rottenness (Exodus 16:19-20), demonstrating that excessive accumulation driven by unbelief inevitably leads to corruption and judgment.

The detail 'and they spread them all abroad for themselves round about the camp' describes preservation by drying or salting. They spread quail around the camp's perimeter to process the meat for long-term storage, planning to preserve what God said would become loathsome (verse 20). Their preparations were futile—death would strike before they could enjoy their hoarded supply (verse 33). This illustrates the tragedy of living for temporal satisfaction: even when we obtain

desired objects, we cannot guarantee time to enjoy them. Only what is received in faith and used for God's glory has lasting value.

Historical Context

The quail migration through Sinai region is well-documented phenomenon. Quail migrating between Europe and Africa often fly at low altitudes, exhausted by Mediterranean crossing, making them easy to catch. God's providence used natural migration but at supernatural timing, quantity, and duration to provide for Israel. The ten homers minimum (approximately 2,200 liters) indicates massive excess—average consumption per person was perhaps 2-3 liters daily, meaning even the smallest portion represented years' supply for an individual. The gathering 'all that day, and all that night, and all the next day' shows obsessive accumulation driven by greed rather than need.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does the people's obsessive gathering (36 hours straight) reveal the insatiable nature of fleshly desires and the impossibility of satisfying the soul through material abundance?
2. What does the enormous quantity gathered (minimum ten homers per person) teach about how greed drives excessive accumulation far beyond legitimate need?

Interlinear Text

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of Israel

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