

Bible Devotions: Lock Stock & Barrel
Devotional Reading for Outdoorsmen (Old Testament)

Numbers 11:31-32

840,366,489,600 Quail

Now a wind went out from the Lord, and it brought quail from the sea and left them fluttering near the camp, about a day's journey on this side and about a day's journey on the other side, all around the camp, and about two cubits above the surface of the ground. And the people stayed up all that day, all that night, and all the next day, and gathered the quail (he who gathered least gathered ten homers); and they spread them out for themselves all around the camp.

Here's the scenario in Numbers 11: The Israelites complained again. No surprise. God's anger was aroused and people started dying. Surprise! So they cried to Moses, Moses prayed to the Lord, and He relented. Yet they still continued to complain. Oh, how much they missed Egypt and all the fine food there! As their grumbling spread throughout camp, the Lord's anger was aroused again.

They complained about the manna God provided, that bread of life which sustained them in the wilderness. Now they wanted meat. So God sent them quail, tons of quail, quail as far as the eye could see.

Let's assume that the Israelites' camp was circular with a 20 mile radius. When the quail came fluttering in three feet deep and about eight per cubic foot (eight quail is the daily bag limit here in Missouri, so that seems about right), it took 600,000 men two and a half days to gather them all. That amounts to over 840 billion birds, or about 1,400,610 quail per person!

Now, let's say that only 25% of each six ounce bird was edible. Each man, then, would have had 131,307 pounds of quail meat, or 4,377 pounds each day for the next 30 days. When they took their first bite of all this meat, people got sick and died. Their camp became known as *Kibroth Hattaavah*, or Graves of Craving (Numbers 11:33-34). God meant it when He said that as they ate, it would come out of their nostrils and become loathsome to them (Numbers 11:20).

God also warned them that they despised Him even though He was among them. God pointed out for them that they whined about being set free from captivity in Egypt. And they still craved for something more. They still complained.

God is among us, too, through His Son, Jesus Christ. He alone can save us from captivity to sin. But oh, how much we still long for our own Egypts and fine foods and selfish desires. Oh, how much we bury ourselves in graves of our own cravings. Oh, how much we still gripe and complain.

We complained about Him when He was born: "You're not having that Baby in my inn."

We complained about Him when evil fled in His presence: "Hey You, leave my pigs alone!"

We complained about Him when He called men to be His disciples: "You really think that I'm going to sell everything and follow You?"

We complained about Him when He performed miracles: "I can't believe that He had the nerve to do that on the Sabbath!"

We complained about Him to His death: "Give us Barabbas! Take this Man off of our hands!"

We complain about Him because He came out of the grave ALIVE: "I'm not ready to believe." Or, "I've got plenty of time." Or, "I can't tell others about the resurrection because they might get offended." Or, "Blah, blah, blah."

Listen up. Jesus is alive and gives eternal life to those who follow Him. He has come to us and is among us, forgiving sins and cleansing us from our unrighteousness. He is King of kings and Lord of lords. He rules. He rocks. He reigns. What more do you want?

The choice is clear. Follow Jesus, our Bread of Life, and live (John 6:48-51). Or gag to death on the quail of our own complaints. I don't know about you but that's too many quail for me.

Bible Devotions: Hook Line & Sinker (study guide)

Numbers 11:31-32
840,366,489,600 Quail

HOOK

1. What is your favorite game bird to hunt, and what firearm and load do you use?

2. What foods bother you most? As pleasant as you can, explain how you are affected!

3. Describe how you prepare quail or other game birds for the table? Or, make up a recipe now.

LINE

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What do you complain about most? Be honest. What will you do to help you stop complaining?

Think of something from which God has set you free. Describe how your life is better because of His salvation from this captivity. How do you show your thanks to Him?

SINKER

Take a few minutes to write your thoughts on this devotional. Reflect on your own experiences.

Key words: captivity complain set free

