

Numbers 11

Verses 1 – 3

Now the people became like those who complain of adversity in the ears of the Lord; and the Lord heard *them* and His anger was kindled, and the fire of the Lord burned among them and consumed *some* at the outskirts of the camp. ²The people then cried out to Moses; and Moses prayed to the Lord, and the fire died out. ³So that place was named Taberah, because the fire of the Lord burned among them.

Now the people became like those who complain of adversity in the ears of the Lord; and the Lord heard *them* and His anger was kindled, and the fire of the Lord burned among them and consumed *some* at the outskirts of the camp.

Life in the desert was challenging but the Israelites were unwilling to accept hardships. This seems a bit odd for a people who just came out of slavery. Adam & Eve were the only two people in history to be born in to a perfect world and even that privilege ended rather quickly. How many years did they lived in a fallen world? Everyone since that time has been born into a fallen world (corrupted by sin) and we should not expect everything to go as one might wish or hope.

God has been directing their way for over a year now – 14 months to be exact. They were openly showing disregard for his leadership even though God had provided all their needs. In this case the squeaky wheel didn't get the grease but instead got a fiery ordeal.

²The people then cried out to Moses; and Moses prayed to the Lord, and the fire died out. ³So that place was named Taberah, because the fire of the Lord burned among them.

This incident ended when Moses intervened for the people of Israel.

In chapter 10 verse 12 we learned that Israel left Sinai and traveled for three days until they came to the wilderness of Paran. However, the text does not say that they had camped yet. This may be why Taberah is not one of the 42 stations listed in Numbers 33. However, there are some other places where we know they camped and yet those are not included in the list in Numbers 33.

Verses 4 – 9

⁴ Now the rabble who were among them had greedy cravings; and the sons of Israel also wept again and said, “Who will give us meat to eat? ⁵ We remember the fish which we used to eat for free in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic; ⁶ but now our appetite is gone. There is nothing at all to look at except this manna!” ⁷ Now the manna was like coriander seed, and its appearance like that of bdellium. ⁸ The people would roam about and gather *it* and grind *it* between two millstones, or pound *it* in the mortar, and boil *it* in the pot and make loaves with it; and its taste was like the taste of cake *baked with oil*. ⁹ When the dew came down on the camp at night, the manna would come down with it.

⁴ Now the rabble that was among them had greedy cravings; and the sons of Israel also wept again and said, “Who will give us meat to eat?”

It is likely that Israel still had flocks and herds of cattle.

See Exodus 12:38

³⁷ Now the sons of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, aside from children. ³⁸ A mixed multitude also went up with them, along with flocks and herds, a very large number of livestock.

It is true that this was a huge group of people, 2.5 million, and they would require a lot of livestock but the flocks and herds would have multiplied during their 11 month stay at Sinai so there should have been enough food for the people.

⁵ We remember the fish which we used to eat for free in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic; ⁶ but now our appetite is gone. There is nothing at all to look at except this manna!”

There is no doubt that their diet was restricted compared to their time in Egypt but NOW they were a free people. Also they did not eat for free in Egypt! They paid for it every day with their hard labor.

God had given Israel their freedom. He was supplying their daily bread and giving them water to drink. But they were not satisfied with that. They wanted to eat like they did as slaves in Egypt. They wanted some vegetables, fruits and spices with their meat and bread.

Maybe they wanted another supply of quail like the first time.

See Exodus 16:13-14

¹³ So it came about at evening that the quails came up and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. ¹⁴ When the layer of dew ^[f]evaporated, behold, on the ^[g]surface of the wilderness there was a fine flake-like thing, fine as the frost on the ground.

The first time they asked for meat was 1 year earlier on 03-15-1446. God not only gave the people quail, He also began the daily supply of manna. Perhaps the people were hoping that God would provide something new on a daily basis like He had done a year ago.

See Pics 1105 Quail



Most people know what quail look like but the baby quail were so cute it was impossible not to add this picture just for the enjoyment factor. ☺

Verses 10 - 15

¹⁰ Now Moses heard the people weeping throughout their families, each one at the entrance of his tent; and the anger of the Lord became very hot, and Moses was displeased. ¹¹ So Moses said to the Lord, “Why have You been so hard on Your servant? And why have I not found favor in Your sight, that You have put the burden of all this people on me? ¹² Was it I who conceived all this people? Or did I give birth to them, that You should say to me, ‘Carry them in your arms, as a nurse carries a nursing infant, to the land which You swore to their fathers’? ¹³ Where am I to get meat to give to all this people? For they weep before me, saying, ‘Give us meat so that we may eat!’ ¹⁴ I am not able to carry all this people by myself, because it is too burdensome for me. ¹⁵ So if You are going to deal with me this way, please kill me now, if I have found favor in Your sight, and do not let me see my misery.”

¹⁰ Now Moses heard the people weeping throughout their families, each one at the entrance of his tent; and the anger of the Lord became very hot, and Moses was displeased.

The people’s demonstration of grief was done in a public way and this made the Lord very angry. They should have looked at what they had just received (their freedom) and been thankful. However, these ex-slaves are not alone in their complaining.

1. Some of the angels that were living in heaven (a pretty nice neighborhood) were not satisfied. They wanted more! What more could they want?
2. Why do the rich always want another tax break? Are they not satisfied with what they have? Are they not satisfied with being rich?

¹¹ So Moses said to the Lord, “Why have You been so hard on Your servant? And why have I not found favor in Your sight, that You have put the burden of all this people on me?

It seems that no one is happy.

1. The people are not happy about their diet.
2. Moses is complaining about his heavy burden.
3. God is angry (not happy) with the constant complaining of the Israelites.

¹³ Where am I to get meat to give to all this people? For they weep before me, saying, ‘Give us meat so that we may eat!’

Was it Moses’ job to provide meat? God was the One that provided the manna, and the water. God had provided meat before and he could do it again. All Moses had to do was ask God to take care of this request and the rest was up to God. It’s easy to lose perspective when we think it’s all up to us.

¹⁵ So if You are going to deal with me this way, please kill me now, if I have found favor in Your sight, and do not let me see my misery.”

Moses was feeling the burden of leading such a large group of people and that should not be minimized but one has to admit that he is being a bit melodramatic. However, Moses did the right thing by going to God in private and voicing his complaint. If he had done this in front of the people there would have been a price to pay.

Verses 16 - 23

¹⁶ The Lord therefore said to Moses, “Gather for Me seventy men from the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and their officers, and bring them to the tent of meeting, and have them take their stand there with you.

¹⁷ Then I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take away some of the Spirit who is upon you, and put *Him* upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, so that you will not bear *it* by yourself. ¹⁸ And you shall say to the people, ‘Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, and you shall eat meat; for you have wept in the ears of the Lord, saying, “Oh that someone would give us meat to eat! For we were well-off in Egypt.” Therefore the Lord will give you meat and you shall eat. ¹⁹ You shall eat, not one day, nor two days, nor five days, nor ten days, nor twenty days, ²⁰ but for a whole month, until it comes out of your nose and makes you nauseated; because you have rejected the Lord who is among you and have wept before Him, saying, “Why did we ever leave Egypt?””’

²¹ But Moses said, “The people, among whom I am *included*, are six hundred thousand on foot! Yet You have said, ‘I will give them meat, so that they may eat for a whole month.’ ²² Are flocks and herds to be slaughtered for them, so that it will be sufficient for them? Or are all the fish of the sea to be caught for them, so that it will be sufficient for them?” ²³ Then the Lord said to Moses, “Is the Lord’s power too little? Now you shall see whether My word will come true for you or not.”

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¹⁷ **Then I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take away some of the Spirit who is upon you, and put Him upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, so that you will not bear *it* by yourself.**

Everyone has a breaking point and Moses was close to his so God provided a way out. In Exodus 18 Moses appointed a group of men to be judges in order to lighten his load in administering justice and now God tells him to choose 70 elders that can help him bear the burden (complaints) of the people.

Some have tried to trace the origin of the Sanhedrin to this event, but that seems unlikely. The first historical recording of the Sanhedrin is dated around 57 B.C.

¹⁹ **You shall eat, not one day, nor two days, nor five days, nor ten days, nor twenty days, ²⁰ but for a whole month, until it comes out of your nose and makes you nauseated; because you have rejected the Lord who is among you and have wept before Him, saying, “Why did we ever leave Egypt?”**

The lack of meat was not the real problem; the real problem was that the people wished they had stayed in Egypt. They preferred the taskmasters of Egypt over the leadership of God.

²¹ **But Moses said, “The people, among whom I am *included*, are six hundred thousand on foot! Yet You have said, ‘I will give them meat, so that they may eat for a whole month.’ ²² Are flocks and herds to be slaughtered for them, so that it will be sufficient for them? Or are all the fish of the sea to be caught for them, so that it will be sufficient for them?”**

The 600,000 on foot is a reference to the men who were able to go to war. Moses did not believe that God could supply enough meat to feed the 2.5 million people for a month.

God had divided the Red Sea (10 miles across and up to 2,400 miles deep) but providing meat was out of the question? Did Moses believe that God created the heavens and the earth? Of course he did. And yet Moses doubted that God could provide enough meat for 2.5 million people for a month. God had provided bread every day for over a year to this same group.

²³ Then the Lord said to Moses, **“Is the Lord’s power too little? Now you shall see whether My word will come true for you or not.”**

This is one of the great questions in the O.T. Is anything too hard for God to do? The obvious answer to that question is NO. And yet there are people in the church who doubt the miracle that took place in Joshua 10.

See Joshua 10:12-13

¹² Then Joshua spoke to the Lord on the day when the Lord turned the Amorites over to the sons of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel,

**“Sun, stand still at Gibeon,
And moon, at the Valley of Aijalon!”**

¹³ **So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped,**
Until the nation avenged themselves of their enemies.

Verses 24 – 25

²⁴ So Moses went out and told the people the words of the Lord. He also gathered seventy men of the elders of the people, and positioned them around the tent.

²⁵ Then the Lord came down in the cloud and spoke to him; and He took away some of the Spirit who was upon him and placed *Him* upon the seventy elders. And when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied. Yet they did not do *it* again.

²⁴ **So Moses went out** and told the people the words of the Lord. He also gathered seventy men of the elders of the people, and positioned them around the tent.

Moses went out from the tent of meeting that was stationed outside the camp. See verse 30.

²⁵ Then the Lord came down in the cloud and spoke to him; and **He took away some of the Spirit who was upon him and placed Him upon the seventy elders.** And when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied. Yet they did not do *it* again.

The “Him” is a reference to the Holy Spirit. The gift of prophesy was given to the 70 elders to mark their new role but it was a onetime manifestation.

Verses 26 - 30

²⁶ But two men had remained in the camp; the name of the one was Eldad, and the name of the other, Medad. And the Spirit rested upon them (and they were among those who had been registered, but had not gone out to the tent), and they prophesied in the camp. ²⁷ So a young man ran and informed Moses, and said, “Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.” ²⁸ Then Joshua the son of Nun, the personal servant of Moses from his youth, responded and said, “My lord Moses, restrain them!” ²⁹ But Moses said to him, “Are you jealous for my sake? If only all the Lord’s people were prophets, that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!” ³⁰ Then Moses returned to the camp, *both* he and the elders of Israel.

²⁶ But two men had remained in the camp; the name of the one was Eldad, and the name of the other, Medad. And the Spirit rested upon them (and they were among those who had been registered, but had not gone out to the tent), and they prophesied in the camp.

We don't know why these two were not with the others before the Tent of Meeting that was outside the camp but their absence did not prevent them from receiving the Spirit and the gift of prophesy.

²⁸ Then Joshua the son of Nun, the personal servant of Moses from his youth, responded and said, “My lord Moses, restrain them.

The first mention of Joshua was in Exodus 17 when Moses chose Joshua to lead the battle against Amalek. Joshua was 38 years old at that time.

When it says he was the servant of Moses from his youth what age does this indicate? If he was 16 at that time then he had been the servant of Moses for 22 years. Now he has been the servant of Moses for 23 years.

It is obvious that he looked up to Moses, the great prophet of God, but his desire to limit the Spirit of God to work in others was not right.

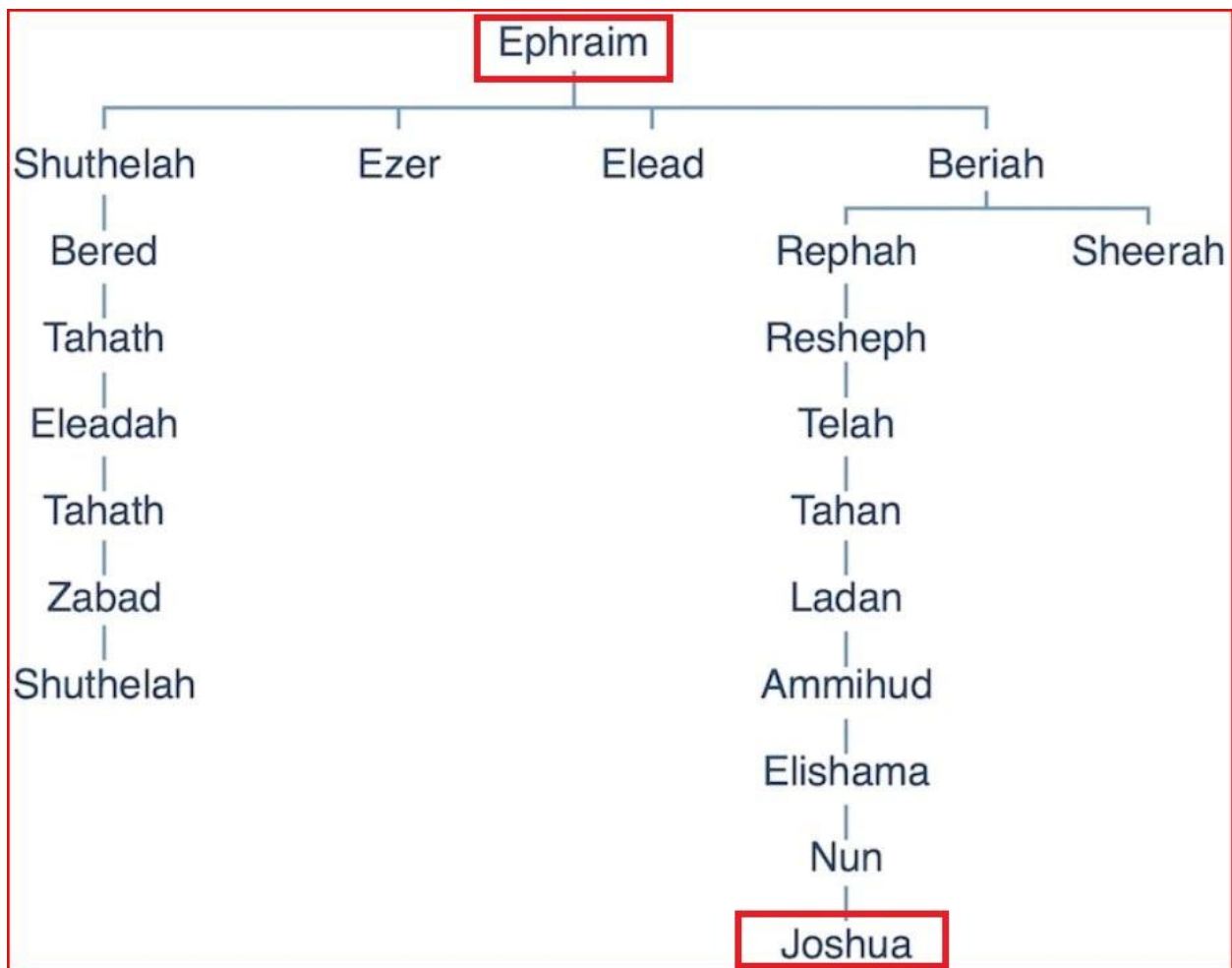
The disciples of John the Baptist were jealous for their leader and they complained about the Lord's disciples because they were baptizing more people than the followers of John. Their jealousy was not warranted either.

See John 3:25-30

²⁵ Then a matter of dispute developed on the part of John's disciples with a Jew about purification. ²⁶ And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified—behold, He is baptizing and all *the people* are coming to Him." ²⁷ John replied, "A person can receive not even one thing unless it has been given to him from heaven. ²⁸ You yourselves are my witnesses that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent ahead of Him.' ²⁹ He who has the bride is the groom; but the friend of the groom, who stands and listens to him, rejoices greatly because of the groom's voice. So this joy of mine has been made full. ³⁰ He must increase, but I must decrease.

Joshua came from the tribe of Ephraim

See chart 1110



Ephraim was born around 1710 BC and Joshua in 1485BC. There were 10 generations between Ephraim and Joshua and a total of 225 years.

²⁹ But Moses said to him, “Are you jealous for my sake? If only all the Lord’s people were prophets, that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!” ³⁰ Then Moses returned to the camp, both he and the elders of Israel.

Moses would have been delighted to see the Spirit of God given to any person that repents of their sins and are baptized. We are privileged to live in the last days.

Here we see that Moses had been at the tent of meeting (his home outside the camp) not at the Tabernacle.

Verses 31 - 35

³¹ Now a wind burst forth from the Lord and it brought quail from the sea, and dropped *them* beside the camp, about a day’s journey on this *side* and a day’s journey on the other *side* all around the camp, and about two cubits *deep* on the surface of the ground. ³² And the people spent all that day, all night, and all the next day, and they gathered the quail (the one who gathered least gathered ten homers) and spread *them* out for themselves all around the camp. ³³ While the meat was still between their teeth, before it was chewed, the anger of the Lord was kindled against the people, and the Lord struck the people with a very severe plague. ³⁴ So that place was named Kibroth-hattaavah, because there they buried the people who had been greedy. ³⁵ From Kibroth-hattaavah the people set out for Hazeroth, and they remained at Hazeroth.

³¹ Now a wind burst forth from the Lord and it brought quail from the sea, and dropped *them* beside the camp, about a day’s journey on this *side* and a day’s journey on the other *side* all around the camp, and about two cubits deep on the surface of the ground.

God often uses a natural agency (because we live in a physical world) to accomplish His will but the event is still miraculous.

The supernatural elements appear in the timing, scope and unusual nature of the event.

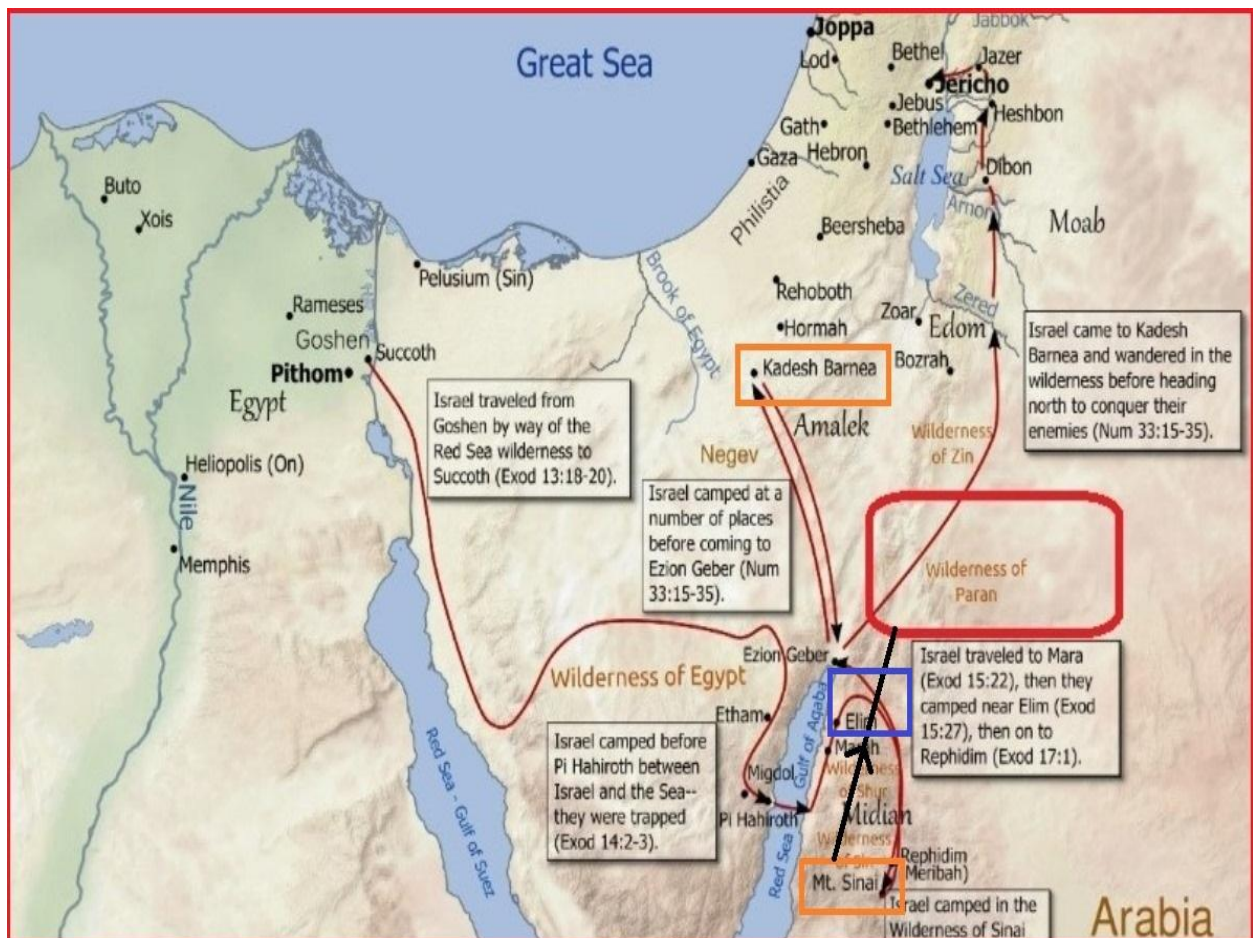
1. The timing does not happen by chance, but was determined by God.
2. The number of quail is far beyond any natural occurrence.
3. The distance they flew may have been unusual depending on the breed of quail that were involved.

The text says that the quail came from the Sea. This would have been the Dead Sea. Most breeds of quail normally only fly short distances, maybe 100 yards when they are trying to escape danger but there are some breeds that are migratory and can travel long distances.

The distance they would have had to fly included the following:

1. From the Dead Sea to the camp (at least 10 miles).
2. The entire width of the camp (probably 10 miles).
3. Some of the quail had to fly a day's journey beyond the camp (at least 10 miles).

See pic 1115 The area the birds covered is in blue



Just as a reminder, Israel had left Sinai in chapter 10 verse 12 and the people had set out for the wilderness of Paran. Here in chapter 11 they are on their way to the wilderness of Paran when some Israelites complained about their meager diet. At the end of chapter 12 Israel will come to the Wilderness of Paran.

³² **And the people spent all that day, all night, and all the next day, and they gathered the quail (the one who gathered least gathered ten homers) and spread *them* out for themselves all around the camp.**

Ten homers are thought to be equivalent to 60 bushels. Verse 31 says the quail were about two cubits *deep* (3 feet deep) on the surface of the ground, and here in verse 32 it says it took 36 hours to gather all the birds. We should also remember that the 60 bushels was the least amount gathered by one person.

It should be mentioned that some of the drawings of this event are less than inspiring.

See pic 1120



A picture with the people waist deep in birds would be more appropriate. And kids would probably find that picture a lot more interesting than the one above.

³³ **While the meat was still between their teeth, before it was chewed, the anger of the Lord was kindled against the people, and the Lord struck the people with a very severe plague.**

A year earlier, God was willing to overlook their murmuring because they were in need. Their daily supply of manna had not started yet and they were hungry. But now they cried for meat, not from need, but out of desire for something different.

³⁴ **So that place was named Kibroth-hattaavah, because there they buried the people who had been greedy.**

Kibroth-hattaavah means graves of lust. We don't know how many died but we do know it was only those who were demanding more than they really needed.

Contrary to the movie, Wall Street, greed is not good.