

# Ezekiel 4:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And thy meat which thou shalt eat shall be by weight, twenty shekels a day: from time to time shalt thou eat it.

## Analysis

**And thy meat which thou shalt eat shall be by weight, twenty shekels a day: from time to time shalt thou eat it.** The rationing becomes precise—twenty shekels weight (approximately 8 ounces or 230 grams) of the mixed grain bread daily, eaten at specific intervals (me'et le-et, מֵעַת לְעֵת, "from time to time"). This meager portion, about one-third of normal daily intake, ensures survival but creates constant hunger. The weighing (mishqal, מִשְׁקָל) emphasizes scarcity—every morsel must be carefully measured and conserved.

Eating "from time to time" suggests scheduled, limited meals rather than eating freely when hungry. This regulated scarcity mimics siege conditions where food reserves diminish daily, requiring strict rationing to extend supplies. The specificity of "twenty shekels" demonstrates God's sovereign control even over judgment's details—nothing is random or excessive; everything is precisely measured according to divine justice.

Spiritually, this rationing illustrates the soul-starvation that results from rejecting God's word. Amos prophesied: "Behold, the days are coming...when I will send a famine on the land, not a famine of bread...but of hearing the words of the LORD" (Amos 8:11). Physical hunger during siege symbolizes deeper spiritual famine—when people reject God's abundant provision, He gives them the scarcity they've chosen. Only in Christ do we find the abundant life and spiritual food that truly satisfies (John 10:10).

## Historical Context

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Twenty shekels (approximately 8 ounces) of bread daily was barely subsistence level. Normal daily food consumption in ancient Israel was approximately 2-3 pounds of bread equivalent plus other foods. Ezekiel's ration represented roughly one-quarter of normal intake, enough to prevent starvation but causing chronic hunger and malnutrition.

During the actual siege of Jerusalem, rations became far worse. Jeremiah records that "the famine was severe in the city, and there was no bread for the people of the land" (Jeremiah 52:6). Archaeological evidence from destroyed houses in Jerusalem shows grinding stones still in place, suggesting people were grinding anything edible trying to make bread. Human remains from this period show signs of severe malnutrition and disease.

The measured, weighed rations in Ezekiel's sign-act would signal to the exiles that Jerusalem faced systematic, prolonged deprivation, not brief hardship. The specific measurement also prevented Ezekiel from cheating or supplementing—he must live exactly as prescribed, fully embodying the message. His hunger pangs became tangible proclamation of Jerusalem's coming suffering.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

## Study Questions

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1. How does the precision of God's measured judgment reveal His perfect justice?
2. What does chronic hunger during judgment teach about the emptiness of life apart from God's provision?
3. In what ways do we experience spiritual famine when we neglect God's word as our primary sustenance?

## Interlinear Text

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וּמֵאֲכָלָךְ	אֲשֶׁר	תֹּאכְלֶנּוּ:	בְּמִשְׁקָל וְלֹ	עֲשֹׂר יָם	שְׁקָל
And thy meat	H834	shalt thou eat	shall be by weight	twenty	shekels
H3978		H398	H4946	H6242	H8255
לִי יוֹם	עַד	עַד	תֹּאכְלֶנּוּ:		
a day	from time	H5704	from time	shalt thou eat	
H3117	H6256		H6256	H398	

## Additional Cross-References

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**Leviticus 26:26** (Parallel theme): And when I have broken the staff of your bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall deliver you your bread again by weight: and ye shall eat, and not be satisfied.