

# Ezekiel 4:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Take thou also unto thee wheat, and barley, and beans, and lentiles, and millet, and fitches, and put them in one vessel, and make thee bread thereof, according to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon thy side, three hundred and ninety days shalt thou eat thereof.

## Analysis

**Take thou also unto thee wheat, and barley, and beans, and lentiles, and millet, and fitches, and put them in one vessel, and make thee bread thereof, according to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon thy side, three hundred and ninety days shalt thou eat thereof.** The bread recipe symbolizes siege desperation—mixing grains and legumes that should never be combined reveals scarcity forcing people to consume whatever remains available. Wheat (chittim, חיטים) and barley (se'orim, שעורים) were primary grains; beans (pol, פול), lentils (adashim, עדשים), millet (dochan, דוחן), and fitches/spelt (kussemet, קסם) were secondary foods normally fed to animals or poor people.

"Put them in one vessel" (keli echad, כל אחד) indicates indiscriminate mixing that violates normal food customs and potentially ritual cleanliness. This hodgepodge bread represents the defilement and degradation of siege conditions. What would normally be unthinkable becomes necessary for survival. The 390 days duration emphasizes the prolonged nature of suffering—not brief hardship but extended deprivation.

Symbolically, the mixed bread illustrates how judgment strips away normal comforts and proprieties. What Israel took for granted—abundant food, dietary

preferences, ritual purity—would vanish during siege. Theologically, this demonstrates sin's consequences affecting every area of life, including basic sustenance. When covenant relationship breaks, God's provision ceases. This points toward Christ as the true Bread of Life (John 6:35)—only He provides spiritual sustenance that satisfies eternally.

## Historical Context

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Ancient Israelite diet normally consisted of wheat or barley bread, supplemented with vegetables, fruits, and occasional meat. Mixing multiple grains and legumes for bread was abnormal, indicating poverty or emergency. During siege, Jerusalem's food supplies would progressively diminish, forcing residents to consume everything available regardless of quality or customary standards.

Historical accounts of ancient sieges describe horrific food scarcity. Josephus recorded the Roman siege of Jerusalem (70 AD) where people ate leather, grass, and even resorted to cannibalism. Lamentations confirms similar horrors during Babylon's siege: "The hands of compassionate women have boiled their own children; they became their food" (Lamentations 4:10).

Ezekiel's mixed grain bread, though unappetizing, was far preferable to what Jerusalem actually experienced. The prophet's sign-act warned of coming deprivation but couldn't fully convey the siege's ultimate horror. The exiles watching Ezekiel's limited rations should have understood: if the prophet suffers this symbolically, Jerusalem's reality will be far worse. Tragically, many refused to believe until judgment arrived.

## Related Passages

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**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**Psalm 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

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

## Study Questions

1. How does the degradation of siege bread illustrate sin's comprehensive destructive effects on life?
2. What does God's provision of subsistence food (however unpalatable) during judgment reveal about His mercy even in discipline?
3. How does this passage point toward Christ as the true Bread who satisfies our deepest spiritual hunger?

## Interlinear Text

וְאַתָּה תִּקְחֶנָּה לְבָנָה וְעֵדֶשׂ יִם and lentiles and millet	H859	Take	H0	thou also unto thee wheat and fitches	H2406	חַטָּאת יִם and beans	H8184	וְאַתָּה תִּקְרְבֶּנָה אֶת־בְּכָל־אֹתָם and barley	H6321		
וְעֵדֶשׂ יִם and beans	H3947										
אֶת־בְּכָל־אֹתָם them in one vessel											
אֶת־בְּכָל־אֹתָם them in one vessel	H5742	and lentiles	H1764	and millet	H3698	וְכַפְרָמִים and fitches	H5414	וְנִתְתַּתָּה and put	H853	בְּכָל־אֹתָם vessel	H259
וְעֵדֶשׂ יִם and beans	H3627										
וְעֵדֶשׂ יִם and beans	H213	and make	H853	and make	H0	לְבָנָה thee bread	H3899	לְלִקְמָה thereof according to the number	H4557	מִסְפָּר days	H3117
וְעֵדֶשׂ יִם and beans	H6213										
מֵאַת שָׁלַשׁ hundred	H3967	מֵאַת שָׁלַשׁ hundred	H7969	אֶצְבָּע upon thy side	H6654	אֶצְבָּע upon thy side	H5921	שָׁוֹכֵב that thou shalt lie	H7901	אֶצְבָּע upon thy side	H834
מֵאַת שָׁלַשׁ hundred	H3117										
וְעֵדֶשׂ יִם and beans	H398	תִּאְכְּלֶנָה shalt thou eat	H398	תִּאְכְּלֶנָה shalt thou eat	H8673	וְעֵדֶשׂ יִם and beans	H398	תִּאְכְּלֶנָה shalt thou eat	H398	וְעֵדֶשׂ יִם and beans	H3117

## Additional Cross-References

**Isaiah 28:25** (Parallel theme): When he hath made plain the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the fitches, and scatter the cummin, and cast in the principal wheat and the appointed barley and the rie in their place?

**Ezekiel 4:13** (Parallel theme): And the LORD said, Even thus shall the children of Israel eat their defiled bread among the Gentiles, whither I will drive them.

**Ezekiel 4:16** (Parallel theme): Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, behold, I will break the staff of bread in Jerusalem: and they shall eat bread by weight, and with care; and they shall drink water by measure, and with astonishment:

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