

# 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, חִטִּים) and barley (se'orim, שְׂעִרִים) were primary grains; beans (pol, פּוֹל), lentils (adashim, אֲדָשִׁים), millet (dochan, דִּחָן), and fitches/spelt (kussemet, כִּסְמֶת) were secondary foods normally fed to animals or poor people.

"Put them in one vessel" (keli echad, כֵּלִי אֶחָד) 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

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

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

## Study Questions

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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

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וּפְּלִי וְשַׁעֲרֵי	וְחִטִּין	לָךְ	קַח	וְאֵת הַ
and barley	thou also unto thee wheat		Take	
H8184	H2406	H0	H3947	H859
וְאֵת דָּ	בְּכֵל יְ	אוֹתָם	וְנָתַתָּה	וְכֶסֶם יִם
them in one	vessel		and put	and fitches
H259	H3627	H853	H5414	H3698
וְאֵת הַ	לָךְ	לָךְ	אוֹתָם	וְעָשִׂיתָ
and make	thee bread	thereof according to the number	days	
H6213	H3899	H4557	H3117	H853
מֵאֹת שְׁלֹשׁ	צִדְךָ	עַל	שׁוֹכֵב	אֵת הַ
three	upon thy side		that thou shalt lie	
H7969	H6654	H5921	H7901	H859
וְתֹשַׁע יָמִים	תֹּאכְלֶנּוּ:	יְ	דַיִם	וְתֹשַׁע יָמִים
and ninety	shalt thou eat	days		
H8673	H398	H3117		

## Additional Cross-References

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**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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