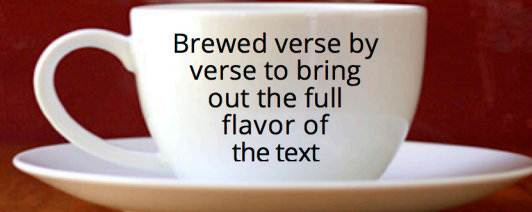


CuppaJ Cafe

Daily devotions
from God's Word...



cuppajcafe.org



The Grind

Savor the taste of our previous brew



Since everything in the Bible leads into and prepares the way for what comes after it, refresh yesterday's Brew to let the previous passage get you ready for today's verses. Though you should have already explored the passage, personally with Jesus, here is the heart of what we saw, together.

In the previous passage, verses 9-13, Ezekiel demonstrates how harsh the siege will be from the scarcity of food and the need to eat unclean things.

9 While a linking word, "**now**," enhances the connection, this passage continues the preparations from the previous one. After the LORD dealt with one of the prophet's natural needs to help him dramatize the rebels' helplessness, He now orders Ezekiel to take care of another natural necessity: diet. Bread was the main food of people in biblical times. Jews normally baked loaves of wheat or barley. The LORD tells Ezekiel to collect other ingredients, native to Babylon, and to mix them together to symbolize contamination from the exile. In other words, life outside the Promised Land exposes people to foods inconsistent with the God-given diet. The "**storage jar**" represents a long-term situation, defined here as the entire "**390 days**" that, Ezekiel "**will be lying on** [his] **side**." Some think that Ezekiel mentions only the 390 days because it includes the other 40 days. But, since the drama has yet to begin, the LORD simply mentions the 390 days because they come before the 40 days, when Ezekiel's actions representing the siege and exile, start and the symbolic diet will commence.

"Now At the present time, or before the drama begins

go and get some wheat, barley, beans, lentils, millet, and emmer wheat, proceed and round up the following ingredients: beans, lentils, millet and spelt to make up for any shortage of the usual wheat and barley

and mix them together in a storage jar. Then blend and keep them all for future use in a piece of pottery with a lid

Use them to make bread for yourself Make them your standard diet

during the 390 days you will be lying on your side. Throughout the 390 day/years you will symbolically stretch out on the ground

10 Drawing on the context, the NLT translates "you will eat 8 oz. of food every day" as "**ration this out to yourself, eight ounces of food for each day**." Cut off from obtaining or receiving fresh supplies, cities under siege conserved food and water by allowing fixed amounts for each person. Contrasting sparse food supplies during the exile with the plentiful, natural resources of the Promised Land, the LORD orders Ezekiel to limit his intake to the weight of 20 shekels, or approximately 8 oz., hardly enough to sustain an adult who needs about 2 lbs. daily. To underscore the insufficient nourishment, the LORD adds, "**eat it at set times**," to discourage snacking between meals.

Ration this out to yourself, Limit yourself

eight ounces of food for each day, to half a pound of the mix per day

and eat it at set times. What's more, don't snack between meals.

11 The LORD turns Ezekiel's attention to the other most important element of diet: liquids. "Then," or after he sets aside 8 oz. of solid food, the prophet needs to "**measure out a jar of water for each day.**" The word "jar," translates the equivalent of "**about two-thirds of a quart** or, [a sixth of a hin, roughly a pint and a half] **of water,**" way less than the minimal daily requirement of about two gallons per adult. To underscore insufficient supplies, the LORD adds the warning, "**drink it at set times,**" to discourage quenching thirst whenever they pleased and make the water last. Jeremiah's eyewitness account of the exile corroborates what we read here. Lamentations reports that during the siege, folks in Jerusalem were reduced to cannibalism, eating their babies (Lamentations 2:20) and dropping dead in their tracks from either thirst or starvation (Lamentations 2:21).

Then Next

measure out a jar of water for each day, allow a pint and a half of water per person, per day

and drink it at set times. What's more, stick to a schedule for sipping it

12 Though wheat tasted better, barley initially dominated Israel's diet "because it matured earlier and tolerated harsher conditions than wheat, growing in areas with less rainfall and poorer soils, such as the northern Negev and the hill country." With a higher yield potential and resistance to insect infestation, "it ripened a month earlier than wheat and was thus available to replenish supplies used up during the winter sooner than wheat, and also provided some food security if the more vulnerable wheat crop was poor or failed" (Wikipedia, "Ancient Israelite Cuisine"). Ezekiel is supposed to mix the ingredients in v. 9 and bake it to resemble "barley cakes," made of barley flour and water, formed by hand into small round shapes – another way of saying that this new blend will replace the old, and displace the old lawful way of life.

To drive home the severity of the hardship to come, Ezekiel must "**bake it over a fire using dried human dung as fuel and then eat the bread...while all the people are watching.**" Underscoring departure from divine law, the LORD tells Ezekiel to bake the cakes over unprecedented fire fueled by human waste and then to eat it. In other words, to meet his basic human needs during the siege and presumably the exile, Ezekiel must do things too disgusting to imagine. While people in the ANE commonly used dried animal excrement in the place of wood, the Law called on God's people to bury their waste (Deuteronomy 23:13) before it could dry out in the sun and Lev. 7:21 actually forbade eating anything contaminated by human uncleanness. So, more than shortages of approved fuel, this verse accents how rebels in exile will be forced to disobey the Law in order to survive, setting the stage for the LORD's prayer where Jesus told us to pray, "**Your Kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven**" (Mt. 6:10). The Master instructed us to express our longing for God to regain complete control over creation and re-install His government on earth, thus implying personal dissatisfaction with the inconsistent and self-destructive reign of the enemy who urges us to indulge self rather than obey God. To remain faithful to God in a fallen world requires sacrifice and inconvenience – living in it, without being part of it.

Eventually, those who remained in Babylon did develop different approaches to Judaism from those who returned to Palestine. Babli, the body of Jewish civil and ceremonial law, or Talmud produced in Babylon promotes another lifestyle than Yerushalmi, its much shorter Palestinian rival.

Prepare and eat this food Put on a show for the rebels. Cook and consume these unclean ingredients

as you would barley cakes. as though they were what you used to eat

While all the people are watching, when you have all their attention

bake it over a fire using dried human dung as fuel roast it over an open fire that burns dried human waste

and then eat the bread." When it's ready, consume it

13 At the conclusion of these instructions, the LORD sums up the passage, saying: "**This is how Israel will eat defiled bread in the Gentile lands to which I will banish them!**" Separated from God by their sin, the rebels

will find themselves in surroundings inferior to the Promised Land and experience a serious decline in the quality of life, represented by the expression, “**eat defiled bread in the Gentile lands to which I will banish them.**” The very law they disdained and disobeyed in the Land had actually protected them from the evils of the world. Sent to lands that ignore the true God, the people will suffer similar problems and be exposed to the same dangers as their neighbors. So, Jeremiah warns the exiles: “*work for the peace and prosperity of the city where I sent you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, for its welfare will determine your welfare*” (29:7).

Then After that

the LORD said, the Eternal One, told Ezekiel

“**This is how** [^{the sons/}children of] **Israel** What I’ve just described for you is a picture of Israel’s descendants

will eat defiled bread consuming unclean food [living compromised, inferior lives]

in the Gentile lands to which I will banish them!” in the places outside the Promised Land where I will exile them



Now
Serving

The Brew

Let us pour you a fresh cup, ground verse-by-verse from today’s passage

In today’s passage, verses 14-17, the LORD allows Ezekiel to stay pure. So, please open your Bibles to Ezekiel Chapter 4, and let me pour you a hot CuppaJesus from today’s brew, starting with v.14.



WHAT TO LOOK FOR TODAY

Here are the main items in the text that will lead you to its understanding.

	Verse 14	Verse 15	Verse 16	Verse 17
Links	Then, for, until now, or	All right, instead of	Then, and 2x	And 2x
Persons	I 6x (Zeke), O Sovereign LORD	The LORD, you, your (Zeke)	He, I (LORD), me, Son of man (Zeke), the people (Rebs)	People, one another, they, their (Rebs)
Places	From (the time)		In Jerusalem	At (one another), in (terror), under (their punishment)
Things	Human dung, the time, a child, any animal that, sickness, other animals, any meat, the law	Bread, cow dung, human dung	Food, it 2x, great care, the water, drop by drop, dismay	Food, water, terror, punishment
Words	Must be defiled by using, have never been defiled before, was, have never eaten 2x, died of, killed by, forbidden by	Said, may bake with	Told, will make very scarce, will be weighed out with, eaten fearfully, will be rationed out, will drink with	Lacking, will look, will waste away

Pay careful attention to every item as you follow today’s devotional in your study Bible. We have already grouped them by colors in “**Today’s Text**,” so you can follow the writer’s flow of thought for yourself. Capture and grasp what he is trying to tell you with matching color pencils to draw lines connecting items to others in the same color-family, and a black pencil to cross-link items from different color-families that still have something to do with one another. Use circles, boxes, triangles, etc. to identify topics and themes (triangles, for instance, might represent the Trinity). Also mark with asterisks, etc., the ones you need to look up later for more information or greater details.

TODAY'S TEXT

NEW LIVING TRANSLATION

14 **Then I** said, "O Sovereign LORD, must I be defiled by using human dung? For I have never been defiled before. From the time I was a child until now I have never eaten any animal that died of sickness or was killed by other animals. I have never eaten any meat forbidden by the law."

15 "All right," the LORD said. "You may bake your bread with cow dung instead of human dung."

16 **Then he** told me, "Son of man, I will make food very scarce in Jerusalem. It will be weighed out with great care and eaten fearfully. The water will be rationed out drop by drop, and the people will drink it with dismay.

17 Lacking food and water, people will look at one another in terror, and they will waste away under their punishment.

THE EXPANDED BIBLE

14 **But I** said, "No [Ah], Lord God! I have never been made unclean [defiled myself; ^critually]. From the time I was young until now I've never eaten anything that died by itself [naturally; ^ca carcass] or was torn [mauled] by animals [wild beasts]. Unclean [Impure; ^critually] meat has never entered my mouth."

15 "Very well," he said. "Then I will give you cow's dung instead of human dung to use for your fire to bake your bread."

16 **He also** said to me, "Human [^TSon of man; 2:1], I am going to cut off the supply of bread to Jerusalem. They will eat the bread that is measured out to them, and they will worry as they eat [eat anxiously]. They will drink water that is measured out to them, and they will be in shock [terror; dismay] as they drink it.

17 This is because bread and water will be hard to find [^cbecause of the siege]. The people will be shocked [terrified; dismayed] at the sight of each other, and they will become weak [waste away] because of their sin [punishment; iniquity].

THE SCRIPTURES 1998

14 **Then I** said, "Ah, Master יהוה! See, I have never defiled myself from my youth till now. I have never eaten what died of itself or was torn by beasts, nor has unclean meat ever come into my mouth."

15 **And He** said to me, "See, I am giving you the dung of cattle instead of human dung, and you shall prepare your bread over it."

16 **And He** said to me, "Son of man, see, I am going to cut off the supply of bread in Yerushalayim, and they shall eat bread by weight and with fear, and drink water by measure and with dread,

17 so that they lack bread and water, and shall be appalled with one another, and be consumed in their crookedness."

THE NET BIBLE

14 **And I** said, "Ah, sovereign LORD, I have never been ceremonially defiled before. I have never eaten a carcass or an animal torn by wild beasts; from my youth up, unclean meat has never entered my mouth."

15 **So he** said to me, "All right then, I will substitute cow's manure instead of human excrement. You will cook your food over it."

16 **Then he** said to me, "Son of man, I am about to remove the bread supply in Jerusalem. They will eat their bread ration anxiously, and they will drink their water ration in terror

17 because they will lack bread and water. Each one will be terrified, and they will rot for their iniquity.

TODAY'S DEVOTIONAL

14 "Then" or "after" the LORD summed up the previous passage as a preview of the exiles eating "defiled bread" in colonies outside of Palestine, Ezekiel protested defiling himself for or with them. Previously undefiled by food as part of his priestly upbringing, he pleads with God to let him stay undefiled. By symbolically bearing the sins of the northern and southern kingdoms, Ezekiel acted the part of Isaiah's Suffering Servant in the drama of salvation. Pointing forward to Christ, the innocent Savior, he now wants to portray himself as the undefiled, "blemish-free, spotless Lamb of God" (1 Peter 1:19), who "knew no sin yet became sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Then After (being told that the exiles will eat defiled bread)

I said, "O Sovereign LORD, I, Ezekiel, cried out, "Ow, Eternal One,

must I be defiled by using human dung? I don't have to contaminate myself with human waste, do I?

For Because

I have never been defiled before. I, Ezekiel have always been religiously pure (or, I have never disqualified myself from participating in any sacred event)

From the time I was a child until now ever since I was born, or all my life

I have never eaten any animal that died of sickness or was killed by other animals. I have never eaten any meat forbidden by the law. Neither diseased flesh, the carcass of a predator, or animals You, personally declared unclean has ever crossed my lips"

15 The LORD agrees with Ezekiel. The words "all right" express the Eternal One's willingness to dialogue with the prophet concerning his personal state as he carries out his divine representative task. The LORD arranged the drama and chose Ezekiel to play this part, knowing that his heartfelt desire to remain pure would fit his role as a stand-in for the Suffering Servant. So, the LORD grants the prophet permission to "bake your bread with cow dung instead of human dung." While "human dung" would have been completely inappropriate, the use of "cow dung" is still unseemly enough to get across the point of the drama: life in exile is impure, and so inferior to life in the Promised Land. At the same time, like Moses willing to die for the sinners in the valley below, Ezekiel's protest for purity offers a satisfactory preview of Messiah Jesus.

"All right," the LORD said. "Very well," replied the Eternal One

"You may bake your bread with cow dung instead of human dung." "You, Ezekiel, have my permission to roast your grains with bovine rather than human waste"

16 The word "then" carries the sense of "nevertheless," or "in spite of that." The LORD may have granted Ezekiel's request, but He has no intention of sparing the people from the consequences of life outside the Promised Land. Separating Ezekiel from the rest as "Son of man," or descendant of Adam and part of the fallen race, while the others are descendants of Israel who have betrayed their illustrious ancestor and rebelled against God, the LORD reaffirms what He will do to the rebels. He fully intends to make food, "very scarce in Jerusalem," so that "It will be weighed out with great care." Unsure of the supply, the food will be "eaten fearfully," as though each meal could be their last. As for water, it "will be rationed out drop by drop," as if it could run out at any time. The exiles "will drink it with dismay," disturbed by the thought they could die of thirst.

Then he told me, "Son of man, In spite of the concession I made to you, personally, the Eternal One told me, descendant of Adam (but not a rebellious descendant of Israel)

I will make food very scarce in Jerusalem. I, the Eternal One will make it almost impossible to find food in the Holy City

It will be weighed out with great care What you can find will be micromanaged to the exact same share

and so that

eaten fearfully. The exiles will eat as though it were their last meal

The water will be rationed out drop by drop, As for clear natural refreshment, it will be distributed drip by drip

and so that

the people will drink it with dismay. The exiles will sip it as though they might die of thirst

17 In the absence of a linking word, Ezekiel connects v.17 to v.16 strictly by context. The words "**lacking**" and "**waste away**" continue and climax the shortage begun by the terms "**very scarce**" and "**rationed**" in the previous verse. The word "**terror**," takes the nervousness and distress of "**fearfully**" and "**dismay**" to the extreme. In this way, the LORD explains both the purpose for the insufficiency of supplies and the outcome of it. It will replace the arrogance of false security with humility of the rebels and bring them to the ruin they deserve. Instead of strength in numbers, the rebels "**will look at one another in terror**," unable to find peace. In place of the prosperity of the Promised Land, the exiles '**will waste away under their punishment**.' Since the wages of sin is death, the expression "**waste away**," aptly describes the decline and deterioration from the siege and exile as what the rebels have earned for their immorality. [cut-off]

Lacking food and water, Deficient in basic resources

people will look at one another in terror, the exiles will look stunned at each other

and at the same time

they will waste away under their punishment. They grow progressively weaker and gaunt – the natural outcome of their immorality.



A Tastier Cuppa

Let Jesus pour you a fuller bodied, more flavorful Cuppa from today's brew

Well, we hope you enjoyed this morning's Cuppa for the Day, brewed verse-by-verse to bring out the full-flavor of the text. Now it's your turn to explore the passage for yourself—to make this study good to the last drop. Remember, you haven't really studied the Bible, God's *Written Word*—until it connects you with Jesus, God's *Living Word*. Then Jesus, the true Teacher can customize the text, so every word comes across written just for you. This morning's Cuppa is just a taste of what's in the text—the starting point for a deeper learning experience with Jesus. So, go ahead; spend time alone with Him to go over this passage together. Let Jesus pour a tastier Cuppa from the same brew, for you, today. Use the following form to jot down whatever Jesus shares with you.



Bible Study

1. Open your Bible to today's passage and **review** today's brew.
2. **Savor** the passage, one verse at a time, **listening** for God's still small voice.
3. **Follow** the trail you marked in each verse, **pause** to look up the terms you flagged for further consideration, and **write** whatever the Spirit brings to mind.

v.14

v.15

v.16

v.17