

Cuppa 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 14-17, the LORD allows Ezekiel to stay pure.

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" (1Peter 1:19), who "knew no sin yet became sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God" (2Corinthians 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.



Now
Serving

The Brew

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

In today’s passage, verses 1-4, Ezekiel illustrates Jerusalem’s destruction after the siege and the scattering of its citizens. So, please open your Bibles to Ezekiel Chapter 5, and let me pour you a hot CuppaJesus from today’s brew, starting with v.1.



WHAT TO LOOK FOR TODAY

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

| | Verse 1 | Verse 2 | Verse 3 | Verse 4 |
|----------------|---|---|----------------------------------|---|
| Links | And 2x, as | After, and, for | And | Then 2x, and 2x |
| Persons | Son of man, your (Zeke) | Your 2x, (Zeke), I, my (LORD), people (Rebs) | Your (Zeke) | All of [the descendants] of, Israel |
| Places | Into (three equal parts) | At the center of, Jerusalem, there, across (your map), to (the wind) | (Tie it) up, in (your robe) | Out, into, up, from there |
| Things | A sharp sword, it, a razor, head, beard, a scale, the hair, three equal parts | A third of it, map of, the siege, it 2x, another third, map, a sword, the last third, the wind, the sword | Just a bit of the hair, it, robe | Some of these hairs, them, 2x, the fire, a fire |
| Words | Take, use 2x, to shave, to weigh | Place, acting out, burn, scatter 2x, chop with, will scatter with | Keep, tie | Take, throw, burning, will spread, destroy |

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

1 "Son of man, take a sharp sword and use it as a razor to shave your head and beard. Use a scale to weigh the hair into three equal parts.

2 Place a third of it at the center of your map of Jerusalem. After acting out the siege, burn it there. Scatter another third across your map and chop it with a sword. Scatter the last third to the wind, for I will scatter my people with the sword.

3 Keep just a bit of the hair and tie it up in your robe.

4 Then take some of these hairs out and throw them into the fire, burning them up. A fire will then spread from there [this remnant] and destroy all [the descendants] of Israel.

THE EXPANDED BIBLE

1 "Now, human [^Tson of man; 2:1], take a sharp sword, and use it like a barber's razor to shave your head and beard. Then take scales and weigh and divide the hair.

2 Burn one-third with fire in the middle of [inside] the city when the days of the attack on Jerusalem [⁻siege] are over. Then take one-third and cut it up with the knife [sword] all around the city. And scatter one-third to the wind. This is how I will chase them with a sword [unsheathed sword].

3 Also take a few of these hairs and tie [bind; tuck] them in the folds [edge] of your clothes.

4 Take a few more and throw them into the fire and burn them up. From there a fire will spread to all the people [⁻house] of Israel.

THE SCRIPTURES 1998

1 "And you, son of man, take a sharp sword, take it as a barber's razor, and you shall pass it over your head and your beard. And you shall take scales to weigh and divide the hair.

2 "Burn with fire one-third in the midst of the city when the days of the siege are completed. And you shall take one-third and strike around it with the sword, and scatter one-third in the wind. And I shall draw out a sword after them.

3 "And you shall take a few hairs from there and bind them in the edge of your garment.

4 "And take again some of them, and throw them into the midst of the fire, and burn them in the fire. From it a fire shall spread unto all the house of Yisra'el."

THE NET BIBLE

1 "As for you, son of man, take a sharp sword and use it as a barber's razor. Shave off some of the hair from your head and your beard. Then take scales and divide up the hair you cut off.

2 Burn a third of it in the fire inside the city when the days of your siege are completed. Take a third and slash it with a sword all around the city. Scatter a third to the wind, and I will unleash a sword behind them.

3 But take a few strands of hair from those and tie them in the ends of your garment.

4 Again, take more of them and throw them into the fire, and burn them up. From there a fire will spread to all the house of Israel.

TODAY'S DEVOTIONAL

Trouble is coming for the descendants of Israel, consistent with the funeral songs, words of sorrow, and pronouncements of doom in the scroll God gave Ezekiel to share with the people in 2:10, and previously prophesied by Isaiah (7:20). The drama that symbolized the disaster on its way to Jerusalem began in Chapter 4 and continues here. First, 4:1-3 made it clear that Jerusalem would undergo siege, then 4:4-8 showed it would last a long time, and finally 4:9-13 described how hard it would be on the people. While 4:14-17 spared Ezekiel from breaking the law, the LORD reaffirmed that the rest would suffer the full consequences of their sins.

Verses 1-4 divide into two main parts: verses 1, 2 describe the LORD's primary instructions to Ezekiel – shave your head and beard, collect the hairs, and divide them into three equal piles; while verses 3, 4 tell him to retrieve a few of the hairs from the third pile and deal with them according to further instructions.

1 The absence of a linking word connects this verse to the previous passage by context: the word "shave" continues the theme of rebels "wast[ing] away" because of their iniquities mentioned in v.17 with a twist. While "waste away" describes the decline and deterioration from the siege and exile that the rebels have earned for their immorality, the word "shave" symbolizes what will happen to the population of Jerusalem during the siege.

Ezekiel plays three parts in the divine drama to convey the full message God wants him to deliver. First, he represents the LORD, leading the siege against the people to punish them for their sins. Second, he substitutes for the people, enduring the consequences for their unlawfulness. Third, he stands for the suffering servant who will innocently bear the sins of the people so a few of them will survive. So, to separate him from the rebellious descendants of Israel as His fitting representative in this scene, the LORD calls Ezekiel "Son of man," a fallen descendant of Adam and orders him to "take a sharp sword and use it as a razor to shave your head and beard." To play his part, Ezekiel, a priest must violate a scriptural mandate for priests, not to "shave their heads or trim their beards" (Lev. 21:5). Evicted from the Promised Land, the people will end up in a world that wants nothing to do with God – that denies His jurisdiction and makes its own rules. So, just as Ezekiel had to break God's Law to demonstrate the fate of the people in verses 9-13, so now, he must also disregard God's commands to portray the fate of the rebels destined for exile. This also points to Christ, the Suffering Servant and a Nazirite (a word play on His coming from Nazareth; cf. Num. 6:1-21 and Mt. 2:23) also forbidden to use a razor anywhere on his body (cf. Samson, Jud. 13).

The “[sword](#)” must be “[sharp](#)” in order to simulate “[a razor](#)” that could cut-off his head-hair and chin-whiskers. The hairs stand for the population of Jerusalem, Israel’s head or chief logo, and shaving represents reducing it to baldness and bare skin – emptiness. A shaved head symbolized either mourning (Isa. 15:2; Jer. 48:37) or shame (2Sam. 10:4). Both senses apply here. As a priest would be shamed, by having his head publicly sheared before a mocking audience, so too would a holy city suffer shame for the evacuation of its citizens (paraphrased from Craigie. [Ezekiel](#), p.37). The LORD then ordered Ezekiel to divide the tresses and bristles that fell from his head and face, into three equal piles. A rough guess, however, won’t do, because God doesn’t deal with estimates. To assure accuracy, the prophet should “[use a scale to weigh the hair](#),” into perfect thirds.

“[Son of man](#), Descendant of Adam (separating him from the rebellious descendants of Israel)

[take a sharp sword](#) get a blade with edges able to slash through anything

[and](#) so

[use it as a razor](#) it will act like a barber’s straight cutter

[to shave your head and beard](#). And remove the hairs from your scalp and face

[Use a scale to weigh the hair](#) Instead of estimating, with the help of a balance, divide what you cut off [into three equal parts](#) into perfect thirds.

2 Verse 2 illustrates the fate of the three groups. The first third, “[at the center of your map](#) [or, model] [of Jerusalem](#),” represents people inside the city. The LORD tells Ezekiel to “[burn it there... after acting out the siege](#),” to show their fate at the end of the siege. Burning them up illustrates their doom, wiped out by the hardships within the city walls. The second third, “[scatter](#)[ed] [across your map and chopp](#)[ed] [with a sword](#) [like a military force cut to pieces, or destroyed in battle]” represents those who will die defending the city from its attackers. The final third, “[scatter](#)[ed, or thrown up into the air] [to](#) [be carried off by] [the wind](#),” represents those forced to flee in all directions for their lives, “[scatter](#)[ed, by the LORD, Himself] [with](#) [or, using] [the sword](#) [of their attackers]” at the city’s fall.

[Place a third of it at the center of your map of Jerusalem](#). Take one pile of hairs and put it in the middle of your 3D-model of Jerusalem under siege

[After acting out the siege, burn it there](#). Wait till the mock blockade is over and set it on fire within the city limits (to symbolize those who will die from the hardships of the siege)

[Scatter another third across your map](#) Sprinkle the second pile of hairs from one side of the entire model to the other

[and chop it with a sword](#). Then cut the hairs to bits with the blade you used to shave your head and beard (to symbolize those who will die fighting to defend the city from its attackers)

[Scatter the last third to the wind](#), Toss the last pile of hairs up in the air (so the wind can spread them like chaff)

[for I will scatter my people with the sword](#) because I, the Eternal One will chase and disperse my so-called people, or rebels who are trying to get away from their attackers

3 The LORD issues further instructions concerning the final third. Their story does not end with them on the run. The LORD demands that Ezekiel “[keep just a bit of the hair](#),” that he picks up from the ground those strands of hair that haven’t blown away, yet, and insert, or “[tie](#) [them] [up](#)” into the pouch of his robe, already pulled up from his ankles and tucked into his belt to prepare him for action (4:7). However, their fate is still not a settled matter.

[Keep just a bit of the hair](#) Save a few strands from the third pile

[and tie it up in your robe](#) then tuck them into the tunic pouch between your ankles and your waist

4 After he grabs a small batch of those fleeing from the overthrown city, Ezekiel must “**take some of these hairs out** [of his robe] **and throw them into the fire.**” In other words, some of those, who survived the blockade and escaped the fate of those who died during the siege will nevertheless suffer the same fate and perish with them. The LORD wants us to know that exile does not guarantee survival. Even there some will die from the hardships of life separated from God and the consequences of their immorality. Unfortunately, the NLT misses the point of the *second* line by substituting “**this remnant,**” for the original word, “**there.**” Instead of those destroyed by fire, the “**remnant**” refers to the ones permanently preserved in Ezekiel’s tunic – the ultimate survivors of exile, or separation from God.

To avoid any confusion, most Bibles translate the second line, “**From there a fire will spread to all the house** [or, rebellious descendants] **of Israel,**” so we will understand that, a fire will spread from those destroyed by fire in the first line, that will ultimately wipe out the whole house of Israel evicted from the land. In other words: as some of the exiles from fallen Jerusalem will meet the same end as those who died from the siege, so also eventually national Israel will share the same fate as the exiles, symbolically removed from Ezekiel’s robe and burned with fire. This is just a more aggressive way of saying that those who go into exile will “**waste away under their punishment**” (4:17), growing progressively weaker and gaunt as they suffer the natural outcome of their immorality. Throughout the NT age, natural Jews have an opportunity to believe in the LORD Jesus Christ and be saved, but Messiah’s remnant of Jews and Gentiles, the church has replaced national Israel as the true Israel of God (Gal. 6:16).

Then After that

take some of these hairs out remove some of the strands you originally tucked into your tunic pouch

and throw them into the fire, burning them up. As well as fling them into the fire burning the first pile so they burn, too (reduced to ashes, suffering the same fate as the first pile for their sins)

A fire will then spread from there That same fire will grow

and destroy all [the descendants] **of Israel.** until it annihilates all the rebels (every national Israelite is still under the same sentence of death as the people under siege to this very day)



A Tastier CuppaJ

Let Jesus pour you a fuller bodied, more flavorful CuppaJ from today’s brew

Well, we hope you enjoyed this morning’s CuppaJ 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 CuppaJ 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 CuppaJ 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.
