

Ezekiel Part 4 (Ezekiel 4)

1. As the book of Ezekiel often reminds us - God and Israel had a covenant relationship.
2. God always keeps His portion of the covenant - Israel did not.
3. Few have been asked to do more and give more in communicating God's message.
4. Unfortunately - one of the most difficult tasks - in every generation - is convincing people they are sinners.
5. Utilizing a brick, some dirt, and sticks - Ezekiel made a model of a siege that was coming against Jerusalem. (Ezekiel 4:1-3)
6. Using various objects - he set up fortifications around the city so nobody could get in or get out.
7. He built a ramp for scaling the walls, and he provided battering rams for breaking down the gates and the walls.
8. Imagine how shocked the people were when Ezekiel's face became hard and resolute and he placed a flat iron plate between his face and Jerusalem.
9. The iron plate symbolized the wall that stood between God and His people - He could no longer look on them with approval and blessing.
10. It's possible for people to rebel against God such a long time that all God can do is allow them to reap the consequences of their own sins.
11. They knew the terms of the covenant, and they knew that God had sent prophet after prophet to rebuke their idolatry. (2 Chronicles 36:11-21)
12. Ezekiel was commanded to lie on the ground at specified times during the day - facing the model he constructed of the siege of Jerusalem. (Ezekiel 4:4-8)
13. He was to be bound and his arm was to be bared. He had to eat the meager food described in verses 9-17.
14. He was to lie on his left side and then on his right side.
15. This symbolic act told the Jewish exiles why the Lord was allowing their holy city to be ravaged and ruined: the nation had sinned and their sins had caught up with them.
16. The binding of the prophet and the baring of his arm spoke of the future binding of the prisoners and the baring of God's arm in judgment.
17. The Lord explained to Ezekiel that each day represented a year in the sinful history of the Jewish nation, and he conveyed this fact to the people who watched him each day.
18. God had been long-suffering toward the sinful people of Judah, warning them and chastening them, but they would not remain true to Him.

19. **4:9–11** The extreme severity of conditions during the siege was enacted by the prophet during the 390 days he lay on his side.
20. He prepared a cake made of a mixture of six kinds of grain (v. 9). The combination of wheat, barley, beans, lentils, millet, and spelt is unusual but not prohibited by the Torah or by the Mishna.
21. The final product was a grade of flour inferior to pure wheat or barley flours. The mixture seems to portray a circumstance in which the people would mix anything edible due to the scarcity of the food.
22. The amount of this inferior flour was specified as twenty-shekel weight (v. 10). Shekels were coins, but they were weighed rather than counted. (An average shekel weight was 11.4 grams)
23. Ezekiel allotted himself about 230 grams of the inferior grade flour per day for food, the equivalent of about eight ounces.
24. He also rationed his daily intake of water just as it would be during an actual siege (v. 11). The water supply for Jerusalem, like many cities of the ancient Near East, was outside the city walls.
25. This made cities vulnerable during long periods of siege so water usually was rationed. A sixth of a hin would be between one-half and one liter per day.
26. The portion of food and water Ezekiel allowed himself was little more than starvation rations. The picture enacted by Ezekiel represented conditions during an actual siege.
27. These actions reinforced the message of the previous dramas, the siege of the clay brick and the laying on his side to portray the destruction of Jerusalem.
28. **4:12–15** The use of dried animal dung as fuel may seem unusual or even repulsive to Westerners, it was a common practice in the ancient Near East that continues to this day.
29. Human waste, however, was considered a defilement, and its use in such a manner was strictly prohibited. (Deuteronomy 23:9–14)
30. Having grown up in a priestly family and probably in training as a priest himself, Ezekiel was especially sensitive to this command to prepare a meal in such an unclean manner.
31. Meager rations prepared in an unclean manner presented a double lesson concerning the crisis conditions during the siege of Jerusalem.
32. Neglect of the word produced a famine (see Amos 8:11; Hos 4:6) both of food and of the knowledge of God and spiritual truths.
33. Second, the reaction of the prophet came not because of his view of the defilement of sin but because of his training as a priest.
34. **4:16–17** God specifically told Ezekiel that the meaning of his actions related to the severity of judgment.