

What are the modern equivalents of biblical weights and measures?

<https://www.gotquestions.org/biblical-weights-and-measures.html>

The use of weights and measurements was common in ancient times, just like it is today. The problem is that the words used for various measurements were usually specific to that culture. Today, most people don't know what a "shekel" is or what is the difference between a "furlong" and a "fathom." Some Bible translations have replaced the archaic words with modern equivalents or approximations. Other translations simply transliterate the Greek and Hebrew words for the measurements.

Below are several terms and their approximated equivalents in both metric and imperial measurements. Since some ancient terms varied by area, we have differentiated Greek and Hebrew measurements.

Weights:

Hebrew:

Talent (3,000 shekels or 60 minas, sometimes translated "100 pounds")

34.272 kg

75.6 lbs

Mina (50 shekels, sometimes translated "pound")

571.2 g

1.26 lbs

Shekel

11.424 g

0.403 oz

Pim (2/3 shekel?)

7.616 g

0.258 oz

Beca (1/2 shekel)

5.712 g

.201 oz

Gerah (1/20 shekel)

0.571 g

0.02 oz

Greek:

Litra (30 shekels, sometimes translated “pound”)

0.4 kg

12 oz

Talent

40 kg

88 lbs

Mina

571.2 g

1.26 lbs

Linear Measurements:

Hebrew:

Reed (6 cubits)

2.7 m

8 3/4 ft or 3 yds

Cubit (2 spans, sometimes translated “yard,” “half a yard,” or “foot”)

0.5 m

18 in.

Span (1/2 cubit or 3 handbreadths)

23 cm

9 in.

Handbreadth (1/6 cubit, 1/3 span, or 4 fingers, sometimes translated “3 or 4 inches”)

8 cm

3 in.

Finger

1.8 cm

0.73 in.

Ezekiel’s Cubit (found in Ezekiel 40:5):

Reed (6 of Ezekiel’s cubits)

3.1 m

10 ft, 2.4 in.

Cubit (7 handbreadths)

0.5 m

20.4 in.

Greek:

Milion (8 stadia, sometimes translated “mile”)

1.5 km

1,620 yds or 0.9 mi

Stadion (1/8 million or 400 cubits, sometimes translated “mile,” “furlong,” or “race”)

185 m

1/8 mi

Kalamos (6 cubits, sometimes translated “rod,” “reed,” or “measuring rod”)

3 m

3 1/3 yds

Fathom (4 cubits, sometimes translated “6 feet”)

2 m

2 yds

Cubit (sometimes translated “yard,” “half a yard,” or “foot”)

0.5 m

18 in.

Dry Measures:

Hebrew:

Kor (10 ephahs, sometimes translated “cor,” “homer,” “sack,” “measures,” “bushels”)

220 L

5.16 bsh or 200 qts

Letek (5 ephahs, sometimes translated “half homer” or “half sack”)

110 L

2.68 bsh

Ephah / Bath (10 omers, sometimes translated “bushel,” “peck,” “deal,” “part,” “measure,” or “6 or 7 pints”)

22 L

3/5 bsh

Seah (1/3 ephah, sometimes translated “measure,” “peck,” or “large amount”)

7.3 L

7 qts

Omer / Issaron (1/10 ephah, sometimes translated “tenth of a deal” or “six pints”)

2 L

2.09 qts

Cab (1/18 ephah, sometimes translated “cab”)

1 L

1 qt

Greek:

Koros (10 ephahs, sometimes translated “sack,” “measure,” “bushel,” or “500 quartsbus”)

525 L

14.9 bsh

Modios (4 omers, sometimes translated “bushel,” “bowl,” “peck,” “corn-measure,” or “meal-tub”)

9 L

1 pk or 1/4 bsh

Saton (1/3 ephah, sometimes translated “measure,” “peck,” or “large amount”)

7.3 L

7 qts

Choinix (1/18 ephah, sometimes translated “measure” or “quart”)

1 L

1 qt

Xestes (1/2 cab, sometimes translated “pot,” “pitcher,” “kettle,” “copper bowl,” or

“vessels of bronze”)

0.5 L

1 1/6 pts

Liquid Measures:

Hebrew:

Cor / Homer

208 L

55 gal

Bath (1 ephah, sometimes translated “gallon,” “barrel,” or “liquid measure”)

22 L

5.5 gal

Hin (1/6 bath, sometimes translated “pints”)

4 L

1 gal (4 qts)

Log (1/72 bath, sometimes translated “pint” or “cotulus”)

0.3 L

0.67 pt

Greek:

Metretes (10 hins, sometimes translated “firkins” or “gallons”)

39 L

10 gal

Batos (1 ephah, sometimes translated “gallon,” “barrel,” or “measure”)

22 L

6 gal

Xestes (1/8 hin, sometimes translated “pot,” “pitcher,” “kettle,” “copper bowl,” or “vessel of bronze”)

0.5 L

1 1/6 pts

Coins and Monies:

Denarius / Denarion: a day’s wage (“penny” in KJV)

Daric / Drachma / Dram: a coin weighing 1/4 oz or 8.5 g

Lepta: the smallest Greek copper coin; of unknown weight (translated “mite” in KJV)

Kodrantess: the smallest Roman copper coin; of unknown weight (translated “mite” in KJV)