

119

MINISTRIES

“The following is a direct script of a teaching that is intended to be presented via video, incorporating relevant text, slides, media, and graphics to assist in illustration, thus facilitating the presentation of the material. In some places, this may cause the written material to not flow or sound rather awkward in some places. In addition, there may be grammatical errors that are often not acceptable in literary work. We encourage the viewing of the video teachings to complement the written teaching you see below.”

The Tabernacle: The Table of Showbread

The tabernacle in the wilderness was God’s dwelling place among the Israelites after he freed them from slavery in Egypt. It can be a chore to read through the passages that describe the tabernacle, but it turns out that the tabernacle is full of symbolism and spiritual lessons that teach us about our relationship with God. For a quick introduction to what the tabernacle was, we recommend watching our teaching, *The Tabernacle: An Introduction*. In this teaching, we’re going to take a close look at one particular item that was found in the tabernacle: the table of showbread. Let’s get started.

The tabernacle was divided into two sections. One section was called the “holy of holies,” and it contained the Ark of the Covenant. The other section contained three items: the menorah or lampstand, the altar of incense, and the table of showbread. We find the table of showbread described in Exodus 25:

Exodus 25:23-30

You shall make a table of acacia wood. Two cubits shall be its length, a cubit its breadth, and a cubit and a half its height. You shall overlay it with pure gold and make a molding of gold around it. And you shall make a rim around it a handbreadth wide, and a molding of gold around the rim. And you shall make for it four rings of gold, and fasten the rings to the four corners at its four legs. Close to the frame the rings shall lie, as holders for the poles to carry the table. You shall make the poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold, and the table shall be carried with these. And you shall make its plates and dishes for incense, and its flagons and bowls with which to pour drink offerings; you shall make them of pure gold. And you shall set the bread of the Presence on the table before me regularly.

This table was two cubits or three feet long, and one cubit or eighteen inches wide. It was made of wood overlaid with gold. Its purpose was to hold the “bread of the presence,” or as the King James translation calls it, “showbread.” What was this “bread of the presence”? We find out in Leviticus 24:

Leviticus 24:5-9

You shall take fine flour and bake twelve loaves from it; two tenths of an ephah shall be in each loaf. And you shall set them in two piles, six in a pile, on the table of pure gold before the LORD

[YHWH]. And you shall put pure frankincense on each pile, that it may go with the bread as a memorial portion as a food offering to the LORD [YHWH]. Every Sabbath day Aaron shall arrange it before the LORD [YHWH] regularly; it is from the people of Israel as a covenant forever. And it shall be for Aaron and his sons, and they shall eat it in a holy place, since it is for him a most holy portion out of the LORD's [YHWH] food offerings, a perpetual due."

The bread of the presence was twelve loaves that were placed on this table every Sabbath. The priests would eat this bread over the course of the week. Each loaf contained two tenths of an ephah of flour. An *ephah* is an ancient unit of measurement, and we don't know exactly how much it was, but estimates place it between five and ten gallons of grain. This means that each one of these loaves likely weighed somewhere around four pounds, or about three times the mass of a modern loaf of sandwich bread. The bread was stacked in two piles and sprinkled with frankincense, and it was called "holy."

So, that's what the bread literally was, but what does "Bread of the Presence" mean? In Hebrew, it is called *lechem panim*, which literally translates to "face bread." In Leviticus 24, when it says that this bread is placed "before YHWH", the word "before" literally means "in the face of":

Leviticus 24:6

And you shall set them in two piles, six in a pile, on the table of pure gold before [*lifney*, "in the face of"] the LORD [YHWH].

So, this "face-bread" was placed before YHWH's face. When the priests ate this bread, it was as though they were eating it before YHWH's face, or in his presence. Also, this bread is said to be "a food offering to YHWH," (Leviticus 24:7). Food offerings to YHWH were normally burned on the altar (Leviticus 2:9). However, this food offering to YHWH is not burned on the altar; instead, it is eaten by the priests. So, when the priests ate this bread, it was like YHWH was inviting the priests to eat his own food at his table.

There are many significant features to this shared meal with God. One of them is in the symbology of God as a king. Sharing a meal with the king was a great honor, and seen as a sign of the king's favor. When a person ate with the king, this is when the king would bless him (cf. Genesis 14:17-20; 2 Samuel 9:7-13; Esther 5:5-6; Luke 22:28-29). So, when God shares his bread with the priests, this is a sign of his favor, that he is bestowing the good things of his kingdom upon them.

Another significant thing about this shared meal is that it means God considers the priests to be pure and worthy. When the priests were impure, they were not allowed to partake of this bread:

Leviticus 22:2-4

Speak to Aaron and his sons so that they abstain from the holy things of the people of Israel, which they dedicate to me, so that they do not profane my holy name: I am the LORD [YHWH]. Say to them, 'If any one of all your offspring throughout your generations approaches the holy things that the people of Israel dedicate to the LORD [YHWH], while he has an uncleanness, that person shall be cut off from my presence [*panim*]: I am the LORD [YHWH]. None of the offspring of Aaron who has a leprous disease or a discharge may eat of the holy things until he is clean.

For the priests to eat this bread, they had to know that they were clean. If they were not clean, then partaking of this bread would not put them in the presence of God; instead, they would be cut off from the presence of God. This is a lesson in humility for us. We should not presume that we are clean,

worthy, or acceptable. Rather, we should be diligent to obey God and be sure we are clean before him. We should be humble and examine ourselves to see if we have any impurity. Then God will invite us into his presence to eat with him. Yeshua and Paul both taught this very concept:

Luke 14:8-11

When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in a place of honor, lest someone more distinguished than you be invited by him, and he who invited you both will come and say to you, 'Give your place to this person,' and then you will begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at table with you. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

1 Corinthians 11:27-29

Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself.

Just like the priests could not enter the presence of God presumptuously, so too we should not be presumptuous when we approach God. We should not think that God owes us anything, but we should see our fellowship with him as the great and undeserved honor that it is.

With that being said, when God does bestow honor upon us, and invite us into his presence to eat with him, what kind of blessing does he give us? What is the spiritual significance of this "Bread of the Presence," this Godly food that the priests ate?

To understand this, let's go back to the beginning. When Adam and Eve sinned, they hid from the presence of God.

Genesis 3:8

And they heard the sound of the LORD [YHWH] God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence [*panim*] of the LORD [YHWH] God among the trees of the garden.

So, one of the consequences of their sin was that they left God's presence. Another one of the consequences of their sin had to do with bread:

Genesis 3:17-19

And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face [*panim*] you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

Before Adam sinned, God provided his food. Adam did have to tend and keep the garden (Genesis 2:15), but God provided him with everything he needed (Genesis 2:8-9). After he sinned, the ground was cursed, and now Adam had to constantly struggle and toil just to have bread. And he did not eat this

bread in relaxation before the face of God, but before his own face, which was still covered in sweat from his own hard labor. So he lost God's presence, and he lost God's bread.

Moving ahead in history, when the children of Israel were slaves in Egypt, they were acutely aware of this curse. They did not seem to be in God's presence, they did not seem to have his favor, and they were constantly laboring just to have bread to eat. But after God freed them from Egypt, the situation completely reversed. In the wilderness, they did not have to toil for their bread, but God provided them with manna, with bread from heaven:

Psalm 105:40

They asked, and he brought quail, and gave them bread from heaven in abundance.

Also, God's presence, his face, was with them:

Exodus 33:14

And he said, "My presence [*panim*] will go with you, and I will give you rest."

So, both of these bad consequences from Adam's sin were gone. Israel was not hidden from God's face, and they did not have to toil for their bread. This "bread of the presence" was a reminder of that new reality. But, there is even more to it than that. There is a key concept that links the bread with God's presence. That concept is *rest*. After God created the world, he rested (Genesis 2:2-3), and Adam shared in that rest. Before Adam sinned, he did not have to toil and work for his bread; he could rest, knowing that God's presence was with him, and God was providing his food for him. Israel got to experience this same kind of rest. When God's presence was with Israel, they had rest, and when God gave them bread from heaven, they had rest. In fact, when God gave this bread from heaven, this manna, he also gave a command to rest. This command was a test to see if the people would value the rest from hard labor that God had given them:

Exodus 16:4-5, 13-16, 22-30

Then the LORD [YHWH] said to Moses, "Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in my law or not. On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather daily."

...[verse 13] In the evening quail came up and covered the camp, and in the morning dew lay around the camp. And when the dew had gone up, there was on the face of the wilderness a fine, flake-like thing, fine as frost on the ground. When the people of Israel saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, "It is the bread that the LORD [YHWH] has given you to eat. This is what the LORD [YHWH] has commanded: 'Gather of it, each one of you, as much as he can eat. You shall each take an omer, according to the number of the persons that each of you has in his tent.'"

...[verse 22] On the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers each. And when all the leaders of the congregation came and told Moses, he said to them, "This is what the LORD [YHWH] has commanded: 'Tomorrow is a day of solemn rest, a holy Sabbath to the LORD [YHWH]; bake what you will bake and boil what you will boil, and all that is left over lay aside to be kept till the morning.'" So they laid it aside till the morning, as Moses commanded them, and it did not stink, and there were no worms in it. Moses said, "Eat it today, for today is a Sabbath to the LORD [YHWH]; today you will not find it in the field. Six days you shall gather

it, but on the seventh day, which is a Sabbath, there will be none.” On the seventh day some of the people went out to gather, but they found none. And the LORD [YHWH] said to Moses, “How long will you refuse to keep my commandments and my laws? See! The LORD [YHWH] has given you the Sabbath; therefore on the sixth day he gives you bread for two days. Remain each of you in his place; let no one go out of his place on the seventh day.” So the people rested on the seventh day.

So, along with bread from heaven, God also gave them rest. The bread itself was a kind of rest, because the people no longer had to toil and slave in order to eat. But the other rest he gave them was the Sabbath day, when they no longer had to do any kind of work. The Sabbath was a day that they could simply rest in God’s presence. This all connects back to the bread of the presence. The priests got to eat God’s bread in his presence without the curse of toil and hard labor. This bread was a reminder of the rest that God was providing for his people. And when was this bread given? Every sabbath day:

Leviticus 24:8

Every Sabbath day Aaron shall arrange it [the bread] before the LORD [YHWH] regularly; it is from the people of Israel as a covenant forever.

Also, if you recall, this bread of the presence was made with “two tenths of an ephah” of flour (Leviticus 24:5). This also connects back to the manna and to the Sabbath. One tenth of an *ephah* is equal to one *omer*.

Exodus 16:36 (NIV)

An *omer* is one-tenth of an *ephah*.

The people gathered one *omer*, one tenth of an *ephah*, of manna every day (Exodus 16:16). However, on the sixth day, in preparation for the sabbath, they gathered two *omers*—two tenths of an *ephah* (Exodus 16:22). This is the same amount of flour that was in each loaf of showbread. So the bread of the presence was set out on the sabbath, and it contained the same amount of food that the people gathered in preparation for the sabbath. It was a reminder of the manna, of the sabbath day, of God’s presence, and of the rest that God was providing Israel from the curses of sin.

So, getting back to our original question, what is the great kingly blessing that is spiritually represented in this bread? The answer is rest. When we are invited into God’s presence to eat with him, he gives us rest. This is symbolism that Yeshua uses as well: Yeshua calls himself “bread” (John 6:48), and invites us to eat (John 6:51), and he also gives us rest:

Matthew 11:28-30

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

This presents a question: when we receive rest, what do we rest from? What is the “work” that we no longer do? We find the answer in Hebrews:

Hebrews 4:9-10

So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.

When we enter God's rest, we rest from "our works," from doing the things that we want to do. Instead of doing things our way, instead of toiling and striving and slaving just for a piece of bread, we do things God's way. We seek after righteousness, and God provides bread for us.

Matthew 6:31-33

Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Again, we see this symbolized in the rest of the sabbath. We know that God tells us to rest on the seventh day, but we also know that we need food, clothing and shelter. We may think that we have to work seven days a week to provide what is needed for ourselves and our families. But God tells us that he knows what we need, and if we obey him, he will provide those things for us. We do not have to constantly strive using our own efforts and following our own ways. We can obey God and rest in his presence on the sabbath, and he will provide us with the things we need. Just like he provided a double portion of manna to the Israelites on the sixth day, he will provide enough for us during the week that we will not go hungry on the sabbath.

One other aspect to this rest is the ultimate rest that we are looking forward to. In God's kingdom, we will forever have our fill of food, be in God's presence, and have his favor:

Revelation 22:1-4

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.

Additionally, we will have perpetual rest—rest from hard toil, rest from our own unrighteous ways, and also rest from all suffering and sorrow and from death itself:

Revelation 21:3-4

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

So, let's recap the symbolism in the table of showbread. Every sabbath, the table would be stocked with bread. The priests would eat this bread every day. The bread was called "bread of the presence" or "face bread," which symbolizes eating in the presence of God. The priests had to be pure in order to eat this bread, which reminds us of the purity and humility that God wants us to have. Eating the bread symbolizes having God's favor and being freed from the curses that come from sin. It also symbolizes entering into God's rest, resting from our own works and doing things God's way. It symbolizes the provision that God will give us if we trust and obey him. Finally, it symbolizes the ultimate rest that God will give his people in his kingdom at the end, when we get to eat with him in his presence forever.

We pray you have been blessed by this teaching. Remember, continue to test everything. Shalom! For

more on this and other teachings, please visit us at www.testeverything.net

Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

EMAIL: Info@119ministries.com

FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/119Ministries

WEBSITE: www.TestEverything.net & www.ExaminaloTodo.net

TWITTER: www.twitter.com/119Ministries#