

The Table of Showbread

Exodus 25:23-25

23 "You shall also make a table of acacia wood; two cubits shall be its length, a cubit its width, and a cubit and a half its height. 24 And you shall overlay it with pure gold, and make a molding of gold all around. 25 You shall make for it a frame of a handbreadth all around, and you shall make a gold molding for the frame all around. 26 And you shall make for it four rings of gold, and put the rings on the four corners that are at its four legs. 27 The rings shall be close to the frame, as holders for the poles to bear the table. 28 And you shall make the poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold, that the table may be carried with them. 29 You shall make its dishes, its pans, its pitchers, and its bowls for pouring. You shall make them of pure gold. 30 And you shall set the showbread on the table before Me always.

As we saw last week with the Ark of the Testimony or Covenant. God's desire is to be with His people and to meet with them. It was at the Mercy Seat that God met the people of Israel and accepted the blood as an atonement, a covering for their sins.

He did this so that they might be able to approach God.

Now today we find the next article to be described in our text is the Table of Showbread or the bread of presence or bread of face. The idea of this bread was much more than God meeting with them but of fellowship. Fellowship with God.

One of the great customs of almost every people group in the world is that of fellowship around a meal. In most cultures this is a sign of a closeness and a companionship.

But we might not think of that same closeness of fellowship as something possible between God and man.

The Table of Showbread was for this purpose, to show us that God wants fellowship with His people. This is much more than to meet with God. Many a meeting has little to do with fellowship.

The whole congregation could not escape the constant presence of God in the wilderness. The pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night was a constant reminder of His presence and His watch-care over them.

They camped all around the tabernacle and could no doubt look and know that the tabernacle of God was with them.

But God longs for fellowship with man. And He has gone out of His way to make it possible and to assure that it happens.

So let us look at this little but highly significant piece of furniture in the tabernacle. The Table of Showbread.

- I. Its description.
 - A. It was of the same substance as the ark of the testimony.
 - 1. This again speaks of the incorruptible humanity of Jesus Christ.
 - 2. The gold speak os His deity.
 - B. It was slightly shorter and narrower but the same height.
 - C. It is one of the few things we have some idea of what it looked like because there was one like it in the temple and Titus carried it to Rome.
 - 1. There on the Arch of Titus is a representing of it and the golden lampstand.
 - D. It was also carried by to staves run through golden rings on its sides.
 - E. Its function.
 - 1. Every Sabbath the priest would bring in 12 loaves of unleavened bread and place them where the last 12 had been for the previous week.
 - 2. The bread would lay there for 7 days before the Lord’s face.
 - 3. After it was removed it was to eaten by the high priest and his sons.
 - 4. Unlike some pagans who thought of their god as having human needs such as hunger for food, the Israelites knew that their God had no need for food.
 - 5. But it was given to God in God’s house, and after a week the priests were welcomed into God’s house to eat His bread.
 - 6. It was a picture of fellowship with God.
 - 7. This bread was different than the manna which sustained them. This bread was not for sustenance but for fellowship. The bread was not provided by God but came from the twelve tribes of Israel, each tribe contributing one loaf. This bread was God’s bread placed in His presence for 7 days. But on the Sabbath it was then shared with the high priest and his sons. It was eaten in the holy place the place of God’s presence. So it was bread that God shared with them in fellowship. AHH
- II. Fellowship with God in the Bible.
 - A. Although there is no record of Adam and Eve eating with God, yet the fellowship as God came to them every evening is without doubt.
 - B. The clearest account of God fellowshiping with man over a meal is the case of Abraham in Gen 18.
 - 1. 1 ¶ Then the LORD appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. 2 So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw

them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground, 3 and said, "My Lord, if I have now found favor in Your sight, do not pass on by Your servant. 4 "Please let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. 5 "And I will bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh your hearts. After that you may pass by, inasmuch as you have come to your servant." They said, "Do as you have said." 6 So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, "Quickly, make ready three measures of fine meal; knead it and make cakes." 7 And Abraham ran to the herd, took a tender and good calf, gave it to a young man, and he hastened to prepare it. 8 So he took butter and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree as they ate.

2. In this place two angels and Jehovah God appear to Abraham in human form and actually fellowship with him over a meal.
3. We see the closeness that this fellowship represents when God asks if He should not share with Abraham what He is about to do in regard to Sodom and Gomorrah.
4. We continue to see the closeness in how Abraham almost presses God to not destroy the city for Lot and his family's sake.

C. We see other cases that are not so dramatic as this in the Old Testament.

D. But the best case is that of Jesus, the person that this table represents.

1. His name is Emmanuel, God with us.
2. Most of the episodes in the gospels finds Jesus in fellowship with people, sinful broken people.
3. We find that He must go through Samaria for there is a sinner at a well He must meet.
4. The biggest complaint that the religious leaders had against Him was that ate with tax collectors and prostitutes.

III. Today what does fellowship with God look like?

A. It is not simply meditation.

1. That is just a conversation with yourself.
2. Much meditation today is dangerous spiritually for they try to get you to clear your mind.
3. But that is how demons enter the minds of people is through an idle mind.

B. It is a meditation on God's word.

1. You read it and then you think about it.
 - a. What is the verse saying to the people it was written to?
 - b. Why was the author telling them this?
 - c. How does this apply to you and others today?
 - d. Is there something here that God wants you to do or to change?
 - e. Is there a promise that God has for you here?
 - f. Is there someone that God wants you to tell about this passage you have read?

2. Then you speak to God during this process.
 - a. As you read and meditate on the Bible you pray to author.
 - b. You pray for understanding and knowledge.
 - c. You pray for wisdom to know what to do with what God is telling you.
 - d. You pray for courage to do what God is calling you to.
 - e. Let your prayer be a back and forth conversation between you and the Holy Spirit.
 - f. He will impress certain things from the Bible into your heart and mind.
 - g. And once you begin to read and to meditate upon the Word you will be amazed how out a clear blue sky the Holy Spirit will bring something you looked at months ago to your heart and mind just when you need it.

- C. When our fellowship with God is only one sided, us telling God what we want and what we need, it becomes fruitless.
 1. The word of God is the only way we can know certainly something about God.
 2. The less we know about Him the less we will fellowship with Him.
 3. 1 John 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life — 2 the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us — 3 that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His

Son Jesus Christ. 4 And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.

The term showbread comes from a Hebrew word that means bread of the face or bread of presence, because the loaves were set before the face or presence of Jehovah. Levy, D. M

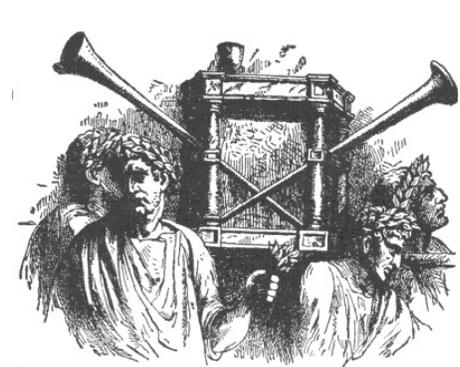
He (Jesus) was born in the city of Bethlehem which means house of bread. Levy, D. M

Jesus is pictured as the bread of life in many places throughout the Scriptures. Levy, D. M. (1993). The tabernacle: shadows of the Messiah: its sacrifices, services, and priesthood. Bellmawr, NJ: Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry.

1 Peter 3:18 (NKJV) 18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit,

The showbread was produced from fine flour (Lev. 2:1), which speaks of the evenness and uniformity of the Lord's life and ministry. To make grain into fine flour, it must be crushed, ground, and sifted. What a picture of the Lord's ministry! Jesus went through the sifting process of Satan's temptation (Mt. 4:1-11) and the religious leaders' testing (Mt. 22:15-40), yet no sin was found in Him (Heb. 4:15). He went through the crushing experiences of scourging (Isa. 53:4-5; Mt. 27:26-30) and crucifixion (Mt. 27:33-50) for the sin of mankind. Levy, D. M. (1993). The tabernacle: shadows of the Messiah: its sacrifices, services, and priesthood. Bellmawr, NJ: Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry.

The frankincense typified Christ in two ways. First, at Jesus' birth one of the wise men presented Him with frankincense (Mt. 2:11), emblematic of the fragrance of His life. The incense pictures the Lord's life as He manifested the sweet fragrance of perfection in all that He said and did. Second, the incense is symbolic of Christ living through the lives of Christians. Paul said, "Now thanks be unto God, who always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ"(2 Cor. 2:14-15). Levy, D. M. (1993). The tabernacle: shadows of the Messiah: its sacrifices, services, and priesthood. Bellmawr, NJ: Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry.



The Table speaks of the substance of that fellowship, and the effect of Christ's atonement: communion and fellowship with God through our feeding upon life-giving bread. Campbell, I. D. (2006). Opening up Exodus (p. 107). Leominster: Day One Publications.

Leviticus 24:9 (NKJV) And it shall be for Aaron and his sons, and they shall eat it in a holy place; for it is most holy to him from the offerings of the LORD made by fire, by a perpetual statute."

The table and the bread is typical of Christ, who sustains us in fellowship with God. Gaebelien, A. C. (1912). The book of Exodus: A Complete Analysis of Exodus with Annotations (p. 56). New York: "Our Hope" Publication Office.