

Exodus 25:23-30 –The Showbread in the Holy Place

Calvin, TSK, Sailhamer, Schultz, Edersheim, Poythress, Gaebelin, HebrewLexicon, Delitzsch, Gray, JFB, Barnes, Bush, Clarke, Henry, Poole, Trapp, Gill, INT
Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: You've likely heard a number of sermons warning you that the church must repent because God is angry with her. And you should! God is angry with a complacent church. And he has made his threats clear in the Scripture.

But often you will find that accompanying the warning to repent is an encouragement to repent. And you need both. Such is a gracious God. He gives warnings against disobedience and he gives encouragement to obey.

Today you will see one such encouragement to repent and stay close to the Lord (and a few more in the future), as we entered into the tabernacle.

As soon as you entered the tabernacle you would see the Holy Place where there were 3 tables. There was one table on the north, one in the south, and one just in front of the Holiest Place. The first table you will hear about was on the north. It was often referred to as the most sacred side. Pay special attention to it.

Our headings are:

The Symbols from the Table of Showbread

The Service from the Table of Showbread

Our goals are: **That you will see the work of the Lord Jesus and how he feeds your soul with everything you needed to have new life and live for his glory, and that you will then respond in love and labor!**

The Symbols from the Table of Showbread

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.

1. The priests had to make a table of acacia wood (a wood that does not rot).

It was about 36 inches long, 18 inches wide, and 27 inches high. **It was a reachable table,** even for the short Jewish people.

24 "And you shall overlay it with pure gold, and make a molding of gold all around.

2. The priests had to overlay the table with pure gold, showing the preciousness of what was on it.

No one serves tenderloin steak on a paper plate.

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.**

3. The priests made a frame for the table of about 9 inches (22cm), with four gold rings attached for carrying it.

There were some decorations to the frame, adding to its beauty.

4. On top of the table, around the edges, there was a another beautiful molding of about 9 inches high, beautifully decorated!

What does that remind you of? **A crown!** In fact, that's the word the old KJV uses.

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**.

5. The priests made 4 poles of acacia wood and overlayed them with gold.

6. The priests made dishes- pans, pitchers, and bowls, all made out of gold, for the service on the table.

These pans were not small. One was about 3 pounds and another 1½ pounds, and of solid gold. They were used for the bread.

There were also pitchers likely containing wine and frankincense.

There was bowls of unknown usage, but one was particularly special. This was a tiny bowl that was used to add fragrance (frankincense) to the showbread. It was so small it was called a spoon.

Leviticus 24:7 "And you shall **put pure frankincense on each row**, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, an offering made by fire to the LORD.

7. The table was covered with a blue cloth (not mentioned here).

Blue pictured the heavens, as you will see later when we come to the veil that separated the Holy Place from the Holiest Place.

Number 4: 7 "On the table of **showbread** they shall **spread a blue cloth**, and put on it the dishes, the pans, the bowls, and the pitchers for pouring; and the showbread shall be on it.

8. Lessons:

a. God made the bread reachable for his people. God came down from heaven to man in the form of his Son to feed man. Isn't this a beautiful picture of sweet communion – fellowship between God and man? God say: "I have things for you. Eat and live."

b. The Jews did not feed God, as pagan religions do to their deities. God fed man!

How deceived some men are to think they can feed God! If God wanted food, he would not ask you! Psalm 50. **(Grew up watching Hindus feed their gods...which we stole. Their**

gods need rice!)

c. This wood of the table was a picture of that Branch that grew out from Jesse's stump! Yes, Jesus was fully human!

The gold on the table pictured the Divinity of Jesus. Yes, Jesus was fully God.

The crown on the table pictured the royalty of Jesus. Yes, Jesus is the King of kings.

The Service from the Table of Showbread

30 "And you shall set the showbread on the table before Me always.

1. The priest had to then place the showbread on the table.

There were 2 stacks of 6 of the bread, picturing food for God's people, for all 12 tribes.

Leviticus 24:6 "You shall set them in two rows, six in a row, on the pure gold table before the LORD.

The bread had a pinch of salt with it, salt picturing the sign of the covenant between God and man.

This bread had to be placed before God continually.

2. What is showbread (or shewbread)?

"Showbread" was Luther's word which he took from the Latin Vulgate, but the literal term is "Bread of the Face" or "Bread of the Presence."

So it is bread that represented the presence of God.

Showbread was more like pita bread or naan.

3. How was the showbread made?

The show bread was made of the finest flour. According to Jewish regulations, it was passed through 11 sieves – not 1, or 5, or 9 times. This made sure that it had the finest texture and of the highest quality. They were of precise size.

Leviticus 24:5 "And you shall take fine flour and bake twelve cakes with it. Two-tenths of an ephah shall be in each cake.

(My children were talking about the perfect way to bake a pie...even pre-baking the crust, but they simply said, "That's too much work." They didn't think too much of their father!

4. The showbread was to be changed regularly, at the beginning of each Sabbath, so Friday evening.

Because that bread had to always be before God, God wanted nothing old and stale.

According to Jewish law, even the color of each loaf of bread had to be the same.

5. Only the priests were to eat the showbread, and only at the appropriate time.

Leviticus 24:9 "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."

6. According to Jewish history, the showbread was anointed with pure olive oil in the middle, in the form of a cross.

Just like the Jews used to mark their door posts and lintel in the form of the cross, they were picturing the work of the Savior, though they likely did not understand it properly.

7. When the bread was eaten by the priests, the frankincense was burned as a pleasing gift to the Lord, picturing the prayers of the Lord Jesus for you.

8. Lessons:

a. Jesus was symbolized in the 12 loaves of bread which were accompanied with incense. The bread, called the Bread of his Presence, showed the presence of Christ to save his people.

Jesus the Bread of Life... God with us...Immanuel. This Bread of Life came and tabernacled among his people. The people would eat of him (which means they believed in him), and would live.

Look at Scriptural proof of Christ's presence and nourishment:

Isaiah 63: 9 In all their affliction He was afflicted, **and the Angel of His Presence saved them;** In His love

Result?

John 6:35 And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. **He who comes to Me shall never hunger...**

This was not speaking of providing physical bread, but spiritual bread...

Jesus was the one who accompanied Israel from Egypt to Canaan. He never left his people. (That's why the showbread was always there in the tabernacle.)

Jesus was that cloud who was with them in the desert.

Jesus was the Rock with them in the desert. (That's why Moses got into trouble.)

Jesus was that fire that gave them warmth at night.

The incense which went up to God pictured the Lord Jesus praying for his children every day.

In short, he was present for his people; he was pleasing God for his people.

b. The more you “eat of him,” the Bread of Life, the more you are strengthened. This is why we use that language in the Lord’s Supper. It is an encouragement to keep receiving the work of Jesus in your heart – by preaching or by the picture of the Lord’s Supper!

c. Christ has come, so there is no longer a need to have a tabernacle, and there is no need to have the old symbol of bread when Christ, the reality, has come. Jesus lives among his people (on earth) and he lives for his people (in heaven). So there is no need for a temple in Jerusalem. You are in the kingdom!

Luke 22:29 "And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, 30 "that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

d. Jesus is the purest and the sweetest one—the fairest of 10,000! He is sweeter than frankincense! This was the picture of Jesus in Songs of Solomon- the Lily of the Valley. More, he is precious.

e. You are now the priest of God and you have a right to eat of the Heavenly Bread. You have a right to eat of him to strengthen your soul. His blood was shed and sprinkled before God for you. You have right standing before God.

John 6:32 Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but **My Father gives you the true bread from heaven.** **33 "For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."** **34** Then they said to Him, "Lord, give us this bread always."

And these things satisfy your soul!

Psalms 36:8 They are **abundantly satisfied with the fullness of Your house,** And You give them drink from the river of Your pleasures.

You might eat a lot...even a delicious meal, but after 6 hours you are hungry again.

f. You will have the final presence of Christ, in all fulness, in heaven.

Psalms 17:15 As for me, I **will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied** when I awake in Your likeness.

Conclusion:

The first piece of furniture in the Holy Place was the Table of Showbread. Literally, it meant “Table of the Presence.” It pictured the presence of Jesus to nourish and sustain all his people with the one and only Bread of Life, himself – his life and his death! Accompanying the bread was wine and the incense.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Thank God Jesus is the Bread of Life who came into the world to nourish you so you could eat and live.

2. Eat of the Bread of Life. Eat him through the Word that is read and preached. Eat him through the Sacraments. Don't starve yourself when there is abundant food. (But what is the natural instinct when you are sick, lonely, or depressed...avoid church...avoid the sacrament!)

3. Share this Bread of Life, starting with your children...and with your husbands, wives, parents, co-worker, fellow student, boss, and neighbor. Carry the Bread of Life through missionary you send.

Finally: Maybe you have tried everything to satisfy yourself and you are still not satisfied. That is because you have not eaten of the Bread of Life. I urge you today to receive Jesus...receive that he perfectly obeyed God for you and you could get the credit of his obedience...receive the fact that he died for sinners...and you could get the credit of his death for sinners. Yes, eat and you will live. Reject him and you will die.