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The Bread of the Presence in the Sanctuary: Christ, the Bread of Life

Exodus 25:23-30, 37:10-16 and Leviticus 24: 5-9

The bread of the Presence in the sanctuary: Christ, the bread of life DIG: What did that table of pure gold with the twelve loaves of bread say about God's relationship with His people? What was the bread of the Presence? What did it represent? Why was it perpetual?

REFLECT: How does this table for God compare to the one where you worship? How is your fellowship with God today? Is there anything, or anyone, in your life right now that is separating you from Him? What do you think God wants you to do about it?

To enter the Holy Place, the priest had to come through the gate before he faced the bronze altar. There he had been reminded of the necessity of the shed blood of the sacrifice for his sin. From there, he passed by the bronze basin, where he washed his hands and feet from the defilement of the desert sands before he dared enter the presence of **God**. This cleansing reminded him again that before he could hold communion and fellowship with **ADONAI**, his daily sins had to be confessed and put away by faith. That cleansing being accomplished, the priest entered through the beautiful hanging fine twisted linen of the outer veil, embroidered in blue, purple and scarlet.

Once inside the Holy Place, the priest saw the beauty of gold, the fine linen embroidered in figures of cherubim above and on the inner veil, and the three pieces of furniture. He would see the table of bread of the Presence on his right, just opposite the golden lampstand on his left, with the altar of incense in front of him. The table of bread of the Presence, along with all the other six pieces of furniture, was merely a shadow of good things to come in Jesus Christ (Hebrews 10:1 NKJ).

The fellowship and communion of **God** with **His** people, foreshadowed by **the bread of the Presence**, was fulfilled in **Jesus Christ**. **God** has always sought the fellowship of his children. In the Garden of Eden, before sin entered to mar **ADONAI's** perfect creation, **He**



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talked with Adam who was made in **His** likeness. But sin entered the world and distanced man from his **Creator**. It caused him to run away from **God** in fear, hiding himself among the trees of the Garden; for the one in sin cannot enter into the presence of a holy **God**. Adam proved this by his actions. There was no common ground for fellowship. That had been forfeited. Unless something changed, he would have no communion with **God**.

This is still the picture of a godless world - running away from **God**, and having no desire for fellowship or communion with **Him**. But not so with **the Church**, or **the bride of Christ**. Once, it was **dead in transgressions and sins**, in time past following **the ways of this world** and **the ruler of the kingdom of the air**, Satan himself, **the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient**. But now **the Church** has **been brought near through the blood of Christ (Ephesians 2:1-2, 13)**. No longer afraid of **God, the bride**, bought with **His** precious blood, finds joy and fellowship in communion with **Him** before the **table** that **He Himself** has prepared, **Christ, the bread of life (John 6:35)**.⁵⁸²

It is of this fellowship and communion between **Jesus Christ** and **the Church** that **the bread of the Presence** speaks; for the priests, as we have already seen, were typical of the believer-priests today, members of the bride and body of **Christ (First Peter 2:9; Hebrews 13:15; Romans 12:1-2; Revelation 1:5-6)**. **The bread of the Presence** literally means *the bread of the face*, and simply means **bread** that was in **the presence of God**.

Now if we turn to **the Holy Spirit's** description of the **table** and its **bread**, we find some striking and significant details that unmistakably remind us of our **Lord**. **The table** was to be made **of acacia wood**, pointing to the humanity of **Jesus - two cubits**, or three feet **long, a cubit**, one foot, six inches **wide and** the four legs were **a cubit and a half**, or two feet, three inches **high**. It was to be overlaid **with pure gold**, foreshadowing the deity of **Christ**, with **a pure gold rim a handbreadth**, or hand width about three inches, **around it** to keep the bread from falling off (**25:23-25, 37:10-12**). There are several similarities between **the table** and the Ark of the Covenant just a few feet away. They were both the same height, the only pieces of furniture that were so. They were both made **of acacia wood** and covered with **pure gold**. And they both had something placed upon them; the ark, the mercy seat, and **the table, twelve loaves of bread**. These points emphasize that **Jesus Christ** is the basis for all communication with **God**.⁵⁸³



Fine flour was used to **bake** the **twelve loaves of bread (Leviticus 24:5a)**. The Hebrew word *challah* used here for **loaves**, indicates that the **bread** was **pierced**. This was not uncommon among some ancient nations. Or more likely, as is often the case with bakers of today, they would pierce **the bread** to allow steam to escape more easily from it. As a result, these **twelve loaves** were not wafer thin like Oriental bread, but much thicker.⁵⁸⁴ The fact that **the loaves** were **pierced**, points to **Christ**. He cried out from the cross: **They have pierced My hands and My feet. I can count all My bones; people stare and gloat over Me. They divide My garments among them and cast lots for My clothing (Psalm 22:16b-18)**. And in **Isaiah** the prophet says that **He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment the brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed (Isaiah 53:5)**.

Two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour was used in the baking of **each loaf**. They were apparently of considerable size based upon the recipe given here.⁵⁸⁵ The number **twelve** symbolized the participation of all the tribes of Isra'el - but only by proxy, since no one outside the priestly order was permitted to eat **the bread of the Presence** except in cases of extreme need (**First Samuel 21:1-6; Matthew 12:4; Mark 2:26; Luke 6:4**).⁵⁸⁶ Every **Sabbath** day **twelve fresh loaves of bread**, representing the **twelve** tribes of Isra'el, were to be **set on the table in two rows, six in each row, as a lasting covenant**. On each Sabbath the priests **put some pure incense** in one of the golden **bowls** and burned it as **an offering made to ADONAI by fire**. Those **loaves** were then food for the priests. **Aaron and his sons** were to only eat it within the **Holy Place, because it was the most holy part of their regular share of the offerings (Exodus 25:30; Leviticus 24:5b-9)**.

Like the Ark of the Covenant, **the table** was to be carried by **poles**. Obviously, the purpose of **the poles** was similar as well - so that no human hand would touch the sacred furniture and thus defile it. That purpose was highlighted by the fact that the command for constructing **the rings and poles for the table** is described in almost the same exact terms



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as the command to make the ark. But there is one important difference. **The poles of the table** were not set permanently in **the rings**, as was the case for the ark. **The table of bread of the Presence** was clearly holy, but it did not possess the same level of holiness as the ark, which was most holy.⁵⁸⁷ **Four gold rings** were to be made **for the table and** they were to be fastened **to the four corners, where the four legs** were. **The rings were to be close to the rim to hold the poles used in carrying the table.** **The poles** were to be made **of acacia wood**, overlaid **with gold**, so **the table** could be carried **with them** on their wilderness wanderings on the shoulders of the priests **(25:25-28, 37:12-15)**.

The table was the place of fellowship. **The bread of the Presence**, along with its **drink offerings**, point to communion between **God** and **His** people. **Its plates and dishes**, that carried **the bread**, were also to be made **of pure gold**, as well as its **pitchers and bowls for the pouring out of drink offerings (25:29, 37:16)**. **The bread** and wine, located just outside the Most Holy Place, were a continual reminder of the covenant that a holy **God**, who was located behind the curtain just a few feet away, had made with **His** people.⁵⁸⁸

The significance of **the bread of the Presence** is to picture **Jesus Christ** as **the bread of life** (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ**, to see link click **Fr - Jesus the Bread of Life**). We have seen by the express command of **ADONAI**, that it was set continually before **His Presence**. **He** looked upon it with satisfaction, because it pointed to **His** one and only **Son** who sustains us in our new life and satisfies our hungry souls, and fills us with the joy of **His** never-failing **Presence**. **Christ** said: **I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me will never go hungry (John 6:32-35a)**. Therefore, the fellowship, which was broken by sin, has now been restored between **the Presence** and **His** believing people. How wonderful that we can have fellowship with **the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, the Sovereign of the universe**, because all who love **God** and feed on **Yeshua** as their **LORD-God** calls **His Children (John 1:12)**. **God** welcomes into **His** presence **His children** and robes them in the righteousness of **His Son**!