



July 08, 2022

Bread of Faces

Warm hellos friends, brethren, co-workers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God from here on the Gulf Coast. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

Have you ever noticed how much time out of our day is spent in eating? Well, we are physical beings and we require a regular intake of food. Try recording each day for one week to see how much time is used to both prepare and eat food. You'll be surprised, I know I was. By the way, I'll be talking more about "food" in my message on the Sabbath webcast from Mankato, MN on July 16.

The term "bread" has been used to symbolize *food* that we eat to sustain and strengthen us. Interestingly enough, bread, or cakes of flour and oil (and sometimes salt) were also an important part of some of the tabernacle ceremonies. Sometimes the flour and oil were offered separately.

When Aaron and his sons were consecrated, the instructions included taking "*one loaf of bread, one cake made with oil, and one wafer from the basket of the unleavened bread that is before the LORD*" and waving them as a wave offering and then burning them on the altar. (Ex 29:23-25)

When someone presented a grain offering, "*his offering shall be of fine flour. And he shall pour oil on it, and put frankincense on it.*" Then the priest took a handful of it and burned it on the altar. (Leviticus 2:1-2) Similarly, if the grain offering was baked, it was to be in the form of "*unleavened cakes of fine flour mixed with oil, or unleavened wafers anointed with oil.*"

There was a special bread termed "the showbread" that was present in the tabernacle and later in the Temple. The bread was placed on a special table made of acacia wood and overlaid with gold. This table was approximately 36 inches

long, 18 inches wide and 28 inches high. It was located on the North side of the holy place inside the tabernacle. (Exodus 40:22) The table was equipped with rings on the 4 corners and poles for transporting the table. The description of the table is found in Exodus 25:23-30.

The bread was to be continually present in the tabernacle (Exodus 25:30) and "*set in order*" on the table (Exodus 40:23). The Temple Institute describes the table as having individual shelves, six on each side stacked vertically. Their description of the table is based on traditions recorded in the Talmud, etc.

The instructions for making the show bread is found in Leviticus 24:5-9. Twelve cakes were made with fine flour and baked. There's no mention of other ingredients, but generally the instructions of Leviticus 2 would apply in having oil (olive oil) mixed with the flour to form the unleavened dough that was then seasoned with salt. (vv.4, 13). They were arranged in two rows of six cakes each. Frankincense was placed on each row. Adam Clarke's Commentary states that "On the top of each row there was a golden dish with frankincense, which was burned before the Lord, as a memorial."

You might be asking, why are we discussing this? Let's continue and I'll explain.

It is fascinating to note that *new* cakes (or bread) was set on the table *every* Sabbath and the *older* ones were removed and could be eaten by Aaron and his sons in a holy place (somewhere within the courtyard). (Leviticus 24:8-9) Eventually men from a family of Levites, "sons of the Kohathites were in charge of preparing the showbread for every Sabbath." (1 Chronicles 9:32)

Here's what intrigued me, and hence my comments. In Exodus 25:30 the special bread placed on the table is called "*shewbread before me*" (AV). Adam Clarke's Commentary states about this expression, "lechem panim - literally, *bread of faces*; so called, either because they were placed before the presence or face of God in the sanctuary, or because they were made square, as the Jews will have it. . . These loaves or cakes were twelve, representing, as is generally supposed, the twelve tribes of Israel." Family Bible Notes states, "It was placed on the table, and called show-bread, or bread of the presence, *because it always stood in the*

presence of the Lord."

The bread was not eaten by God, but by the priests who represented the people. Why was it changed on the Sabbath? What instruction and meaning might we derive from this ceremony that was a vital part of the rituals that took place in the tabernacle? We'll explore some possibilities next time...

Arms up friends! Our prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Please do pray for us as well.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Scott Hoefker', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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