



June 14, 2024

### **New Cakes or Bread was set on the Table every Sabbath**

Warm hellos once again friends, brethren, fellow laborers, 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.

Last week we discussed "Lessons from Special Cakes or Flat Loaves of Bread". I had also previously mentioned that "Bread" can symbolize food and sustenance in general. Jesus instructs us to include in our prayers, "*Give us this day our daily bread.*" (Matthew 6:11)

I look forward to this upcoming double Sabbath with the Day of Pentecost being observed this Sunday the 16<sup>th</sup>. On this Sabbath and Pentecost we'll be eating and sharing both spiritual bread (or food) as well as physical bread (food).

Speaking of the physical food, have you ever noticed how much time out of our day is spent in eating? We are physical beings and require a regular intake of food. The term "bread" has also been used to symbolize that food that we eat to sustain and strengthen us.

Perhaps it has been awhile since you have read where God also reveals that bread or cakes of flour and oil (and sometimes salt) were 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. (Exodus 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.

What I find interesting is that 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 are 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."

Another fascinating bit of information to note is 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)

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 sincere prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Thanks in advance for your heartfelt prayers for us.



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