

Lesson 6: The Table of Showbread

Read: Exodus 25:23-30

The table of showbread was a small table made of acacia wood and overlaid with pure gold. It measured 3 feet by 1.5 feet and was 2 feet, 3 inches high. It stood on the right side of the Holy Place across from the lampstand and held the showbread, or bread of the presence.

Discussion:

1. Read Leviticus 24:5-9 about the showbread. What were some of the rules regarding the bread?

- *The priests were to bake 12 loaves, representing the 12 tribes of Israel.*
- *They baked the bread with fine flour and it remained on the table before the Lord for a week; every Sabbath day the priests would remove it and eat it in the Holy Place, then put fresh bread on the table.*
- *Only priests could eat the bread, and it could only be eaten in the Holy Place, because it was holy.*

2. In this light, why was the showbread called the bread of the presence?

Showbread was called “bread of the presence” because it was to be always in the Lord’s presence.

3. Why did God want to have bread in the tabernacle if He didn’t literally eat it?

The table and the bread were a picture of God’s willingness to fellowship and communion (literally speaking, sharing something in common) with man. It was like an invitation to share a meal, an extension of friendship. Eating together often is an act of fellowship. God was willing for man to enter into His presence to fellowship with Him, and this invitation was open at all times.

4. Read John 6:35, 48-51. How did Jesus fulfill the purpose of the bread of the presence?

Jesus exemplified God’s desire to fellowship with man when He left heaven to walk with man on earth. He came to dwell (“tabernacle”) among man. He often ate with people and fellowshiped with them, especially the tax collectors, prostitutes and outcasts of Jewish society. But Jesus was extending more than just a gesture of earthly friendship. God so desired fellowship with man that He came to be the bread that would give us access to eternal fellowship with Him. By partaking in that bread (trusting in Jesus for our salvation), we can enjoy everlasting and

unceasing fellowship with God and always be in His presence – just as the bread was always His presence.

4. Jesus uses bread for another significant analogy in Matthew 26:26. How is this analogy important to us as believers?

Jesus' not only was the bread of life; His body was broken for us like the bread was broken on the Passover. His broken body is our only access to fellowship with God. Today, we celebrate the Lord's Supper, or communion, to remember this important truth.