

Title: **THE TABLE OF SHOWBREAD**

Text: Exodus 25:23-30

Subject: *The Typical Significance of
The Table of Showbread*

Date: Tuesday Evening — November 25, 2008

Tape : Exodus #87

Readings: *Larry Brown and Larry Criss*

Introduction:

Listen carefully to these seven statements. These are the things that I want fixed in your mind (I pray that God the Holy Spirit has stamped them upon your hearts.) as we look at our text in a moment.

1. All who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ are numbered among the elect of God: chosen, redeemed, and called.
2. All God's elect are in Christ. – By Election. – By Regeneration. – By Faith.
3. All God's elect are accepted in Christ, with Christ, for Christ's sake, as Christ himself is accepted.
4. All God's elect are supplied and provided for by Christ.
5. All God's elect are safe and secure in Christ.
6. All God's elect are a part of that royal priesthood, described by Peter, who serve God in the sanctuary.
7. And all God's elect are one in Christ. The Church of God is one body (the body of Christ) with many members.

Our text is Exodus 25:23-30. Our subject is **THE TABLE OF SHOWBREAD**. These verses of Scripture contain the instructions the Lord commanded Moses to give to Aaron and the children of Israel regarding the table of showbread in the tabernacle.

THREE PIECES OF FURNITURE

You will remember that there were three pieces of furniture in the first section of the tabernacle, in the outer sanctuary. As the priest walked into that holy place, before the veil that separated the holy place from the holy of holies and the ark of the covenant, he would see these three things.

1. Standing in the back, right in front of the veil, he would see the **golden altar of incense**.
2. On his left, he would see the **golden candlestick**.

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3. And on his right, he would see the **golden table of showbread**, with its twelve loaves of bread in two rows, with golden dishes, golden bowls, and golden spoons, and frankincense upon each row of bread.

This piece of furniture is described in detail in Exodus 25:23-30.

(Exodus 25:23-30) “Thou shalt also make a table *of* **shittim wood** (a wood that was not subject to decay for a long, long time): two cubits (about 36 inches) *shall be* the length thereof, and a cubit (about 18 inches) the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half (about 27 inches) the height thereof. (24) And thou shalt **overlay it with pure gold**, and make thereto **a crown of gold** round about. (25) And thou shalt make unto it a border of an hand breadth round about, and thou shalt make a **golden crown to the border** thereof round about. (26) And thou shalt make for it four **rings of gold**, and put the rings in the four corners that *are* on the four feet thereof. (27) Over against the border shall the rings be for places of the staves to bear the table. (28) And thou shalt make the **staves of shittim wood**, and **overlay them with gold**, that the table may be borne with them. (29) And thou shalt make the **dishes** thereof, and **spoons** thereof, and **covers** thereof, and **bowls** thereof, to cover withal: **of pure gold shalt thou make them**. (30) And thou shalt set upon the table showbread before me always.”

LEVITICUS 24:5-9

That is the physical description of the table of showbread. This same description is given again in Exodus 37:10-16. In Leviticus 24:5-9, the Holy Spirit gives shows **the instructions Aaron was given** concerning the table and its bread.

(Leviticus 24:5-9) “And thou shalt take fine flour, and bake **twelve cakes** thereof: **two tenth deals** shall be in one cake. (6) And thou shalt set them in **two rows**, six on a row, upon the pure table before the LORD. (7) And thou shalt put **pure frankincense upon each row**, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, *even* an offering made by fire unto the LORD. (8) **Every sabbath** he shall set it in order before the LORD continually, *being taken* from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant. (9) And **it shall be Aaron’s and his sons’; and they shall eat it in the holy place**: for it *is* most holy

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unto him of the offerings of the LORD made by fire by a perpetual statute.”

Proposition: This golden table of showbread and the bread upon it give us much typical instruction concerning our Lord Jesus Christ and God’s bounteous provisions of grace for his people in him.

THE TABLE

First, I want you to see that **the golden table of showbread is itself typical of our great Savior.** The name given to this table, “*the table of showbread*” (Numbers 4:7), might better be translated, “**the table of the bread of presence.**”

- It speaks of Christ ever present with God and ever present with us. There never was a time when the Lord Jesus Christ was not present with God for us. — “*I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was...Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men*” (Proverbs 8:23, 30-31).
- And the materials of the table clearly speak of our Redeemer. It was made of Shittim wood, overlaid with pure gold. These were the very same materials used to make the ark of the covenant.

The Shittim wood, a wood (like our cedar) that did not decay or rot, portrays our Savior’s humanity, which **never saw corruption.** In order to redeem and save us, the Son of God took on himself our nature. He became one of us. Yes, Jesus Christ, our God, is a real man. He has taken our human nature into union with himself, indivisibly and permanently. He who would redeem man must himself be a man. But this man was born of a virgin, and had no sin. He had no sin, did not sin, and knew no sin. Yet, he was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Sin is that which has corrupted God’s universe, corrupts our race, and shall at last corrupt our bodies in the grave; but it **did not corrupt Christ’s body!** Though he was made sin for us, when he had put away our sins by the sacrifice of himself, he arose from the grave before his body could see corruption. Now, yonder in heaven, seated upon the throne of God is God in

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our nature, the God-man, the Lord Jesus Christ. — It is written, “*He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin!*”

The Shittim wood being overlaid with pure gold speaks of our Savior’s perfect and eternal divinity. That man who is our Savior is God, perfectly and fully God, shining forth from eternity, and for evermore, in the golden brilliance of his divinity. Though he were a perfect man, though he had died as our Substitute, his sacrifice could never have availed for our eternal salvation, except he be himself God incarnate.

Well might the sun in darkness hide
And shut his glories in
When God the mighty Maker died,
For man, the creature’s sin!

The table, wearing a crown of pure gold, speaks of Christ’s exaltation and glory as our great King. God the Father has made him both Lord and Christ. He has placed upon the head of the God-man, our Mediator, the crown of universal monarchy. He has given him power and dominion over all flesh, that he might give eternal life to all his redeemed ones. **Yes, the God-man, our Savior, holds the reins of the universe in his hands.** He rules the entire universe, absolutely, for the salvation and everlasting good of his people to the glory of God.

THE TABLE’S PLACE

*Second, **be sure you do not fail to see the place where the table of showbread stood.*** — The table of showbread, the bread of presence, stood in the holy place in the tabernacle, before the presence of the Lord. The bread was symbolically **set before God himself.** It stood there before the Lord God **continually,** as bread **fit for God, offered to God, honored by God,** and **accepted by God.** It stood there symbolically as **the Bread of God.** Now, turn to John 6:33, and hear the words of our Savior.

(John 6:33) “For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.”

The Lord Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life for our souls, (more about that later), is the very Bread of God. He is the Food of heaven. That is to say,

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our all-glorious Christ (his person and work) is he upon whom God feasts, delights, and finds satisfaction.

THE LOAVES

Third, we are told that **twelve cakes (loaves) of bread were to be set upon the golden table** (v. 30; Leviticus 5-6).

(Exodus 25:30) “And thou shalt set upon the table showbread before me alway.”

(Leviticus 24:5-6) “And thou shalt take fine flour, and bake twelve cakes thereof: two tenth deals shall be in one cake. (6) And thou shalt set them in two rows, six on a row, upon the pure table before the LORD.”

TWELVE IS THE NUMBER OF GOD’S ISRAEL, HIS ELECT. (144,000 — Revelation 7:4; 14:1-3). Without question, these twelve loaves of bread **typify our Lord Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life**, as we have seen. **But the fact that the bread is here specifically required to be in twelve loaves makes it clear that the loaves represent Christ in connection with his people, represented in**

- the twelve tribes of Israel,
- the twelve names inscribed upon Aaron’s breastplate,
- the twelve stones of the altar erected by Joshua when Israel crossed over Jordan,
- the twelve stones of Elijah’s altar on Mt. Carmel before the prophets of Baal,
- the twelve apostles,
- the twelve foundations of the New Jerusalem,
- and the twelve gates of the city.

The twelve loaves in the holy place, upon the table before God, tells us symbolically that the high priest of God has an abundant supply for all whose names are inscribed upon his breastplate. Therefore, none shall perish.

Hear our Savior, hear him, needy souls, and rejoice. In our Father’s house there is “*bread enough and to spare*” (Luke 15:17). The supply is

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abundant, super-abundant. Did you notice (Leviticus 24:5) that each loaf had “*two tenth deals*” of fine flour — two omers. That was **double any man’s daily provision of manna** in the wilderness. In other words, in each loaf of bread, sitting on the table in the holy place there was symbolically twice as much bread for every person in Israel as he needed. — “*Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound!*” **My Savior’s supply is infinite, boundlessly infinite! And his supply is mine.** His supply, my brother, my sister, is yours! And it is a bountiful supply.

- – All grace (Ephesians 1:3)!
- – All glory (John 17:22)!
- – All things (1 Cor. 3:21)!

Feasting on the Bread of God’s providing,
 Jesus crucified, my soul is satisfied:
 Feasting on the Bread of God’s providing,
 O wonderful and bountiful supply!

BREAD FOR SINNERS

Is there here a hungry soul? Is there a poor, needy, starving sinner here? Is there in this house a poor soul made hungry by grace, one who hungers and thirsts for righteousness before God? Come, and eat. **In Christ, there is bread enough for you!** There is such an infinite sufficiency and abundance of life, of mercy, of love, of grace in Christ that, though untold multitudes live by eating this Bread, **the Bread is undiminished.** There is still just as much as in the beginning.

“*Come, now, let us reason together.*” — You may not know that your name is in the Book of Life. You may not know that your name is on the breastplate of our great, sin-atoning High Priest. But this you should know (You should know it because our text and the whole Word of God declares it.), there is plenty of Bread on God’s table, **plenty of Bread** for your needy soul in Christ, and **you are welcome to it.** Come and eat, and you will discover that the table was set specifically for you! If you perish the fault will be all your own, and no one else’s.

Perhaps you think, “But Bro. Don, no one’s hand was allowed to touch that bread except the priest’s.” Satan has a fiendish way of turning the truth of God into a lie and of making what should be most encouraging horribly discouraging. Doesn’t he? Yes, it is true, no hand could touch that bread but

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the priest's. **But that ought to tell you that the Bread of Life is for sinners who need a Priest!** The priest alone must manage the table and keep bread on it all the time. The Bread is in the holy place, so that sinners may get it as they come to God by faith in Christ.

PRIESTS' BREAD

There is much typical instruction in the fact that only God's priests were allowed to eat the showbread, and in the fact that they were to eat it only in the holy place.

- God's Provision for His Servants – Those who preach the gospel are to live by the gospel (1 Corinthians 9:14).
- That which is represented here, the salvation of God's elect by the will of God, is Christ's bread.
- Still, the showbread is for us. It speaks of Christ who is our Bread.

Our text declares plainly that none but God's priests could eat this bread. The long and short of that is this: – **If I come to Christ the Bread of Life and eat him, I am, I must be, one of those made to be in him "a chosen generation and a royal priesthood" before God!** "The proof is in the puddin'," we are told. Well, in this case, the proof is in the Bread, in eating the Bread of God (John 6:54-58).

(John 6:54-58) "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. (55) For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. (56) He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. (57) As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. (58) This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever."

Come my soul, come my brother, come my sister, come needy sinner. There is Bread abundant on the table. There are **twelve loaves**. Each loaf has **twice as much as you can take in**. The Bread **sits on a table with four corners**, pointing to sinners everywhere. The Bread is **there all the time**. And the Table is **the King's Table**. Here, Mephibosheth eats, with his mangled legs covered, as one of the King's sons! Eat and be satisfied!

TWO ROWS

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Then we are told that the bread was to be set on the table in two rows (Leviticus 24:6). Try to picture the scene. There is a priest, Aaron or one of his sons, standing before this table with twelve loaves of bread before him. There is Christ, standing in the holy place, ever busy, never idle, his hands constantly and bountifully providing Bread for his people.

- Bread of Grace
- Bread of Providence
- Bread of Consolation
- Bread of His Presence
- Bread of His Tender Care

TAKEN FROM ISRAEL

Now, watch this. The bread was to be taken from the children of Israel (Leviticus 24:8) because the Lord God would have all his people know that it was for them. So, too, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life, is Bread taken from among men, that we might know that all he is he is for us and all he does he does on our behalf.

(Psalms 89:19) “Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon *one that is* mighty; I have exalted *one* chosen out of the people.”

(Hebrews 5:1-2) “For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things *pertaining* to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: (2) Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.”

THE FRANKINCENSE

Fourth, it was required of God that **each row of bread have some frankincense upon it for a memorial of burnt offering to the Lord** (Leviticus 24:7).

(Leviticus 24:7) “And thou shalt put pure frankincense upon *each* row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, *even* an offering made by fire unto the LORD.”

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The bread was to be eaten, but the frankincense was to be burned. The frankincense speaks of our acceptance with God and the acceptance of our worship, praise, and sacrifices, the acceptance of our very prayers by Christ. All God's spiritual Israel, typified by the twelve loaves, are made through Christ a sweet savor to him. Our prayers and sacrifices, worship and service come up before God for a memorial of a sweet, acceptable savor to him (Acts 10:4; 1 Peter 2:5).

(Acts 10:4) “And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.”

(1 Peter 2:5) “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”

RENEWED WEEKLY

Fifth, **the Lord required Aaron to set fresh bread on the golden table every sabbath** (Leviticus 24:8). There is more here than this, I am sure, but this is distinctly a word of **instruction to God's servants**. The bread was to be prepared before it was brought to the tabernacle. Yet, it was to be freshly prepared. Then, every Saturday the priest was required to set fresh bread on the table in the house of God.

So gospel preachers must come to the house of God with fresh Bread and set that upon the table before the Lord, feeding his children with the Bread of God. God's servants **dare not bring stale bread** to his people, and **dare not bring any other food** to feed them. Displays of oratory eloquence, great learning, and vain philosophy, theological speculation, denominational dogma, and religious ceremony, history, moralisms, and civic duties are all a breach of this perpetual statute. The only bread with which God's servants are to feed his children is Jesus Christ and him crucified, the Bread of Life.

THE SABBATH

Sixth, as the bread was brought out before the people and placed in the holy place on the golden table on the sabbath day. Christ is our Sabbath, and the

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rest the wherewith the Lord causeth “the weary to rest, and their refreshing.”

(Psalms 116:7) “Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee.”

(Isaiah 28:12) “This *is* the rest *wherewith* ye may cause the weary to rest; and this *is* the refreshing: yet they would not hear.”

And our Lord Jesus Christ, the Bread of God,

- is brought out and set before men in this blessed gospel sabbath by the preaching of the gospel;
- and he shall be brought out on the morning of that great eternal sabbath awaiting us and set gloriously before his people forever.

He is set before us continually upon the table of God, the table of God’s preparing, the table of God’s presence, the table of God’s showing.

- The Gospel Table
- The Table Prepared for Me in the Presence of My Enemies
- The Lord’s Table
- The Table at the Marriage Feast of the lamb

What a day that will be,
When my Jesus I shall see.
I shall look upon His face,
The One who saved me by His grace!
What a day, glorious day that will be!

BLESSED FELLOWSHIP

Seventh, the two rows of bread, six loaves to a row, sitting upon that golden table, suggests the blessed fellowship, unity, and oneness of God’s church. God’s Israel in this gospel age is just one tribe.

(1 Corinthians 10:16-17) “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? (17) For we *being* many are one bread, *and* one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.”

We are one in Christ. This is our—

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- Strength!
- Peace!
- Joy!
- Hope!

These loaves sat on the table one beside the other, each closely connected with the other. We read the words “*one another*” in Colossians 3 again and again. — “*Lie not one to another; — forbearing one another, — and forgiving one another;*” — “*in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another.*” **That is the way believers are to live. We live not for ourselves, but to love and serve one another** (Ephesians 4:1-5:2).

(Ephesians 4:1-8) “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, (2) With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; (3) Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (4) *There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; (5) One Lord, one faith, one baptism, (6) One God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all. (7) But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. (8) Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.”

(Ephesians 4:11-16) “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; (12) For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: (13) Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: (14) That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; (15) But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ: (16) From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”

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(Ephesians 4:25-27) “Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. (26) Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: (27) Neither give place to the devil.”

(Ephesians 4:29-32) “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. (30) And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. (31) Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: (32) And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.”

(Ephesians 5:1-2) “Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; (2) And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.”

One last thought, God’s Israel, God’s church is ever one before him.

These twelve loaves, covered with pure frankincense, arranged in divine order on the table of pure gold, standing in the holy place before the Lord, standing in the light of the golden candlestick, display the indissoluble unity of God’s Israel. Even after the revolt of the ten tribes there were twelve loaves on the table (2 Chronicles 13:11), because, “*the purpose of God according to election*” stands unaltered (Romans 9:11; 2 Timothy 2:19). The Church of God is one body, the body of Christ, already seated with him in glory. Not one member shall be severed from that body. All Israel shall be saved.

This is the everlasting memorial of God’s honor and glory. Like the twelve stones taken out of Jordan and laid together as a memorial to God, and those twelve stones erected as an altar by Elijah before the altars of Baal, these twelve loaves in the tabernacle declare to the glory of God our Savior, whose name is called Jesus, “**He shall save his people from their sins!**”

Amen!