

# KNOWING JESUS THROUGH THE STUDY OF THE TABERNACLE

## Part 6 – The Table of Shewbread

This is the first mention in Scripture of a "table". We are entering the Tabernacle (the canopied structure) from the outer court. We have passed the courts, we have passed the brazen altar, we have passed the brazen laver and now we have entered the Tabernacle. We know Tabernacle is divided into the Holy Place and Most Holy Place. Right now, standing in the Holy place, right side is the table of shewbread, left side is the Golden lampstand and in the front of us is the altar of incense in the centre, just in front of the veil dividing Holy place & Most Holy place.

Only High priest can enter the Most Holy place but regular priests can enter Holy Place any time of the year. As the priest enters the tabernacle, from the bright sunlight in the courtyard, he would notice that the only source of light in the Holy place comes from the Golden lampstand that burns continuously, all the time.

### ***Instruction/ blueprint given: Exodus 25: 23-30***

***"You shall make a table of acacia (Shittim) wood. Two cubits shall be its length, a cubit its breadth, and a cubit and a half its height. <sup>24</sup> You shall overlay it with pure gold and make a molding of gold around it. <sup>25</sup> And you shall make a rim around it a handbreadth wide, and a molding of gold around the rim. <sup>26</sup> And you shall make for it four rings of gold and fasten the rings to the four corners at its four legs. <sup>27</sup> Close to the frame the rings shall lie, as holders for the poles to carry the table. <sup>28</sup> You shall make the poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold, and the table shall be carried with these. <sup>29</sup> And you shall make its plates (for shewbread) and dishes(cups/ ladles/ spoons) for frankincense, and its flagons(Pitchers/ jars) and bowls with which (to pour drink offerings); you shall make them of pure gold. <sup>30</sup> And you shall set the bread of the Presence on the table before me regularly.***

### **Execution of plan: Exodus 37:10-16**

***10 He also made the table of acacia wood. Two cubits was its length, a cubit its breadth, and a cubit and a half its height. 11 And he overlaid it with pure gold, and made a molding of gold around it. 12 And he made a rim around it a handbreadth wide, and made a molding of gold around the rim. 13 He cast for it four rings of gold and fastened the rings to the four corners at its four legs. 14 Close to the frame were the rings, as holders for the poles to carry the table. 15 He made the poles of acacia wood to carry the table, and overlaid them with***

**gold. 16 And he made the vessels of pure gold that were to be on the table, its plates and dishes for incense, and its bowls and flagons with which to pour drink offerings.**

**Exodus 40: 22 He put the table in the tent of meeting, on the north side of the tabernacle, outside the veil, 23 and arranged the bread on it before the Lord, as the Lord had commanded Moses.**

### **General specifications:**

1. Location: The table of shewbread was positioned on the north side of the Tabernacle within the Holy Place. It was one of three pieces of furniture within that compartment where nothing, but gold was seen by the eye of the priest – a scene displaying the glory of God. Only the sons of Aaron, the priestly family, were permitted to enter this sacred place and behold the splendor of the gold as it was illuminated by the light of the golden lampstand.
2. Dimensions: 2 X 1 X 1.5 cubits (Length X Breadth x height)  
  
36 inches long, 18 inches wide, 27 inches high (same height as the Ark of the covenant)  
  
It is approximately the size of a piano bench
3. Its materials – acacia wood overlaid with gold.
4. Its vessels – dishes, spoons, bowls, and cups.
5. Its use – to display the shewbread before the Lord.

### **Specific Instructions:**

1. You shall make a table of acacia (Shittim) wood:

The incorruptible shittim wood speaks of His humanity. Acacia wood is water resistant and known for durability. It is the hardest of all hardwoods, characterized by high density and resilience. It is highly resistant to fungi, pests and weather variations. The gold speaks of His deity.

Christ's perfect Humanity and absolute deity combined in one blessed Person.

***Philippians 2: 6,7 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.***

**Hebrew 2:17 Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.**

**Hebrews 1:3 He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,**

**Hebrews 4:15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.**

**Colossians 1:19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,**

2. The gold molding/crown/ledge around the top edge and the 3-inch border/rim all around the table, had a very practical purpose as well as a beautifying effect. The crowned border on the top was for the purpose of protecting, or guarding, or securing what was placed upon it. So that the bread /materials on it wouldn't slide off easily especially while transporting it.

The bread was not removed when the camp moves from place to place (Numbers 4:7) – it was always before the Lord. Therefore, the raised border was necessary to keep the cakes in place.

3. 4 rings of gold and attach it to 4 corners at its 4 legs . Insert poles made with acacia wood overlaid with gold to carry the table when the camp moved.

**Exo 25:26-28 And you shall make for it four rings of gold and fasten the rings to the four corners at its four legs. 27 Close to the frame the rings shall lie, as holders for the poles to carry the table. 28 You shall make the poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold, and the table shall be carried with these.**

4. Make special containers of pure gold for the table – bowls/plates (for bread), ladles (for frankincense), pitchers & jars (drink offering).

5. **Exodus 25: 30 And you shall set the bread of the Presence on the table before me regularly/ continuously.**

6. Restrictions: No unauthorized people allowed. Those who were not permitted to eat the shewbread from the table were:

a) The defiled priest. Lev 22: 4.

b) The stranger/ outsider/ visitor/ a sojourner ( one who is not a priest) v 9

c) The hired servant who worked for wages. v 10

**Only the ordained priests were allowed to eat the bread**

## **7. Specific instructions on how the bread was prepared and presented:**

In Leviticus 24.5-9 instructions are given in respect of the Shewbread

***Leviticus 24: 5 “You shall take fine flour and bake twelve loaves from it; two tenths of an ephah shall be in each loaf. 6 And you shall set them in two piles, six in a pile, on the table of pure gold before the Lord. 7 And you shall put pure frankincense on each pile, that it may go with the bread as a memorial portion as a food offering to the Lord. 8 Every Sabbath day Aaron shall arrange it before the Lord regularly; it is from the people of Israel as a covenant forever. 9 And it shall be for Aaron and his sons, and they shall eat it in a holy place, since it is for him a most holy portion out of the Lord's food offerings, a perpetual due.”***

The bread was to be made on a weekly basis, on sabbath day. Bake twelve loaves of bread from choice flour / fine flour (sifted many times) .

Set in two rows of six upon the table.

Each loaf consisted of 4 quarts of fine flour, like 6lbs (2.7 kilos) in weight/loaf. Surprisingly, each loaf was made from approximately 5-6 pounds of finely ground flour (see Leviticus 24:5), about the amount of a standard bag of flour! This would mean that the total weight of all the twelve loaves of bread would be around 60-75 pounds.

Pure Frankincense was placed upon each stack (The word ‘upon’ can mean either upon OR by it) - that it may be on the bread for a memorial, even an offering made by fire unto the Lord. *It is difficult to know how the frankincense was used. If they tried to keep this incense burning every day, it would use up an awful lot of incense. Most authorities say that the incense was burned on the incense altar, not on the bread.*

After the new freshly baked bread had been placed on the Table, the bread that had been there for the previous seven days was to be eaten by the priests in a sacred place (Lev 24.9).

Ritual: Though only the priests could enter the Tabernacle proper to partake of the showbread each Sabbath, because the priests represented all of Israel, it was as if all the twelve tribes were partaking of the bread. Bread stacked as a gift from the Israelites, an ongoing expression of an eternal covenant. memorial” was to remind the Lord of His lovingkindness to His people, and of His covenant with them, and promises to them.

Included on the table were also frankincense which is later offered by fire to the Lord as a “memorial” (Leviticus 24:7). In essence, the Lord partook of His portion of the bread, symbolized by the burning of the frankincense, thus sharing a meal with the priests. The loaves of bread belonged to Aaron and His descendants. After eating the bread, the showbread would be replaced by new loaves of bread which would stay on the table till the next Sabbath, meaning the bread would be week-old bread!

### **Names given to the bread:**

1. This bread was called the showbread, bread of the face, or the bread of the presence because it was placed before where the presence of God would dwell. (Ex 25.30, NKJV).

In Hebrew, the showbread is called lechem hapanim, which translates literally as “face bread.”

***Exodus 25: 30 And you shall set the bread of the Presence on the table before me (Paniym) regularly.***

Paniym – before, in front of, presence of, in face of, front of my face (used of cherubim had 4 faces ; Deuteronomy 5:4 The Lord spoke face to face with you at the mountain, from the middle of the fire.

***Num 4:24,25 The LORD bless you and keep you; The Lord make his face (paniym) to shine upon you, and be gracious to you;***

***Deut 32:20 I will hide my face (paniym) from them," he said, "and see what their end will be; for they are a perverse generation, children who are unfaithful.***

***Psalm 27:9 Hide not thy face (paniym) far from me; Put not thy servant away in anger: Thou hast been my help; leave me not, Neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.***

***Psalm 31:16 Make thy face (paniym) to shine upon thy servant: Save me for thy mercies' sake.***

***Psalm 139:7 Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence (Paniym)? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.***

*Let this be the prayer rising from our heart. Lord, cause your face to shine on me always. Never hide your face from me. Just like the Shewbread remained before your face (presence) continually, help me to enter into that fellowship with you where my face, my eyes, my gaze is set upon you constantly.*

Though only the priests could enter the Tabernacle to partake of the showbread each Sabbath, because the priests represented all of Israel, it was as if all the twelve tribes were partaking of the bread. Each loaf represented each tribe. Whether it was a little tribe (like Benjamin) as or a big tribe (like Reuben) was represented before the face of the Lord.

2. Continual bread (Num 4.7). These twelve loaves were never hidden from God, as the Lord Jesus is always before His face. Neither was this bread ever absent from the Table. As they journeyed "the continual bread shall be thereon".
3. Hallowed bread (1 Sam 21.4). This is how Ahimelech the priest referred to the Shewbread when David and those who were with him came to the Tabernacle at Nob, asking for five loaves of bread to feed them. This bread was hallowed, set apart for priestly use, yet Ahimelech willingly offered it to David.
4. Perpetual bread - There was never, ever to be a lack of bread in His house. And when they came in to change it, there was new bread to replace the old bread. So there was always 12 loaves of bread in the tabernacle at all times. So, it was there perpetually before Him.
5. Cakes. The name "cakes", is used of the Shewbread; is also used of the meal offering (Lev 2.4); at the consecration of the priests (Ex 29.2; Lev 8.26); in the offerings of the Nazarite (Num 6.15); and in the offering of the firstfruits in the land (Num 15.20).

The word means "pierced cakes", the piercing being carried out probably to ensure that these thick cakes were baked in a shorter time. The Lord Jesus was pierced, suffering for others even although there was in Him a beauty and fragrance which the world had never before seen or experienced. This beauty, however, could only be enjoyed by those who entered the Sanctuary.

### **The Significance of the bread:**

- Fellowship & unity:

Anciently, bread was a highly significant part of every meal. It is the oldest food existed through civilizations. It is the most popular, universal food that exists in every country and every culture around the world. Jewish tradition includes breaking bread at the

beginning of a meal with the words “Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who bringest forth bread from the earth.” Breaking of bread at the table signifies fellowship & unity.

The task of making bread lay mostly with women, who would spend many hours each day grinding and sifting the wheat, then making it into small flatbread, and then cooking it over a fire.

In addition, to being life-sustaining, the breaking and eating of bread could symbolize becoming at peace with your enemy. Inviting someone into your home to share a meal signified that you trusted them and also that you would protect them while they were under your roof. It was a sign of fellowship and unity.

- Nourishment/ life giving: Just like the priests entering the Tabernacle each Sabbath, we become at one with God, or at peace with Him, through the breaking of bread. Through this symbolic meal, we are nourished and strengthened, the bread literally becoming a part of us giving us life.

His Word is our daily bread. Feed on His word continuously for our nourishment, sustenance. To feast on Christ Jesus, the true Bread of the Presence, is to enjoy provision that will give all the variety of diet required; a banquet that meets the need of every part, and never fails to amaze in its diversity. “Give us this day our daily bread”. Just like we get nourishment from physical bread – our spirit, soul is nourished when we feed on His word.

Because bread was one of the cheaper items that could feed a family, large quantities of bread would be used. For this reason, bread was often called the bread of life, or the daily bread (see Matthew 6:11), because it literally sustained life.

- Symbol of God’s providence: God, as Creator, provides all food for man and beast today. Mankind eats at God’s table in the physical realm. He is the source of all supply.

***Nehemiah 9:15 “You gave them bread from heaven when they were hungry and water from the rock when they were thirsty. You commanded them to go and take possession of the land you had sworn to give them.***

***Genesis 41:54 and the seven years of famine began to come, as Joseph had said. There was famine in all lands, but in all the land of Egypt there was bread.***

***Psalms 37:25 I have been young, and now am old; Yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, Nor his seed begging bread.***

***Psalms 132: 15 I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread.***

***Psalm 105:40 The people asked, and he brought quails, And satisfied them with the bread of heaven.***

- ***Jesus became our living bread, the bread of life. John 6:35 Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.***

It is noteworthy that Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem, which in Hebrew means the “house of bread.” Just as the showbread was finely ground and placed in the fire to cook, so too our Savior was ground down under the weight of our sins and sorrows and placed in the fiery furnace of affliction for our sakes. Truly it is through His suffering that we receive the true bread of life. Bread that if we will partake of, we will have eternal life!

The loaves were made of fine flour (smooth, pure, lump free) indicating the spotless perfection of Jesus, the Son of God; there was no unclean or impure grain. None of the coarseness was to be found in Him. There was no leaven present, for sin was absent from Him and it was impossible for the Son of God to commit sin of any kind.

Yet this fine flour had to be pierced and then subject to the heat of the furnace. He had to endure temptations at the hand of Satan, rejection by sinners, was scorned, ridiculed, beaten by unruly Roman soldiers. Through all this He remained pure, the fine flour as fine at the end as it had been at the beginning. He delighted to do God’s will and His ear was open to His God morning by morning (Isaiah 50.4-5).

### **Invitation to the Table of communion / fellowship:**

A table is a place at which meals are taken and at times the word is used to signify a meal. The purpose of God in erecting the Tabernacle was not only to provide Himself with a dwelling place, but also to provide a set table at which His guests could partake and be satisfied. The table is a place of food and fellowship, for only those in harmony with each other can sit at ease at the same table. Particularly it is only those who are in fellowship with the host who can partake at his table.

### **The Significance of the Table:**

The Table itself speaks of true fellowship, community, relationship and steadfast presence.

In Jewish Culture, the table fellowship is highly significant. In the heart of a Jewish home, the table represents far more than just a place to sit and eat dinner. The culture is about togetherness, a shared history, and a shared trauma; represented not just by those around the



table but the dishes that are sitting on top of it. Example : Challah bread, Haroset, latkes, matzo – retell the story of the Bible. The Table is a place of communion, fellowship where also business contracts, marriage contracts happen.

The dinner table shows a lot about a family. Family that eats together stays together. Study done - Children of families that regularly eat dinner together are less likely to suffer from anxiety, less chance of violence / substance abuse and more likely to enjoy boosted self-esteem – boost grades too. Flood your body with happy chemicals? Sharing meals with loved ones - releases oxytocin. Less screen time.

Family table as a space to bond, communicate and feel supported, memorable conversations and bonding time. Hearts open up, brings hearts together.

Numerous scriptures that speak about table in Bible. *He prepares a table before me in the presence of my enemies. He brought me to the banqueting table, and his banner over me was love.* Why a table? Let's see!

- **There is favour at the King's table : 2 Samuel 9: 1-12**

*One day David asked, "Is anyone in Saul's family still alive-anyone to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan's sake?" 2 He summoned a man named Ziba, who had been one of Saul's servants. "Are you Ziba?" the king asked. "Yes sir, I am," Ziba replied. 3 The king then asked him, "Is anyone still alive from Saul's family? If so, I want to show God's kindness to them." Ziba replied, "Yes, one of Jonathan's sons is still alive. He is crippled in both feet." 4 "Where is he?" the king asked. "In Lo-debar," Ziba told him, "at the home of Makir son of Ammiel." 5 So David sent for him and brought him from Makir's home. 6 His name was Mephibosheth ; he was Jonathan's son and Saul's grandson. When he came to David, he bowed low to the ground in deep respect. David said, "Greetings, Mephibosheth." Mephibosheth replied, "I am your servant." 7 "Don't be afraid!" David said. "I intend to show kindness to you because of my promise to your father, Jonathan. I will give you all the property that once belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will eat here with me at the king's table!" 8 Mephibosheth bowed respectfully and exclaimed, "Who is your servant, that you should show such kindness to a dead dog like me?"*

*9 Then the king summoned Saul's servant Ziba and said, "I have given your master's grandson everything that belonged to Saul and his family. 10 You and your sons and servants are to farm the land for him to produce food for your master's household. But Mephibosheth, your master's grandson, will eat here at my table." (Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.) 11 Ziba replied, "Yes, my lord the king; I am your servant,*

***and I will do all that you have commanded." And from that time on, Mephibosheth ate regularly at David's table, like one of the king's own sons. <sup>13</sup> And Mephibosheth, who was crippled in both feet, lived in Jerusalem and ate regularly at the king's table.***

We were once crippled, unworthy to be seated at the table. Now we have the privilege of feasting at the master's table with the King of Kings ALWAYS.

Mephibosheth was not only shown favour but bonus favour given, even to his entire family. He said, "Who is your servant, that you should show such kindness to a dead dog like me?".

Mark 7 – talks about the faith of a gentile woman. ***27 Jesus told her, "First I should feed the children—my own family, the Jews. It isn't right to take food from the children and throw it to the dogs."***

***28 She replied, "That's true, Lord, but even the dogs under the table are allowed to eat the scraps from the children's plates."***

We were once like that – strangers, aliens- but He invited us to the table. Are we ready to commune & fellowship with Him?

***1 Kings 2: 7 Be kind to the sons of Barzillai of Gilead. Make them permanent guests at your table, for they took care of me when I fled from your brother Absalom.***

- ***The Table shows the providence of God/ Place where providence kicks in:***

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. The enemy will see how God provided for you. Your enemies will be put to shame when they see God's providence over your lives.

***Job 36:16 Even so would he have removed thee out of the strait (distress) into a broad place, where there is no straitness; and that which should be set on thy table should be 'full of fatness'.***

***1 Kings 10:4 When the queen of Sheba realized how very wise Solomon was, and when she saw the palace he had built, 5 she was overwhelmed. She was also amazed at the food on his tables, the organization of his officials and their splendid clothing, the cup-bearers, and the burnt offerings Solomon made at the Temple of the Lord.***

***10 Then she gave the king a gift of 9,000 pounds of gold, great quantities of spices, and precious jewels. Never again were so many spices brought in as those the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon. (In addition, Hiram's ships brought gold from Ophir, and they also brought rich cargoes of red sandalwood and precious jewels. Never before or since has there been such a supply of sandalwood.)***

## **Believe for an overflow!**

The Table of shewbread in the tabernacle is a reminder of God's provision for the Israelites. God wants to provide an overflow of provision, an abundance because of your fellowship with the Lord at the table. BELIEVE! There will be fatness on your table. Just come to the table of fellowship, sit at His table, spend time communicating with Him.

- **Table of salvation:** Christ gave a parable in which a king gave a marriage supper for his son. The invited guests refused to come. This provoked the king to deal with the rejecters, and having done so, he extended the invitation to include those in the highways and byways. These were bidden to come and to eat. Thus, an invitation has gone out today to the world to come and partake of the salvation as it is in Christ.
- **Table shows who you fellowship with/ your association:**  
1 Kings 18:19 – Gather all who eat at **Jezebel's table** – prophets of Baal

***1 Corinthians 10:21 Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.***

Jesus had to overthrow the tables of moneychangers in the temple, who turned the house of prayer to den of thieves. ***Read Mark 11:15-17***

Temple – table of pure communion with the Lord, no place for any other agenda. Just you and the Lord with no distractions whatsoever.

- **Table -shows your privilege in Christ:**  
***Luke 22:27- 30 Who is more important, the one who sits at the table or the one who serves? The one who sits at the table, of course. 29 And just as my Father has granted me a Kingdom, I now grant you the right to eat and drink at my table in my Kingdom. And you will sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.***

As His children we are given the privilege of fellowshiping at His table.

***1 John 2:28 And now, dear children, remain in fellowship with Christ (Abide in Him/ remain in Him) so that when he returns, you will be full of courage and not shrink back from him in shame.***

***1 John 1:3 And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.***

***1 Corinthians 1: 9 God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.***