

The Tabernacle in the Wilderness

GOD's Marvelous Revelations Concerning Sin and Death
and
The Divinely Provided Way of Salvation

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CHAPTER SEVEN -

THE TABLE OF SHEWBREAD

Read Exodus 25:23-30; 37:10-16; 40:4, 22

In the Holy Place, opposite the golden lampstand, on the North side of the Tabernacle, was placed the Table of Shewbread. This table was fashioned of acacia wood, covered with pure gold. In our measurements, it was three feet long, 18 inches broad, and 27 inches high. It is notable that it was exactly the height of the grating on which the fires burned on the Altar of Burnt-Offering, and the height of the Altar of Burnt-Incense, and, lastly, the exact height of the Mercy-Seat of the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies. The meaning of this will be noted later.

Often the Table of Shewbread is represented as being very lightly constructed. This is not in harmony with all else pertaining to the Tabernacle. These pieces of furniture were in use for hundreds of years, and were carried under all sorts of conditions of climate and weather, requiring that they be sturdily and exactly constructed. Our artists have followed some of the most authentic illustrations obtainable.

There is sufficient evidence to indicate that there were receptacles which held wine, which was partaken of by the priests on the occasion of the stated feasts, as directed in the instructions and commandments given to Moses on the Mount. Doubtless, the loaves were of the type found everywhere in that day, and even today, throughout the East. They were fairly small, rounded, and flat. The recipe for the preparation of the flour, the directions for the composition and fashioning of the loaves, and their baking, and placing on the table are meticulously given. For clearness, we quote:

"And thou shalt take fine flour, and bake twelve cakes thereof: two tenth deals shall be in one cake. And thou shalt set them in two rows, six on a row, upon the pure table before the Lord. 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. Every sabbath he shall set it in order before the Lord continually, being taken from the children of Israel by an everlasting

covenant. And it shall be Aaron's and his sons'; and they shall eat it in the holy place: for it is most holy unto him of the offerings of the Lord made by fire by a perpetual statute"
(Leviticus 24:5-9)

THE HOLY BREAD AND WINE

In passing, it is important that we should notice that the partaking of bread and wine had been instituted many centuries previously, when "**Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine**" when he met Abram, returning from his conquest of the enemies of Lot. (Gen. 14:18) Frankincense was to be placed *upon* the loaves on the Table of Shewbread, to indicate that it all was a memorial. How strikingly significant this is! It also foreshadowed the most sacred memorial, which all sincere Christians partake of from other tables inscribed, "**DO THIS IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME.**" Not for one moment, from the vari-colored gate of the court, until we stand in the Holy of Holies, are we allowed to forget that everything pertaining to the Tabernacle foreshadows and symbolizes the character and ministry of our Lord, all the way from His incarnation, by way of the Cross, until He entered into His Glory.

The table was the meeting place of the priesthood. Each Sabbath-day they fellowshipped in the Divine presence and partook of the consecrated bread and wine. The bread represented the sustenance provided, not only for the priests; but there were twelve loaves, representing GOD's provision for the twelve tribes of Israel. The table was so constructed that no loaf could become separated, or fall off. The table was so strong that all who knew the meaning of these symbols and ceremonies, were forcefully reminded that GOD would sustain and preserve and keep for Himself all those whom He had redeemed. How much more rich and complete is the wonderful teaching of the New Testament, where the symbolism of the Tabernacle is lifted up to the heights and given its superb meaning and application.

BREAD AND LIFE

We cannot understand our Lord's discourse on the Bread of Life, found in John 6:32-58, without grasping the significance of the symbolism of the shew-bread in the Tabernacle in the Wilderness. Millions have been astounded by JESUS' words, "**I am that Bread of Life . . . I am the Living Bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.**" How wonderful it was that the frankincense must be placed on the bread, back there in the Tabernacle! Friends, these revelations came from GOD; they were not discoveries made by mere men, groping for light.

Whatever the earthly station and condition of those who rightfully come to the Table of our Lord, in Him they are united in spirit for time and eternity. They will be kept by power Divine. "**I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.**" (John 10:28-29) This is the meaning of the double crown around the loaves resting on the Table of Shewbread. We shall be kept!

SECURE IN CHRIST

Represented here, this is true of every believer, born-again and sealed by the Spirit into the Body of CHRIST, which is His TRUE, spiritual Church. We may be pilgrims and strangers, traveling through the wilderness of this world, but in the purpose and provision of GOD, we are kept securely by His presence and power. We Christians need to walk, as in the very presence of CHRIST, and, doing so, to have full assurance of faith that we shall, indeed, be kept by the Father's all-powerful hand.

By our study of the Lamp-stand we have learned that through CHRIST the Light of the World, GOD giveth His children Light. Through our study of the Table of Shewbread we learn that GOD provides food that this world knows not of; "**he that eateth of this bread shall live forever.**" (John 6:58) GOD provides this food for those who love Him, even in the desert places, where this world offers no food. Did He not feed His people for forty years with food sent from Heaven? This world provides no spiritual food. It must come from Heaven. It must be divinely provided. CHRIST is, indeed, that bread of life, that Manna from Heaven, always available to those who KNOW HIM and feed upon His Word through FAITH.

Can anyone doubt that He, who fed thousands with what He could hold in His human hands; since He has sat down on the throne of GOD, with all power in Heaven and on earth given into His hands, can, and will, provide for those for whom He was willing to die on the Cross. He cannot, and never will, fail those who love and serve Him.

GOD has provided light and food for our Spiritual lives. "**Ask and ye shall receive.**" They are ours for the taking. We honor GOD when we ask with outstretched hands, and with thankful hearts, believing that we shall receive. Receiving should not be such rare incidents in our lives. Believing and receiving should be our constant attitude and relationship to our Heavenly Father. Were this true, faith would not fail us in the emergencies which come upon us so suddenly.

Each Sabbath-day, the ministering priests gathered in the Holy Place and ate every whit of the bread which reposed in the presence of the Lord. Then the bread, which had been consumed, was replaced by FRESH loaves. They were not intended merely for show and symbolism, as is so much that has a place in the worship of so many churches. The shewbread in the Tabernacle was real bread. It was capable of sustaining the life of the priests, who ministered there. But it **had to be eaten. Those who ministered had to eat it themselves.** They had to eat it before they could set forth FRESH bread.

EAT IT, IF YOU WOULD IMPART IT

Friend, if you hope to give forth the bread of life, you must eat it yourself. It must be eaten in the Holy Place, separated from the world and in the presence of Him, who is the Light of the World. Then illumined with Divine light and strengthened by the bread of life, who is CHRIST dwelling within, GOD's hungry children will receive the FRESH BREAD of Life, as they come into the holy place on each Lord's day, joyously expecting that they too will be fed with the Manna which cometh down from GOD out of Heaven.

So many set out stale bread, and LEAVENED bread, or truth with an admixture of error, or presented with mere human eloquence and wisdom, rather than the inspired Word of GOD. Many ministers are so busy with many things, Service Clubs, Lodges, Ball games, or what not,

that there is little time for the minister to partake of the shewbread, in the presence of the Lord in the Holy Place.

Since all believers are called to be priests, in devotion and service, to their Saviour and Lord, holding forth and exemplifying things Divine before a dying world, we still need TO GO ON to the Altar of Incense, where our Lord lifts us up before the throne of GOD.

~ end of chapter 7 ~

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