

### BFF317 The Bread of Presence or the Bread of Faces

**Scott Moore:** Welcome to the "Building Faith Families" podcast with Steve Demme. I'm your host, Scott Moore. Thanks for joining us today. Good morning, Steve. How are you today?

**Steve:** I was able to travel this last weekend. I went to St. Louis for the conference. The first two days I spoke and did minimal participation at the booth, and then I snuck up to my room and took naps in between session. I didn't leave the hotel/convention center for three days. By Saturday, I was starting to feel almost normal, and Sunday when I came home, not too bad. Here I am. How are you doing?

**Scott:** Pretty good. I've stayed away from whatever was ailing you. That's good.

**Steve:** Today, we're going to move into the holy place. There is so much here, I'm having trouble getting my mind around it. It's rich and I find myself dreaming about it the more I study it. Let's pray, and then we'll embark.

Father, thank You for the richness of Your word, and the depth of each word. Thank You for encouraging us. Thank You for leading us on this journey. I pray that You'll meet us today, and You'll guide us. We're doing our homework. We're reading Your word and we're seeking You. We're trusting for Your Spirit to give illumination, and to reveal not only the truth of these passages, but point us to Jesus. In Jesus' name. Amen.

**Scott:** Amen.

**Steve:** Now, that I'm somewhat normal again, I'm out walking the dogs. I looked at the clouds, and they remind me of the cloud of His presence, coming down upon the tabernacle.

Then, of course, the sun is shining, which I like to call, "Son-shine" because Jesus is going to be the light of the city of the New Jerusalem. We won't need the moon and the sun anymore. We're going to have the "Son."

The sky was blue, which makes me think of truth. I was thankful for these physical realities that God gives me which point to heavenly realities.

As I was doing this, I thought, "This is what we're doing in our study of the tabernacle." God has taken the time to give us physical realities that are patterned after heavenly realities so that we can see them physically to introduce heavenly realities.

God could have just made the heavens and stayed there. Or He could have remained on the mountain, instead, He took the initiative to come into the camp and live among His people.

When David purposed to build the temple in 1 Chronicles 16 and 17, God says, "It's OK. I've been living in a tent for hundreds of years." David replied, "No, I want to build

You a house." It beautiful -- his heart. All I could think of was, "Yeah, that's what we're doing. We're studying the tent where God lived.

Instead of Exodus or Leviticus let's begin in Hebrews 9:1-2, "Even the first covenant had regulations of divine worship and the earthly sanctuary. For there was a tabernacle prepared, the outer one in which were the lampstand, the table, and the sacred bread. This is called the holy place." This is where we are entering today.

Exodus 25:23-30 "You shall make a table of acacia wood, two cubits long and one cubit wide and one and a half cubits high. You shall overlay it with pure gold and make a gold border around it. You shall make for it a rim of a handbreadth around it; and you shall make a gold border for the rim around it. You shall make four gold rings for it and put rings on the four corners which are on its four feet. The rings shall be close to the rim as holders for the poles to carry the table. You shall make the poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold, so that with them the table may be carried. You shall make its dishes and its pans and its jars and its bowls with which to pour drink offerings; you shall make them of pure gold. You shall set the bread of the Presence on the table before Me at all times."

If the cubit is 18 inches, which is what's normally assumed, that means it's 36 inches long, 18 inches wide, and one and a half or 27 inches high, or a little over two-feet high, and three by one-and-a-half on top.

I don't think we need to spend too much time studying the table since we've already studied acacia wood. We know that it was chosen probably because of its longevity. As far as I can tell, they used this tabernacle for about four hundred years. This was overlaid with gold, which we know that how beautiful, how precious, and how valuable gold is.

It's got a rim around the top of it, and it's got rings for which to carry it. Let's consider the expression, "Bread of the Presence." You have "lehem" which is Hebrew for bread. We see this word in Beth-lehem which means the house of bread (Beth is house). This is the home of David, it was his city, and Jesus, of course, as the Son of David, was born there.

The Bread of the Presence is also called the "showbread." In the King James it is called the "shewbread." Most translations say Bread of the Presence because it's "lahem punim."

"Punim" is used a couple of thousand times in the Bible and mostly is rendered face. Bread of the Presence, or the Bread of Faces, or the Presence Bread. "Punim" can be also be translated "turnings" It's not simply turning but turning under an influence. It's bread under the influence or in the presence of God. This Bread of Faces, this bread of the Presence, this showbread, is supposed to be there before God at all times.

Now, I'm going to read from Leviticus 24:5–9 because it gives us a little bit more detail about this table and what was on it. "Then you shall take fine flour and bake 12 cakes with it. Two-tenths of an ephah shall be in each cake. You shall set them in two rows, six to a row on the pure gold table before Jehovah. You shall put pure frankincense on each row, that it may be a memorial portion for the bread. Even in offering by fire to Jehovah. Every Sabbath day, he shall set it in order before Jehovah continually. It is an everlasting covenant for the sons of Israel. It shall be for Aaron and his sons, and they shall eat it in a holy place. For it is most holy to him from Jehovah's offerings by fire his portion forever."

This is a lot more detail there than what we read in Exodus. Let's just start breaking this down a little bit, and see we can come up with. There are 12 cakes being baked with fine flour. Now, some translations say they're supposed to be set in two rows, so this would be two rows of six. Other translations say it's two stacks. I get into the Hebrew little bit in there, and it's hard to tell which is which, stacks or rows.

I'm leaning more towards the stacks just because of the size of the table. The table is only 18 inches wide and 3 feet long. Each cake weighs two-tenths of an ephah. An ephah is about a gallon. If you have two-tenths of a gallon, that would be 20 percent or a fifth of a gallon, which would be a little bit smaller than a quart. That's a pretty decent size.

If they were short and stout, you might say you could probably get them laid out in two rows of six and six. If they were flat, since in 1 Chronicles 9:31–32, "Mattithiah, one of the Levites, the firstborn of Shallum the Korahite, was entrusted with making a flat cakes. Also, some of their kinsmen of the Kohathites had charge of the showbread, to prepare it every Sabbath."

His job was to make these 12 cakes, with 2/10 of an ephah of fine flour.

Then it says, "You shall put them on the pure gold table before Jehovah or under His influence or in His presence," and then you're supposed to put pure frankincense on each row that it may be a memorial portion for the bread. "Even in offering by fire to Jehovah." So, frankincense is an ingredient..

Scott, you've been patiently quiet. I know you're just itching to make commentary here. When I say the word "frankincense," what do you think of?

**Scott:** Christmas. Christ birth.

**Steve:** Very good. It's exactly right. It turns out frankincense can be a white material, but it's very pricey. It's taken from trees, where it is ground down, and they make this very expensive frankincense -- this spice.

When Jesus was born, you and I know He was a child what says when the wise man came to his house. Here's what it says. Matthew 2:11, "Going into the house, they saw the child with Mary, his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him."

"Then opening their treasures they offered him gifts, gold, frankincense, and myrrh." I didn't study the myrrh, but we've already talked about the fact that it's a gold table.

We have 12 loaves, and God told them, "Add frankincense, that it may be a memorial." My first thought was, "Wow, this is expensive incense. This is an expensive spice." It was given to Jesus along with gold. It was brought from these men from the east, and this is a precious gift.

My second thought was, "Not only was frankincense a precious gift, perhaps it was the very expensive ointment with which he was anointed for burial." It says in Matthew 26, "When Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, a woman came up to him with an alabaster," -- which is a whitish flask, "A very expensive ointment, and she poured it on his head as he reclined the table."

Jesus got after the disciples because they were wondering, why did you waste all this? You could have sold this, given it to the poor. He said, "In pouring this ointment on my body, she has done it to prepare me for burial." I'm just introducing the thought. I don't have anything concrete on that. When I thought of the frankincense and started studying how precious it was, I thought of the precious ointment, I thought of the precious gift.

Frankincense bespeaks a memorial. A memorial of what? What is this bread reminding us of? Is it reminding us of Jesus being the bread of life? Is it reminding us of Jesus giving the manna in the wilderness? We know that He was giving Himself because He was the bread of life. I don't know, but it's a memorial.

Perhaps it's the smell from the frankincense that's going up. As we've talked about on previous podcasts, the sense of smell is one of the primary triggers to our memory. Perhaps the frankincense is reminding us of something. I don't know, but it adds a different dimension.

As we walk into this holy place, we not only see the bread, we smell it. It's got frankincense on it, and it's an offering by fire. This is supposed to happen every Sabbath. "Every Sabbath day, he shall set it in order before Yahweh continually."

It's an everlasting service. This covenant for the sons of Israel. Then it's supposed to be eaten by Aaron and his sons. They shall eat it in a holy place, for it is most holy. The word is "kadesh," a partner, sacredness to him from Jehovah. Offerings by fire his portion forever.

When I start seeing words like "everlasting covenant," it's supposed to be set in order before him forever. It's a portion forever. That's another dimension that we're going to explore because these 12 cakes were supposed to be a memorial or perhaps a reminder.

Who's it reminding? Perhaps it's reminding God. I'm just dropping seeds now because I've got more stuff on this later. It's a memorial offering, it's a forever offering, and it's an everlasting covenant for the sons of Israel.

Why 12? I think the obvious reason is, 12 tribes. God has made everlasting covenants with these 12 tribes. These 12 tribes have been given promises, they've been given covenants. My first thought was that these twelve cakes represent 12 tribes sitting on this gold table reminding God that He has made promises to them. They're forever promises. That bread is going to sit there forever, and it's going to remind God that He's made promises to them.

Where does this showbread appear in Scripture besides in the tabernacle? One of the most famous is when David is fleeing Saul. This is in 1 Samuel 21:1–6.

"David came to Nob to Ahimelech the priest. And Ahimelech came to meet David, trembling, and said to him, 'Why are you alone, and no one with you?' And David said to Ahimelech the priest, 'The king has charged me with a matter and said to me, "Let no one know anything of the matter about which I send you, and with which I have charged you." I have made an appointment with the young men for such and such a place. Now then, what do you have on hand? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever is here.' And the priest answered David, 'I have no common bread on hand, but there is holy bread— if the young men have kept themselves from women.' And David answered the priest, 'Truly women have been kept from us as always when I go on an expedition. The vessels of the young men are holy even when it is an ordinary journey. How much more today will their vessels be holy?' So the priest gave him the holy bread, for there was no bread there but the bread of the Presence, which is removed from before Jehovah, to be replaced by hot bread on the day it is taken away."

Once a week, this bread is taken away, eaten by the priest, and more bread is replacing it. This interchange between David and Ahimelech is referred to in Matthew 12, Mark 2, and Luke 6. Matthew mentions how he entered the House of God and ate the bread of the Presence, which it was not lawful for him to eat nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests.

Jesus is making a point, but he's appealing back to the bread of the Presence way back in 1 Samuel 21:6. This is pretty interesting, isn't it? It's mentioned again as we started off, in Hebrews.

Now, let's review some of the words that we're talking about here. The bread was set in two rows, six to a row. It was produced by (1 Chronicles 9:32) "Some of the relatives of the sons of the Kohathites -- these are Levites, were over the showbread to prepare it every Sabbath."

**It says in 1 Chronicles 23:29,** "Their duty was also to assist with the showbread of flour for the grain offering, the wafers of unleavened bread, the baked offering, the offering mixed with oil, and all measures of quantity or size."

Where else do we see 12 in the Bible?

**Scott:** 12 disciples.

**Steve:** There you go. I thought that this morning because Jesus, before He died, He broke bread and fed it to the disciples. Is He saying that they are priests now? One of the things that I noticed recently is that He washed their feet, and you remember, the priests had their feet washed before they entered into this holy place?

I don't know. I'm putting that in the air. I'm saying that that's a possibility. There were 12 loaves, there are 12 disciples, there are 12 tribes, there are 12 leaves in the tree of life.

Some of the things that I think of when I think of 12, "When it says 12 stones as a memorial, you remember when Joshua went over the Jordan River, and he said take 12 men from the people, from each tribe of man and command them saying take 12 stones from here out of the mist of the Jordan?"

These 12 stones were a memorial, and we talked about how when he put the frankincense on, it was supposed to be a memorial portion. These 12 stones were to remind them how God had led them into the promised land over dry land.

There's also Aaron on his breastplate, who had 12 stones representing the 12 tribes. I love that picture because I've often thought of Aaron carrying them on his heart because he's got them on his breastplate.

He comes into God's presence, and there are 12 stones with the 12 tribes of Israel on his chest, right in God's presence as he's walking by this table with 12 loaves of his presence bread -- the bread of Presence, the Bread of Faces, at the same time.

Aaron, as priest, is representing 12 tribes before God. He's walking in there with prayers for the people of Israel. He's interceding for them just by carrying them on his chest.

I used to think that it would be a special thing at a men's conference to make vests, and each of us put stones on our vest with each of the names of our wife and our kids. This is part of our job as the priest of our home, as the parent, as the dad, is to walk before God every day and remind God, "Hey, my wife and my sons, my wife and my daughters, we're bearing them up before You. I'm doing my job and praying for them."

There was also when they did crossover the Jordan. God had the people stand in two groups on Mount Gerizim and on Mount Ebal. He had six tribes on one mountain and six on the other. Then they read the law. This was also 12. Here, it's 12 in 2 groups of 6. I'm just planting seeds in people's mind so we can think about these.

By the way, when I was talking about the high priest, it's from Exodus 28:9 and 10. It says, "You shall take two onyx stones, engrave on them the names of the sons of Israel, six of their names on the one stone, and the names of the remaining six on the other stone in the order of their birth." This is even different. You had onyx stones. You had all the 12 stones.

I think that there's something about the fact that these 12 loaves are sitting there on this table in God's presence with the frankincense as a memorial, as a smell, as an offering, as a special incense before God, representing the 12 tribes.

There is plenty of information for us to pursue the future, and intonations from the past already of what they've gone through. This is probably a good stopping spot for today, but there's more to come. What do you think?

**Scott:** To me, it just seems like it's all pointing to Jesus in some way, shape, or form. The Last Supper is going to happen eventually.

**Scott:** My guess is that those guys sitting around the table there had some sense of all of this tradition and everything that they've grown up with. I would think at some point as the light bulbs go on, and they realize who Jesus is after his resurrection, maybe all this started to come to light.

**Steve:** As you say, there's more going on than meets the eye. We see the bread, and I don't want to go too far in making applications. When I'm thinking about 12 -- bread, incense, frankincense, an offering, sweet smell -- an aroma. Forever, I'm thinking about covenants that God has made with these people forever. I'm thinking about Jesus, the bread. I'm thinking about the sweet aroma. There's a lot of things that are touching our senses, as well as our spirit, as we ponder this.

Let's pray. Father, thank You for these divine images. You carefully chose these. These were not something that Moses just pulled together with the best of his ability, but these were divine instructions that You gave to Moses.

I pray that You'll help us to grab a hold of what we physically have read and have seen in the Bible, and in Hebrew. I pray that You also give us more. Help us to see more of Jesus. Help us to see more of Your plan and Your purpose as we consider the showbread. In Jesus' name. Amen."

**Scott:** Amen. That's our show for this week, folks. Thanks for joining us for the Building Faith Families podcast with Steve Demme. If you have a question for the show, email Steve at [spdemme@gmail.com](mailto:spdemme@gmail.com). If you have a question for me, you can reach me at [scott@unsocializedmedia.com](mailto:scott@unsocializedmedia.com). Thanks for joining us. Have a great week.