Table of Showbread, Christ Our Food Pt. 1

By Charles Feinberg

Charles Feinberg:

This is the fourth message in this series on the tabernacle by Dr. Charles Lee Feinberg Dean at Talbot Theological Seminary in La Mirada California. The subject of this study is the table of showbread. We've already seen the altar, the brazen or bronze altar, Christ our justification. The Bronze Laver Christ Our sanctification through the word and the operation of the Spirit of God with it. Now the table of Showbread. We read of the table of showbread in Exodus 25 verse 23 to 30.

In this passage we have the first directions concerning the making and the construction of the table of showbread in Exodus 25 23 we read thou shalt also make a table of acacia wood, two cubits shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof. And a cubit and a half the height thereof. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold and make thereto a rim of gold round about. And thou shalt make unto it a border of a hand breadth around about and thou shalt make a golden rim to the border thereof roundabout and thou shalt make for it four rings of gold.

Put the rings in the four corners that are on the four feet thereof over against the border. Shall the rings be for places of the staves to bear the table and thou shalt make the staves of acacia wood and overlay them with gold that the table may be born with them and thou shalt make the dishes thereof and spoons thereof and covers thereof and bowls thereof with which to pour of pure gold shalt thou make them and thou shalt set upon the table showbread before me always. That’s exodus 25 verses 23 to 30. There's a very important passage in the book of
Leviticus also on the table of showbread. It's in Leviticus Chapter 24 verses five to nine and thou shalt take fine flower and bake 12 Cakes thereof two tenth parts 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. These are the directions orders concerning the Showbread. Now in addition to the mention of the table of showbread in Exodus 25 and in Leviticus 24 we have further references in Exodus Chapter 37 verses 10 to 16 be very profitable to look these up and read them and study them. Then in the 39th chapter of Exodus Verse 36. In the 40th chapter we have the table of showbread mentioned in Verse 4 Verse 22 and verse 23. The table of Showbread is Christ our food Christ our center of communion Christ the center of our fellowship in the house of God as we think of these marvelous things of the tabernacle we're reminded, I am at least of Luke 24 verse twenty seven. That's the last chapter of Luke. After the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ remember he was walking with the disciples.

The two disciples from Ameas and he said to them oh fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken, that's Luke 24 Verse 25. Verse 26 ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory. Now Verse 27 and beginning at Moses, that's the law and all the prophets he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. No doubt friends this was one of the greatest spiritual theses ever prepared what a Bible conference. I dare to say that if we consider it a Bible conference it outstrips and surpasses every
other Bible conference on earth. One of the greatest spiritual feasts to think of our Lord Jesus taking these disciples and beginning with the very start of the Old Testament and going all through the prophets and showing in every single instance every single case and instance the things that spoke of him. What a course in Christology. What a wonderful course in prophetic truth Christ began at Moses and went throughout the Old Testament speaking of himself as foretold in the Old Testament books. Now just as we use a dictionary to give the meaning of new words. So the truths of the New Testament are best explained, best comprehended in the light of the Old Testament the Old Testament is the best dictionary for the new.

Now coming to the plan of the tabernacle itself. You remember there was an outer court a holy place and the holiest of all in the innermost sanctuary. In the outer court we had the bronze or brazen altar the altar of burnt offering. It's called the brazen or the bronze Laver. And now we come into the holy place in the outer court. All was of bronze in the holy place all is of gold. The three pieces of furniture in the holy place. Hebrew speaks of it as the first Tabernacle meaning as you enter into the first compartment of the tabernacle proper on the north side. Since all of it was oriented to the east that which was to the right as the priest would come in toward the north was the table of showbread. To the South was the golden lamp stand and then toward the west facing directly the veil and the Ark of the covenant which was hidden of course by the veil directly against that veil was the golden altar of incense I repeat in the outer court all has been of bronze in the holy place all of gold. No one can enter into the blessings of the truths of the holy place who has not appropriated the truths of the outer court.

If one has not received Christ as his justification or Christ as his sanctification through the Word and the operation of the Spirit of God then he can't know very much about Christ our food or Christ our light or Christ our intercessor not at all and it must be in the holy place that all
shall be of gold you remember Psalm 29 verse 9 we read in his temple the last sentence in that verse in his temple doth everyone speak of glory. Yes. Gold symbolizes through the Bible that which is glorious. Want to talk about a glorious period of history or a glorious age we speak of the golden age or the golden period or era.

Now the material of the table and its dimensions occupy our attention. Now here is the first time that the word table is mentioned in the Bible and beautifully it speaks not of some man's table but God's table Exodus 25 23 is the first time in the whole bible that the word table is mentioned. It reads thou shalt also make a table of acacia wood the measurements are these. The table was to be two cubits in length one cubit in breadth one and one half cubit in height. Its height was equal to that of the mercy seat, a cubit and a half showing that the believer in his communion is commensurate with the fullness of the place gained through the death of Christ.

And incidentally that one and one half cubit in height is exactly where the offering was made on the bronze altar on the altar burnt offering. Again it shows that exactly as we see Christ giving himself for our sins and fulfilling the will of God exactly as we see that and appropriate it so much shall we eat his flesh and drink his blood as he said in John six we shall appropriate Christ as our food as our bread the true bread the living bread the bread of God the bread that came down from heaven the bread that was given for the life of the world.

The table of showbread then speaks of Christ as the food of his people the center of their communion and fellowship with God. Christ our showbread what's the meaning of showbread? It's the bread that showed forth the very presence the very glory of God. Now the table was made of wood and overlaid with gold the acacia wood very durable. Again as in the altar of burnt offering speaks of his earthly origin and humanity that which came up as a root out of a dry ground. So the acacia would underneath speaks of his basic essential irreducible humanity. The
gold which was on the outside of the table overlaid the acacia is an emblem of the divine excellence. He was one hundred percent man our Lord Jesus Christ was 100 percent undiminished deity.

Now the Incarnation friends here you have the humanity and the deity of our Lord together. That is what we call the great truth of the incarnation that is at the basis it's at the very heart of the communion and fellowship of the church. Without that communion and fellowship are impossible. That's not just our opinion. We read it in God's Word. Second John verse 10 and 11 we read if there come any unto you. And there were teachers coming back and forth in the early church. There were itinerating men who were coming some to preach the truth and some to lead away from the truth. How are you going to know the difference? Says the Apostle John through the Spirit of God [inaudible] unto you and bring not this doctrine. This teaching. Receive Him not into your house neither bid him Godspeed for he that bid of him Godspeed is partaker of his evil deeds. What is the doctrine that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh? Verse seven. Anyone who doesn't believe that anyone who teaches something contrary to that is a deceiver and many deceivers have come into the world who don't confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. That one is a deceiver and an anti-Christ.

So the incarnation I cannot emphasize it too strongly. Beloved friends the Incarnation is at the basis of the communion and fellowship of the church. Now when we compare the dimensions of the table with the brazen altar we'll find that the brazen altar or the bronze altar is larger and understandable because there are more saved by the death of Christ it would seem to tell us there are more saved by the death of Christ than there are who feed on him in communion a sad sad thing that is we have this wonderful privilege we have this wonderful bounty. Why should we not feast on him as Scripture tells us? Now the table you can visualize it had two
crowns two rims of gold, one on the table itself and one on the border in the holy place. Christ is crowned by God. How many times God would direct our attention to see Christ we cannot see him with a physical eye. But we can see him with the eye of faith for in Hebrews the second chapter and the ninth verse we read but we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

Yes. In the holy place Christ is crowned by God. And you remember as the Lord Jesus prayed that wonderful high priestly prayer in John 17 3 and 4 he says glorify thy son that thy son may glorify thee. Glorify me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. So he is crowned by God one crown spoken of here and then by the humble reverent believer as we feast on him the heavenly bread for our souls. Now coming back to Exodus 25 you'll notice in verse 26 and 27 (I hope you have your bibles before you) and thou shall make for it. Four rings of gold is for this table make four rings of gold. Put the rings of the four corners there on the forefeet thereof over against the border shall the rings be for places for the staves. There shall be two staves one staff on one side of the table another on the other in order to bear or to carry the table. The rings and the stave how they show in this case as for instance will the altar of burnt offering the Christ in his relation to his people in whatever circumstances they are. Here they were in the wilderness will it suffice there.

Yes this can be carried around there all through their wilderness journeying and wanderings. Now the Scripture speaks in this passage of dishes and spoons covers and bowls. They too are all of pure gold. They speak of the sacred things of ministry all ordained of God all instituted of him. No wonder God said again and again see that thou make it according to the pattern that was shown thee in the mount. Now with reference we've spoken of the table but the
table had no significance in itself except that it was the place the resting place for the showbread. Let's see what God has for us as to meaning as to wonderful picturing of the person and work of our Lord Jesus in the showbread. Now the showbread is so important friends that it is given a number of names in the Old Testament. It's called the bread of ordering or row that's called [inaudible] that’s the bread of ordering. Put in a specific proper order we read in Second Chronicles. Chapter 2 Verse 4. That same book of Second Chronicles. Chapter 13 verse 11 we read about Nehemiah. Ten thirty three. It's also called the bread of the face or presence [inaudible] the bread of his presence indicating his presence. Find that in Exodus 25 verse 30 and Exodus 35 Verse 13 thirty nine thirty six. And numbers. Chapter 4 Verse 7. Now how many loaves were there in this showbread and where they made just anyway? Or were they to be made a specific and very particular definite way.

Oh yes there was a definite number of them and they were very very clearly outlined as to the making of them. The showbread was 12 loaves of bread of fine flour. Notice these several things concerning the showbread. Some five items. Number one the bread was to be made of fine flour. See you need the passages besides Exodus you need those in Leviticus and in numbers to tell us the constituency of the showbread made of fine flour. Now flour is a product of the earth. It's a necessity for man. The earthly life of our Lord Jesus was perfect in its whiteness like fine flower Pilate could say I find no fault in the man his wife said have nothing to do with this righteous man for I have suffered many things in a dream this night because of him again and again they could find no fault in him. There was no shortcoming. There was no crime. There was no treason. There was certainly no rebellion in this blessed one this Jesus of Nazareth. No fault in him folk Look at us with telescopes and we don't look very well. We don't show up very well but then looked at him and not his friends either. His enemies looked at the Lord Jesus with
microscopes and could find absolutely nothing no speck no blemish no fault no marring. If that were possible to find something in him we would have had no savior whatsoever. Yes. You see no sifting of that grain no bruising no pressing could alter its character. So Christ is the same in every test in every trial in every difficulty. I wonder if trials reveal our weaknesses and our failings. I'm afraid they do all too often.

He was made a fine flower even and pure white unblemished. He dwelleth in a light unapproachable God is light and in him there's no darkness at all. That flour was fine flower it beautifully spoke of that which is a product of Earth but goes through a whole process of operation a whole process of making that well speaks of the grain dying except a seed of grain fall into the ground and die it abides alone. But if it dies it brings forth much fruit. Speaking of the death of Christ and then it has to be kneaded oh the many trials? How often he was oppressed how many times in the Gospels we find our blessed Lord groaning as his spirit was being so burdened and pressed. And then this bread made of fine flower had to be baked. Christ was baked in the hot oven of God's wrath against our sin. He was made sin for us. Him who knew no sin God made to be sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in him made sin. All of that speaks of of the direction of God's righteous wrath against sin all laid upon him.

He was made a curse for us because it's written cursed is everyone that continue not in all the words of this book to do them those who do not keep the entire law of God have the curse upon them and he took that he was made a curse for us as it is written cursed is every one that Hanged upon a tree oh how he suffered even in anticipation at Gethsemane as he viewed Calvary not the physical angles of it don't ever restrict it that way but to think that his righteous soul his righteous spirit would come in contact with sin never had before.
But now all the sin of the world is going to be placed upon him and although baked into loaves it will still fine flour through all trials Christ remains unchangeable. You know too many Christians don't bake well half-baked sometimes burned to a crisp on one side and all pudgy and gooey on the other side oh too many of us do not bake very well before our lives can do good to others. We must pass through the fiery trials of life yes it had to be baked. He's bread and it's no wonder then that he was born in Bethlehem Bethlehem the House of Bread. If you bake bread in your home for the time that becomes a bakery it has that function. It serves that purpose. And he if he's going to be the bread for us comes down from heaven. It is altogether fitting that he should be born in the House of bread. Now the loaves were 12 in number. They were in two rows and this is beautifully seen in Orthodox Jewish homes even now on Friday evening before the Sabbath. Things are prepared for the folk as they come back from the synagogue and mother has the tables set and she has under a little cloth bread cloth.

She has two loaves of bread to represent the two rows of six loaves each in the Tabernacle and later on in the temple. And these loaves are like the plaited hair that women used to have and this is particularly called the Sabbath loaf. It's supposed to represent. I say each one of those loaves those two loaves are supposed to represent. Each one will represent six loaves of one row and six of another with twelve in number. All the tribes were represented. Oh how that speaks of how God's people. Now as then can rest on the savior the golden table and he will sustain. You remember John's Gospel begins with the son in the bosom of the father. And how beautifully it ends with a sinner in the bosom of the Savior. John resting in the bosom of our Lord Jesus at the last supper. You say it ends there. Yes because the twelfth chapter of John is actually the completion of our Lord's ministry to the world. Wonderful that the gospel could
begin with the only begotten son of the bosom of the father end with the sinner in the bosom of the Savior. Yes all can rest on him.

He will sustain. Now there were no differences between the tribes on the table if you'd of looked at those loaves as they are represented in scripture and as they have been pictured for us artistically by skilled artists. There were no differences between those loaves on the table no differences between the position of the individual members of the tribes on the table they were all alike though they might be different in the camp outside you member of the order. The camp was Juda always first the royal tribe and Dan last on the march but here all have similar position. So we all may have differing gifts experiences services abilities capacities. But before God let's remember it we are all one in Christ one with one another. Oh how that would make for unity and harmony and respect and concern for each other to keep the dignity of the body of Christ well we are members of Christ we're members one of another that they all may be one you remember our Lord Jesus Christ prayed.

So these loaves of the showbread made of fine flower. They had to be baked fire speaking of the wrath of God because you remember lamentations two you have that remarkable picture there in lamentations also in the first chapter. Is it nothing to you all ye that pass by. See if any sorrow like unto my sorrow with the affliction were with a law of the afflicted. Before he sent fire into my bones and it hath prevailed against them of course Jeremiah is speaking in the first instance of what happened to Jerusalem at the time of the destruction of the temple in 586 but how equally well it can represent the marvelous truth of what took place in the life and ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. So these loaves had to be baked. There were 12 in number and then they were renewed every Sabbath changed every Sabbath. The bread of his presence must
be ever fresh. The story of the Gospel may be old to many yes but to the convicted and needy heart as well as the spiritual believer is oh so fresh bread from heaven.

I suppose as an early reader of the book of the revelation one who hasn't read it before. Suppose someone comes for a first reading of the revelation realizes this is the last book of the Bible. It must have some very very excellent things in it that have never been seen before he does. Truly it does. Believe me it does. Someone may say it's going to have post post graduate theology it can it does have that but notice notice the starting point Revelation 1 5 and 6 and from Jesus Christ. Here is grace and peace from Jesus Christ who was the faithful witness and the first begotten of the dead and the prince of the kings of the earth unto him that loveth us and washed us from our sins in his own blood. The story of the gospel ever new he loves us. He washed us from our sins in his own blood.

He has made us a kingdom of priests unto God and his father to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever amen. Fresh bread from heaven and gospel. Every time we hear it those still are hungering and thirsting those who know it best who've heard it most often are hungry and thirsty to hear it like the rest. As the gospel hymn has it the strength of the soul friends comes from continually feeding upon Christ the hidden bread. It's impossible to keep fresh if we live on the stale bread of experience. Oh how sad it is to hear someone get up in a testimony meeting and say some thirty or thirty four years ago perhaps even 35 years ago. I had a marvelous experience with the Lord but where where my dear friend have you been with the Lord ever since.

Is there nothing new is there nothing fresh. I shall never forget. Friend of ours a widow had just one daughter and someone asked her strangely enough one day when was it in your life that you enjoyed your daughter the most. When was it you enjoyed her the most and this lady's
wise answer was you want to know when I have enjoyed her the most? Today. That can be true of our lives. It should be with reference to our fellowship and our feasting upon Christ the hidden bread. I repeat it's impossible to keep fresh. It's impossible to keep alive. It's impossible to keep vigorous if we live on the stale bread of experience. There ought to be renewal not just once a week, daily. Yes even more often. And there is ample provision Ephesians 3 16 to 20 will show you. Yet many don't know anything about feeding on him. We're told of an Indian spy who rendered quite valuable assistance to our United States government during the Civil War and in due time he was rewarded by a certificate entitle him to an annual pension.

Well he couldn't read it. No one apparently took time out to explain it to him even if they did mention the word pension. He thought it was some kind of a charm. And so he put a string through it and he wore it around his neck as long as he lived. This dear Indian never drew one single dollar not one red penny of his pension. He is like so many many believers who neglect to feast on Christ in the Word of God. For that reason too many soldiers of the cross are so weak spiritually they are more fit for a hospital than a battlefield. And as someone has said if you go into a little town and find five churches there you'll find four of them dead and the fifth one breathing hard.

[End Part 1]