

COURSE 9

GOD'S PLAN AS SEEN IN THE SHOWBREAD

The main focus of this Course will be on the twelve Temple breads (breads of the presence) and on God's intended spiritual meanings when He commanded this natural service. In Course 8 we saw God's plan to make mankind into His image and likeness so that He could dwell among and within His people. Now we'll turn our attention to how God's plan was seen in the weekly Sabbath service with the twelve breads in the Temple:

^{NAS} Exodus 25:8 “And let them construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may **dwell among** them.

^{NIV} Psalm 27:4 One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple.

^{DBY} Psalm 17:15 As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, **when I awake, with thy likeness.**

The law, the sacrifices, the Temple, and the Tabernacle all pointed forward to spiritual truths in the New Covenant, as did the service with the twelve breads:

^{NAS} Hebrews 8:4b–5 since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law; who serve **a copy and shadow of the heavenly things**, just as Moses was warned *by God* when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, “See,” He says, “that you make all things according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain.”

^{NAS} Hebrews 9:24 For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, **a mere copy** of the **true one**, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;

^{NAS} Hebrews 8:2 a minister in the sanctuary, and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.

^{NAS} Hebrews 10:1 For the Law, since it has *only* a shadow of the good things to come *and not the very form of things*, can never by the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect those who draw near.

As the scripture shows, the Showbread service (as a part of the law) was **a shadow** of the good things to come and “not the very form” or substance of those things. The Showbread thus pointed to a spiritual position (the substance) that the twelve tribes were called to. In the New Covenant, we are all called to this position that was foreshadowed by these twelve breads.

Names Used for These Breads Reveal Spiritual Truths

To ascertain what God was revealing through this Showbread service and learn what He wants to show us in the New Covenant, we will first look at the names used for these breads since these names can help us to see the true spiritual meaning:

- The “bread of the presence” is the most common name. In Hebrew, the literal meaning is “bread of the face” or “faces.” However, many other slightly different meanings exist, such as “face to face” (Exodus 25:30; 35:13; 2 Chronicles 4:19). If you are face-to-face with someone, you are in his or her “presence.”
- The “bread of the row” or “row bread” referred to the two rows on the golden table in the Temple on which these breads were stacked (1 Chronicles 9:32; 23:29; 2 Chronicles 13:11; Nehemiah 10:33).
- The name “continual bread” was used because these fresh breads were continually set in the second most holy room of the Temple, near the holiest place where God said He would dwell. Every Sabbath the priests would bring in twelve new breads, and “break bread” by eating the previous week’s twelve loaves (Numbers 4:7).
- The twelve “cakes” or challah (they are called this one time in Leviticus 24:5).

- The “breads of the purpose” or “breads of the plan.” They are often called this in the Greek of the Septuagint (1 Samuel 21:6; Exodus 40:23; 1 Chronicles 9:32). Jesus used this same Greek wording, calling them the “breads of the purpose” or “plan” (Matthew 12:4; Mark 2:26; Luke 6:4).
- The “purpose of the breads” or “plan of the breads.” Paul gives a slightly different nuance by reversing the order of the Greek words that Jesus used when he refers (in Greek) to these twelve breads as the “plan of the breads” or the “purpose of the breads” (Hebrews 9:2).

In Course 7 we saw that these breads represented the twelve tribes of Israel, but we also know that many other things in the Tabernacle/Temple pointed forward to spiritual truths in the New Covenant.

The Hebrew names of these breads (“face,” “presence,” etc.) help reveal their true meaning, but let’s now consider how the Greek words that the Messiah and Paul used shed additional light on them (the breads of the purpose/plan, and the plan/purpose of the breads). These various meanings in the list above are not really dissimilar, for when you are face-to-face with someone, you are before them, or in their presence. Also, a person’s face can reveal their purpose, their plan, or their will.

When the time was drawing near for Christ’s suffering, death, and ascension, he “set his face” to go to Jerusalem. The Messiah understood the totality of what his sacrificial death would involve, and his face showed his determination to do what God had called him to:

^{NAS} Luke 9:51 And it came about, when the days were approaching for His ascension, that He resolutely **set His face** to go to Jerusalem;

Isaiah, speaking of the Messiah, said he would “set his face” as a flint stone. In other words, his face revealed his unmovable determination to fulfill God’s will, and strikes from the enemy did not cause him to shrink back. His resolute face revealed that this was his plan and purpose:

^{JPS} Isaiah 50:7 For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore have I not been confounded; therefore have **I set my face like a flint**, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.

Speaking harshly of the man who would eat blood among the Israelites, God also said that He would set His face against anyone who went against this command. God’s “face” figuratively showed his plan and purpose:

^{NAS} Leviticus 17:10 ‘And any man from the house of Israel, or from the aliens who sojourn among them, who eats any blood, I will **set My face** against that person who eats blood, and will cut him off from among his people.

We Who Abide in God’s Presence Are to Be Made into Spiritual Presence Breads

Although the English translations do not convey this, the words Jesus spoke in Greek should be translated as “breads of the purpose” or “breads of the plan.” And Paul’s words should be translated as “purpose of the breads” or “plan of the breads.” The exact same Greek word spoken by Jesus in connection with the Showbread appears in only one other place in New Testament scripture (aside from when referring to the twelve breads), and it means “purpose” or “plan”:

^{NAS} Acts 27:13 And when a moderate south wind came up, supposing that they had gained their **purpose**,²⁰⁴ they weighed anchor and *began* sailing along Crete, close *inshore*.

The similar Greek word (this time in the accusative case) is translated as both “plan” and “purpose” in the following translations of this verse in Ephesians:

^{NAS} Ephesians 1:11 also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His **purpose** who works all things after the counsel of His will,

^{NIV} Ephesians 1:11 In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the **plan** of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will,

In Course 8 we saw that God revealed His purpose and plan for mankind down through the ages, beginning in Genesis 1:26, then through men such as Noah, Moses, David, and also the Messiah. And God has called us to become partakers in the divine nature:

^{NAS} 2 Peter 1:4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them **you might become partakers of the divine nature**, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

204 *Barnes’ Notes* (p. 531) describes “purpose” in this verse as the “object of their desire.”

Just as the Showbread continually abides in God's presence, so did David understand that being in His presence was a position the upright were called to:

^{NAS} Psalm 140:13 Surely the righteous will give thanks to Thy name;
The upright will dwell in Thy presence.

As the Showbread would be permeated symbolically by God's presence, so does the believer have God's spirit continually indwelling him. We have this treasure dwelling in our earthen vessels (i.e., our bodies):

^{NAS} 2 Corinthians 4:7 But we have this treasure in **earthen vessels**,
that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not
from ourselves;

^{NIV} 1 Corinthians 6:19 Do you not know that your body is a temple
of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from
God? You are not your own;

David knew the fullness of joy that came from abiding in God's presence:

^{NAS} Psalm 16:11 Thou wilt make known to me the path of life; **In
Thy presence is fulness of joy**; In Thy right hand there are pleasures
forever.

The Jewish scholars who translated the Septuagint from Hebrew into Greek used these same Greek words that Jesus and Paul used for the twelve breads, so this was not a completely new concept or understanding. The "bread of the face/presence" was sometimes translated into Greek as "breads of the purpose/plan."

Many of these spiritual truths were lost after the Pharisees gained control among the people. They were not geared toward spirituality and the love of God, but instead were more interested in rigidly enforcing their interpretations of the law, doctrines, and traditions on their subjects.²⁰⁵

Although some who were more spiritually minded understood prophecies and deeper truths to various degrees, the Messiah told his disciples that many prophets and kings had desired to look into some of the truths that he was showing forth, yet they could not see them:

205 Whiston in his *New Complete Works of Josephus* ("Jewish Antiquities," 13.10.6 [p. 441] and 18.1.3–4 [p. 586]) translates this history written by Josephus.

^{NAS} Luke 10:24 for I say to you, that many prophets and kings wished to see the things which you see, and did not see *them*, and to hear the things which you hear, and did not hear *them*.”

The Making of the Twelve Breads Shows God’s Process to Make Us into His Image and Likeness

Now we’ll look at the making of the Showbread from a spiritual, typological perspective to see how God’s plan is shown through these twelve breads. This is not meant to be a full dissertation on this subject; it is only intended to spur more discussion.

Typology is a method of biblical interpretation whereby an element found in the Old Testament is seen to prefigure one found in the New Testament.²⁰⁶

Typology does not prove doctrine, but on numerous occasions it was used by Paul, John, and other writers of the scripture to bring out spiritual truth from elements in the Old Testament.

One of the elements in the Tabernacle that pointed forward was the Showbread. The priests who made these twelve breads served “a copy and shadow” of the heavenly spiritual things to come, including the making of man into God’s image and likeness.

Building on this analogy of the priests preparing the Showbread, we see that three main elements go into God’s process of making us into His image and likeness: God’s part, man’s part, and the priest’s part. We will examine this in further detail in a moment, but it’s worth stating first that some overlap existed between the priest’s part and man’s part. For instance, the people of Israel were to remove the *natural* (or literal) chaff and the priests (i.e., shepherds and teachers) in the New Covenant are to use God’s word to carefully remove the *spiritual* chaff. Part of this overlap between the people’s functions and the priestly functions exists because God wanted the Israelites to be a kingdom of priests.

The fact that all twelve breads are pictured as abiding in God’s presence shows that His will was for all Israelites (and by extension all nations) to dwell in His presence and be as priests before Him, once the Messiah’s mission was completed:

^{NAS} Exodus 19:6 and **you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests** and a holy nation.’ These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel.”

206 Adapted from *Theopedia.com*, s.v. “Biblical typology.”

This is fulfilled in the New Covenant believers:

^{NAS} Revelation 1:6 and **He has made us to be a kingdom, priests** to His God and Father; to Him *be* the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

We will now turn to the reciprocal aspects in the making of the Showbread to see that God, the people, and the priests were all involved in giving and receiving in His house.

God's Part in the Process

The rain from God must come for the wheat crops to grow

There is natural rain that God sends upon the earth for the growing of crops, and there is spiritual rain (also called the “teaching” rain) that God sends to spiritually grow the crops of people. Moses showed that the rain coming down parallels the teaching that comes from God:

^{NAS} Deuteronomy 32:2 “Let my **teaching** drop as the rain, My speech distill as the dew, As the droplets on the fresh grass And as the showers on the herb.

The rains were, of course, extremely important in Israel. There was a spring rain that happened around Passover, and a winter (latter) rain that came around the time of the Festival of Ingathering (Tabernacles/Sukkot):

^{NAS} Joel 2:23 So rejoice, O sons of Zion, And be glad in the LORD your God; For He has given you the early rain for *your* vindication. And He has poured down for you the rain, The early and latter rain as before.

The Hebrew word for “rain” above can also mean “teacher,” seen below in Young’s Literal Translation of this same verse as “Teacher of righteousness”:

^{YLT} Joel 2:23 And ye sons of Zion, joy and rejoice, In Jehovah your God, For He hath given to you the **Teacher for righteousness**, And causeth to come down to you a shower, Sprinkling and gathered—in the beginning.

What is probably meant here is that God would give the rain in righteous or just measure, but this could also have a secondary application pointing to the Messiah. The teaching that comes down from God is what prepares us for the third and final Festival of the Ingathering (Sukkot/Tabernacles). Unlike Passover and Pentecost, this is a festival that has not yet been completely fulfilled in its spiritual aspect:

^{NAS} Deuteronomy 11:14 that He will give the rain for your land in its season, the early and late rain, that you may gather in your grain and your new wine and your oil.

^{KJV} Hosea 6:3 Then shall we know, *if* we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and **he shall come unto us as the rain**, as the latter *and* former rain unto the earth.

We are dependent upon God for this spiritual teaching rain, which He has promised us. Without natural rain there could be no wheat for the Showbread, and without spiritual rain the final third festival will not be fulfilled:

^{NAS} James 5:7 Be patient, therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains.

Believers must remember that if the Lord is bringing a latter teaching rain to correctly grow our crops, we must be willing to receive His new truths and not assume that we already have all that we need to know and therefore do not need the rain. The truth behind the following scripture in Amos is that God will send His teaching rain upon those assemblies who are willing, but those who refuse His truth will not receive His rain:

^{NAS} Amos 4:7 “And furthermore, I withheld the rain from you While *there were* still three months until harvest. Then I would send rain on one city And on another city I would not send rain; One part would be rained on, While the part not rained on would dry up.

While some may say that doctrine is divisive, and that we should just love, the Messiah and his disciples taught the importance of true doctrine:

^{KJV} Matthew 15:9 But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men.

^{NIV} Titus 1:9 He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others **by sound doctrine** and refute those who oppose it.

^{NAS} 1 Thessalonians 5:21 But examine everything *carefully*; hold fast to that which is good;

^{DBY} 1 Timothy 4:1 But the Spirit speaks expressly, that in latter times some shall apostatise from the faith, giving their mind to deceiving spirits and **teachings of demons**.

^{NAS} Acts 2:42 And **they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching** and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

The sunlight from God is needed to grow the crops

The land needed the sunlight, for without it, the wheat crops would not grow and there would then be no Showbread. God sent forth the Messiah, who grew into the exact representation of God's nature, giving us spiritual light and showing us the pattern that we are to come into:

^{NAS} John 12:46 "I have come *as* light into the world, that everyone who believes in Me may not remain in darkness.

^{NAS} 2 Corinthians 4:6 For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

^{NAS} Hebrews 1:3 And He is the radiance of His glory and **the exact representation** of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high;

As long as wheat receives both water and sunlight, it will grow into the finished product; this is built into the DNA of wheat. So it is with the believer: as long as we stay willing to receive God's teaching and sunlight, it is within our *spiritual* DNA to grow into the intended product—the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26) that Christ showed forth.

Man's Part in the Process

The Israelite needed to till the ground

Israeli wheat growers had to till their land so that it could receive the grain seed during planting. Through a parable, the Lord showed that if the ground was not first prepared, the seed would not bring forth as intended (Matthew 13:3–9). Jesus told several parables along this line, applying tilling in the spiritual sense of preparing one's heart to receive the teaching he was bringing from God.

God used this figurative language through the prophets:

^{NAS} Jeremiah 4:3 For thus says the LORD to the men of Judah and to Jerusalem, “Break up your fallow ground, And do not sow among thorns.

And Jesus taught along these lines:

^{NAS} Luke 8:15 “And **the seed in the good soil**, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance.

When the ground of our heart is prepared, it can properly accept the seed during the planting.

As the proverb below says, we are to buy the truth and never let go of it. We are not to reject truth just because it's uncomfortable in society or it does not align with our traditions, but to always hold on to it:

^{NAS} Proverbs 23:23 Buy truth, and do not sell *it*, Get wisdom and instruction and understanding.

The wise man planted the seed that came from God

One of the Lord's parables likened the kingdom of heaven to a man who planted good seed:

^{NAS} Matthew 13:24 He presented another parable to them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to **a man who sowed good seed** in his field.

Some say that, in terms of our doctrine, we need to submit to our pastor, priest, or rabbi. However, the Messiah is the highest authority under God, and we must hear his voice and hold on to any good seed that he gives. He provides teachers and shep-

herds to teach us his word, yet we must yield to the Holy Spirit when new truth is brought, rather than think, "Well, I believe this teaching is from the Lord, but my pastor/priest/rabbi and my social club do not approve, so I cannot keep it."

The Israelite needed to harvest and then winnow the wheat

Ruth met Boaz at the winnowing area (called the "threshing floor," where the chaff was removed from the grain) after he had spent a long day winnowing barley (Ruth 3:2). Boaz would have brought the priests a tithe of the barley and the wheat that he grew, harvested, and winnowed from his land, and the priest would have used some of this wheat to create the twelve breads in the Temple.

One grandchild from the eventual union of Boaz and Ruth was King David, son of Jesse the Bethlehemite (1 Samuel 16:1). It was prophesied that the Messiah was to be a *son* of David (meaning from David's lineage) and to be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2), which means "house of bread." Both prophecies were fulfilled exactly when the Messiah was born in Bethlehem of David's lineage (Matthew 2). Those who are made into his image will spiritually come from the "house of bread" as they partake of the bread of life that the Messiah gives.

This winnowing process removed the chaff so that only the good, edible grain would remain. The New Covenant states that we are to be a kingdom of priests (Revelation 1:6), which points to all believers being involved in both the spiritual winnowing and meshing of that grain into flour.

We do this as we encourage one another daily in the house of God. We share His love. We are merciful as chaff comes to the surface and is blown away, knowing that we ourselves also have chaff and God is covering us in the process. We do not point to one grain and say, "Look, Sam has chaff!" but instead we cover one another in the process. The devil stands near to accuse, and although some brethren will join him, we do not listen to those voices; rather, we hear the Lord's voice that promises mercy. The Messiah knew that the Pharisees did not really understand mercy and God's love, of which the prophet Hosea spoke:

^{KJV} Hosea 6:6 For **I desired mercy, and not sacrifice**; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

Quoting a portion of this verse in Hosea, the Messiah specifically told them to go and learn about God's mercy:

^{NIV} Matthew 9:13 But **go and learn what this means**: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

And later in Matthew, similar words:

^{NIV} Matthew 12:7 If you had known what these words mean, ‘**I desire mercy, not sacrifice,**’ you would not have condemned the innocent.

Christians can also be Pharisaic—legalistically condemning others who may still have sin, instead of learning mercy—so we all need to learn what these scriptures are saying. At the same time, the scripture is clear that when one (including an elder) continues in blatant, willful sin, such as those “spots” in Course 5, there is a time for open rebuke (1 Timothy 5:19–20).

Yet all of the grains need chaff to be removed, and all who are willing deserve God’s mercy. Figuratively speaking, the grains should not attack other grains when they see chaff but rather cover one another during the perfecting process. The grains do not highlight the weaknesses of another grain when it is sometimes failing but still trying to walk with God; instead they show forth God’s mercy with an understanding that each grain has chaff that needs to be removed. God brings the winds of adversity to help blow away the chaff during the winnowing process, and the people, like Boaz, also do their part to help the grains be separated from the chaff:

^{NIV} Hebrews 3:13 But **encourage one another daily**, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.

^{NAS} Galatians 6:1 Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, **you who are spiritual**, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; *each one* looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted.

^{NAS} Proverbs 24:16 For a righteous man **falls seven times, and rises again**, But the wicked stumble in *time of* calamity.

God also takes part in the spiritual winnowing

^{NAS} Matthew 3:12 “And His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

In Israel, the people would look for a hill with wind as a good spot for the winnowing. God showed the importance of spiritual winnowing by choosing a threshing floor for the site of His house, the Temple. The very site where He directed David to build the Temple had been used previously for winnowing wheat:

^{NAS} 1 Chronicles 21:18 Then the angel of the LORD commanded Gad to say to David, that David should go up and build an altar to the LORD on the **threshing floor** of Ornan the Jebusite.

^{NAS} 1 Chronicles 22:1 Then David said, “**This is the house of the LORD God**, and this is the altar of burnt offering for Israel.”

When the winnowing was complete, the people would bring their grain tithe into the house of God, demonstrating reciprocal giving and receiving. They were to bring their grain offerings as fine flour, which the Showbread required; thus they first needed to grind the grain into this flour before bringing it into the Temple.

In a spiritual sense, we must be willing to be formed into flour so that we can be joined to our brethren and made into one bread; otherwise the priests do not have the proper substance from which to make the Showbread. God's ministers can work only with what we give them; we must prepare our hearts to be changed when they bring His teaching, or else we will remain alone and not bear the proper fruit:

^{NAS} John 12:24 “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

This parable shows that to grow more wheat the grain must fall into the ground and break open (in other words “die” or germinate). So too, to be made into spiritual Showbread, the grain must be willing to be broken and combined into one flour, then into one bread (the spiritual body).

The Priest's Part in the Process

The Showbread service was considered one of the communal meals for Temple priests, and the first-century historian Josephus wrote that the Showbread came from the *commom* (communal) offerings of the people.²⁰⁷

The priest was required to enter the house of God in a state of holiness, for he was doing God's will in his ministry by making the required offerings and sacrifices, many of which kept the nation sanctified and set apart unto Him. Another reason he had to enter the sanctuary in holiness was that he ate the “bread of God.” The priest could eat from the holy and the most holy offerings:

207 Whiston, *The New Complete Works of Josephus*, “Jewish Antiquities,” 3.10.7, p. 133.

^{NAS} Leviticus 21:22 “He may eat the bread of his God, *both* of the most holy and of the holy,

The Showbread was a required and “most holy” offering, because the frankincense was placed on the fire (thus making it a fire offering) before the bread was shared by the priests descended from Aaron:

^{NAS} Leviticus 24:9 “And 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 the LORD’s offerings by fire, *his* portion forever.”

Under the law of Moses, the priest was to live off of the people’s tithes and offerings. This is how he would receive his sustenance in the house of God and be able to do the work in the Tabernacle/Temple. In the New Covenant, we receive spiritual sustenance from one another as members in the spiritual body of Christ when we gather together in spiritual fellowship:

^{NAS} Ephesians 4:15–16 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him, who is the head, *even* Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together **by that which every joint supplies**, according to the proper working of each individual part, **causes the growth of the body** for the building up of itself in love.

^{NAS} Colossians 2:19 and not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, **being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments**, grows with a growth which is from God.

^{NAS} 1 Corinthians 12:25 that there should be no division in the body, but *that* **the members** should have **the same care for one another**.

The Greek word translated as “one another” in the scripture above is a reciprocal pronoun, showing the reciprocal nature of the members of the spiritual body caring for one another.

While addressing who should be taken care of financially by the assembly, Paul in his letter to Timothy writes not of spiritual provision but of natural provision, stating that elders who labor in God’s word are worthy of double wages:

^{NJB} 1 Timothy 5:17 Elders who do their work well while they are in charge earn double reward, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.

^{NAS} 1 Timothy 5:18 For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing," and "The laborer is worthy of his wages."

For the ministry to continue, the people's offerings must help the ministers and those who are called to labor in the word of God. Unlike some teachings today that still insist on the 10 percent tithe, Paul understood that the tithe was a requirement of the law, but that in the New Covenant we are no longer under this law. Paul knew that in the New Covenant, the giving is not by compulsion (as it was under the law), but something that comes from the heart after seeing the ministry's need:

^{NIV} 2 Corinthians 9:7 Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

In the Temple, priests would share the bread, and God's word was also shared among the people gathered together. Jesus often spent time teaching in the Temple:

^{NAS} Luke 21:37 Now during the day He was teaching in the temple, but at evening He would go out and spend the night on the mount that is called Olivet.

^{NAS} Nehemiah 8:1 And all the people gathered as one man at the square which was in front of the Water Gate, and they asked Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses which the LORD had given to Israel.

^{NIB} Nehemiah 8:8 They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people could understand what was being read.

The priest would then add water and mix it with the flour

The water that is mixed with flour to make the twelve breads can represent the Holy Spirit of God—the water of life—as well as the teaching rain, as we saw previously:

^{NAS} Revelation 22:17 And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the **water of life** without cost.

Jesus speaks of the Holy Spirit as (living) water, which would later be poured out because of his sacrifice:

^{NAS} John 4:13–14 Jesus answered and said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water shall thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but **the water that I shall give** him shall become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.”

^{NAS} John 7:37 Now on the last day, the great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink.

^{NAS} John 7:39 **But this He spoke of the Spirit**, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Adding warm water to the flour would initiate the natural leavening process, which, once heat was applied, would cause the dough to rise into bread. It is also possible that the priests added leaven to make the twelve breads, since that was the normal way to make bread. (Just because God did not say to add leaven does not mean it was not added, for neither did He say to add water. The way the Israelites made *bread* was to add leaven and water to the flour, then mix it, and bake it.)

Without adding water to the flour, the resulting product at the end of the baking process would not be bread, but rather burned flour. The spiritual priest in the New Covenant must always add the water of life, because the letter of the law without the spirit does not bring life, but only burns the flour without producing the true bread that God wants:

^{NAS} 2 Corinthians 3:6 who also made us adequate *as* servants of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; **for the letter kills**, but the Spirit gives life.

Again, God’s plan through the Messiah was to make man into His image and likeness, into which the Messiah himself was made perfectly:

^{NAS} Genesis 1:26 Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness;

^{NAS} 2 Corinthians 4:4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

^{DBY} 1 Corinthians 15:49 And as we have borne the image of the *one* made of dust, we shall bear also the image of the heavenly *one*.

As we abide in God's presence (as the presence breads did), it is in our *spiritual* DNA to grow into His likeness as long as we become sifted as flour, partake of the water, remain in fellowship and harmony with the other willing breads, and allow God's process to perfect us.

The priests would oversee the baking of the Showbread

After mixing the water with the fine flour, the priests had the duty to oversee the baking process. Placed in the heat, the breads would rise into the "image" of the pans that contained them. The form of the pan represents Christ/Messiah, the image and pattern of God's plan that we are to come into.

In the New Covenant, the fiery trials (spiritual baking process) help perfect us, and as we rise above them, we become like Christ in the process. The trials that we face in this world work to perfect us into what God wants:

^{NAS} 1 Peter 4:12 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you;

^{DBY} 1 Peter 1:7 that the proving of your faith, much more precious than of gold which perishes, though it be proved by fire, be found to praise and glory and honour in *the* revelation of Jesus Christ:

^{DBY} Romans 8:17 And if children, heirs also: heirs of God, and Christ's joint heirs; if indeed we suffer with *him*, that we may also be glorified with *him*.

^{NIV} John 16:33 "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

God knows those who love Him, and those whom He knew ahead of time by his foreknowledge, He predestined to live at the proper time when the people would be conformed to the image of His son. This is what the scripture says:

^{NAS} Romans 8:29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born **among many brethren**;

God did not want only one son to come into His image, but to have Christ be the firstborn *among many brethren*. For as soon as Zion travailed, she gave birth to many sons:

^{NAS} Isaiah 66:8 “Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Can a land be born in one day? Can a nation be brought forth all at once? As soon as Zion travailed, she also brought forth her sons.

The priests were to place the breads on the golden table in God’s presence

It was the priests’ duty to place the twelve breads on the golden table before God, in His presence, on the other side of the veil from where the ark of His presence resided. The veil that separated the Showbread from the holiest place showed that the way into God’s direct presence had not been made while the Old Covenant law (Tabernacle/Temple) still had a legal standing:

^{NIV} Hebrews 9:7 But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance.

^{YLT} Hebrews 9:8 the **Holy Spirit this evidencing** that not yet hath been manifested the way of the holy *places*, the first tabernacle having yet a standing;

The picture of the Showbread in the New Covenant is this: When Christ paid the penalty for sin, the veil in the holiest place was torn in two. The Holy Spirit was thus “evidencing” that, because of Christ, the *spiritual* Showbread is now face-to-face with God in His very presence.

^{NIV} Hebrews 10:19 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus,

The New Covenant teacher should seek to place the spiritual Showbread in God’s presence, where it can be transformed inwardly (speaking spiritually). In the New Covenant we can move spiritually beyond this veil into God’s very presence.

The priest from Aaron must partake of the breads

As we partake of the one bread in the body of Christ, we partake of Christ in one another:

^{NAS} 1 Corinthians 10:17 Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body; for we all partake of the one bread.

We see Christ within each member of his body. We share Christ—the bread of life—whenever two or three are gathered in his name (Matthew 18:20). God is then flowing to and through each member in the spiritual body.

Some of the best sharing of scriptures I have experienced was in the master's class in Bible college. In certain areas of research or understanding where I might have been weak, another student was strong, and together all the students' talents and knowledge combined to enable us to delve much deeper into select studies. Similarly, when the body of Christ unites, Jewish and Hebrew scholars who are like the righteous scribes in David's day will come together in God's house with various Gentile scholars, and together they will find many treasures in His word. What a glorious day that will be, as we can then explore even deeper truths that await us. Just as the priests shared the twelve breads, so will God's people share new truths from His word, and together we will gather new truths from the Old and New Testaments:

^{NAS} Matthew 13:52 And He said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a head of a household, who brings forth out of his treasure **things new and old.**"

After seeing this high calling that God has for us, some might feel overwhelmed and think, "How can we possibly get there?"

In these times, we must remember that all we need to do is stay connected to the spiritual body of Christ and yield to all that God brings in His word and by His spirit—then He will bring us into His image and likeness.

And we must not allow the focus to be only on ourselves—condemning ourselves for falling short of God's high calling—but look away to Christ as the author and finisher (Hebrews 12:1–2). Our perfection will not happen overnight, but it will be a process from glory to glory:

^{NAS} 2 Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

Bread Is Instruction from God

Just as we saw earlier that the rains from God typify His teaching, so did the manna (the bread of heaven) typify His divine instruction coming down:

^{NAS} Exodus 16:4 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Behold, **I will rain bread from heaven** for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day’s portion every day, that I may test them, whether or not they will walk in **My instruction**.”

When Jesus miraculously “broke bread” out to the multitudes using only five breads, a group approached him the following day wanting him to provide bread again, just as Moses had provided manna continually (John 6). Jesus went on to relate many things on this, but essentially he said that he represented the “true bread” (i.e., spiritual manna) being given out from heaven, which was the Father’s teaching coming through him.

^{NAS} John 6:32 Jesus therefore said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the **true bread** out of heaven.

^{NAS} John 6:51 “I am the living **bread that came down out of heaven**; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread also which I shall give for the life of the world is My flesh.”

In this parable, Jesus declaring that he will give his “flesh” as bread partly refers to the people who make up his body on earth—the spiritual body of Christ, or his bride. Genesis 2:24 speaks of two—a man and his wife—becoming *one flesh*. Paul, teaching about a man loving his wife (as his own flesh), showed this was a great mystery that concerns Christ and the Church/assembly:

^{NAS} Ephesians 5:29–32 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also *does* the church, because we are members of His body. For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.

So John 6:51 above is possibly also showing that Jesus has given us—his spiritual body (his flesh, his bride, the assembly)—to also be as spiritual bread that brings his teaching and spiritual nourishment to the world:

^{NAS} John 6:58 “This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate, and died, he who eats this bread shall live forever.”

Jesus thus spoke of himself (and his “flesh”) being bread that he would give in the future—statements that were to be understood spiritually:

^{NAS} John 6:63 “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; **the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.**



It was not a new concept to Jews that God's words were spiritual bread to eat; many would have understood this connection. It was because of the rain (teaching rain) that they would have bread:

^{KJV} Isaiah 55:10–11 For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and **bread** to the eater: **So shall my word be** that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it.

Isaiah spoke of a future new covenant in which the true bread and wine that brings satisfaction is found in listening carefully to God and His instruction:

^{NAS} Isaiah 55:1–3 “Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; And you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy **wine** and milk Without money and without cost. “Why do you spend money **for what is not bread**, And your wages for what does not satisfy? **Listen carefully to Me**, and **eat what is good**, And **delight yourself in abundance**. “Incline your ear and come to Me. Listen, that you may live; And **I will make an everlasting covenant** with you, *According to* the faithful mercies shown to David.

Paul quotes Isaiah 55:10 below and speaks of **bread** for food, giving it a spiritual application as a *spiritual* harvest of righteousness:

^{NAS} 2 Corinthians 9:10 Now He who supplies seed to the sower and **bread for food**, will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the **harvest of your righteousness**;

God anointed Moses to write that man does not live by natural bread alone, but by every word of God, which is the true spiritual bread:

^{NAS} Deuteronomy 8:3 “And He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by **bread alone**, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD.

As we saw earlier, the word of God was shared in the Temple during the festivals, Sabbaths, and often throughout the week:

^{NIV} Nehemiah 8:18 Day after day, from the first day to the last, Ezra read from the Book of the Law of God. They celebrated the feast for seven days, and on the eighth day, in accordance with the regulation, there was an assembly.

^{NAS} Matthew 26:55 At that time Jesus said to the multitudes, “Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest Me as against a robber? **Every day I used to sit in the temple teaching** and you did not seize Me.

Reciprocal Giving and Receiving in the House of God

Now we’ve seen how the making and sharing of the Showbread demonstrated reciprocal giving and receiving in God’s house, and how this in turn showed forth His purpose and plan for those in the New Covenant.

As with the twelve breads in the Temple, the three annual festivals (and communal meals in general) all require reciprocal giving and receiving. During these festivals, no one is to appear before God without bringing some of their harvest or a similar offering:

^{NAS} Deuteronomy 16:16 “Three times in a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses, at the Feast of Unleavened Bread and at the Feast of Weeks and at the Feast of Booths, and **they shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed.**

In this giving and receiving, all were involved. The Showbread also embodies this, since it was made from the communal grain tithes that came from the produce and labors of the people.

The people had their part: to till the ground and then plant the seed, grow and harvest the wheat, and bring their tithes into the Temple. God had His part: to pro-

vide the water and sunlight, without which the wheat could not grow. The priests had their part: to provide the sacrifices required to keep the whole nation sanctified before God, and to partake of the breads. They would also teach in the Temple and other leaders in the synagogues, so the people would know the will of God. The priests received food and sustenance from the tithes and sacrificial offerings of the people, and in return the people received atonement and forgiveness provided for the whole nation as a result of the sacrifices performed by the priests; these sacrifices kept the nation in right standing before God.

God took an active part in reciprocally giving and receiving as well; He was always in the midst of the Temple activities as long as the people's hearts were right and they walked with Him. God would then provide His portion and blessing in the rain and teachings that He sent down.

In these communal Temple meals, Israelites knew that God was more than just a distant guest; He was actually a participant, spiritually dwelling right in their midst (as was covered in Courses 5 and 6).

In Matthew 18:20, Jesus said that wherever two or three are gathered in his name, there "I am" in the midst; he was showing how the believers would soon function in the New Covenant. This is the perfect picture of the spiritual Showbread—the believers are the presence bread, for they are pieces of the one bread that have Christ within and dwell in God's presence. The grains of wheat are combined together in fellowship by sharing God's word with Christ and God's spirit in their midst. The two or three show the reciprocal aspect of giving and receiving in the body of Christ.

The one new commandment that Jesus gave also displays this reciprocal giving and receiving in the New Covenant:

^{NAS} John 13:34–35 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love **one another**, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

^{NAS} Romans 13:8 "Owe nothing to anyone except to love **one another**; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled *the* law."

The *UBS Greek-English Dictionary* makes it clear that the Greek word translated as "one another" in both scriptures above is a reciprocal pronoun, showing that the Lord wants us to *both give and receive* His *agape* love. This will be a prominent feature in the powerful move of God's spirit that is now beginning. It is the teaching rain and the spirit, along with reciprocal giving and receiving of God's love in the body of Christ, that will produce the spiritual fruit that God is seeking.

^{YLT} 2 Corinthians 3:18 and **we all**, with unveiled face, the glory of the Lord beholding in a mirror, **to the same image are being transformed**, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

The Greek word translated into English as “beholding in a mirror” means “beholding, reflecting” according to the *UBS*, and both meanings fit this context. This Greek word is often translated into English as “mirror,” because in a mirror you behold and reflect at the same time. “We all” behold and reflect the Lord’s image as we share His *agape* love and allow His spiritual sustenance to flow from one member to another as we fellowship and worship.

Whether in worshipping, singing, dancing before the Lord, or fellowshiping in God’s love, *we all* are being transformed from glory into glory by God’s spirit as we follow His plan.

Twelve Breads, Now One Spiritual Bread

As he broke the one bread at the Last Supper, Jesus showed that in the New Covenant we are no longer twelve breads, but we are made one bread and one body in the Messiah, the bread of life. This is what the apostles understood from the Last Supper parables:

^{NAS} 1 Corinthians 10:17 Since there is **one bread**, we who are many are one body; for we all partake of the one bread.

^{NAS} Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for **you are all one** in Christ Jesus.

When Jesus held one bread at the Last Supper, broke it, and gave the pieces to the disciples, the Greek word used is singular. Similarly, when the disciples went forth “breaking bread” in Acts 2:42, the Greek reads “breaking of *the* bread” (singular). In Acts 2:46, once again “breaking bread” is singular, as it is in Acts 20:7 and 20:11, showing that the disciples now understood and were “breaking bread” in the spiritual sense.

We no longer approach God in the old way through blood sacrifices, nor do we partake of the twelve breads of the presence in the Temple. This is because now we can enter God’s direct presence through the one bread—the Messiah—and by being pieces of the one bread that he broke, the true presence bread, the spiritual body of Christ with Christ in the midst. It is he who provides the bread of life. We who are his spiritual body also break and share this bread.

The *McClintock and Strong Cyclopedia* quotes the German scholar Carl Bahr, who makes some excellent points about the bread being spiritual food whereby God is seen and experienced:

The 'bread of the face' is, therefore, that bread through which God is seen; that is, with the participation of which the seeing of God is bound up, or through the participation of which man attains the sight of God. Hence it follows that we have not to think of bread merely as such, as the means of nourishing the bodily life, but as spiritual food, as a means of appropriating and retaining that life which consists in seeing the face of God. Bread is therefore here a symbol, and stands, as it generally does in all languages, both for life and life's nourishment; but by being entitled the bread of the face, it becomes a symbol of a life higher than the physical. They who eat of it and satisfy themselves with it see the face of God" (Bahr, *Symbolik*, bk. 1, ch. 6, § 2).

The article continues:

Bahr proceeds to show very beautifully the connection in Scripture between seeing God and being nourished by God, and points, as the coping stone of his argument, to Christ being at once the perfect image of God and the bread of life.²⁰⁸

To this excellent writing of Bahr, I would only add that we also see God's face in our brethren (pieces of the one bread) during spiritual fellowship, as we gather together and share the bread of life in and through one another. That is what the reciprocal aspects of the making of the twelve breads and the sharing of these breads in the Temple showed forth.

208 McClintock and Strong, *Cyclopedia*, vol. 9, p. 712, s.v. "Showbread."