

BREAD — a staple food made from flour or meal and mixed with a liquid, usually combined with leaven and kneaded into dough, then shaped into loaves and baked.

Bread played an important role in Israel's worship. During the celebration of PENTECOST, "two wave loaves of two-tenths of an ephah . . . of fine flour . . . baked with leaven" were offered with the animal sacrifices (Lev. 23:17). A type of ritualistic bread known as SHOWBREAD consisted of 12 loaves baked without leaven by the Levites and placed weekly in the tabernacle, and later in the Temple (Ex. 25:30). When removed at the end of the week, the loaves were eaten by the priests. The purpose of the showbread was to symbolize God's presence with His people.

When fleeing from bondage in Egypt, the Israelites made unleavened bread, or bread without yeast (Ex. 12:8; 13:6–7). For that reason, the EXODUS was remembered annually by eating unleavened bread for a period of seven days (Lev. 23:6). This celebration was called "the Days of Unleavened Bread" (Acts 12:3).

In the New Testament, Satan tempted Jesus by saying, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." But Jesus answered, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God'" (Matt. 4:3–4). In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus taught his disciples to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread" (Matt. 5:11). In the Gospel of John, Jesus called Himself "the true bread from heaven" (5:32), "the bread of God" (5:33), "the bread of life" (5:34), and "the bread which came down from heaven" (5:41). The Old Testament background for these references is the MANNA that fell miraculously from heaven to sustain God's people during the Exodus (Exodus 16). Symbolically, Jesus is the heavenly manna, the spiritual or supernatural bread given by the heavenly Father to those who ask, seek, and knock (Rev. 2:17). On the night before His crucifixion, Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper: "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed it and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body'" (Matt. 26:26). By His sacrifice, Christ became the Bread of Life for His people, that they may eat of Him and find forgiveness of sin and eternal life.

Bread is also spoken of often in figurative language in the Bible. "The bread of tears" (Ps. 80:5) and "the bread of sorrows" (Ps. 127:2) refer to food eaten in grief and distress. The "bread of mourners" (Hos. 9:4) is bread eaten at the time of death. The "bread of adversity" symbolizes hardship (Is. 30:20). The virtuous woman does not eat "the bread of idleness" (Prov. 31:27); she is diligent, hard-working, and productive. Securing bread "without money and without price" (Is. 55:1) is finding that free gift of God that not only satisfies spiritual needs, but also bestows abundant life.

BREAD. The preparation of bread as an article of food dates from a very early period. Gen. 18:6. The corn or grain employed was of various sorts. The best bread was made of wheat, but "barley" and spelt were also used. John 6:9, 13; Isa. 28:25. The process of making bread was as follows: the flour was first mixed with water or milk; it was then kneaded with the hands (in Egypt with the feet also) in a small wooden bowl or "kneading-trough" until it became dough. Ex. 12:34, 39; 2 Sam. 13:3; Jer. 7:18. When the kneading was completed, leaven was generally added [LEAVEN]; but when the time for preparation was short, it was omitted, and unleavened cakes, hastily baked, were eaten, as is still the prevalent custom among the Bedouins. Gen. 18:6; 19:3; Ex. 12:39; Judges 6:19; 1 Sam. 28:24. The leavened mass was allowed to stand for some time, Matt. 13:33; Luke 13:21; the dough was then divided into round cakes, Ex. 29:23; Judges 7:13; 8:5; 1 Sam. 10:3; Prov. 6:26, not unlike flat stones in shape and appearance, Matt. 7:9, comp. 4:3, about a span in diameter and a finger's breadth in thickness. In the towns where professional bakers resided, there were no doubt fixed ovens, in shape and size resembling those in use among ourselves; but more usually each household possessed a portable oven, consisting of a stone or metal jar, about three feet high, which was heated inwardly with wood, 1 Kings 17:12; Isa. 44:15; Jer. 7:13, or dried grass and flower-stalks. Matt. 6:30.

Bread—*food*

A. *God's provision for:*

Earned by sweat Gen. 3:19

Object of prayer Matt. 6:11

Without work, condemned 2 Thess. 3:8, 12

A gift Ruth 1:62 Cor. 9:10

B. *Uses of unleavened, for:*

Heavenly visitors Gen. 19:3

The Passover Ex. 12:8

Priests 2 Kin. 23:9

Nazarites Num. 6:13, 15

Lord's Supper Luke 22:7–19

C. *Special uses of:*

Provided by ravens 1 Kin. 17:6

Strength 1 Kin. 19:6–8

Satan's Matt. 4:3

Miracle Matt. 14:19–21

Insight Luke 24:35

D. *Figurative of:*

Adversity Is. 30:20

Christ John 6:33–35

Christ's death 1 Cor. 11:23–28

Communion with Christ Acts 2:46; 1 Cor. 10:17

Extreme poverty Ps. 37:25

Heavenly food Ps. 78:24

Prodigality Ezek. 16:49

Wickedness Prov. 4:17

Idleness Prov. 31:27

E. *Bread of life:*

Christ is John 6:32–35

Same as manna Ex. 16:4, 5

Fulfilled in Lord's Supper 1 Cor. 11:23, 24

Breaking of bread—*a meal*

Prayer before Matt. 14:19

Insight through Luke 24:35

BREAD. Called the STAFF OF LIFE, Ezek. 4:16; 5:16; 14:13.

KINDS OF: Bread of affliction, 1 Kin. 22:27; Psa. 127:2; Hos. 9:4; Isa. 30:20; made with yeast, Lev. 7:13; 23:17; Hos. 7:4; Amos 4:5; Matt. 13:33; not made with yeast, Gen. 19:3; Ex. 29:2; Judg. 6:19; 1 Sam. 28:24. Made of wheat flour, Ex. 29:2; 1 Kin. 4:22; 5:11; Psa. 81:16; manna, Num. 11:8; meal, 1 Kin. 17:12; barley, Judg. 7:13.

HOW PREPARED: Mixed with oil, Ex. 29:2,23; honey, Ex. 16:31; with yeast, or ferment, see made with yeast, in paragraph above, also see YEAST, Kneaded, Gen. 18:6; Ex. 8:3; 12:34; 1 Sam. 28:24; 2 Sam. 13:8; Jer. 7:18; Hos. 7:4. Made into loaves, 1 Sam. 10:3; 17:17; 25:18; 1 Kin. 14:3; Mark 8:14; cakes, 2 Sam. 6:19; 1 Kin. 17:12; wafers, Ex. 16:21; 29:23; cracknel, 1 Kin. 14:3. Baked in ovens, Ex. 8:3; Lev. 2:4; 7:9; 11:35; 26:26; Hos. 7:4; in pans, Lev. 2:5,7; 2 Sam. 13:6-9; on hearths, Gen. 18:6; on coals, 1 Kin. 19:6; Isa. 44:19; John 21:9. Made by men, Gen. 40:2; women, Lev. 26:26; 1 Sam. 8:13; Jer. 7:18. Traffic in, Jer. 37:21; Mark 6:37.

SACRIFICED, Lev. 21:6,8,17,21,22; 22:25; 1 Sam. 2:36; 2 Kin. 23:9. By idolaters, Jer. 7:18; 44:19. See **CONSECRATED BREAD; OFFERINGS.**

FIGURATIVE: Isa. 55:2; 1 Cor. 10:17; 2 Cor. 9:10. Christ, John 6:32-35.

SYMBOLICAL: Of the body of Christ, Matt. 26:26; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:23,24.

BREAD

Royal bread, Genesis 14:18.

Scarcity of bread, Genesis 47:12-13 (KJV).

Donkey bread-bearer, 1 Samuel 16:20.

Day-old bread, 1 Samuel 21:6.

Abundant supply, 1 Samuel 25:18.

Bread delivered by air, 1 Kings 17:6.

New grain bread, 2 Kings 4:42.

Bread dough stewardship, Nehemiah 10:37 (NKJV).

BREAD

3899 *lechem* (236), *food, bread*

740 *artos* (72), *loaf of bread*

BREAD (Loaf)

1. *artos* (740), “bread” (perhaps derived from *aro*, “to fit together,” or from a root *ar*—, “the earth”), signifies (a) “a small loaf or cake,” composed of flour and water, and baked, in shape either oblong or round, and about as thick as the thumb; these were not cut, but broken and were consecrated to the Lord every Sabbath and called the “shewbread” (loaves of presentation), Matt. 12:4; when the “shewbread” was reinstated by Nehemiah (Neh. 10:32) a poll-tax of 1/3 shekel was laid on the Jews, Matt. 17:24; (b) “the loaf at the Lord’s Supper,” e.g., Matt. 26:26 (“Jesus took a loaf,” RV, marg.); the breaking of “bread” became the name for this institution, Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor. 10:16; 11:23; (c) “bread of any kind,” Matt. 16:11; (d) metaphorically, “of Christ as the Bread of God, and of Life,” John 6:33, 35; (e) “food in general,” the necessities for the sustenance of life, Matt. 6:11; 2 Cor. 9:10, etc.

2. *azumos* (106) denotes “unleavened bread,” i.e., without any process of fermentation; hence, metaphorically, “of a holy, spiritual condition,” 1 Cor. 5:7, and of “sincerity and truth” (v. 8). With the article it signifies the feast of unleavened bread, Matt. 26:17; Mark 14:1, 12; Luke 22:1, 7; Acts 12:3; 20:6.¶

BREAD

lechem (3899), “bread; meal; food; fruit.” This word has cognates in Ugaritic, Syriac, Aramaic, Phoenician, and Arabic. *Lechem* occurs about 297 times and at every period of biblical Hebrew. This noun refers to “bread,” as distinguished from meat. The diet of the early Hebrews ordinarily consisted of bread, meat, and liquids: “And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord ...” (Deut. 8:3). “Bread” was baked in loaves: “And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left in thine house shall come and crouch to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread ...” (1 Sam. 2:36). Even when used by itself, *lechem* can signify a “loaf of bread”: “... They will salute thee, and give thee two loaves of bread ...” (1 Sam. 10:4). In this usage, the word always preceded by a number. “Bread” was also baked in cakes (2 Sam. 6:19).

A “bit of bread” is a term for a modest meal. So Abraham said to his three guests, “Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched ... and I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts ...” (Gen. 18:4-5). In 1 Sam. 20:27, *lechem* represents an entire meal: “... Saul said unto Jonathan his son, Wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse to meat, neither

Fellowship thereby Acts 2:42

Strength gained by Acts 20:11

See Lord’s Supper

“Bread of tears,” Psalm 80:5.
Ashes as bread, Psalm 102:9 (Berk.).
Sustaining bread, Psalm 104:15.
Half-baked loaf, Hosea 7:8 (GNB).
Daily bread, Matthew 6:11.
Sacramental bread, Matthew 26:26; Mark 14:22; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.
“Bread of the Presence,” Luke 6:4 (NRSV).

yesterday, nor today?” Thus, “to make bread” may actually mean “to prepare a meal”: “A feast is made for laughter, and wine maketh merry ...” (Eccl. 10:19). The “staff of bread” is the “support of life”: “And when I have broken the staff of your bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall deliver you your bread again by weight: and ye shall eat, and not be satisfied” (Lev. 26:26). The Bible refers to the “bread of the face” or “the bread of the Presence,” which was the bread constantly set before God in the holy place of the tabernacle or temple: “And thou shalt set upon the table showbread before me always” (Exod. 25:30).

In several passages, *lechem* represents the grain from which “bread” is made: “And the seven years of dearth began to come, according as Joseph had said: and the dearth was in all the lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread” (Gen. 41:54). The meaning “grain” is very clear in 2 Kings 18:32: “Until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards....”

Lechem can represent food in general. In Gen. 3:19 (the first biblical occurrence), it signifies the entire diet: “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread....” This nuance may include meat, as it does in Judg. 13:15-16: “And Manoah said unto the angel of the Lord, I pray thee, let us detain thee, until we shall have made ready a kid for thee. And the angel of the Lord said unto Manoah, Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread....” In 1 Sam. 14:24, 28, *lechem* includes honey, and in Prov. 27:27 goat’s milk. *Lechem* may also represent “food” for animals: “He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry” (Ps. 147:9; cf. Prov. 6:8). Flesh and grain offered to God are called “the bread of God”: “... For the offerings of the Lord made by fire, and the bread of their God, they do offer ...” (Lev. 21:6; cf. 22:13).

There are several special or figurative uses of *lechem*. The “bread” of wickedness is “food” gained by wickedness: “For [evil men] eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence” (Prov. 4:17). Compare the “bread” or “food” gained by deceit (Prov. 20:17) and lies (23:3). Thus, in Prov. 31:27 the good wife “looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness”—i.e., unearned food. The “bread of my portion” is the food that one earns (Prov. 30:8).

Figuratively, men are the “food” or prey for their enemies: “Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us ...” (Num. 14:9). The Psalmist in his grief says his tears are his “food” (Ps. 42:3). Evil deeds are likened to food: “[The evil man’s] meat in his bowels is turned, it is the gall of asps within him” (Job 20:14). In Jer. 11:19, *lechem* represents “fruit from a tree” and is a figure of a man and his offspring: “... And I knew not that they had devised devices against me, saying, Let us destroy the tree with the fruit thereof, and let us cut him off from the land of the living, that his name may be no more remembered.”

Matzah (4682), “unleavened bread.” This noun occurs 54 times, all but 14 of them in the Pentateuch. The rest of the occurrences are in prose narratives or in Ezekiel’s discussion of the new temple (Ezek. 45:21).

In the ancient Orient, household bread was prepared by adding fermented dough to the kneading trough and working it through the fresh dough. Hastily made bread omitted the fermented (leavened) dough: Lot “made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat” (Gen. 19:3). In this case, the word represents bread hastily prepared for unexpected guests. The feasts of Israel often involved the use of unleavened bread, perhaps because of the relationship between fermentation, rotting, and death (Lev. 2:4ff.), or because unleavened bread reminded Jews of the hasty departure from Egypt and the rigors of the wilderness march.

V. Bread. “Give us this day our daily bread” (Matt. 6:11). Jesus prayed for bread, meaning food in general. But bread itself was a staple of Hebrew diet. Grain—usually wheat, but also barley—was milled, sifted, made into a dough, kneaded, formed into thin cakes, and then baked. Expressions like “bread of sorrows” (Ps. 127:2) and “bread of wickedness” (Prov. 4:17) may indicate that these experiences become as much a part of life as daily bread is a part of life.

A. Showbread. Each Sabbath 12 loaves of unleavened bread (for the 12 tribes of Israel) were baked. They were placed in two piles or rows on the golden table in the sanctuary as an offering to the Lord. When the old bread was removed, it could be eaten only by the priests in the court of the sanctuary (Lev. 24:5–9).

B. Leaven. Jesus uses the term *leaven* (a ferment used in bread to make it rise) in a figurative sense, as He does many well-known everyday terms. In Matthew 13:33 He likens the kingdom to leaven, with its power to change the whole. Perhaps we are most familiar with this term when we use it in connection with unleavened bread. Bread without leavening was used at times in peace offerings and also during the week of the Passover to remind the Israelites of their release from Egyptian bondage.

C. Wafer. This thin unleavened cake made of wheat flour and anointed with oil was used in offerings (Ex. 16:31; Num. 6:15).

D. Cracknels. These hard biscuits or crumbcakes are mentioned in 1 Kings 14:3. They are called *cracknels* in the KJV because they made a cracking noise when they were broken.