

Our theme is Jesus, the Bread of Life. Before the bread comes the grain!

*You can see the wheat grain in our decorations today.

*In the Old Testament, the nation of Israel celebrated the feast of the first fruits.

*On the 16th day of the first month of the Hebrew calendar, which is our April, the people were to take the first sheaf of grain from the early harvest, and present it to the Lord. They were not to use the rest of the harvest until they had first offered to God the FIRST FRUITS.

*The purpose of the feasts the nation of Israel were to celebrate, was to remind them that they belonged to God, and also to be a symbol of their Messiah to come.

* When their Messiah came, he would fulfill every offering, including this offering of the first fruits.

* Christ in His resurrection is "the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (I Corinthians. 15:20-23). "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept," (or of all who have died and will die). Because He is the firstfruit in His resurrection, we know we, too, will rise some day!

*Jesus gave His life as our Passover lamb, fulfilling all the blood sacrifices of all the centuries, on the 14th day of the first Hebrew month, Nisan, the day of the feast of the Passover, at the historic hour of sacrifice! This was no accident.

*He rose from the dead on the 16th of Nisan, the Feast of Firstfruits. Since Jewish reckoning views part of a day as a full day, the 14th through the 16th was considered three days. Consider Christ the Firstfruits while the ladies sing.

The Empty Tomb

Back to the Jewish calendar, 50 days after the offering of the sheaves of grain, 2 loaves of bread were to be offered in the feast of weeks. Jesus also fulfilled this offering as He tells us, "I am the bread of life," in John 6:35.

Jesus - the Bread of Life - what it means

In understanding what Jesus means, we lose the meaning if we think only of how we use bread in today's world.

We use bread as something accompanying the main course: toasted garlic bread with a juicy steak, corn bread with a bowl of chili.

But the Bible was written 2000 years ago. What did bread mean then?

In Jesus' time, bread was not an accessory, it was the meal! In Bible times, sheep were worth far more to people alive for wool and milk, than dead on their plate.

Killing an animal for a meal was reserved for very special celebrations, like the visit of a king. In Jesus' time bread was the one essential of life. It was made daily, except for the Sabbath. Bread was so central to the meal that "bread" meant "food".

And so when Jesus said, "I am the bread of life", he was saying he was alone all that was needed for life. He is all we need.

Jesus—the Bread of Life - the miracle

Let's look at the context of Jesus announcing Himself as the bread of life. He had just fed 5,000 people with five barley loaves and two fish (John 6:1–15), with the result that crowds of people were looking for - MORE FOOD (vv. 22–26).

Jesus wants the people to understand that they should not look for temporary food like bread that perishes but food from God that lasts forever (v. 27). Let's sing together.

Break Thou the Bread of Life, verses 1 and 3

In verse 28, the people ask what they must DO to receive this bread, very typical as the Jews believed the LAW is God's bread. They are wondering which works of Mosaid Law are required for eternal life.

Christ does not say they are wrong that something must be done, but the thing He tells them to do is put their trust in Him (v. 29).

Jesus knew the Jews were looking for a Messiah to bring manna, but He tells them their concept of manna falls short of the true manna - Christ Himself, the bread of life that can satisfy the spiritual hunger. v. 35 - I Am The Bread of Life!

Because Jesus was the Passover Lamb, He died and took the punishment for our sins. Until you accept Jesus as your Savior from sin, you do not have eternal life!

Sing: Fill My Cup, Lord - Bread of heaven, feed me til I want no more

The junk food of the world has changed our taste! If we fill ourselves up on television, magazines, the internet, we lose our hunger for what God gives.

We need to feed on the Bread of Life first. When we make Him our priority we lose the taste for junk. He is truly all we need.

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Sing: All That I Need

Dried Crust or a Fresh Loaf

The dried crust is our sin, and the junk food present all around us every day.

The fresh loaf is Jesus Christ.

We need to turn from the crust that will provide no nourishment or strength, and accept the Bread of Life who will meet our greatest need and be our Savior from sin, and then every need of the heart forever. He is all we need.

A Lady Bread Giver (from Baptist Bread, March 2014, this is not original with me) ¶ "He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor." Proverbs 22:9 ¶ In Proverbs 31, we find the Bible definition of a lady. There are many characteristics of this virtuous and excellent woman. Verses 15 and 20 discuss her labors and distribution of goods to others. ¶ In an old book, there is an intriguing explanation of the etymology of the word lady. It is an Anglo-Saxon word derived from two Saxon words: leaf or Laf, signifying a loaf of bread and dian, which means to give or to serve. ¶ It was a custom in olden times for the wealthy and prosperous to regularly give bread to the less fortunate in their neighborhoods. The custom was that the lady or mistress of the manor would oversee and personally distribute the weekly dole. ¶ Hence, she was called the laf-dy or bread-giver, and over the course of time it was abbreviated to the expressive word "lady." In a literal sense it would be wonderful if some of God's ladies would provide bread and other necessities to the needy in and around our neighborhoods. ¶ More importantly, ladies who know the Lord, ought to be daily distributing what Jesus

Christ called Himself: I am that bread of life. If there ever was a time when a loaf of the Lord's life needed to be shared through our neighborhoods, it is now. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God" (Luke 4:4). ☞ Dear lady, be a bread-giver! ☞ We have been given this commission by the Lord Himself! "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel" WITH his promise: "Lo, I am with you always." I Am With You -