

## Sam. Popoola

**“Thou shalt also make a table of shittim 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 crown of gold round about. And thou shalt make unto it a border of an hand breadth round about, and thou shalt make a golden crown to the border thereof round about. And thou shalt make for it four rings of gold, and put the rings in the four corners that are on the four feet thereof. Over against the border shalt the rings be for places of the staves to bear the table. And thou shalt make the staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold, that the table may be borne with them. And thou shalt make the dishes thereof, and spoons thereof, and covers thereof, and bowls thereof, to cover withal: of pure gold shalt thou make them. And thou shalt set upon the table shewbread before me alway” Ex.25: 23-30.**

A great emphasis is to be laid on provision of a table as a symbol of availability of abundance of spiritual food if a believer is to make significant spiritual progress in accordance with divine mind and purposes. Life sustenance is a factor of availability of the right meals at the right times. Natural life depends on natural food for growth so is spiritual life dependent on spiritual food for growth. David said, **“thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies...”** Ps. 23: 5. The table referred to is the table of feeding. His food is assured in spite of the forces working against his divine provision. Israel doubted the integrity of God and his ability to make food available in the wilderness when they asked, **“can God furnish a table in the wilderness? ...can he give bread... can he provide flesh for his people?”** Ps.78:19-20. The account said, **“they believed not God, and trusted not in His salvation: though he... had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven. Man did eat angels food: he sent them meat to the full”** Ps.78: 22-25. The table signifies a **“dinning table”**. This is the picture painted by the Psalmist when he sang, **“thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table”** Ps.128: 3. The table also significantly refers to the heart. The writer in Proverbs said, **“let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart...”** Prov.3: 3. Referring to the heart as the table and the word of God as the meal on the table, the writer in Proverbs further said, **“keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye. Bind them upon thine fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart”** Prov.7: 2-3. Speaking of wisdom he said, **“Wisdom hath builded her house, ...she hath killed her beasts... she hath also furnished her table... she crieth upon the highest places of the city...come, eat of my bread...”** Prov.9: 1-5.

The table of shew bread is significant of our spiritual feeding. One of the vital elements of the life in the Spirit is the place of spiritual feeding. There is the aspect of feeding on the word. The word plays a pivotal role along with the Spirit in the process of transforming us from the image of the corruptible to that of the incorruptible. The mind of the fallen man is grossly out of order with divine mind. The very fabric of human nature is coded with corruption. The very cell structure of the human mind is distorted. The normal thought pattern is very averse to the ways

of God.

The natural man is typically rebellious. When we are born again, it is the human spirit, which is fully involved. The Holy Spirit takes over the human spirit and injects into it the nature of God. The spirit of the **“born-again”** is the element of man that is born again and is under the complete control of the Holy Spirit. The soul and the outer component of the man are in the control of his own will. When his will is yielded in the direction of spiritual progress in God, the word of God becomes the vital ingredient for the renewal of his mind. Paul writing to the Ephesian church instructed, **“...ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lust; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth...”** Eph.4: 23-25. The Greek root word translated **“renewed”** here is **“to regenerate”, “to renovate”, and “to reform”**. He said to the church at Colosse, **“lie not to one another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.”** Col.3: 9-10. Writing to Titus, Paul said, **“according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost”** Tit.3: 5. His words to the Romans: **“I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God... and be not conformed to this world (age): but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God”** Rom.12: 1-2. In all of these scriptures, the word **“renewed”** from the root **“anakainosis”** translates to **“renovation”**. Renovation has to do with that which is old and dilapidated. Renovation means rehabilitation. It means refurbishment. The soul and the outer man component in us is like an old, dilapidated house needing rehabilitation; it is like an old over-used vehicle needing refurbishment. In the word of Paul quoted in Romans 12, the word **“transformed”** in verse two is from the Greek word **“metamorphoo”** which in essence translates to **“metamorphosis”** or **“transformation”** or **“transfiguration”**. The account was given of the **“transfiguration”** of Jesus, **“and after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light”** Matt.17: 1-2. The word **“transfigured”** as used here is also the Greek **“metamorphoo”** which translates to **“a change” “a transformation”** or as is popularly acknowledged, **“a transfiguration”**.

When a man comes to Christ in the first encounter, he meets Christ as the old, degenerate, corrupt, fallen man. He is like the old dilapidated house by reason of his fallen nature of sin. The place of this encounter at the cross of Christ is as coming to the brazen altar in the outer court of the Tabernacle of Moses on which the old man is to be judged and slain. As was said earlier on, if the old man dies at the cross, the new man that emerges in the **“first”** typical resurrection is the Spirit man. The soul and the natural body attain the **“new”** status to the degree the man’s will is yielded to God. The man whose spirit is now born again, in spiritual progression, begins a process of **“feeding”** on the word by the help of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit as represented by the lampstand in the type and shadow of the tabernacle provides the light of understanding and enlightenment in the knowledge of Christ and divine purposes through the scriptures. It is this progressive feeding on the scriptures which provides the medium for a progressive **“change”** or **“transformation”** or **“transfiguration”** within. It provides a gradual re-educating and retraining of the mind that before now has been grossly

distorted. The mind before now was more of the mind of the devil. This is why the natural man has the greater tendency towards evil than towards the works of righteousness. Jesus said that men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil, John 3: 19-21. What actually takes place at the table of **“Shew Bread”** is a metamorphosis, a renewal of the mind. When the Holy Spirit is not involved in the feeding on the word, what results is the **“letter that killeth”**. However, the interaction of the Holy Spirit and the word give life. Feeding at the **“table of shew bread”** is not only feeding on the word, we also feed on Christ. Jesus said, **“verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life... for my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him... I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manner in the wilderness, and are dead... I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world”** John 6: 53-56; 48-51. Feeding on the living Christ entails ability to be in the Spirit and allow the Holy Spirit to unfold to us the mind of God through the word. There is a carnal understanding we may receive from the scriptures as we employ human methods. More often than not, the benefits received by such method are limited; the damage they do may also outweigh the good. We receive much help as we come before God and allow His Spirit to instruct our spirit. Jesus witnessed and said, **“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: FOR HE SHALL RECEIVE OF MINE, AND SHALL SHEW IT UNTO YOU. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that HE SHALL TAKE OF MINE, AND SHALL SHEW IT UNTO YOU”** John 16: 14-15. The Holy Spirit reveals and unveils the Christ into our spirit man at a level beyond the mental appreciation of his person in the letter of the word but in the spirit and the life of the word.

We also feed on the **“table of shew Bread”** as we partake of the life of the Body of Christ. Paul touched on this vital principle, when he wrote to the Corinthian church on the **“bread of communion”**. He said, **“I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, take eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner, also he took the cup when he had supped, saying, this cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat the bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord... for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep”** I Cor.11: 24-30. The mystical Body of Christ is a living organism; it has life in itself from which every member receives life and vitality.

**“...We henceforth.. speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body UNTO THE EDIFYING OF ITSELF IN LOVE”** Eph.4:

14-16. In view of the vital role the Body of Christ, plays in the supply of vital life with which it edifies itself, Paul emphasised the vital need for **“assembling of ourselves together”**. He instructed, **“and let us consider one another...not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together...but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching”** Heb.10: 24-25.

The **“table of shew bread”** emphasises the great responsibility for those who are in spiritual leadership to be able to constantly feed God’s people with bread just as the divine shepherd feeds his flock. David wrote of God in the shepherdic Psalm, **“the Lord is my Shepherd I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters...”** Ps.23: 1-6. The Psalmist expresses freshness in what the Shepherd provides for him. He is also sure he will not want what to eat. In the same manner, Aaronic priests had the responsibility to always serve six pairs of freshly baked bread every Sabbath. The **“old”** is taken away. No stale bread is allowed to be in God’s presence on the table of shew bread. The challenge is for the spiritual leadership in God’s house to always be in God’s mind for the now to be in a position to always serve the people with freshly baked bread, otherwise known as **“the bread of the presence”**. The challenge is being in God’s presence to know His mind and His divine purposes and be able to bring the same to His people in such a way that they serve as **“green pastures”**.

The table is made of shittim wood to reveal the human instrument in conveying divine mind and purposes to God’s people. Shittim wood is particularly durable to suggest the enduring nature of God’s word and the need for a **“patient continuance”** and endurance by the vessels that are the medium of serving the bread of God’s purposes. The wood is covered with gold to emphasise the great need to press into the Spirit in order to receive as well as convey the pure word and the truth of God’s mind to the people. Gold speaks of divine nature, God’s nature of truth, which can only be accessible as we press into the realm of the Spirit. Outside of this, we only can dwell on the outer kernel of the doctrines of men that does no good than convey death to the people in the realm of do(s) and do not(s). There is the border of an hand’s breadth in gold and crowns of gold adorn this border: two sets of crowns, one set facing down and the other facing up. Hand’s breadth is to emphasise ministry that is pure and flows from the mind of God. The two sets of crowns on **“the border round about”** is to doubly emphasise the kingly nature of this ministry. It embraces power and the authority of Christ. The ministry of God’s purposes, which flows out of His presence must of necessity, come with power and with authority. It comes like freshness of a new wine such that when the ruler of the feast tastes it, he is bound to say, **“every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now”** John 2: 10. The wine of God’s purposes has been kept till this last hour to fulfil the counsel of His mind.