# BREAD

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*(During the service we made bread and shared it during communion.)*

## Isaiah 25: 6-8 (a reading for reconciliation week)

6 On this mountain the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples,
a banquet of aged wine — the best of meats and the finest of wines. 7 On this mountain
he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations;
8 he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all
faces; he will remove his people's disgrace from all the earth. The Lord has spoken.

## History of Bread

There is evidence that Indigenous Australians collected and ground seeds of wattle and grasses 50,000 years ago. They mixed the flour with water to form dough and baked it in the coals or attached it to a stick to be cooked over a fire. This bush bread was very dense and fibrous!

In other places millstones dating 30,00 years ago have been found. Initially the ground seeds were mixed with water to make a type of porridge, but baking the dough produced a much more portable, durable and tasty food.

However grinding seed was a labour-intensive process. It may have contributed to the development of more settled communities.

About 11,500 years ago people in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East started to plant seed and grow crops such as wheat, barley, rye, lentils and chickpeas. Sometime later ovens were developed.

By 8,000 BC pita-like bread was a staple of Egyptian food.

About 5000 years ago yeast was introduced into bread making, probably by the Egyptians. They may have used yeast from beer or wine.

The Romans produced huge amounts and a wide variety of breads. It was a staple food of the Roman empire.

Bread has been made from a variety of grains in many countries, eg India, Ethiopia, Latin America, China, However it is not made in some eg, Pacific Islands, some Asian countries.

## Bread in the Bible

In biblical times, bread was clearly an essential part of life and an integral part of every meal

> *Genesis 13:17:* Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out **bread** and wine. He was priest of God Most High
>
> *Genesis 18: 6:* So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah. “Quick,” he said, “get three seahs of the finest flour and knead it and bake some **bread**.”
>
> *Genesis 25:34:* Then Jacob gave Esau some **bread** and some lentil stew. He ate and drank, and then got up and left. So Esau despised his birthright.
>
> *Genesis 27: 17*: Then she handed to her son Jacob the tasty food and the **bread** she had made.
>
> *Genesis 40:16*: When the chief baker saw that Joseph had given a favorable interpretation, he said to Joseph, “I too had a dream: On my head were three baskets of **bread**.
>
> *Genesis 45:23*: And this is what he sent to his father: ten donkeys loaded with the best things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain and **bread** and other provisions for his journey.

## Unleavened Bread in the Bible

Normally yeast was used to make bread, but could be omitted if the bread was needed in a hurry.

> *Genesis 19:3:* But he (Lot) insisted so strongly that they (the angels) did go with him and entered his house. He prepared a meal for them, baking bread without yeast, and they ate.

When the Israelites left Egypt they took their dough with them but did not have time for the usual preparation process.

> *Exodus 12:33-34, 39*:The Egyptians urged the people to hurry and leave the country. “For otherwise,” they said, “we will all die!” So the people **took their dough before the yeast was added**, and carried it on their shoulders in kneading troughs wrapped in clothing.
>
> **With the dough the Israelites had brought from Egypt, they baked loaves of unleavened bread**. **The dough was without yeast because they had been driven out of Egypt and did not have time to prepare food for themselves.**

## Unleavened Bread in the Bible

The feast of unleavened bread was to remind the people of this event.

> Exodus 34:18: “Celebrate the **Festival of Unleavened Bread**. For seven days eat bread made without yeast, as I commanded you. Do this at the appointed time in the month of Aviv, for in that month you came out of Egypt.”

## Bread of Heaven in the Desert

Clearly the dough eventually ran out. God provided another type of bread. We know the story of the manna from heaven.

> *Exodus 16:4a*: Then the Lord said to Moses, “I will rain down **bread from heaven** for you.
>
> *Exodus 16:15*: When the Israelites saw it, they said to each other, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, “It is **the bread the Lord has given you** to eat.
>
> *Exodus 16: 31-32*: The people of Israel **called the bread manna**. It was white like coriander seed and tasted like wafers made with honey. **32** Moses said, “This is what the Lord has commanded: ‘Take an omer of manna and keep it for the generations to come, so they can see **the bread I gave you to eat in the wilderness** when I brought you out of Egypt.

## Jesus the Bread of Life

Bread featured in Jesus ministry:

- his response to the tempter
- the bread he was thinking of was like what we call Lebanese bread
- there was a similarity between this bread and the stones around him

> *Matthew 4:3-4*: The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become **bread**.” Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on **bread** alone, but on **every word that comes from the mouth of God**.’”

## Jesus the Bread of Life

Bread featured in Jesus ministry

- the feeding of the five thousand with five small loaves

- his first recorded reference to himself as bread was to a gentile woman

> *Matthew 14:17-21:* "We have here only **five loaves of bread** and two fish," they answered.
> 18 "Bring them here to me," he said. 19 And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking **the five loaves** and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and **broke the loaves**. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. 20 They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. 21 The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.
>
> *Matthew 15:26:* He replied, "It is not right to take the children's **bread** and toss it to the dogs."

## Jesus the Bread of Life

Jesus talks to the disciples about the food that gives eternal life, that God gives the true from heaven that gives life.

> *John 6: 27-39*: Do not work for food that spoils, but for **food that endures to eternal life,** which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval."
>
> Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?"
>
> Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."
>
> So they asked him, "What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? **Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness**; as it is written: '**He gave them bread from heaven** to eat.'"
>
> Jesus said to them, "Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is **my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven**. For the **bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world**." "Sir," they said, "always **give us this bread**."

## Jesus the Bread of Life

Jesus says that he is the bread of life.

I am not surprised that the Jewish leaders objected to this.

> *John 6: 40-42* Then Jesus declared, "**I am the bread of life.** Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.
>
> At this the Jews there began to grumble about him because **he said,**
> **"I am the bread that came down from heaven**." They said, "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I came down from heaven'?"

## Jesus the Bread of Life

Jesus repeats that he is the bread of life, then talks about his flesh being bread.

This is outrageous. I'm not surprised that the Jewish leaders objected strongly to it.

Imagine you were there. What would you make of it?

> *John 6: 48-58*: **I am the bread of life**. Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, yet they died. But **here is the bread that comes down from heaven**, which anyone may eat and not die. **I am the living bread that came down from heaven**. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. **This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world**."
> Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"
>
> Jesus said to them, "Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so **the one who feeds on me will live** because of me. **This is the bread that came down from heaven**. **Your ancestors ate manna and died, but whoever feeds on this bread will live forever."**

## Jesus the Bread of Life

During the last supper with his disciples, Jesus again describes his body as bread and invites them to eat it.

> *Luke 22:19:* And **he took bread**, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "**This is my body** given for you; do this in remembrance of me."

## Jesus the Bread of Life

Ever since, his followers have done just that. I invite you to join them.

> *Acts 2:42:* They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of **bread** and to prayer.
>
> *Acts 2:46:* Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke **bread** in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts
>
> *1 Corinthians 11:26*: For whenever you eat this **bread** and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

## Jesus the Bread of Life

Jesus also took the cup of wine as a symbol of his blood and the new covenant.

Remember him.

> *Luke 22:20:* In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.