

## **Rabbinic Traditions Regarding Challah**

What is Challah?

The challah is a special bread that is made only for erev shabbat. The rabbis say that we are only to make challah on Friday in preparation for shabbat, this is because it makes the shabbat that much more special. The bread is woven together by strands of dough. As messianics we look at the woven bread as a representation of our messiah, who is woven in a masteries way, as fully human, and yet fully God.

The bread is glazed with butter so that it shines in the light and will reflect the light of the candles. The challah has sesame seeds on the top of it, to remind us of the manna in the desert. It is made with honey so that it is sweet, as it is said "The house of Israel named it manna, and it was like coriander seed, white, and its taste was like wafers with honey." (Ex. 16:31)

It is traditional to have two loaves of challah at the table. This is traditional for several reasons. Once again to remind us of the manna in the wilderness. The Israelites were told to gather a double portion in preparation for the shabbat. (Ex.16:5) The two loafs also remind us of the morning and evening sacrifice.

The Challah is covered with a detractive cloth, and is not revealed until it is time to eat. The rabbis have never really been able to give us a good explanation for why this is, however those of us who believe in the messiah realize that the bread is hidden and anticipated and at the right time is revealed, just as our Lord was hidden and anticipated, and came at the perfect time.

The bread is held up just as the sacrifices were waved before the Lord, and the blessing over the food is sung. After the blessing the bread is torn. The thought here is that since shabbat is to be a day of rest reflecting the life of eternity, we are to remember that when our Lord rules over us there will be no more war, and so the first bite of bread is not cut with a knife, which would be a sign of war, but torn. We however also remember that our master was broken for us.

The first bite is eaten with salt, once again a symbol of the grain offerings in the temple that was to have salt added. At this time we also take the opportunity to fulfill the command to "remember lots wife." (Luke 17:32)

Shabbat Shalom

After the bread has been blessed we move on to the last part of our shabbat seder, and that is singing a traditional song that just says "shabbat shalom" (sabbath peace) over and over again.