

The Brazen Laver

Exodus 30:17-21

17 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 18 "You shall also make a laver of bronze, with its base also of bronze, for washing. You shall put it between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar. And you shall put water in it, 19 for Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet in water from it. 20 When they go into the tabernacle of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister, to burn an offering made by fire to the LORD, they shall wash with water, lest they die. 21 So they shall wash their hands and their feet, lest they die. And it shall be a statute forever to them--to him and his descendants throughout their generations."

This is the last piece of furniture for the tabernacle. As we will see the brazen laver had both a practical as well as a spiritual purpose. They lived in a place that was dry and dirty and their job of offering all the animals as sacrifices proved a problem for cleanliness.

The phrase "Cleanliness is next to godliness", is not found in the Bible but it is a principle that seems to prove true.

But there is much more involved in this than simply cleaning one's hands and feet.

I. The atonement of Christ removes sin.

- A. Now, it is of first importance that we should discriminate between two distinct types. In Exodus 29:4 we are told, "And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and thou shalt wash them with water." While in Exodus 30:19 we read, "Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and feet thereat." The former was done for them; the latter was done by them. In the one they were completely washed all over; in the latter, it was only their hands and feet that were concerned. The former was never repeated; the latter was needed every time they would draw near the golden-altar. The one was a figure of regeneration, the other typified the Christian's need of daily cleansing.
A.W. Pink

II. But what about the filth of this world that we come into contact day by day.

- A. This laver represents the work of the Holy Spirit in connection with the word of God.
 - 1. "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit" (1 Peter 1:22).
 - 2. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to Thy Word" (Psalm 119:9).
 - 3. "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (John 15:3).
 - 4. "Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word" (Ephesians

5:25, 26).

5. “According to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit” (Titus 3:5).

III. Jesus was referring to this laver and washing at it.

- A. John 13:10 (NKJV) 10 Jesus said to him, "He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you."
- B. We are cleansed from the guilt of sin by the blood of Jesus Christ shed for us on the cross, and when we confess our sins, that blood cleanses us (1 John 1:5-2:2). But when we disobey God, our hearts and minds are defiled by sin (see Ps. 51), and it's the "washing of the word" (Eph. 5:26) that restores us. *Bible Exposition Commentary - Bible Exposition Commentary – Be Delivered (Exodus 25-20)*.

IV. The laver was made from the mirrors of the women.

- A. Exodus 38:8 (NKJV) 8 He made the laver of bronze and its base of bronze, from the bronze mirrors of the serving women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.
- B. James 1:22-26 (NKJV) 22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; 24 for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. 25 But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does. 26 If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless.
- C. 2 Corinthians 3:18 (NKJV) 18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

On certain solemn occasions he was required to bathe his whole person (Exodus 29:4; Leviticus 16:4). Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament.

Leviticus 16:4 (NKJV) 4 He shall put the holy linen tunic and the linen trousers on his body; he shall be girded with a linen sash, and with the linen turban he shall be attired. These are holy garments. Therefore he shall wash his body in water, and put them on.

In the temple constructed centuries later by Solomon, the "laver" was replaced by the "Sea of cast bronze" (1 Ki 7:23). The Believer's Study Bible.

In Scripture, water for drinking is a picture of the Spirit of God (John 7:37-39), while water for washing is a picture of the Word of God (Ps. 119:9; John 15:3; Eph. 5:25-27). The laver, then, typifies the Word of God that cleanses the mind and heart of those who receive it and obey it

(John 17:17). The fact that the laver was made out of the bronze mirrors of the Jewish women (Ex. 38:8) is evidence that it typifies God's Word, for the Word of God is compared to a mirror (James 1:22-26; 2 Cor. 3:18).

his foot—supposed not to be the pedestal on which it rested, but a trough or shallow receptacle below, into which the water, let out from a cock or spout, flowed; for the way in which all Eastern people wash their hands or feet is by pouring upon them the water which falls into a basin. This laver was provided for the priests alone. But in the Christian dispensation, all believers are priests, and hence the apostle exhorts them how to draw near to God (John 13:10; Heb 10:22). JFB

How does God do this cleansing, sanctifying work in our lives? He does it by the power of his Holy Spirit, who makes us holy through his Word. The Bible says that Jesus cleanses us "by the washing with water through the word" (Eph. 5:26; cf. John 17:17). God's Spirit uses God's Word to produce real spiritual change in our lives. If we want to make progress in holiness, we need to spend time in God's Word—both publicly and privately—asking God's Spirit to sanctify us all the way through. Preaching the Word - Preaching the Word – Exodus: Saved for God's Glory.

There can be no true communion with God, save as personal holiness is diligently maintained. "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth" (1 John 1:6).

Ver. 19. For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat.] Not in it, but at it; the laver had mouths or spouts, as Ben Melech says, from whence the water flowed when the priests washed their hands and feet at it; and so Bartenora says, they did not wash out of the laver, but from water flowing out of it; it is said out of it, not in it; it seems at first there were but two of these spouts; for it is said Ben Katin made twelve spouts or cocks, which had but two before; so that 12 priests could wash their hands and feet at one time, and which they could do at once, ...
John Gill, An Exposition of the Old Testament, vol. 1, The Baptist Commentary Series (London: Mathews and Leigh, 1810), 501.