

KNOWING JESUS THROUGH THE STUDY OF THE TABERNACLE

Part 4 – The Brazen Laver (Outer court)

The laver was the other article of furniture that stood in the outer court with the brazen altar. It was probably used more frequently than any other article of furniture in the Tabernacle. The primary and evident meaning of the laver is that of cleansing.

Laver in Hebrew is 'kiyowr' (pot, basin, laver, pan, a washbowl, something round (as excavated))

Instruction given: Exodus 30:17-21

¹⁷ The Lord said to Moses, ¹⁸ “You shall also make a basin of bronze, with its stand of bronze, for washing. You shall put it between the tent of meeting and the altar, and you shall put water in it, ¹⁹ with which Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet. ²⁰ When they go into the tent of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister, to burn a food offering to the Lord, they shall wash with water, so that they may not die. ²¹ They shall wash their hands and their feet, so that they may not die. It shall be a statute forever to them, even to him and to his offspring throughout their generations.”

Implementation: Exodus 38:8

8 He made the basin of bronze and its stand of bronze, from the mirrors of the ministering women who ministered in the entrance of the tent of meeting.

Role of women: Women who ministered in the entrance of the tent of meeting. (Not much details given as to what type of service these women offered at the entrance).

Women not only donated towards the construction but also served at the entrance of the tent of the meeting.

These bronze mirrors would not be like our modern-day mirrors. Ancient mirrors were traditionally slightly convex, highly polished brass to allow for a vague reflection of a face.

These donated mirrors were melted down (hammered into shape) to make the basin where the priests wash before entering the holy sanctuary.



Other contributions of people towards the building of tabernacle (Women also were involved).

People gave in abundance that the craftsmen had to literally stop their work and tell Moses that we have more than what we require. He literally had to stop them from bringing. (Exodus 36:1-7)

When the scripture says, 'the women gave/brought' it could be their prized possession that they owned. They didn't know they were being used for greater purpose. Things might look seemingly insignificant like a few fish, a couple loaves of bread – but when we release it, it is being used for God's greater purposes that we can't even imagine.

List of items for the building of tabernacle – Exodus 35: 4-19 (Sacred offering – those with generous heart to donate gifts) ***V 21 And they came, everyone whose heart stirred him, and everyone whose spirit moved him, and brought the Lord's contribution to be used for the tent of meeting, and for all its service, and for the holy garments. 22 So they came, both men and women. All who were of a willing heart brought brooches and earrings and signet rings and armlets, all sorts of gold objects, every man dedicating an offering of gold to the Lord. 23 And everyone who possessed blue or purple or scarlet yarns or fine linen or goats' hair or tanned rams' skins or goatskins brought them. 24 Everyone who could make a contribution of silver or bronze brought it as the Lord's contribution. And everyone who possessed acacia wood of any use in the work brought it. 25 And every skillful woman spun with her hands, and they all brought what they had spun in blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen. 26 All the women whose hearts stirred them to use their skill spun the goats' hair. 27 And the leaders brought onyx stones and stones to be set, for the ephod and for the breast piece, 28 and spices and oil for the light, and for the anointing oil, and for the fragrant incense. 29 All the men and women, the people of Israel, whose heart moved them to bring anything for the work that the Lord had commanded by Moses to be done brought it as a freewill offering to the Lord.***

The Brazen Laver:

Dimensions: Not given (all other objects in the tabernacle has dimensions)

Specifications & parts of laver: To be made out of bronze - Bronze wash basin with a bronze stand

Instructions given :

- Make a bronze wash basin with a bronze stand. (*Solomon's temple-The brazen/molten sea and the ten lavers that served the same purpose in the temple of Solomon, were elaborately worked in artistic designs and are minutely described in 1 Kings 7:23-29.*)
- Placement: Between the tabernacle and the altar. Jewish tradition says that its place however not exactly between them, but a little to the south.
- Consecration of Brazen laver – **Exo 40:11,30; Leviticus 8:11** ***And he sprinkled some of it on the altar seven times, and anointed the altar and all its utensils and the basin and its stand, to consecrate them.***
- Fill it with water.
- Purpose: The Bronze laver was to be used only for ritual washing by the priests. Normally Israelites could only come until the brazen altar and not past that point.



Two main types of ritual washings of the priests took place at the laver.

1. The first type of washing occurred before a High priest, or a priest could begin their service at the tabernacle or later temple. Occurred only once in their life as part of their consecration. This washing, clothing and anointing ritual was preparatory for them before they could represent the people.

Exodus 40: 12 Then you shall bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance of the tent of meeting and shall wash them with water 13 and put on Aaron the holy garments. And you shall anoint him and consecrate him, that he may serve me as priest. 14 You shall bring his sons also and put coats on them, 15 and anoint them, as you anointed their father, that they may serve me as priests. And their anointing shall admit them to a perpetual priesthood throughout their generations.”

This consecration of the priests involved 3 important symbolic acts:

- **Washing**
- **Clothing**
- **Anointing**

These gestures were to demonstrate Israel that the priests were now authorized to act on their behalf.

The Levitical priests of ancient Israel were required to be without physical defect and ritually pure before performing their duties. They followed strict guidelines related to physical condition when going before God in their Temple or Tabernacle duties.

Leviticus 21 outlines the requirements for the purity that God required of them. ***A descendant of Aaron had to be pure, unspotted and without physical defects before he could offer sacrifices or offering to God. These defects included blindness, lameness, a marred face, a limb too long, a broken foot, a broken hand, hunchbacked, dwarfed, a defective eye, eczema, a scab and castration (Leviticus 21:17-23).***

The priest could not go near the veil or approach the altar if he had a defect profaning God's sanctuary. These defects represented the effects of sin! Sin separates man from God (Isaiah 59:1-8).

We are not only the temple but priests.

***And you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'* These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel. "Exodus 19:6**

2 Peter 2: 9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim (show forth) the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

He promises that we will be kings and priests in His Kingdom (Revelation 5:10).

The responsibilities of ancient Israel's Levitical priesthood and the spiritual royal priesthood of God are similar in that purity is absolutely required. The ritual purity of the Levitical priesthood was accomplished by such physical activities as ritual washing and burnt sacrifices. Israel's priesthood was a shadow of God's spiritual priesthood (Colossians 2:17; Hebrews 8:5; 10:1).

Procedure for ordination/ consecration of priests : (Exodus 40; Leviticus 8)

- **The priests will be first washed with water from the laver.** The Bible does not give us complete details on this washing – as to the quantity of water and how it was used. Not with soap & water as we think. Instead it was done to symbolically show that the priest was ritually clean to serve.
- **Once washed, the priests are now clothed with holy garments.** The clothing concept was highly symbolic and demonstrated a significant gift or endowing of power and authority. For example, the gowns worn by the student graduating, demonstrates that they now have the license or power to operate after having acquired the needed

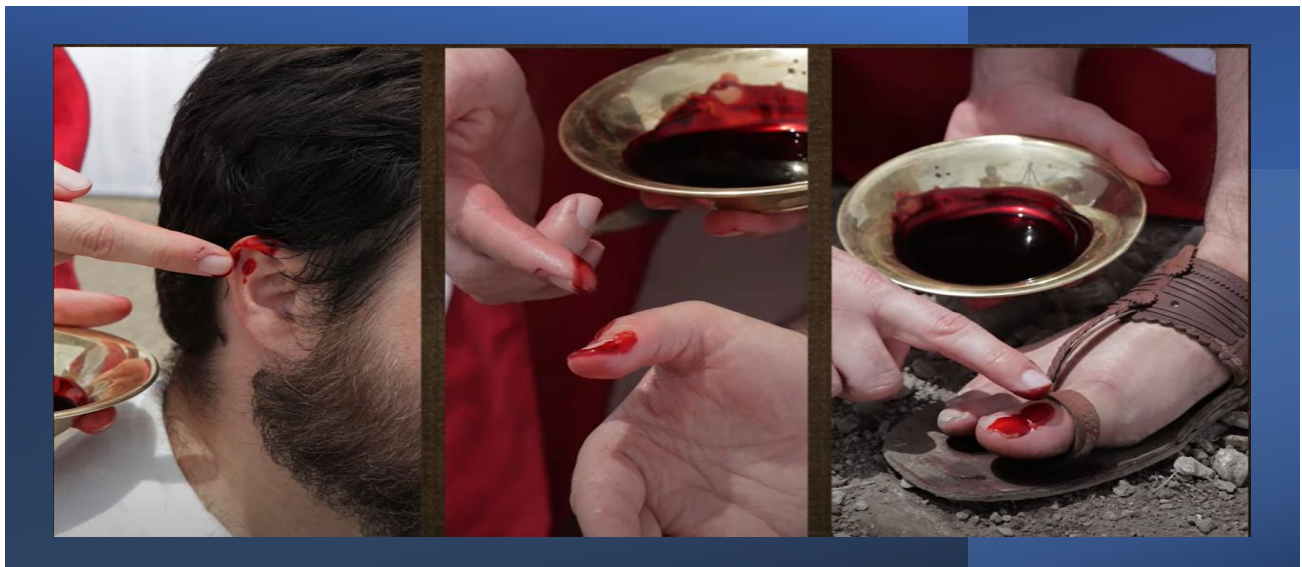
knowledge. So these ceremonial robes represent receiving of special power by the person wearing them.

He put the official tunic on Aaron and tied the sash around his waist. He dressed him in the robe, placed the ephod on him, and attached the ephod securely with its decorative sash. 8 Then Moses placed the chest piece on Aaron and put the Urim and the Thummim inside it. 9 He placed the turban on Aaron's head and attached the gold medallion—the badge of holiness—to the front of the turban.

- **Once clothed , they are now Anointed** : Next, Moses was to anoint Aaron and his sons with the sacred anointing oil and blood from the sacrifice. The oil will likely be 'poured out' from the horn of an animal (horn – symbol of power & strength).

(Lev 8: 14-24) Moses would present a bull for sacrifice (for sin offering); a ram for sacrifice (burnt offering) ; another ram (ram of ordination) . Aaron & his sons lay hands on the animal, slaughtered. ***Moses took some of the blood and applied it to the lobe of the right ear, the thumb of the right hand, and the big toe of the right foot of Aaron & his sons. (Read Lev 8:23,24)***

What does this symbolise? Act of covering with blood directly relate to act of atonement. Hebrew word for atonement (Kippur-atonement/ Kaphar – to atone)– simply means to cover/ blot out / make covering for.



Applying blood

- on lobe of right ear – Need for the priest to listen to the word of God as they serve and represent people.

2 Tim 4:3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled,

Mathew 13:15 For the hearts of these people are hardened, and their ears cannot hear, and they have closed their eyes—so their eyes cannot see, and their ears cannot hear, and their hearts cannot understand, and they cannot turn to me and let me heal them.

Proverbs 2:2 Make your ear attentive to wisdom, Incline your heart to understanding

Jeremiah 9:20 Now hear the word of the Lord, O you women, And let your ear receive the word of His mouth;

- thumb of the right hand – It represents the actions .

Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? “He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully” (Ps. 24:3–4).

James 4:8 Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

Psalm 26:6 I wash my hands in innocence and go around your altar, O Lord,

Psalm 51:7 (After David’s sin with Bathsheba) Purify me from my sins, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Oh, give me back my joy again; you have broken me— now let me rejoice.

9 Don’t keep looking at my sins. Remove the stain of my guilt. 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me. 11 Do not banish me from your presence, and don’t take your Holy Spirit from me.

Isaiah 1:16 “Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Remove the evil of your deeds from My sight. Cease to do evil,

- big toe of the right foot – It represents our walk; the need for the priests to walk in the paths of righteousness. Remember we are the priests of God.

Psalm 1:1 How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!

1 John 1:6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

Revelation 3:4 But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.

Deuteronomy 8:6 Therefore, you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him.

Psalm 15:1,2 O Lord, who shall sojourn in your tent? Who shall dwell on your holy hill? He who walks blamelessly and does what is right and speaks truth in his heart;

- 2. The second type of ritual washing at the laver took place on a daily basis and each time the priest served .** Aaron and his sons were to wash their hands and feet at this laver every time they went in to minister. For this purpose, clean water was put into the laver fresh every day. Though they washed themselves ever so clean at their own houses, that would not serve, they must wash at the laver. This was designed to teach them purity in all their ministrations, and to possess them with a reverence of God's holiness, and a dread of the pollutions of sin. They must not only wash and be made clean when they were first consecrated, but they must wash and be kept clean whenever they went in to minister. He only shall stand in God's holy place that hath clean hands and a pure heart, Psalm 24:3-4.

The priest would wash his hands and feet, both before and after performing a sacrifice on the altar and before entering the Holy place to carry out the services.

We can see that the Laver was constantly being used. It is a constant reminder of the importance of being spiritually clean. Walk worthy of your calling !

Symbolism of water in Bible: (This water in the Brazen laver is inside you)

- 1. Holy Spirit: *On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture***

has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow ‘rivers’ of living water.’” Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. – John 7:37-39 (ESV)

Mathew 3:16 As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him.

- Eternal life/salvation / Fountain of life:** water is also the source of the living water that springs up into eternal life. Brazen laver had no dimensions, it was limitless. It shows a constant source of supply / unending supply. No matter how much water was taken out it never runs dry . It sed to be aconstant source of cleansing.

Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.” – John 4:10-15 (ESV)

Here, Jesus refers to the water that He is to give the woman as the living water, and He goes ahead to say He is the source of that water which springs up to eternal life.

Rev 22: 1, 17 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb –

The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.

Revelation 21:6 And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning, and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment.

Isaiah 55: 1 “Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

Isaiah 12:3 With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.

Jeremiah 2:13 “for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water”

Jeremiah 17:3 those who turn away from you shall be written in the earth, for they have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of living water.

Zechariah 13: 1 On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness.

3. Word of God:

For cleansing : The word of God is often referred to as 'water' in the Bible because it acts like a cleansing agent which explains what Paul meant when he wrote about Jesus' cleansing the church.

"that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish" Eph 5:26-27

"I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness, and from all your idols I will cleanse you" (Ezekiel 36:25)

"let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb 10:22).

Reflection just like mirror: Just like the mirror reflects our face and helps us to correct the flaws, the word of God points us to the sinful area that needs to be corrected. ***James 1:23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. 24 For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like.***

Significance of Brazen Laver:

1. It is reminder of Christ's present resurrection ministry. He continues cleansing His own until He presents them "faultless [blameless] before the presence of his glory [throne] with exceeding joy" (Jude 24). This is the heavenly ministry of Christ in cleansing.
2. It also applies to the present ministry of the Holy Spirit on earth. The indwelling Holy Spirit confirms the ministry of the written Word. These are not separate operations but one, for the indwelling Spirit does not direct apart from or contrary to the Word. This is the earthly application of the meaning of the laver.

Husbands, love your wives, even as 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)

The Word of God is being likened both unto the laver and unto the water contained in the laver. Both the substance and purpose of the laver are symbols of the Word of God. The laver's primary purpose was for cleansing. Likewise, the Word of God is for cleansing. Christ said, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (John 15:3). The laver was filled with water, and the priests were commanded to wash there repeatedly in the service of the Tabernacle. To wash in the Word of God is to apply the Word to the life. The Word washes because it reveals as the mirrors were revealers, and thus is used in cleansing and beautifying. One of the benefits derived from the Word of God is declared by Paul in 2 Timothy 3:16 to be "correction." The Word is profitable for correction; it cleanses by correcting.

In the Lord's prayer in John 17, Christ prays for His own, and makes specific mention that He does not pray for the world: "***I pray for them [those whom the Father gave Him]: I pray not for the world***" (John 17:9). In the same prayer He makes this interesting and enlightening request of the Father: "**Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth**" (v. 17). The Word of God is a sanctifying agency for the children of God. The Holy Spirit is to the Word of God what the water was to the laver. The Word of God is the means by which a child of God learns to walk. As the priests spent more time at the laver than at any other article of furniture, thus the child of God ought to spend more time in the Word of God

The laver was used for the cleansing of the priests, those belonging to God and His service. When the priests were ordained, they were washed all over: "And Moses brought Aaron and his sons and washed them with water" (Leviticus 8:6). That washing was once for all. It was never repeated, but there was a continual and daily cleansing at the laver. The blood of Christ cleanses the believing sinner from all sin, but in his daily walk and service he becomes defiled and needs cleansing. The Holy Spirit indwells each believer, but sin keeps Him from having full sway in the lives of believers today. He sanctifies us daily.