

The Bronze Laver

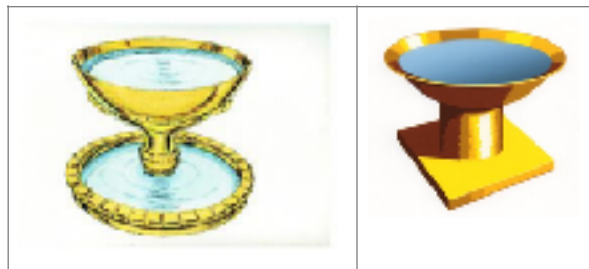
The Doctrine of Sanctification

June 21, 2020

Instructions for constructing the Laver

The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “You shall also make a laver of bronze, with its base of bronze, for washing; and you shall put it between the tent of meeting and the altar, and you shall put water in it. “Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet from it; when they enter the tent of meeting, they shall wash with water, so that they will not die; or when they approach the altar to minister, by offering up in smoke a fire sacrifice to the LORD. “So they shall wash their hands and their feet, so that they will not die; and it shall be a perpetual statute for them, for Aaron and his descendants throughout their generations.” (Ex 30:17-21)

The laver was the other article of furniture that stood in the outer court with the brazen altar. It was located between the altar and the tent (Ex 30:18; 40:7), and like the brazen altar was constructed of brass and filled with water.



Some believe that it had a top part for the washing of the hand and a lower part, called its foot, for the washing of the feet.

The Laver may have had a 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.

Others believe that water was removed from the laver to wash the priest's hands and feet.

Oriental never put their hands or feet in water to cleanse them but pour water upon them (Young). Samuel J. Baird notes that “In fact, the laver was not a bathtub, nor ever used as such, but a containing vessel from which was drawn water for all the uses of the sanctuary.

All service in the tabernacle required the one serving to wash at the laver. It was probably used more frequently than any other article of furniture in the Tabernacle.

Comparison: Though closely related to the brazen altar the laver stood in striking contrast.

Bronze Altar	Bronze Laver
Made of wood and brass	Made of brass only
Was square in shape	Was round in shape
Dimensions are given	No measurements are given
Had rings and poles for carrying	Nothing is said about these
It was covered when they journeyed	Nothing is said about covering it
The altar was for fire	The Laver for water
All Israel could come to the altar to sacrifice	Only the priests alone could wash at the Laver
Speaks of His death – it was for sinners	Speaks of His resurrection - it was for a sin
The work of Christ (atonement)	The work of the Spirit (cleansing)

The Laver tells us of our need of cleansing to maintain communion with God

Cleansing not from the guilt of sin (dealt with at the brazen altar), but from the defilement we encounter along the way as we walk with God.

At the brazen altar the sacrifice was slain, its blood was poured out at the foot of the altar. Having officiated at the brazen altar, their hands would be unclean, smeared with blood. No shoes were provided for them, so their feet would also need cleansing. To be able to advance to burn incense upon the golden altar they first had to wash at the Laver.

As we serve (hands) Jesus Christ and walk (feet) with Him “in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation” (Phil 2:15) we also need daily cleansing.

This defilement does not affect our standing before God (righteous and justified by grace). It does interfere with our relationship with Him; “let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2Cor 7:1).

The Laver points to our Lord Jesus Christ.

He is our sufficiency, meeting our every need. Having been cleansed “let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” (Heb 4:16)

The laver also represents the work of the Spirit in the following ways:

He baptizes us into the body (1Cor 12:13);
He circumcises our hearts (Rom 2:29);
He purifies (Isa 4:4);
He sanctifies (2Thes 2:13; 1Pt 1:1-2);
He leads and guides (Rom 8:14);
He gives us the sword [the Word of God] (Eph 6:17);
He empowers us to put sin to death (Rom 8:1-5, 13; Gal 5:16-18);
He gives access to God's presence (Eph 2:18)

The water of the Laver

“The figure of water is universally familiar and represents one of the most important and necessary elements in the physical universe. We find it in the vast ocean, comprising by far the largest part of the earth's surface; and in our inland lakes and rivers, which form such exquisite networks both of beauty and convenience and of commercial value. We find it in the vapor of the skies; and the dews that gather about the vegetable creation and preserve it from withering through the torrid summer. We find it forming the largest proportion of our own bodies. It is a figure of purity and refreshing; of quickening life and power; of vastness and abundance. Without it, life could not be for a single month maintained. And so, we find it in the Bible as one of the most important symbols of spiritual things” (Dr. A. B. Simpson).

The water of the Laver is one of the most far-reaching and many-sided figures of Scripture.

Water in the Old Testament

1. In Eden we find mention of a river “to water the garden” (Gen. 2:10).
2. There was a river in Eden that parted into four heads and went out from Eden to water the earth.
3. The waters of the flood was the instrument of God's unsparing judgment upon sin.
4. God twice spared Hagar and Ishmael by providing a “spring of water” (Gen 16:7; 21:19).
5. Pharaoh and his army were destroyed by the element of water (Ex 14:1).
6. Twice in the wilderness God provided water for His people from a rock (Ex 17:6; Nu 20:8).
7. Naaman was healed by washing in the waters of Jordan (2Ki 5:1-14),
8. God spared Jehoshaphat and his army from destruction, giving them water (2Ki 3).
9. “There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God” (Ps 46:4).

Water in the New Testament

1. The first miracle of Jesus – turning water into wine (Jn 2).
2. Jesus gives living water that makes you to never thirst again (Jn 4:7-15; 7:38).
3. From the pierced side of the Savior there flowed “blood and water” (Jn 19:34).

4. Figuratively we have been buried with Christ through the water of baptism (Rom 6:4).
5. In Rev 22:1 we see “a river of the water of life, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb

The Laver represents God's Word in three aspects of

2Cor 7:1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

1) God's Word is our mirror: It shows the condition of our inner life. Showing us who we are in Christ,, and also our failures and imperfections.

Jas 1:22-25 “prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers ... if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was”

Illustration: We see this in the upper room when Jesus washes the apostle's feet (Jn 13:1-20).

Jn 13:6-11 So He came to Simon Peter. He said to Him, “Lord, do You wash my feet?” Jesus answered and said to him, “What I do you do not realize now, but you will understand hereafter.” Peter said to Him, “Never shall You wash my feet!” Jesus answered him, “If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.” Simon Peter said to Him, “Lord, then wash not only my feet, but also my hands and my head.” Jesus said to him, “He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you.” For He knew the one who was betraying Him; for this reason He said, “Not all of you are clean.”

We have bathed and are clean (righteous) because of the cross (brazen altar) of Christ.

We need to wash our feet and hands (bronze laver) to be with Jesus (have part with Him).

Notice that Jesus did not say in Me,” but “with Me.”

“In Christ” refers to my spiritual state and standing before God, my acceptance.

“With Christ” has to do with fellowship; communion with Him. For this there must be a removal of all that defiles, all that offends His holy eye. The Laver points to Christ as the Cleanser of His people; its water (the Word) He uses for cleansing.

2) God's Word is our judge: Brass typifies God's examination and judgement.

The Father is a reluctant judge, giving all judgment to the Son (Jn 5:22, 27).

Jn 5:22 “For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son,”

The Son say's, I'm not going to judge you. I've given all judgment to My Word.

Jn 12:47-48 “If anyone hears My sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.”

This gives us opportunity to judge ourselves

1Cor 11:31-32 But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged ...

2Tim 3:16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

Jesus appears to John (Rev 1:12-16):

“His feet were like burnished bronze” (15) – speaks of judgement

“a sharp two-edged sword in His mouth” (16). - speaks of the Word

He walks amid the seven golden lamps inspecting and passing sentence (Rev 2 & 3)

3) God's Word is like cleansing water

Jn15:3 "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.

Eph 5:25-27 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.

Notes:

The women of Israel [who ministered at the door of the tabernacle (Ex 38:8)] sacrificed their mirrors of highly polished brass to construct the laver.

Omissions

There was no dimensions given for the Laver. The measurements of all the other vessels are given.

We are not told of the quantity of water which it contained.

There was no directions given to Israel concerning the covering of the laver while they journeyed. All of the six other furniture pieces were covered (see Num 4).

Only once is it referred to after the tabernacle was erected and furnished, when it was anointed (Lev 8:11). There is no other references to it in the Old Testament.

References Used:

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