

The Brazen Laver

Scripture	Main Theme	Description/Notes
Exodus 30.17-21	The Brazen Laver	

The Construction

The Laver was a vessel for holding water and was placed between the tent of the Tabernacle and the Brazen Altar. It was made of “brass” (which was actually copper) that had been highly polished and was used as mirrors for the Israelite women to admire themselves (Exodus 38.8) before they gave them to the work of the Lord. The Laver stood on a base (or ‘foot’). *Exodus 38.8: And he made the laver of brass, and the foot of it of brass, of the lookingglasses of the women assembling, which assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.*

No measurements are given for the laver.

The Use

The Laver was not for the use of the people, only the priests. It was first used in Leviticus 8 at the public ceremony of the consecration of the priests. On this occasion, **Moses** bathed Aaron and his sons completely with water (Leviticus 8.6). After this ‘initiation’ ceremony, the priests daily washed their hands and their feet whenever they went into the tent of the Tabernacle, or offered a sacrifice on the brazen altar (Exodus 30.20). This was God’s commandment and it never changed. The penalty for not washing was death (Exodus 30.19-21).

The Laver was more of a reservoir than a basin, i.e. the priests were to wash their hands and feet **from** the Laver, not **in** the Laver: *19 For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat (or, from it).* This was important to ensure the water in the Laver remained clean.

On the Day of Atonement, the priest would wash before and after the ceremony (Leviticus 16.4, 23-24).

The Significance

The Laver was designed for the daily cleansing of the priests. It was first used **once** by Moses to bathe the priests completely, and then used **daily** by the priests themselves to remove defilement in the service of God.

This signifies the cleansing by water we have received by Christ once for all, and the cleansing that we as priests must apply daily to be of any use in God’s service.

Cleansing Once for All!

Our salvation was accomplished by water and the Spirit of God, *John 3.5: Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

What is this water? *Titus 3.5: Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing (or, **laver**) of regeneration (new birth), and renewing (a making new again, a renovation) of (or, **by**) the Holy Ghost.*

The Apostle Peter (who knew a lot about water and washing, cf. John 13) notes in *1 Peter 1.23: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.* So, the Word of God (as well as the Holy Spirit) answers to the water and is the instrument used in new birth. It brings conviction to the sinner and points him to Christ (Romans 10.17, James 1.8).

When we were saved (regenerated), we were completely washed positionally clean before God. This can never be repeated: *John 13.10: Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.*



Daily Cleansing!

*John 13.10: Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not **save to wash his feet**, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.* Despite this positional cleansing, which is once and for all, we still need practical cleansing on a day by day basis.

Without this daily cleansing found in the Laver (Word of God) we have no part with Christ (i.e. there is no fellowship and communion with Him!). *John 13.8: Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.*

We must deal with sin in our daily walk before we can expect to come into God's presence to behold His beauty to worship Him and to fellowship with Him. A life that is not spiritually clean prevents true worship and fellowship.

Psalm 24.3-4: 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.

*Note the tenses of salvation: We have been saved (past), we are being saved (present) and we shall be saved (future). We have been saved from the **penalty** of sin; this is illustrated in the Brazen Altar (2 Timothy 1.9). We are being saved from the **power** of sin (1 Corinthians 1.18, 'being saved'); this is illustrated in the Brazen Laver. We shall be saved in the future from the **presence** of sin (Romans 8.23, 13.11).*

Position. At the Brazen Altar, sins were dealt with and put away. At the Golden Altar worship was presented to God. Midway between the two stood the Laver which speaks of daily purification for communion with God. Worship and prayer cannot be presented to God without first a daily cleansing (Psalm 66.18, Proverbs 28.9)!

Construction. Brass speaks of God's righteousness and testing according to His holiness. The Brazen Laver therefore represents the testing and trying of our ways. The light of the Word of God as we read it shines on our lives and exposes the weakness and failure of our lives. With God's help these things should be confessed and put right before Him.

This is further illustrated by the 'looking glasses' that were used in the construction. These mirrors were once used for judging one's own outward appearance in vanity and pride. This is something we are very good at; considering how good we are as Christians in our own sight, but our lives should be measured against God's standards in the Word of God. The mirror of human pride is exchanged for the mirror of divine reflection. James 1.23-25 indicates that we are to hear the Word of God and allow it to act on us.

Hands and feet. This speaks of the fact that we should have clean hands as we **serve** Christ and clean feet as we **walk** with Him. The Tabernacle had no floor. The priests constantly walked on bare ground and as a result became defiled with every step they took. For this they needed constant cleansing. As believers we are in Christ, nevertheless we are still living in this world of defilement and sin. We are constantly exposed to the defilement around us. We must therefore come to the Laver for cleansing (1 John 1.9). Praise God there is no limit to the cleansing power.

No measurements. This suggests that the Laver was limitless in its application. It was constantly in use every day for when the priest became defiled he must wash at the Laver. So the Word of God is limitless in its application; its cleansing power cannot be exhausted. The restoration of fellowship and communion is always available from our God (1 John 1.9).

Daily washing. The priests washed many times daily at the Laver. We must spend time daily in confession and reading the Word of God. Our lives are defiled every day we walk in this world and daily cleansing is essential.