

THE TABERNACLE OF MOSES

"The Brazen Laver"

John 13:1-10

- 1 It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love.
- 2 The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus.
- 3 Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God;
- 4 so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist.
- 5 After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.
- 6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"
- 7 Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."
- 8 "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."
- 9 "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"
- 10 Jesus answered, "A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." (NIV)

At the Temple in Jerusalem, the priests served by course. Those to whom the course belonged (there were 24 courses) served in the Temple for a whole week plus a day, the duties of the courses (incoming and outgoing) overlapping on the Sabbath. The morning and evening sacrifices were continual duties in the Temple, transpiring regardless of the festival calendar. Before day break, the superintending priest would arrive at the priests' quarters "Sometimes . . . at the cock-crowing, sometimes a little earlier, sometimes a little later (Mark 13:35). He came and knocked, and the opened to him. Then he said unto them, 'All ye who have washed, come and cast lots.'"¹ These lots were for cleansing the altar, offering the morning sacrifice, and offering the incense. None could minister in these functions unless they had bathed first. Once bathed, they need not bathe again all day except their hands and feet. The priests that were ready would go to the laver and wash their hands and feet by washing their right foot with their right hand and their left foot with their left hand. Thus the whole operation can be described as "washing the feet only."²

Jesus was eating the Passover meal with his disciples. They had already bathed (vs. 10, compare also John 11:55). Three ceremonial cups of wine (mixed with water) were drunk during the meal. After the first cup, everyone washed their hands. It was probably at this time that Jesus "went the extra mile" and washed their feet. We need to be cleansed; body (our entire person), hands (our work and labor), and feet (our walk). Jesus' statement to Peter that he who has had a bath need only to wash his feet was a reference to priestly service. Note that although the Lord washed Peter's feet, he also indicated

¹ A. Edersheim, *The Temple: Its Ministry and Services, Updated Edition*, Copyright 1994, Hendrickson Publishers, Inc. Peabody, Mass. p. 112-113

² *ibid.* p. 121

the necessity of Peter washing his own feet. Priestly washings were done at the laver.

Exod 30:17-21

17 Then the LORD said to Moses,

18 "Make a bronze basin (*KJV- laver*), with its bronze stand, for washing. Place it between the Tent of Meeting and the altar, and put water in it.

19 Aaron and his sons are to wash their hands and feet with water from it.

20 Whenever they enter the Tent of Meeting, they shall wash with water so that they will not die. Also, when they approach the altar to minister by presenting an offering made to the LORD by fire,

21 they shall wash their hands and feet so that they will not die. This is to be a lasting ordinance for Aaron and his descendants for the generations to come." (NIV)

The brazen laver was the only piece of Tabernacle furniture that was specifically for the priests. The ark was God's throne, the table His table, the lampstand His light, the altars were altars for offerings to him (incense and burnt). But the laver was for the priests to "wash withall."

It was constructed of two pieces, the basin and its stand. The top served as a reservoir for the water and the base acted as a catch basin into which the water was dispensed for use. It was placed between the brass altar and the Tent of Meeting (Tabernacle proper). We are now in the outer court of the Tabernacle and the predominate metal in the outer court is brass. Brass is a symbol of judgment.

Deut 28:15, 23

15 However, if you do not obey the LORD your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come upon you and overtake you:

23 The sky (*KJV- heaven*) over your head will be bronze, the ground beneath you iron. (NIV)

Lev 26:18-19

18 "If after all this you will not listen to me, I will punish you for your sins seven times over.

19 I will break down your stubborn pride and make the sky above you like iron and the ground beneath you like bronze. (NIV)

Num 21:4-9 (NKJ)

4 Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way.

5 And the people spoke against God and against Moses: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread."

6 So the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died.

7 Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD that He take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people.

8 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that

everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live."

9 So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.

This type was fulfilled by Jesus at the crucifixion.

John 3:14-15

14 Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up,
15 that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. (NIV)

John 12:30-33

30 Jesus said, "This voice was for your benefit, not mine.

31 Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out.

32 But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself."

33 He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die. (NIV)

The laver wasn't simply brass. The brass for the laver came from a special place.

Exod 38:8

They made the bronze basin and its bronze stand from the mirrors of the women who served at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. (NIV)

The laver wasn't only a place of cleansing for the priests, it was a place of self-examination. With the shiny, reflective brass of mirrors and the water, the priests could see themselves clearly and make sure that they were clean and their dress was straight.

James 1:23-25

23 Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror

24 and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.

25 But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it-- he will be blessed in what he does. (NIV)

John 13:17

Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them. (NIV)

The word of God is a mirror in which we examine ourselves. In doing what we see, we fulfill God's destiny for our lives.

2 Cor 3:13-18 (NKJ)

13 unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away.

14 But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ.

15 But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart.

16 Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

17 Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

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.

The water of the laver speaks to us of the Word of God as well as His spirit, which empowers us to do his will. The Word of God gives direction, reproof, and correction. The Spirit of God convicts us of sin, righteousness and judgment.

2 Tim 3:16

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, (NIV)

John 16:8 (NIV)

When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment:

(Quote from *The Tabernacle*, W. Brown, p. 56-57)

The laver was filled with water. Where did the water come from? Well (no pun intended), Israel's history with water in the wilderness is very significant.

- Ex. 15:22-26 The waters of Marah made sweet by the casting in of a tree. At this place, the Lord revealed himself as Jehovah-Rapha, the Lord who heals you (vs. 26).
- Ex. 15:27 The camp at Elim. They found 12 wells of water (Apostolic fullness) and 70 palm trees (Sanhedrin, council of elders grows from the doctrine of the Apostles).
- Ex. 17:1-7 The struck Rock in the Desert of Sin at Mount Horeb (Sinai). This was their water source while at Mt. Sinai (80 days Moses on the mount and 9 months building the Tabernacle). Ex. 40:7, 12, 30-32; the basin is filled with water and Aaron and his sons are washed. The supply for this water came from the struck Rock!
- Num. 20:2-13 Moses was to speak to the Rock, instead he struck it twice. This outpouring was to be the type of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

1 Cor 10:1-4

1 For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea.

2 They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.

3 They all ate the same spiritual food

4 and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. (NIV)

Eph 5:25-32

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her

26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word,

27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

- 28 In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.
- 29 After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church--
- 30 for we are members of his body.
- 31 "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh."
- 32 This is a profound mystery-- but I am talking about Christ and the church. (NIV)

Titus 3:4-6

- 4 But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared,
- 5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,
- 6 whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, (NIV)

In an oversimplification, we can say that the Word is the knowledge and the Spirit is the ability to do right. Doing righteously is cleansing, being washed by the washing water of the Word.

I Jn 3:2-8

- 2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.
- 3 Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.
- 4 Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.
- 5 But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin.
- 6 No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.
- 7 Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. He who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous.
- 8 He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. (NIV)

Jesus has empowered us to walk righteously. As we do right and do not do evil, the devil's work comes to naught (this is the execution part of it).

1 Pet 1:18-25

- 18 knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers,
- 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.
- 20 He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you
- 21 who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.
- 22 Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,
- 23 having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever,

24 because "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away,

25 But the word of the Lord endures forever." Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you. (NKJ)

*As John recorded Jesus saying, "You will be blessed if you do them." Verse 22 is startling; souls are purified by **obeying** the truth **through** the Spirit! As we walk in the Spirit, He empowers us to **do** the truth. The **doing** of the truth purifies our souls!*

The Lord wants his king-priests to be clean to serve before him. In the Old Testament, any priest who dared enter the holy place without washing his hands and feet died. Praise Him that he has washed us in his blood, spirit and water. We are now to clean our hands and feet by the washing water of the word in the power of the Holy Spirit and be doers of the word, not hearers only; loving one another fervently with a pure heart! Amen!