

FINDING

GENESIS
EXODUS
LEVITICUS
NUMBERS
DEUTERONOMY
JOSHUA
JUDGES
RUTH
1 SAMUEL
2 SAMUEL
1 KINGS
2 KINGS
1 CHRONICLES
2 CHRONICLES
EZRA
NEHEMIAH
ESTHER
JOB
PSALMS
PROVERBS
ECCLESIASTES
SONG OF SOLOMON
JEREMIAH
LAMENTATIONS
ISAIAH
HOSEA
AMOS
OBADIAH
JONAH
MICAH
HABAKKUK
ZEPHANIAH
HAGGAI
MALACHI
ZECHARIAH
MALACHI
MATTHEW
MARK
LUKE
JOHN
ACTS
ROMANS
1 THESSALONIANS
2 THESSALONIANS
1 CORINTHIANS
2 CORINTHIANS
GALATIANS
EPHESIANS
PHILIPPIANS
COLOSSIANS
LOSIANS
1 TIMOTHY
2 TIMOTHY
TITUS
PHILEMON
HEBREWS
JAMES
1 PETER
2 PETER
1 JOHN
2 JOHN
3 JOHN
JUDE
REVELATION

IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Tabernacle – 2

Introduction

Last week we looked at two important keys to understanding the symbolism of the tabernacle.

1. God's Presence with His people

2. The Tabernacle's reflection of Creation.

In Creation, God created three spaces and then filled those spaces.

The Tabernacle also has three spaces. These spaces teach three different aspects of God's Salvation.

Today we will look at the Outer Court.

Exodus 27:9-19

“You shall also make the court of the tabernacle. For the south side *there shall be* hangings for the court *made of* fine woven linen, one hundred cubits long for one side. ¹⁰ And its twenty pillars and their twenty sockets *shall be* bronze. The hooks of the pillars and their bands *shall be* silver. ¹¹ Likewise along the length of the north side *there shall be* hangings one hundred *cubits* long, with its twenty pillars and their twenty sockets of bronze, and the hooks of the pillars and their bands of silver.

¹² “And along the width of the court on the west side *shall be* hangings of fifty cubits, with their ten pillars and their ten sockets. ¹³ The width of the court on the east side *shall be* fifty cubits. ¹⁴ The hangings on *one side of the gate shall be* fifteen cubits, *with* their three pillars and their three sockets. ¹⁵ And on the other side *shall be* hangings of fifteen *cubits*, *with* their three pillars and their three sockets.

¹⁶ “For the gate of the court *there shall be* a screen twenty cubits long, *woven of* blue, purple, and scarlet *thread*, and fine woven linen, made by a weaver. It *shall have* four pillars and four sockets. ¹⁷ All the pillars around the court shall have bands of silver; their hooks *shall be* of silver and their sockets of bronze. ¹⁸ The length of the court *shall be* one hundred cubits, the width fifty throughout, and the height five cubits, *made of* fine woven linen, and its sockets of bronze. ¹⁹ All the utensils of the tabernacle for all its service, all its pegs, and all the pegs of the court, *shall be* of bronze.

Only One Way

The first thing that we see was that the tabernacle's outer court was enclosed by a curtain fence. There was only one way into the court and this was through an entrance on the east side. You may have jumped over a fence when you were little, but there was no jumping this fence.

God Himself was the one who watched and EVERYTHING had to proceed as He had prescribed. There was only one way into His presence and that was through the single gate. Jump the fence and you may end up dead!

Many today think that they can come to God in any way that they want.

People must be careful to come to God in the way He has told us in His word. Jesus said that on the day of judgement many will say did we not do this, and did we not do that in your name... and he will say 'depart from me, I never knew you'. Solemn words. These are people that thought they could come to God without going through the gate and discovered they were wrong.

Only One Way

This entrance itself is a picture of the Lord Jesus. He is the door. He is the gate. He is the only entrance into salvation. As Jesus said:

John 10:9

I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.

Now put yourself in the place of someone approaching this entrance. As you approached this gate you would have first noticed the color on the curtain. Blue, purple and scarlet thread made up the fine linen curtain entrance. These colors would have reminded you that you were entering into something that was heavenly and involved royalty. The scarlet would have reminded you that this was also a place of sacrifice and blood. As you thought about the fine linen you would have been reminded that this was a place of complete righteousness. The gate represent Christ. He is the one who came down from heaven (blue). He is the royal king (purple). He is the one who gave His life as a blood sacrifice (scarlet). He was the only man that has ever been completely righteous (fine linen). If salvation was to be found you had to come through Christ. That was the picture God gave then, that is the reality for all now.

The Altar

Exodus 27:1-8

“You shall make an altar of acacia wood, five cubits long and five cubits wide—the altar shall be square—and its height *shall be* three cubits. ² You shall make its horns on its four corners; its horns shall be of one piece with it. And you shall overlay it with bronze. ³ Also you shall make its pans to receive its ashes, and its shovels and its basins and its forks and its firepans; you shall make all its utensils of bronze. ⁴ You shall make a grate for it, a network of bronze; and on the network you shall make four bronze rings at its four corners. ⁵ You shall put it under the rim of the altar beneath, that the network may be midway up the altar. ⁶ And you shall make poles for the altar, poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with bronze. ⁷ The poles shall be put in the rings, and the poles shall be on the two sides of the altar to bear it. ⁸ You shall make it hollow with boards; as it was shown you on the mountain, so shall they make *it*.”

The Altar

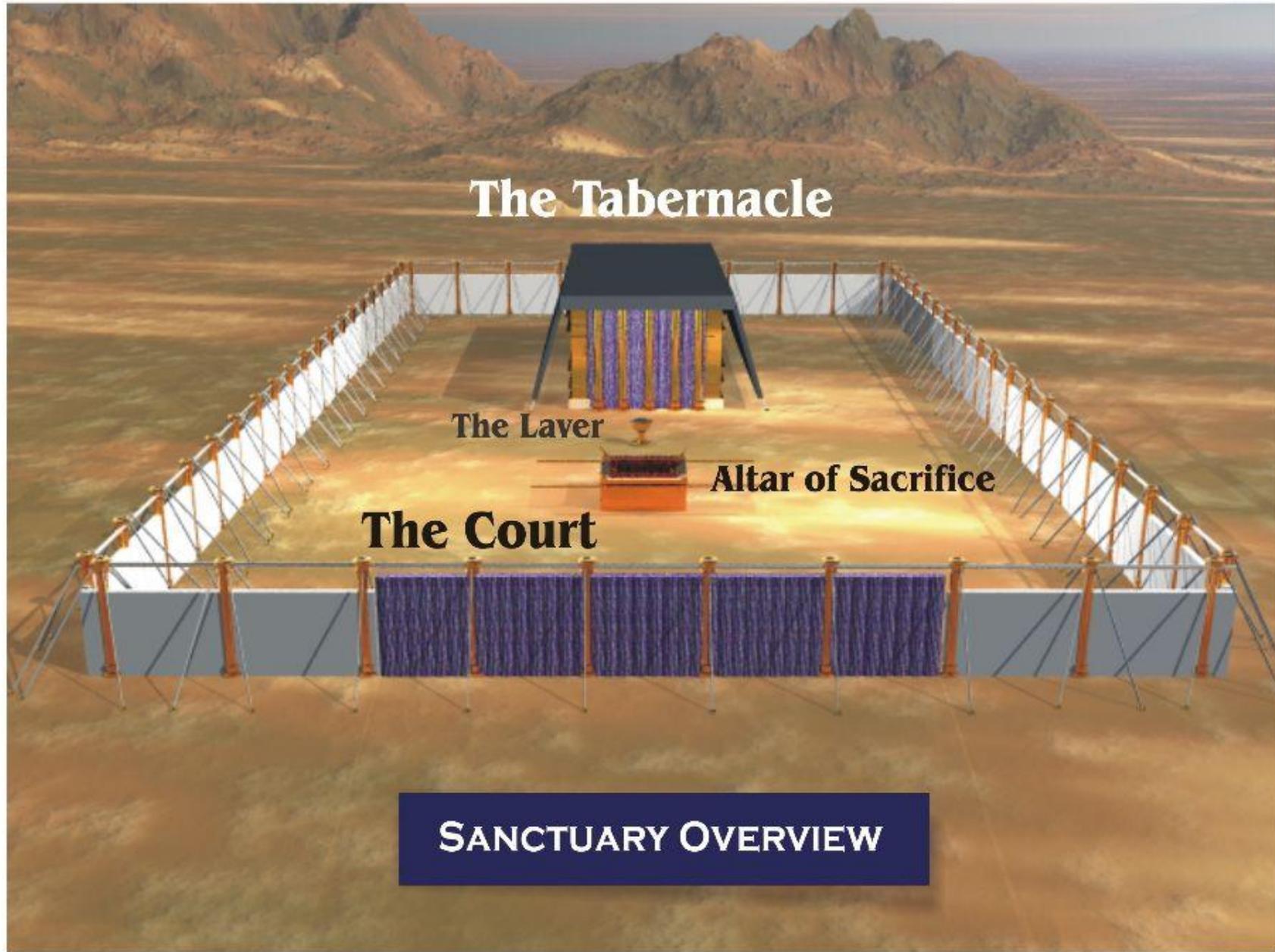
Leviticus 6:12-13

And the fire on the altar shall be kept burning on it; it shall not be put out. And the priest shall burn wood on it every morning, and lay the burnt offering in order on it; and he shall burn on it the fat of the peace offerings. ¹³ A fire shall always be burning on the altar; it shall never go out.

But as you would go through that gate, you would be confronted the brazen altar with its sacrifices and perpetual fire.

The altar had four horns in each of the corners where the sacrificial animal was bound and killed by the priests. These sacrifices went on daily and the command from God was that the fire for this altar was to never go out. Everything in the courtyard was made from bronze. The altar itself was made from acacia wood but was completely covered in bronze. All of the utensils were bronze, even the wooden poles used to carry the altar were covered in bronze. This entire scene spoke of judgement. The fire that never went out, the continual sacrifices and shedding of blood, and the use of bronze on everything. It declared God's hatred of sin. It spoke volumes of the continual judgement of God upon that sin.

The Tabernacle



SANCTUARY OVERVIEW

The Altar

This altar has its fulfilment at the cross. This altar was a picture of the sacrifice for sin that Jesus would accomplish at Calvary. But unlike the continual sacrifices of unwilling animals that occurred at the brazen altar in the tabernacle, Jesus was a willing sacrifice that would end all sacrifices. At the brazen altar the animals had to be tied down to the four horns for they didn't want to die. Yet Jesus went willingly to the cross saying 'greater love has no man that he lays down his life for his friends.' And what's more, the fires of God's judgement burnt out in Christ! He was the final sacrifice taking all the judgement of God. Any who are now 'in Christ' are forever safe. That is not to say that the fire of God's judgement no longer exists at all. Surely it does and for those that reject God's offer of salvation in Christ then for them the text will be fulfilled that 'it is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God'. 'Vengeance is mine says the Lord and I will repay.'

The Altar

H.A Ironside wrote the following:

"One of the first gospel illustrations that ever made a real impression upon my young heart was a simple story that I heard a preacher tell when I was less than nine years old. It was of pioneers who were making their way across one of the central states to a distant place that had been opened up for homesteading. They travelled in covered wagons drawn by oxen, and progress was necessarily slow. One day they were horrified to note a long line of smoke in the west, stretching for miles across the prairie, and soon it was evident that the dried grass was burning fiercely, and was coming toward them rapidly. They had crossed a river the day before but it would be impossible to go back to that before the flames would be upon them. One man only seemed to have an understanding as to what should be done. He gave the command to set fire to the grass behind them. Then when a space was burned over, the whole company moved back upon it. As the flames roared on toward them from the west, a little girl cried out in terror. "Are you sure we shall not all be burned up?" The leader replied, "My child, the flames cannot reach us here, for we are standing where the fire has been!"

The fires of God's judgment burned themselves out on Jesus, and all who are in Christ are safe forever, for they are now standing where the fire has been.



Run and Cling to the Horns!

The altar was also a place of refuge. Many in Israel's history fled to the altar when they thought they may die and grabbed hold of the horns. An example is recorded for us in **1 Kings 1:50**. Adonijah, David's son, had wrongfully tried to exalt himself as king. If successful, he would likely have killed any other claimants to the throne. But when David exalted his son Solomon to the throne Adonijah ran for his life to the brazen altar.

1 Kings 1:50-53

Now Adonijah was afraid of Solomon; so he arose, and went and took hold of the horns of the altar. ⁵¹ And it was told Solomon, saying, "Indeed Adonijah is afraid of King Solomon; for look, he has taken hold of the horns of the altar, saying, 'Let King Solomon swear to me today that he will not put his servant to death with the sword.'" ⁵² Then Solomon said, "If he proves himself a worthy man, not one hair of him shall fall to the earth; but if wickedness is found in him, he shall die." ⁵³ So King Solomon sent them to bring him down from the altar. And he came and fell down before King Solomon; and Solomon said to him, "Go to your house."

Run and Cling to the Horns!

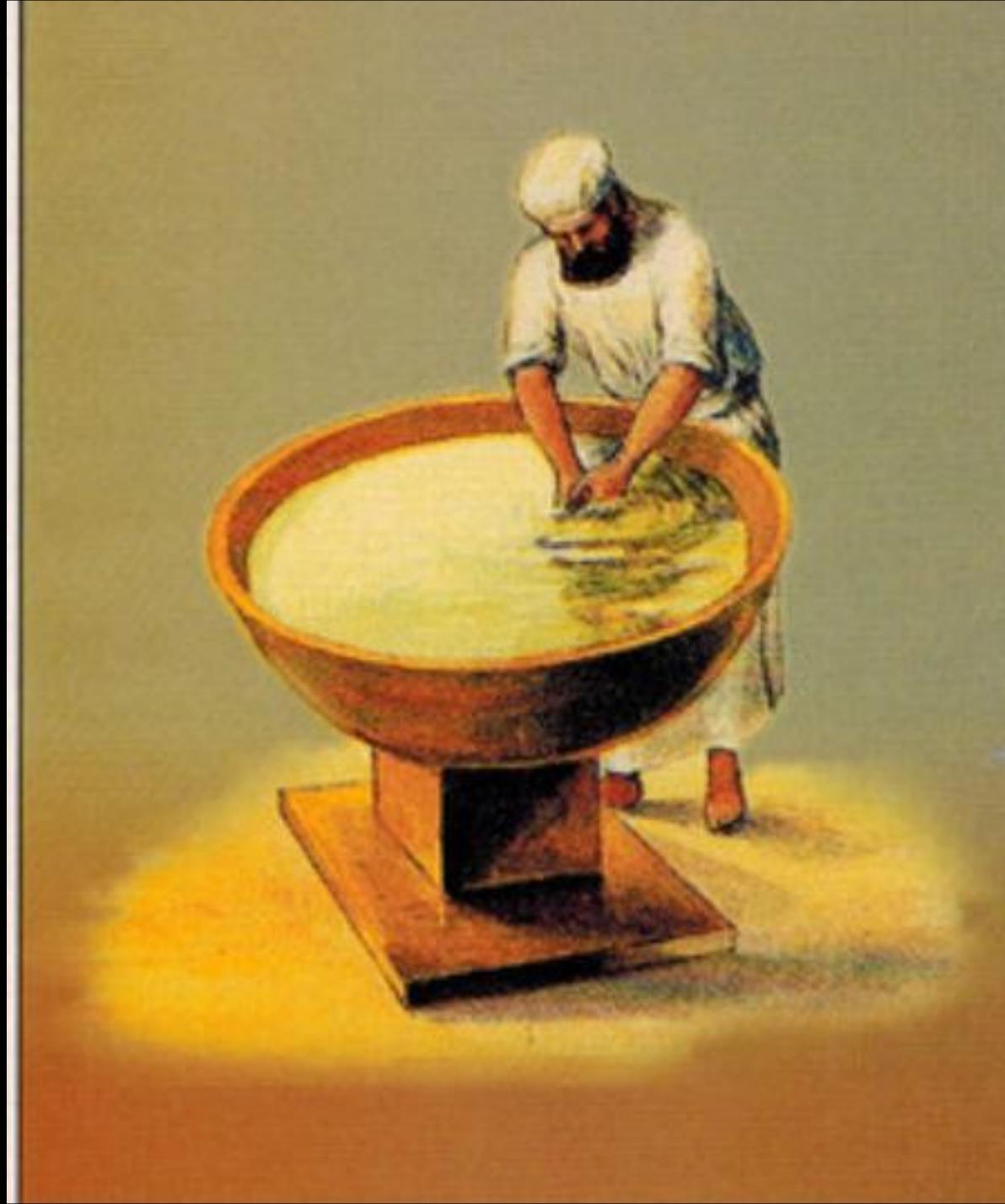
So while the altar is a place of judgement and sacrifice, it is also a place of refuge. By grabbing hold of the horns of the altar Adonijah was saying in affect “I deserve to die for my sin. I deserve to be judged. I associate myself with those that are sacrificed on this altar in the hope that I may find mercy and have my sins forgiven.”

And mercy was found for Adonijah. Likewise for mankind today God is asking them to come to this altar, the cross, and associate themselves with the sacrifice that was made on their behalf nearly 2000 years ago. We grab hold of the horns so to speak, as we see that Christ was our substitute that day. He took the place that we deserved so that we can now find mercy and eternal life through the payment with His life that he made for our sin.

The Bronze Laver – Don't Forget to Wash

Exodus 30:17-21

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.”



The Bronze Laver – Don't Forget to Wash

As you moved forward through the tabernacle you would come to the bronze laver. This laver was for the priests to wash from before ministering at the altar or in the holy place. As you approach the laver and peer in you are faced with yourself! The laver was made from the polished bronze that the women used for their mirrors.

Exodus 38:8

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.

The Bronze Laver – Don't Forget to Wash

So what was God trying to say here? We've got water, washing, and a bronze mirror. So what is likened to water and washing in scripture? What is likened to a mirror in scripture?

Ephesians 5:25-26

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶ that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word.

James 1:23-25

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.

The Bronze Laver – Don't Forget to Wash

What God was illustrating here was the constant need that we have of being washed with the water of His word. As we live in this world, the ways and thoughts of the world rub off onto us just as the earth dirties your feet when you go walking. There is no real way of escaping it. God calls us to be in the world, but not of it. It is inevitable that wrong thinking and some wrong practices will rub off onto you as you associate with those that are not Christians. So how do we clean ourselves of this dirt? That is where the word of God comes in. As you read the Bible it has a perpetual washing effect. As you read the thoughts of God and meditate on His ways it is like pouring water over your dirty feet and hands.

The Bronze Laver – Don't Forget to Wash

So reading the word of God is like washing in water and purifying yourself from the wrong ideas, attitudes and thoughts that exist in the world. But that is not all. The bronze laver was also made from mirrors so that those who washed could see themselves. If we are to progress anywhere in the Christian life we must come to see ourselves. If we are to minister to God or to His people we must know all the frailty and weakness that dwells within our own soul. The Bible says it like this: The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? (Jeremiah 17:9)

The Bronze Laver – Don't Forget to Wash

You need to learn to see yourself and have the God given ability to discern the flesh, your old nature, at work. When you do that, you will then be able to judge yourself properly. You will be able to acknowledge your faults instead of blaming others. That is what you are like in your old nature. It is thoroughly wicked and in that old nature dwells no good thing. But thank Jesus that there is forgiveness and cleansing; that He has given us Himself to be in me what we are not; that he has given us a new nature that longs to know God and walk in His ways!

As you wash yourself with the truth once again you will then be in a position to minister to God or to His people just as the priests were allowed to minister after washing at the bronze laver.

So What ...

We have seen that the courtyard represent God's judgment upon sin. Do not be deceived, God hates sin. It is like a cancer that eats away at the things He loves.

Have you come to the place where you see your own sin and your need of a Savior? Come and cling to the altar and find the forgiveness in Jesus's Sacrifice for you!

For those who know Christ and His forgiveness, let us dedicate ourselves to gazing into the mirror of His Word and allow it to transform our lives. We need to live as living tabernacles in this world since the Holy Spirit lives in us! Let us live holy for He is holy!