

Tabernacle – 3

Introduction

We have 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 continue to look at the Outer Court.

Only One Way

Last week we looked at the gate to the tabernacle.

There was only one way to enter.

The gate and its colors 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.

The Fence of Righteousness

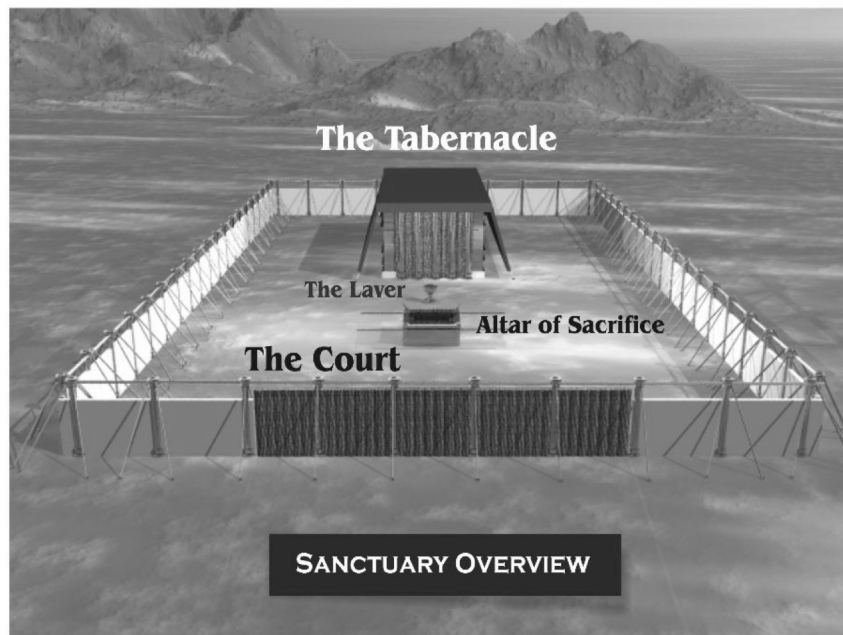
The courtyard was surrounded by a white linen fence. The posts were made of bronze, and the hooks were silver.

There are several teaching points here.

1. The tabernacle is holy. Those who enter in must also be holy. That is why one must come through the gate (Jesus).
2. The fence represent Jesus. He is righteous and pure. In Him is no sin at all. He is Holy! Yet that righteous curtain is hung on posts of brass. Here is a beautiful picture. The righteous Jesus, being hung on the cross of judgment. The interconnecting rings holding it all in place are made of silver. Silver represents redemption. This is what binds it all together. It was Jesus' love for us that bound Him there so He could purchase our redemption for sin and death.

The Fence of Righteousness

3. Since the Tabernacle is a type of Christ, then the outmost boundary pictures Jesus' perfection and His atonement. Jesus as God, our Emmanuel, took on human flesh that bore the judgment of God. In a sense, we see the transfiguration here. Jesus contains the glory of God, but is veiled in His flesh which took God's judgment for us. Many today acknowledge Jesus and His death, but they are only gazing at the external barrier as they deny His deity.
4. Our bodies are the temple of God. When people look at us, they should see the transformation of our lives. They should see holy lives based upon the atoning work that Jesus did for us as He bore the judgment of our sin upon the cross.

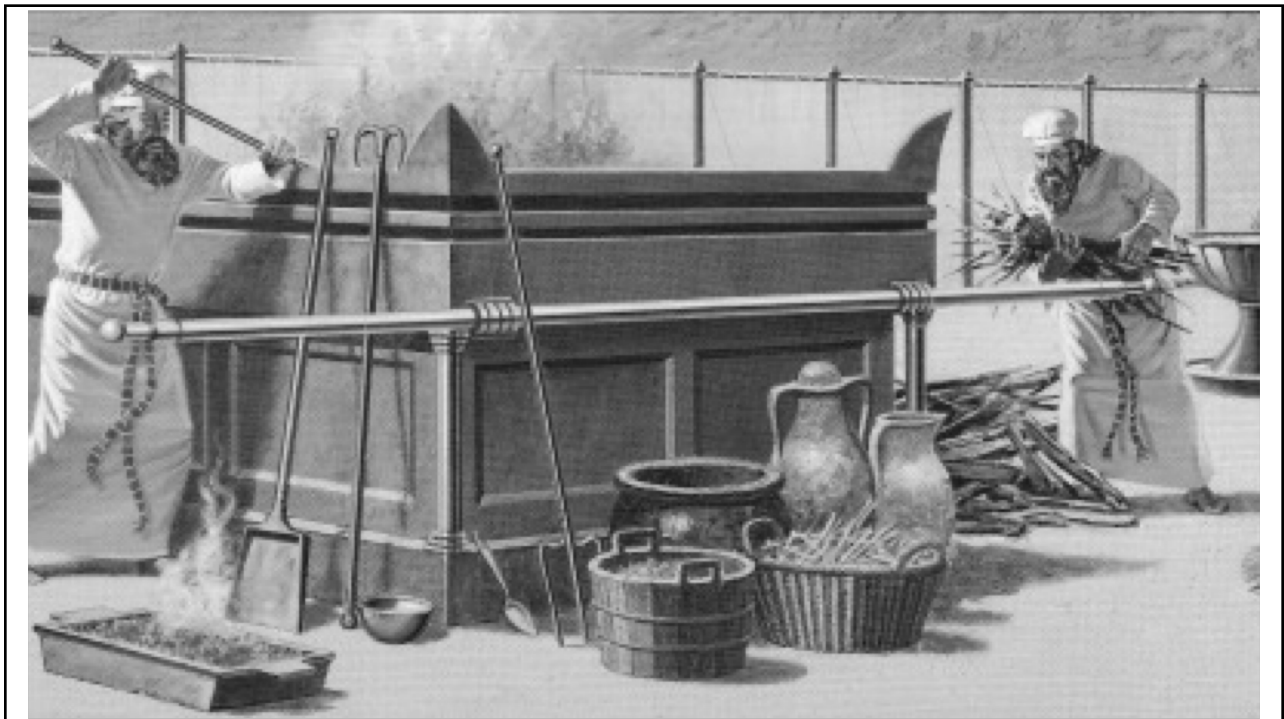


The Altar

Last week we looked at the altar. Just a few reminders

- The fire in the altar was never to go out. This is a picture of God's wrath on sin.
- The altar was made of acacia wood which represented Jesus' humanity. The wood was covered by brass symbolizing that Jesus bore our judgment in His flesh for our sin.
- The altar was a place of sacrifice. We will look at these later, but for now recognize that Jesus was the ultimate sacrifice for our sin. Hebrews tells us that Jesus was offered up once and for all. The fire in the altar has been satisfied and has been put out. The fire of God's wrath now rests in hell and later in the lake of fire where those who have rejected God's gracious gift of salvation will bear the full judgment of God.

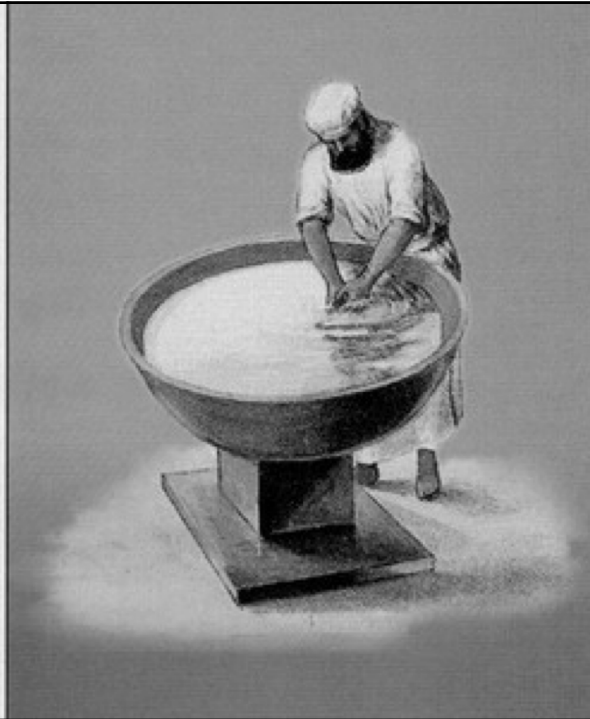
The altar had horns in each of the corners where the sacrificial animal was bound and killed by the priests. Scripture lists several incidents where those who were worthy of death fled to the horns of the altar seeking sanctuary. In this sense they identify with their need of forgiveness. In salvation we also identify with the reality that we deserve death and find the forgiveness we need in identifying with Jesus.



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.

The Bronze Laver – Don't Forget to Wash

We see that Jesus took on the form of the Laver with His disciples and taught them to do the same with each other.

John 13:3-5

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.

Jesus washing the disciples feet is symbolic of the Tabernacle Priest washing at the Laver, as they prepared to enter into ministry in the Holy Place. As they washed, the Tabernacle priests would see how God viewed them as they looked into the mirrored surface of the Laver. This of course led them to contemplate their readiness to move into a more intimate relationship with God in the Holy Place.

The Bronze Laver – Don't Forget to Wash

In washing His disciples feet Jesus is enabling them to see themselves as God saw them. He was showing them that His ministry was one of service to others without regard for social status or rank. This enabled them to contemplate their readiness to move on to the next level of ministry to God.

Jesus clearly communicates several key points in washing His disciple's feet.

- He communicates that each disciple should strive for purity in their life and their walk with God.
- Only by looking at and focusing on the life of Jesus can we see ourselves accurately. Looking directly into the life and actions of Jesus is like looking into a spiritual mirror that reflects our true image. Look at what happened when the disciples watched as Jesus lowered Himself culturally to the status of a slave in washing their feet. The result was that their self-image was changed in the process. They realized that they had to deal with some serious imperfections. They were able to truly see their faults, perhaps for the first time. They saw themselves not with the eyes of the world but rather, with the eyes of God. They, therefore, knew that they would have to change their heart and their behavior to be able to achieve what God wanted in the ministry of Jesus Christ.

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!