

Title:            **DO YOU WANT TO BE CLEAN?**

Text:            Exodus 30:17-21

Subject:        *The Laver of Brass*

Date:            Tuesday Evening — June 23, 2009

Tape :            Exodus #101

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Introduction:

Man, by nature, is one vile mass of sin, polluted and filthy from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet. Throughout the Book of God, the God of Glory declares, “*Thou art vile!*” Our thoughts, our affections, even our bodies are declared to be vile. And, if ever the Lord God is pleased to make you know yourself, you will confess with a horrid sense of shame before him, like Jeremiah, “*I am become vile*” (Lamentations 1:11). If the Lord God is pleased to have mercy upon you, He will cause you to become shockingly aware of your vileness before Him, just as he did Job (Job 40:1-5).

(Job 40:3-5) Then Job answered the LORD, and said, (4) Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. (5) Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further.

Has the Lord God shown you how vile and dirty you are before Him? Do you want to be clean? If so, give me your attention. — **DO YOU WANT TO BE CLEAN?** That is the title of my message. I want to show you from the Book of God how the vilest of sinner can be made clean. My text is Exodus 30:17-21. Here, the Lord God commanded Moses to make a “*laver of brass,*” a bronze wash tub, in which every priest was required to wash before he entered the Tabernacle of the Congregation, or when he approached the altar to make a burnt offering.

(Exodus 30:17-21) And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, (18) Thou shalt also make a laver of brass, and his foot *also of brass*, to wash *withal*: and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein. (19) For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat: (20) When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the LORD: (21)

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So they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not: and it shall be a statute for ever to them, *even* to him and to his seed throughout their generations.

**ALTAR AND LAVER**

The altar and the laver were both essential; but the altar preceded the laver. The laver stood between the altar and the door of the Tabernacle, and right in line with the mercy-seat and the altar of incense, signifying that the no one can ever approach God, except by washing in this “*laver of brass.*”

- In the brazen altar we see Christ dying for our sins.
- In the laver of brass we see the work of God the Holy Spirit causing sinners to wash and be made clean in the Fountain opened for sin and uncleanness (Titus 3:4-7; Zechariah 12:10-13:1).

(Titus 3:4-7) But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, (5) Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; (6) Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; (7) That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

(Zechariah 12:10-14) And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for *his* only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for *his* firstborn. (11) In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. (12) And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; (13) The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; (14) All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.

(Zechariah 13:1) In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.

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The laver comes after the altar. First the Cross, then Pentecost; first justified by His blood, then sanctified by His Spirit in regeneration. — “*For the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified*” (John 7:39).

The laver was filled with water. Water is used in Scripture to symbolize both the Word and the Spirit of God. The laver of brass in the Tabernacle typified the awakening and cleansing work of God the Holy Spirit, as He makes the Word of God effectual to the hearts of chosen, redeemed sinners in the saving operations of His grace. This, of course, can come only as the result of and only through the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ shed for us in the accomplishment of redemption (Galatians 3:13-14).

(Galatians 3:13-14) Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree: (14) That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

## **WOMEN’S MIRRORS**

The laver was made of bronze, a very strong metal. It shadowed forth our Lord Jesus, the One of whom the Spirit always speaks, to Whom the Spirit always points. Christ is our Strength. He came to save His people from their sins, to perform the mightiest work ever performed by God Himself.

We read in Exodus 38:8 that the materials for this laver of brass were from the women the Lord brought out of Egypt. **That is the first thing I want you to see. The laver was made from mirrors women brought to Moses.**

(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.

The Jewish women had mirrors made of beaten brass that they brought out of Egypt, mirrors the Egyptian women had given them. These mirrors they brought to Moses; and Moses used them to make this wash tub for the house of God. I think three things are significant in this fact.

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1. *First*, and foremost, as this laver portraying our Savior was made from that contributed by women, so our Lord Jesus Christ is the woman's Seed, "*made of a woman, made under the law,*" to redeem you and me from the curse of the law.
2. *Second*, that which was once used only for vanity was brought to the Lord God and accepted by Him in His service, in His house, for the worship of His name.
3. *Third*, as the mirror shows a person's face, so the only way we ever see ourselves as we really are is when we come to Christ, the Laver of our souls, and wash in Him.

When, like these women, we stand at the door of the Tabernacle, and see ourselves in the light of the presence of a holy and sin-hating God, like Job, we abhor ourselves and repent in sackcloth and ashes. As we behold Christ crucified, we see ourselves as we really are, "*abominable and filthy,*" "*unclean*" and "*vile.*"

Yet, looking upon the Savior in faith, bathing our souls in this Fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, we begin to see ourselves as we really are in Him: Justified, Sanctified, Fair, Without Spot, Made Beautiful through His Beauty!

**FOR CLEANSING**

*Second*, the laver was made for the cleansing of God's priests. That was its purpose. It was a big wash tub, standing between the brazen altar of sacrifice and the door of the Tabernacle. And in Exodus 30:20 **a strict command was issued that no priest should touch the altar or pass the door until his hands and feet had been washed in the laver.** — **No defilement may approach the Lord God.** But, and this is sweeter than honey, — **He who demands such purity provides the purifying stream.** The Lord who says that you must be cleansed, brings near His cleansing Laver! — **Wash and be clean.**

**Eternal love devised the plan. Eternal wisdom drew the pattern. Eternal grace provides the basin. But by whom can it be filled? Jesus Himself pours in the stream.** He brings the rich supply. It is blood, blood from His own veins, blood from His very heart! Nothing in heaven or earth could help, but this. He bled, to fill the washbasin. He died, to open wide the cleansing Fountain.

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**And there is infinite virtue, merit and efficacy in the blood of God's dear Son to wash away sin!** Sin is indeed a hell-dark stain! Wash it with all that human nature knows or man can bring, and its black dye only becomes more black. If tears of repentance could flow forever, they would not lessen the filthiness of our souls. The waters from the murky puddle of man's best resolves leave the stained soul in aggravated stains. Let rivers after rivers of religious rites and ceremonies, and strictest self-denial and most severe observances pass over it, yet still the deeply ingrained pollution would unclean. If all angelic hosts could wash the spots with all the innocence of angels' tears, the crimson stain would be crimson still. Sin is the vile, deadly malignity that pollutes us, a malignity from which we can be healed and cleansed only by the precious blood of Christ!

Your sins, indeed, are many, black and vile. They have all aggravation and all filth. They have been acted and reacted, in defiance of all light, all conscience, all rebukes, all checks. Their number leaves the sands behind. Their color makes the night seem bright. But plunge into this Fountain, and they are gone forever! No speck of uncleanness can now be found! Your sin-black soul becomes as white as snow! — Whiter than the whitest snow.

**Satan** beholds, and can discern no remnant of a flaw. Nothing is left which he can touch. **God** looks with an all-searching eye, but sin has fled as far as the east is from the west. It has vanished in the efficacy of Christ's perfect atonement. The blood, the all-powerful blood has washed it out. **The Christ-bathed soul is pure and clean and bright and spotless and as fit for heaven, even as Christ Himself.** It is so. It must be so. Hear the Spirit's witness. — *"The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin."* 1 John 1:7. Lift up your eye! **Behold the bright arrayed throng. Where is their title to the heavenly home?** It is the precious blood of Christ!

**But sins forgiven in the court of heaven are not soon forgotten in the court of conscience.** Satan finds entrance here in our conscience. With savage voice and clamorous demand, he drags our old transgressions and our present iniquities before the bar of conscience. If he cannot cast us into hell, he will do his best to keep us half afraid of hell until we enter heaven's glory. What wild storms of fear he raises in weak, uninformed minds! He reads out long scrolls of iniquity, transgression and sin, things we know full well we have done! He argues that souls so black are only fuel for the

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endless flames of hell. But, when he would raise up Moses, our mighty Advocate, by His word and by His Spirit, brings us again and again to the Laver to Wash!

Compassed with trouble, in distress,  
What fears possess my mind!  
Savior, I long to see Your face,  
For grace and peace divine!

With broken heart, and waiting long,  
Beneath this crushing load,  
I own my sin, confess my wrong,  
And stretch my hands to God.

My wretched heart, my God, I mourn;  
And for my sin I weep!  
With every lust obscene I burn,  
And sink into the deep!

As Satan raises Moses up  
And roars against my soul,  
Lord Jesus, my poor cause take up  
And make Your servant whole!

Arise, O Lord! Shine forth in grace!  
Your precious blood apply!  
Embrace my soul, dear Prince of Peace,  
Blest Rock higher than I!

Speak, Savior, let me hear Your voice,  
Show me, again, Your face!  
Oh! Hear my inmost groans and cries. —  
Revive my soul with grace!

**The only refuge for our sin-polluted souls is the Laver of God, Christ Jesus!** Would you have conscience at ease, unruffled, calm before God? Would you have peace in your soul and quietness in your heart? Then **wash in the Laver!** Here, blood washed souls confidently rejoice and sing, “God is appeased! Justice is satisfied! My sins are gone!”

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While the polished brass of the laver revealed the uncleanness, the water in the laver would cleanse it away. This is the work of God the Spirit, convincing the redeemed, blood bought soul at once of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment (John 16:7-11). — The water in the laver was only for those who were redeemed at the altar!

(John 16:7-11) Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. (8) And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: (9) Of sin, because they believe not on me; (10) Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; (11) Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

**THE SPIRIT'S WORK**

*Third*, the laver of brass speaks of the work of God the Holy Spirit. **We are not told what the dimensions of the laver were.** No mention is made of its size and shape. When Moses received instructions to make “the laver and its foot,” no mention at all is made of size or shape. At first sight one wonders at this. Is it an overlook? God can make no mistake. Every omission with Him is as emphatic as a declaration. It is surely significant that the vessel which represents the work of the Holy Spirit should not be limited to any particular form or size. — “*The wind (Spirit) bloweth where it listeth; thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth*” (John 3:8). Why was the laver not made of wood and brass like the altar? The answer seems clear and unmistakable. Christ had two natures — divine and human. The Holy Spirit is one Person. Let us adore the wisdom of God. Those who study and understand the types have no difficulty about the inspiration of the Scriptures. The other vessels of the Tabernacle had staves or shafts by which they were to be carried. The laver had none. This may also confirm the inference that we have here not only a work represented, but a Divine Person. We are saved by the redeeming work of the Lord Jesus Christ for us and by the regenerating (sanctifying) work of God the Holy Spirit in us. Both are essential (Ezekiel 36:25-26).

(Ezekiel 36:25-26) Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. (26) A new heart also will I give you, and a new

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spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

**The work of the Spirit is as necessary to make us fit for heaven as the work of the Savior.**

- We must be redeemed; and we must be regenerate.
- We must be justified; and we must be sanctified.
- We must have a righteous record; and we must have a righteous nature.
- We must have righteousness imputed to us; and we must have righteousness imparted to us.

(2 Corinthians 5:17-21) Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. (18) And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; (19) To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. (20) Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. (21) For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

(2 Peter 1:4) Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Are you a **new-made creature in Christ Jesus?** Mark well the solemn truth, — “*Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*” There is no heaven, but for people made holy by redemption and regeneration. **Our title to heaven must be found in Christ; and our fitness for heaven must be gotten from Him. The blood which bought all pardon and confers all peace, earned and bestows all the supplies of sanctifying grace.**

**THE ALTAR AND THE LAVER**

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Fourth, notice the connection between the altar of sacrifice and the laver of cleansing. Like all the other vessels, there was a blood connection between the altar of burnt-offering and the laver of cleansing. The laver was sprinkled with the blood of atonement. The laver could not be reached and used by any except those for whom blood had been shed.

The Spirit did not come till after the work atonement was finished. The sprinkling of the laver with the blood was symbolically the consecrating and imparting of divine authority for its work. When Christ entered into Heaven by His own blood, He sent the Holy Spirit. The work of the Holy Ghost in regeneration is the fruit of and is based upon the sin-atonement death of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is a vital connection between Calvary and Pentecost.

The laver was to be filled with water — water. Where did the water come from? — The Smitten Rock! — *“That Rock was Christ”* (1 Corinthians 10:4). The laver could be filled, and men could be cleansed, because the rock was smitten.

- At the altar we see the blood of atonement.
- At the laver we see the water of cleansing.
- Both are needed; and both come to us through our Blessed Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ.

You remember that when they had pierced His side, *“forthwith came there out blood and water”* (John 19: 34) — the blood first, then the water. The water, or ministry of the Spirit, always comes by way of the altar (Ezekiel 47: 1-12). — *“He shall take the things of Christ, and show them unto you”* (John 16:13,15). You believe in the forgiveness of sin; believe also in the indwelling Spirit. The water of the Spirit (the Water of Life) comes to us in the Laver, Christ Jesus. The two cannot be separated. The indwelling of the Spirit is *“Christ in you the hope of Glory.”*

- **They must be clean** who would *“stand before God.”*
- There was but **one means of cleansing**. There was but one laver; no other was needed. This was God’s provision. They might wash themselves elsewhere, but that would not make them *“clean before the Lord.”* Hear Job’s testimony, — *“If I wash myself, and make my hands never so clean; yet shalt Thou plunge me in the ditch”* (Job 9:30-31). The snow-waters of earth and self-will never avail, but only while the *“Fountain opened for sin and uncleanness.”*

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- **The washing of regeneration is as much a matter of necessity as the blood of redemption.** — “*Ye must be born again!*”

**ILLUSTRATION**

I travel to a foreign country preaching the gospel of Christ, at least once a year. I have crossed the borders of our nation north, south, east, and west many times. Whenever you leave this country and cross into another, three things are required.

- (1) You must have a birth certificate to prove your citizenship.
- (2) You must have a visa from the country receiving you.
- (3) You must have a clean record, no criminal record.

Soon I will leave this land of sorrow and sin. I hope to enter into the bliss and glory of heaven. I hope to stand forever accepted as a citizen of the New Jerusalem. Here is the basis of my hope.

- **I have a birth certificate.** The Lord God has given me a new nature (2 Corinthians 5:17). There is in me a new man, created of God in righteousness and true holiness.
- **I have a visa. I have a right to enter into heaven itself by the blood of Christ,** because I am washed in his blood and robed in his righteousness (Colossians 1:12). God says, “*It must be perfect to be accepted,*” and in Christ I am perfect! He has made me perfectly righteous before God!
- **And I have a clear record.** The Lord Jesus Christ has purged away all my sins with his own precious blood. Therefore God will never charge me with any sin (Romans 4:8). When I stand before God and he searches the books for iniquity and sin under my name, He will find none.

Amen.