

The Laver - The Way of Cleansing

“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” (Exodus 30:18).

From all the signs in public restrooms about washing hands, there must be a lot of folks who were never taught this law of physical hygiene. When I was growing up as a boy, it was a major law in the Hayes’ household. Washing my hands was not something on which I was allowed to vote. In fact, I wonder how many times my dear mother said to me, “Make sure you wash your hands!”

In an attempt to help prevent infection and sickness, Mayo Clinic has published an article entitled “Hand Washing: Do’s and Don’ts.” I must confess I was somewhat startled and amused at some of the simple instructions concerning this matter. Who would have ever thought that we needed to be taught when (both before and after) and how (with soap and water) to wash our hands?

As seen in the above text, the Lord instructed Moses to provide the priests with a way of cleansing before they entered into the Tabernacle in the Wilderness holy place. The next verse indicates that the priests were to wash both “their hands and their feet” (30:19) with the water from the laver. While these instructions were also rather simple and plain, both physical and spiritual lessons were being set forth.

The priests found the privilege of cleansing at the laver! The work at the altar left their hands unclean; the sand of the wilderness left their feet defiled. Thus, to wash their hands and feet in the water of the laver was a refreshing privilege. Likewise, when believers are contaminated in this earthly sojourn, they can enjoy the privilege of the “washing of water by the Word” (Ephesians 5:26).

The priests found the purification of cleansing at the laver! To approach God, the priests must be pure and clean. In fact, twice it is stated in this context that they must cleanse their hands and feet “that they die not” (30:20, 21). In similar fashion, we must “cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit” (2 Corinthians 7:1) that we may know the spiritual reality of true worship.

The priests found the preparation of cleansing at the laver! There had to be an altar before a laver. Or, as stated earlier, there must be justification before there can be practical sanctification in our lives. Furthermore, there had to be cleansing at the laver before there was entrance into the holy place. And, dear hearts, only as our hearts are prepared by His sanctifying grace can we truly worship Him in the beauty of holiness.

