

THE TABERNACLE

Day Two: The Laver of Water

Conversions in the NT

Acts 8 – 9

Introduction:

1. In God's design for the Tabernacle, the Altar of Sacrifice was the first thing to be approached when one entered the courtyard.
2. Between the Altar of Sacrifice and the Tabernacle itself was the Laver of Water.
3. After an Israelite brought a sacrifice to the altar, the priests took control of the work associated with the offering.
4. They were the only ones who could use the Laver of Water.
5. Let us consider its purpose and function in the Tabernacle.

I. The Laver of Water

- A. Next, as one approached the Tabernacle, was the laver of water.
- B. The instructions for it are found in Exodus 30:17-21.
- C. It was to be made of brass (bronze) and to stand upon a foot or base.
 1. No dimensions are given, so we do not know how big the laver was.
 2. According to Exodus 38:8, the brass used to make the laver came from the "looking-glasses" of the women of Israel.
 - a. "Looking-glass" is an old word for a mirror.
 - b. However, these mirrors were not made of glass.
 - c. Instead, the metal – in this case, brass – was polished until one could see his or her reflection in it.
 - d. These were considered luxury items of great value.
 - e. Thus, the women of Israel made valuable sacrifices so the Tabernacle could be built.
 3. When Solomon built the Temple, the laver was enlarged to a "molten sea" that was 7½ feet tall and 15 feet across (1 Kings 7:23-26).
- D. Only the priests could use the laver of water.
- E. It was for the washing of their hands and feet that they might be cleansed to enter and serve in the Tabernacle.
 1. They had to wash before offering sacrifices at the altar.
 2. They had to wash before entering into the Tabernacle.
 3. They had to be ritually clean before they could serve God or enter into His house.
- F. This symbolized the washing of baptism that adds one to the Lord's church.

II. Symbolism of the Laver of Water

- A. The washing that took place at the Laver of Water symbolized the washing of baptism that adds one to the Lord's church.
- B. The blood was made available in the sacrifice of Jesus – *symbolized by the Altar of Sacrifice*.
- C. Man contacts that blood in baptism.
 1. When Jesus was crucified, blood and water were joined together (John 19:34-35).

2. When one is baptized, he is baptized into Jesus' death – thus, he comes in contact with His blood (Romans 6:1-4).
 3. Our sins are washed away by the blood of Jesus (Revelation 1:5).
 4. Yet, they are also washed away by baptism (Acts 22:16).
 5. Therefore, the Bible teaches that man's sins are washed away by the blood of Jesus in the act of baptism – not before.
- D. Furthermore, at baptism, a person is added to the church by the Lord.
1. Those who were baptized on the Day of Pentecost were added to the church by the Lord (Acts 2:38, 41, 47).
 2. One who obeys the Gospel is baptized into Christ and "puts on" Christ (Galatians 3:26-27).
 3. To be in Christ is to be a part of His body, the church (Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4; 5:23).
 4. The church is God's tabernacle (temple, house, family) today (Ephesians 2:19-21; 1 Timothy 3:15; Hebrews 3:6; 10:21; 1 Corinthians 3:16-17).
- E. Just like the priests had to wash at the Laver of Water before they could enter God's house and serve Him, so we must be washed by the blood of Jesus in baptism to be a part of God's family and serve Him.

III. Two New Testament Conversions

- A. There are two stories in the New Testament that emphasize the importance of baptism in God's plan of salvation. *{In reality, there are many stories one could study. All the accounts of conversion in Acts involve baptism.}*
- B. First, consider the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8:26-40.
1. The man from Ethiopia was a good man who worshipped God and studied his Bible.
 2. However, he still needed to know what to do to be saved.
 3. Thus, when Philip preached to him, the eunuch understood that he needed to be baptized.
 4. When they came to a body of water, the Ethiopian confessed his faith in Jesus and was baptized.
 5. Then – and only then – could he go on his way rejoicing, because his sins had been washed away.
- C. Next, consider the conversion of Saul of Tarsus in Acts 9.
1. The story of Paul's conversion begins on the road to Damascus.
 2. Paul was traveling to Damascus to continue his persecution of the church (Acts 9:1-2).
 3. However, before he reached the city the Lord intervened.
 4. The Heavenly Vision Revealed God's Majesty (Acts 9:3-4).
 - a. His glory – *a light from Heaven* (cf. Acts 22:11; 26:13)
 - b. His power – *Saul fell to the earth* (cf. Acts 26:14)
 - c. His authority – *He spoke* (cf. Acts 26:16-18)
 - d. His omniscience – *He knew Saul and his deeds*
 5. The Heavenly Vision Revealed Jesus' Resurrection (Acts 9:5a).
 - a. Paul did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God.
 - b. However, knowing that He had been resurrected from the dead changed Paul's mind.
 - c. The significance of this fact was not lost on Paul (cf. Acts 26:8).
 6. The Heavenly Vision Revealed Saul's Sinfulness (Acts 9:5b-6a).

- a. If Jesus were raised from the dead, then not only were the Christians whom Paul was persecuting right, but Paul was wrong – deadly wrong!
 - b. Paul was not only hurting innocent men and women, but he also was injuring himself.
 - c. Paul immediately realized the seriousness of his situation; thus, he began to tremble with fear.
 - d. His question indicates that he understood that he was disobeying God and needed a change of direction.
7. The Heavenly Vision Revealed Heaven's Mercy (Acts 9:6b-8).
- a. In spite of Paul's disobedience, God did not bring immediate punishment upon him.
 - b. Instead, Jesus gave Paul a chance to make things right.
 - c. The revelation of God's Will is an act of mercy.
8. Paul learned about humility (Acts 9:9a, 12).
9. Paul learned about penitence (Acts 9:9b).
10. Paul learned about prayer (Acts 9:11).
11. Paul learned about love (Acts 9:13-14).
12. Paul learned about forgiveness (Acts 22:12-16; 9:18).
- a. Notice that Paul was told to be baptized to wash away his sins.
 - b. In spite of all that had happened to him, Paul was not saved until he obeyed God's command to be baptized.
13. Paul learned about persecution (Acts 9:15-16; 26:19-21).
- D. Both of these stories show that baptism is necessary for one to be saved from sin.

Nine Questions from Acts Nine

Introduction: *Conversion*

1. Acts 3:19 – the solution to sin is conversion
 2. Conversion is the point in time when God removes one's sins.
 3. Two Models of Conversion
 - a. Man's Way (cf. Jeremiah 10:23)
 - b. God's Way (cf. Book of Acts)
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- I. Acts 9:1-2 **Saul Was Sincere & Religious**
 - A. Is he saved yet?
 - B. He was sincere (22:9).
 - C. He was a servant – but, misinformed.
 - D. Matthew 7:21-23 – *Saying is not serving*
 - E. We do not accept sincerity alone in other areas – i.e. Medical Tests

 - II. Acts 9:3 **Saul Saw a Light from Heaven**
 - A. Is he saved yet?
 - B. This was a real, miraculous event (26:13).
 - C. Many (if not all) claims today cannot be substantiated.
 - D. Yet, experiences are subjective.

 - III. Acts 9:4-5 **Saul Heard the Voice of Jesus**
 - A. Is he saved yet?
 - B. God speaks today through His Word (Hebrews 1:1-2).
 - C. God speaking does not prove salvation (Gen. 3:16-19).

 - IV. Acts 9:6 **Saul Received Instructions from Heaven**
 - A. Is he saved yet?
 - B. The Gospel is to be preached by man (Matthew 28:19-20).
 - C. Jesus did not appear to save Saul (cf. Ac. 26:16-18).
 - D. Obedience was essential. {*Note that Saul had faith (cf. "Lord").*}

 - V. Acts 9:7-9 **Saul Experienced Godly Sorrow and Repented**
 - A. Is he saved yet?
 - B. Why did Saul not eat for three days?
 - C. He sure seems miserable for a saved man!

 - VI. Acts 9:10-11 **Saul Prayed**
 - A. Is he saved yet?
 - B. Does prayer save? (Cf. Acts 10:1-6; 11:14)
 - C. Did Saul pray the "sinner's prayer?"

 - VII. Acts 9:12 **Saul Saw a Vision**

VIII. Acts 9:17 **Saul Witnessed a Miracle**

- A. It was actually performed upon him.
- B. But, that does not prove salvation (cf. 13:9-11; Matthew 9:1-7).

IX. Acts 9:18 **Saul Was Baptized** (cf. 22:12-16)

- A. Is he saved yet?
- B. Did Ananias obey God? {*If yes, then this is the record of God's instructions for what Saul "must do."*}
- C. Before baptism, Saul still had sins that needed to be washed away.
- D. Thus, Paul was not saved on the road to Damascus.
- E. Furthermore, "calling on the name of the Lord" does not equal prayer.
- F. YES! (Revelation 1:5; Romans 6:3-4) Saul was cleansed by the blood of Christ when he obeyed God's command to be baptized.