

# Exodus 38:8

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/exod/exod-38/exodus-388/>

*The bronze laver is constructed. The specifications for building the bronze laver and how it was to be used were given in [Exodus 30:17 – 21](#).*

The next piece of furniture for the tabernacle concerned *the laver of bronze*. A *laver* was a wash basin. It was used to hold water for ceremonial washing and purification. It was to be built *with its base of bronze, from the mirrors of the serving women who served at the doorway of the tent of meeting*. It was made of *bronze mirrors*, but there is no mention of its size and dimensions. The *mirrors* were made of highly-polished *bronze*. These *mirrors* likely would have been given to the *serving women* by the Egyptians, just before they left Egypt ([Exodus 12:33-36](#)).

We are not told what particular task was performed by the *serving women*, only that they provided the *bronze* for the *laver of bronze*. Perhaps their service was connected with the *laver*.

The book of Exodus features the deeds of the Israelite women in a number of places. The Hebrew midwives courageously and shrewdly defied Pharaoh's order to kill the male Hebrew babies because they "feared God" ([Exodus 1:16-22](#)). Moses' sister Miriam led the women to celebrate the passing through the Red Sea ([Exodus 15:20-21](#)). Here, in 38:8 the *serving women who served at the doorway of the tent of meeting* furnished the *bronze* for the *laver of bronze* by donating their bronze mirrors

The *laver of bronze* was placed in the courtyard between the tabernacle and the altar. In [Exodus 30](#), God prescribed that the priests, Aaron and his sons, were to wash their hands and feet before they entered the tent of meeting. Without washing, the priests were not to enter the presence of God, lest they die ([Exodus 30:18-21](#)). This pictures the nature of sin, that the consequences of sin is death ([Romans 6:23](#)). Remaining in fellowship with God and walking in His ways is the means to avoid these negative consequences, for God knows what is in our best interest ([Deuteronomy 30:15-20](#)).

In the New Testament era, God offers all who believe on Jesus forgiveness once and for all, to remove our eternal separation from God, and place us into His family ([John 3:14-16](#)). Our relationship as a child of God is then secure,

but relationship does not ensure fellowship. The Bible often uses washing to symbolize forgiveness, which is an ongoing necessity for continuing fellowship.

For believers in Jesus, we are called to be baptized after coming to faith in Him. Baptism represents having all our sins washed clean with respect to our relationship with God by being immersed in the death of Jesus, then raised to walk in the newness of life through Jesus' resurrection. Similarly, God pictured Israel becoming His people by "baptizing" them in Moses, by having them walk through the Red Sea ([1 Corinthians 10:1-2](#)). In each case, this was God's choice, apart from deeds ([Ephesians 2:8-9](#)). In each case, the baptism symbolized the cementing of a relationship between God and His people, a relationship that is an irrevocable gift ([Romans 11:29](#)).

Interestingly, the New Testament book of Hebrews was written to Jewish believers, and calls "instruction about washings" a teaching that is "elementary" ([Hebrews 6:1-2](#)). Perhaps this is pictured by the laver being located outside the tabernacle. The washing is a prelude to entering the tent of meeting into the presence of God. In like manner, Hebrews urges believers to spiritually enter the true Holy of Holies in heaven, to receive grace in the time of need, and to have our consciences cleansed ([Hebrews 4:14-16;10:19-22](#)).

However, in order to experience the blessings of God's covenant promises, sin must be dealt with to maintain ongoing fellowship. This is what is pictured in symbolic washing. When Jesus washed the disciples' feet, it was a symbol of being forgiven to allow ongoing fellowship ([John 13:5](#)). Jesus also taught that it was necessary for us to forgive those who sin against us as a part of coming before God to be forgiven for our sin against Him ([Matthew 6:12, 14](#)).

The requirement for the Israelite priests to wash prior to conducting service before the LORD also illustrates this same principle, that ongoing fellowship requires continual cleansing. This recognizes the reality of human frailty. With respect to being in relationship with God as His people, humans cannot measure up, so God provides us with a relationship with Him as a gift, through faith in His Son. He also chose Israel as His people because He loved them and kept His oath to their forefathers ([Deuteronomy 7:6-8](#)). But in order to continue in covenant fellowship, and receive the blessings of the covenant, His people are required to walk in obedience, in continuing fellowship. God recognizes a need for frail humans who stumble to be restored in fellowship. And God provides that way through confession of sins, symbolized in the Old Testament through washings and sacrifices.

The LORD provided the *laver of bronze* so His priests could cleanse themselves before approaching Him in worship. The *bronze mirrors* provided by the *women* have been seen to symbolize the Word of God which, when gazed upon, revealed to the person his need for cleansing. In the New Testament, His people are cleansed by confessing their sins apart from ceremony ([1 John 1:9](#)).

New Testament believers are appointed to serve as priests in the kingdom of God, and to intercede for the world ([Revelation 1:6](#)). As the spiritual Husband of the church, Jesus washes believers in the water of the Word ([Ephesians 5:26](#)). Believers are called to walk in confession and repentance ([1 John 1:9](#)), and enter the true holy place in heaven to have our consciences cleansed, that we might be prepared to do the work of God in the world, just as Aaron and his sons did the work of God in the tabernacle ([Hebrews 10:19-22](#)).

### **Biblical Text:**

**<sup>8</sup> Moreover, he made the laver of bronze with its base of bronze, from the mirrors of the serving women who served at the doorway of the tent of meeting.**