



In this **fourth** part of the series of studies about the priest in the order of Melchizedek, the meaning of the **laver** is explained. After the altar of burnt offering, this is the **second** object that the priest/disciple encounters in the courtyard, along the new and living way through the tabernacle.¹ This study also explains what it means to enter the **Holy Place** through the **second curtain**, towards the full life in Jesus Christ and the throne of God.

The significance of the laver.

The **laver** was made according to God's command to Moses:



- *Make a laver, with its bronze stand, for **washing**. Place it between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water in it. Aaron and his sons are to wash their hands and feet with water from it. Whenever they enter the tent of meeting, they shall wash with water **so that they will not die**. Also, when they approach the altar to minister by presenting a food offering to the Lord, they shall wash their **hands and feet so that they will not die**. This is to be a lasting ordinance for Aaron and his descendants for the generations to come. (Exodus 30:18-21)*

• *They made the laver and its bronze stand from the **mirrors of the women who served** at the entrance to the tent of meeting. (Exodus 38:8)*

Mirrors:

The Hebrew word '**marah**', which is only translated as **mirrors** in this text, appears in 10 other places in the sense of a **revelation**, as in:

- *(Ezekiel says) ... while I was among the exiles by the Kebar River, the heavens were opened and I saw **visions** of God. (Ezekiel 1:1)*
- *(After 21 days in prayer Daniel sees the angel Gabriel) Daniel, was the only one who saw the **vision**; ... (Daniel 10:7)*

The copper mirrors for the manufacture of the laver, do not refer to the mirrors as objects, but to what they reveal.

Anyone who looks in a mirror sees himself, as it were, as a 'revelation' of who he/she is.

At the laver, the priest/disciple sees himself reflected in the copper.

The laver is a symbol of what Jesus means to the priest/disciple.

Washing oneself here means **putting off** one's **self-righteousness**, at the mirror image that Jesus represents as a 'mirror' of himself/herself. This is necessary if he/she is to be able to examine himself/herself for worldly ideas and reflections that may have slipped into his/her thought-world through contact with the world (spiritually speaking: through the feet).

Washing at the laver means **cleansing** oneself from all that the pure touchstone of Jesus cannot abide.

¹ Study: The priest in the order of Melchizedek (3).



Only the feet:

Washing at the laver in the courtyard is a foretaste of what Jesus did just before He died.

In the past, the priests had to wash their **hands and feet** at the laver.

At the Last Supper, Jesus washed only the **feet** of his disciples, **not their hands as well**.

He said:

- *Those **who have had a bath** need **only to wash their feet**; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you. (John 13:10)*

By so doing, Jesus, as the high priest in the order of Melchizedek, changed the laws concerning the laver. He washed **only** the feet of his disciples.

The Levitical priests had to wash their hands as well, because they would have got their hands dirty while serving in the tabernacle.

The priesthood in the order of Melchizedek is a spiritual priesthood however.

The priest/disciple, who had first bathed outside the forecourt, was cleansed by the Word and clothed with the priestly garments (as explained in study part 2²). He/she had then **only** to wash his/her **feet**, before entering the Holy Place of the tabernacle through the second curtain.

Cleansing oneself from worldly ideas is **necessary** in order to take the **next step**, through the second curtain, along the new and living way that takes the priest/disciple into the sanctuary, towards the throne of God

Remark:

Jesus told His disciples:

- *Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, **you also should wash one another's feet**. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. (John 13:14-15)*

Just as the priest in the order of Melchizedek, has to wash his feet again and again, so he will also help the other priests/disciples to keep themselves undefiled from the world.

He must **not** only look at what others **are doing** (with his hands so to speak) but gain an understanding of what **is motivating** the others, what is going on **in their soul**.

That can be damaged and confused as a result of upbringing, life events, choices made, or misconceptions that have shaped its thoughts.

Washing another person's **feet** means the same as: lovingly helping the other person to bring all aspects of his/her life under the authority and forgiveness of Jesus Christ.

A serious warning:

In the law concerning the laver in Exodus 30, mentioned at the beginning of this study, the statement '**so that they will not die**' occurs **twice** (in verses 20 and 21).

Twice means it is a **serious warning**.

2 Study: The priest in the order of Melchizedek (2).



Before the Levitical priests were allowed to enter the sanctuary they had to wash their hands and feet **or they would die!**

For the priest in the order of Melchizedek, who only has to wash his feet, the tabernacle has a spiritual meaning, as described above.

This means: washing and letting go of every worldly idea that has been absorbed by life in society. Worldly ideas stand in the way of a holy way of life and are incompatible with the purity of a life in the Holy Place.

In order to receive full life in the Holy Place of the tabernacle, the priest/disciple must be free of worldly ideas.

He/she may not bring any of these into the sanctuary.

That is why Peter warns:

- ***As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy." (1 Peter 1:14-16)***

Peter knew what he was talking about when he wrote this.

When he refused to allow Jesus to wash his feet, Jesus said:

- ***Unless I wash you, you have no part with me (this can also be translated as: you have no destiny, or labour with me). (John 13:8)***

Entering the sanctuary through the second curtain.

Remark:

In the conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus explains that there is a difference between **seeing** the Kingdom of God and **entering** this Kingdom.³

Whoever lives with Jesus in the **courtyard**, **sees** the tent of the tabernacle, in which the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place are situated.

Whoever **enters** the **Holy Place** of the tabernacle, will meet God in the **Most Holy Place**, the place where He dwells, between the cherubim on the atonement cover.

This is very special because, in the past, the curtain separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place, so that the ark was hidden from the ministering Levitical priests.

But when Jesus died on the cross of Golgotha,

- ***The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. (Mark 15:38)***

Entering into the **Holy Place** means **entering into the kingdom of heaven.**

In the privacy of the Holy Place, near to the throne of God, the priest/disciple **lives with Jesus** and receives Him into his/her heart.

³ Study: John 3:3-5 - Conversion and discipleship.



This is the fulfilment of the life, the prospect of which Jesus held out when He said:

- *I have come, so that they might have **a life that surpasses everything**. (John 10:10, translated freely)*

The significance of the second curtain:

The second curtain that gave access to the Holy Place was, like the first curtain, made of fine woven linen in shades of blue-purple, red-purple and scarlet, an image of Jesus Christ as priest-king.

At the **first** curtain, at the entrance of the **courtyard**, the emphasis was on Jesus as **priest**.

At this **second** curtain, at the entrance of the **Holy Place** of the **tabernacle**, the emphasis is on Jesus as **king**.

Entering the holy place through the second curtain and **accepting** the authority of **Jesus as King** is the next step along the new and living way, towards the throne of God.

The priest of the order of Melchizedek who enters the sanctuary through the second curtain (literally through Jesus):

- is cleansed in life by the Word
- lives out of forgiveness by Jesus Christ
- is free of worldly ideas
- and accepts the **authority of Jesus** over his/her life.

Or, as Jesus said:

- *Whoever wants to be my disciple must **deny** themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. (Luke 9:23)*

Deny: the OLB translates the Greek '**aparneomai**' as follows:

- to deny - to affirm that one has no acquaintance or connection with someone
- to forget one's self, lose sight of one's self and one's own interests

As Jesus said:

- *Anyone who loves their life (*psuche: soul*) will lose it, while anyone who hates (*abhors*) their life (*psuche: soul*) in this world will keep it for eternal life. (John 12:25)*

Put differently:

Whoever lives according to his/her own personal ideas, wishes and desires, does not live the real life, as God intended. Whoever lets go of these ideas and submits to the norms and values of Jesus and enters the Holy Place, to live in a relationship with Him, will receive the superlative life, not only in eternity, **but in this world as well**.

The priest/disciple who enters the Holy Place through the second curtain will not die if he/she has not let go of worldly ideas.

However, with these ideas he/she will **not** be able to accept **the full authority of Jesus**.



He/she will not be able to receive Jesus Christ (represented in the Holy Place by the symbols of **Light** on the lampstand and **Bread** on the table of the bread of the Presence) in all His fullness deep into his/her soul.

This priest/disciple will not achieve full spiritual maturity in the relationship with Jesus and, ultimately, will therefore not gain knowledge of the abundant life that He has promised.

This is further elaborated in the study about the lampstand.⁴

⁴ Study: The priest in the order of Melchizedek (5).