

The Tabernacle and the three witnesses.

Atoned for by the Blood, washed/sanctified by the water, and sealed by the Spirit.

The earthly Tabernacle was a shadow of the heavenly Tabernacle and of the work of Christ. As we move through the Tabernacle, we see the united testimony of the blood, the water, and the Spirit. Together they proclaim the completeness of our salvation. Through Christ we have been atoned for by His blood, cleansed by the washing of water through His Word, and sealed by the Holy Spirit for our eternal inheritance.

"For there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one." (1 John 5:8)

1. The Outer Court

The Tabernacle had only one gate. The gate and the outer enclosure separated the outer court from the outside world. The people of Israel, the covenant nation, entered through this gate. The Gentiles, people like me by birth, were excluded from the covenant community and were strangers to the covenants of promise.

In Christ, the barrier has been removed. The dividing wall that separated Jews and Gentiles has been torn down. Through His body, Christ became our reconciliation, making the two one new man.

(a) The Bronze Altar (Testimony of the Blood)

Having entered through the gate, the bronze altar foreshadowed Christ, who became our substitutionary sacrifice. He offered Himself as the perfect atoning sacrifice for our sins, once for all, fulfilling every sacrifice that came before Him.

"And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma." (Ephesians 5:2)

(b) The Bronze Laver (Testimony of the Water)

He then cleansed us through the washing of water by the Word. The bronze laver in the Tabernacle was made from the bronze mirrors of the serving women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. The water testifies to cleansing and sanctification, preparing us to minister in the Holy Place.

Even on the cross, when Christ's side was pierced, blood and water flowed out (John 19:34). Christ fulfilled what the bronze altar and the bronze laver foreshadowed: the blood speaks of atonement and the forgiveness of sins, while the water speaks of cleansing and sanctification. Christ has opened the way for us to enter the heavenly sanctuary.

"But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Corinthians 3:18)

"Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church." (Ephesians 5:25–27).

The laver was made from the bronze mirrors and mirrors reveal our natural appearance. James teaches that merely observing ourselves in the mirror does not bring a lasting change. With the laver, the mirrors that were used to observe natural appearance become a vessel of cleansing thus pointing to a call beyond external self-examination.

In Christ, our attention is no longer fixed on ourselves. Instead, as we behold the glory of the Lord, the Holy Spirit transforms us into His image from glory to glory, preparing us for fellowship with God and conformity to Christ.

2. The Holy Place

Having reconciled both Jews and Gentiles into one body, Christ atoned for our sins by His blood and cleansed us through the washing of water by His Word. He made us holy and brought us into the Holy Place— a realm of fellowship with God that, under the old covenant, was accessible only to the priests.

This also symbolises a deeper level of intimacy with God than the outer court. The bronze mirrors reflected one's outward appearance, but the same mirrors in the form of the bronze laver at the entrance of the Holy Place became a place of washing and sanctification. In the old covenant, this level of intimacy was reserved for the priests. Through Christ, all who believe have been washed, sanctified and brought through both the door and the veil into God's presence.

Within the Holy Place, Christ fulfills the meaning of every piece of furniture: the Lampstand, the Bread of the Presence, and the Altar of Incense. He is our Light, our Bread, and our Intercessor.

(a) The lampstand (Testimony of the Spirit).

Pure olive oil fuelled the seven lamps that lit the holy place. The oil points to the Holy Spirit, who reveals Christ, the Light of the world. The Spirit bears witness that we are children of God, seals us for the day of redemption, and guarantees our inheritance.

(b) The showbread.

The Bread of the Presence foreshadowed Christ, the true Bread who came down from heaven. He is our all-sufficient nourishment. The twelve loaves, representing the twelve tribes of Israel, foreshadow the completeness and unity of God's people, who are nourished by Christ.

(c) The altar of incense.

The altar of Incense stood immediately before the veil and signifies Christ's continual intercession ushering us into the presence of God.

You shall make an altar to burn incense on... And you shall put it before the veil that is before the ark of the Testimony, before the mercy seat... where I will meet with you. (Exodus 30:1–6)

Therefore, He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them (*Hebrews 7:25*)

Brothers, under the law every sinner stood condemned to die. And since everyone sinned, everyone was condemned to die.

Yet God, in His manifold grace and wisdom had a plan to redeem mankind in a way that would satisfy both justice and grace. He prepared a body for His Son, and the Son offered that body as a perfect substitutionary sacrifice for our sins.

Now that we have been atoned for and forgiven, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies **a living sacrifice**, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service."

May you be encouraged and stand firm, knowing that our salvation is grounded in the unanimous testimony of the three witnesses:

- The blood declares that our sins have been forgiven.
- The water declares that we have been cleansed and sanctified.
- The Spirit declares that we belong to God forever.

These three agree as one, declaring the completeness of Christ's finished work and assuring every believer that they belong to Him.

THE TABERNACLE

