

Sermon #15 — *Discovering Christ in Leviticus*

Title: **EVER-BURNING FIRE**

Text: Leviticus 6:8-13

Subject: *The Fire Upon the Altar*

Date: Tuesday Evening — July 31, 2018

Readings: *Lindsay Campbell and Mark Henson*

Introduction:

EVER-BURNING FIRE — That is my subject. —

EVER-BURNING FIRE — That is the title of my message. My text will be Leviticus 6:8-13. **Fire is used throughout the Scriptures as an emblem of God's purity, holiness, and justice.** It was so from the very beginning.

- When the Lord God drove Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden, he set “*Cherubim and a flaming sword which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life*” (Genesis 3:24).
- When Abraham offered sacrifice to God who revealed himself in “*smoking furnace and a burning lamp*” (Genesis 15:17-18), he carried fire with him to the altar of sacrifice (Genesis 22).
- God poured out fire and brimstone from heaven upon Sodom.

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- When the Lord God revealed himself to Moses, he spoke to him out of a bush that burned with fire (Exodus 3).
- When God gave his law at Sinai, the mount was filled with fire.
- Nadab and Abihu were killed by the hand of the Lord because they burned “*strange fire*” on God’s altar (Leviticus 10).
- Hell is a place of horrible torment, a pit of everlasting, unquenchable fire.¹

¹ Through the ages multitudes, both religious and profane, have brought forth countless arguments to fritter away the fact of the everlasting damnation unbelieving rebels in hell, but the fact stands as it is plainly revealed in Holy Scripture. — “*The wicked shall be turned into hell.*” — “*The expectation of the wicked shall perish*” (Psalm 9:17-18). — “*Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?*” (Isaiah 33:14) Troubling and horrible as the fact of eternal damnation is, God’s elect know with certainty that soon our Lord Jesus shall be “*revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power.*” And in that day and for all eternity he shall be “*glorified in his saints*” and “*admired in all them that believe*” (2

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- Our God is a consuming fire.
- In the camp of Israel, upon the altar of God, fire was burned continually. It is written, “*The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out.*”

(Leviticus 6:8-13) “And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, (9) Command Aaron and his sons, saying, This *is* the law of the burnt offering: It *is* the burnt offering, because of the burning upon the altar all night unto the morning, and the fire of the altar shall be burning in it. (10) And the priest shall put on his linen garment, and his linen breeches shall he put upon his flesh, and take up the ashes which the fire hath consumed with the burnt offering on the altar, and he shall put them beside the altar. (11) And he shall put off his garments, and put on other garments, and carry forth the ashes without the camp unto a clean place. (12) And the fire upon the altar shall be burning in it; it shall not

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be put out: and the priest shall burn wood on it every morning, and lay the burnt offering in order upon it; and he shall burn thereon the fat of the peace offerings. (13) The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out.”

Never imagine that there are redundancies in the Word of God. **Everything written in the Book of Inspiration is written according to divine purpose.**

- In the first five chapters of Leviticus the Lord gave Moses specific instructions about how the burnt offering, the meat offering, the peace offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering were to be made. — Here, in chapters 6 and 7, he gives instructions again about those same offerings.
- In the first five chapters the instructions were for the people who brought the offerings.
- In these two chapters the instructions were give specifically to the priests, to Aaron and his sons.

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In the portion before us this evening (Leviticus 6:8-13), the primary thing before us is the **EVER-BURNING FIRE** upon the altar. — *“The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out.”*

Proposition: The fire burning upon the altar is an instructive picture of the holy justice of God which must be satisfied.

The message of our text is given to us in 2 Corinthians 5:18-21.

(2 Corinthians 5:18-21) “And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; (19) To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. (20) Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you*

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in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. (21) For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

Divisions: I want to call your attention to five things in these five verses.

1. The Fire upon the Altar
2. The Priest's Linen Garments
3. The Priest's Other Garments
4. The Fuel for the Fire
5. The Perpetuity of the Fire

THE FIRE UPON THE ALTAR

1st — **We read in verses 8 and 9 about the fire upon the altar.**

(Leviticus 6:8-9) And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, (9) Command Aaron and his sons, saying, This *is* the law of the burnt offering: It *is* the burnt offering, because of the

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burning upon the altar all night unto the morning, and the fire of the altar shall be burning in it.

Here the Holy One of Israel speaks again from the holy place, revealing the horror of his wrath against sin and the perfection of his infinite justice which demands its punishment. God's infinite justice, burning against sin is displayed in the fire burning upon the altar of the tabernacle.

This fire was never to be extinguished. In these five verses, the Lord God tells us three times that the fire was never to be put out by man or allowed to burn out on its own. — Why? — Because “*every one of his righteous judgments endure forever*” (Psalm 119:160). **The fire burned all through the night as an emblem of the sleeplessness of hell and the burning wrath of God against all iniquity and of the ever-watchful eye of divine righteousness that watches over the earth.**

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In the pit of the damned they have no rest, no respite, no relief from the wrath of God. And the holy eyes of the holy Lord God ever behold the sons of men upon the earth. He whose eyes are a flaming fire constantly watches over his creation, beholding the sons of men.

In the Book of God, we read of the damned that the smoke of their torments ascends up forever.

— The fire and brimstone of hell produces a smoke ever rising up to God, the holy angels, the redeemed in Glory, and the Lamb upon his throne.

(Revelation 14:10-11) “The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: (11) And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.”

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(Revelation 14:18) “And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.”

All through the night the fire burned upon the altar. It could be seen by all the camp of Israel.

The wise, believing father might well have taken his children to their tent’s door before going to bed and, pointing to the fire, he may well have said, “Children, do you see that fire? Do you smell that smoke? Except you find refuge in the Lamb of God, so shall the fire of God’s wrath consume you forever.”

But, blessed be God, that fire represented something far greater than God’s holy and just wrath. — It represented the way of escape. — Can you see the victim burned upon the altar, the lamb

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consumed by the fire, whose life feeds the flames? That is Christ dying under the horrid wrath of God in the place of sinners who deserve to die. His suffering and death, upon which the triune God had his holy eye from eternity, was held forth in the camp of Israel perpetually in the fire burning upon the altar. There the love and justice of God met together in perfect unison, righteousness and peace perpetually kissed each other. Mercy and truth embraced each other. Beholding the fire on the altar, the believing Israelite could sleep peacefully through the night knowing that God in Christ is both a just God and a Savior!

THE PRIEST'S LINEN GARMENTS

2nd — In the 10th verse the Lord commanded his priest to put on his linen garments.

(Leviticus 6:10) And the priest shall put on his linen garment, and his linen breeches shall he put upon his flesh, and take up the ashes which

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the fire hath consumed with the burnt offering on the altar, and he shall put them beside the altar.

We do not have to guess what these linen garments represented. The priests' linen garment with his linen britches portrayed purity, holiness, and righteousness (Revelation 19:8).

(Revelation 19:8) “And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.”

In this suit of purity, the priest was a type and emblem of Christ our Redeemer in his perfect purity (divine and human) coming to perform the work of atonement as our Substitute.

- In this suit of pure, white linen, the priest was to take the ashes of the burnt sacrifice off the altar and lay them for a while beside the altar so that all Israel might see that the flame of justice had not spared the sacrifice.

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- There, the ashes lying beside the altar portrayed our crucified Savior in the tomb and declared, “Justice has found its object. The lightening of God’s holy wrath has struck the lightning rod. It shall not strike again!”

Blessed be the God of all grace, he has made our Priest’s holy linen garments ours! Believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, God’s elect are made the righteousness of God in, with, and by him who was made sin for us! In Revelation 19:8 the word “righteousness” really should read “the righteousnesses of saints” (plural) not “*the righteousness* (singular) *of saints.*” — **The righteousness that is ours in Christ is, like our Savior’s, a plural righteousness.**

- Righteousness Imputed in Justification — A Righteous Record!
- Righteousness Imparted in Regeneration — A Righteous Nature — “*Christ in you, the hope of Glory!*” — “*Partakers of the divine nature!*” — “*That new man created in righteousness and*

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true holiness!” — That “holiness without which no man shall see the Lord!”

THE PRIEST’S OTHER GARMENTS

3rd — Then, in verse 11, God’s priest was required to take off his linen garments and put on his other garments.

(Leviticus 6:11) And he shall put off his garments, and put on other garments, and carry forth the ashes without the camp unto a clean place.

Coming out of the sanctuary, the priest has put aside his linen garments and is wearing his other garments. He takes off the garments that had been ceremonially polluted by sin, and puts on his holy, priestly garments to carry the ashes of the sacrifice away unto a clean place. The Valley of Ashes (Jeremiah 31:40) was used for this purpose. The Valley of Ashes was

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southwest of the city of Jerusalem. It was a ditch at the foot of Mt. Calvary (Hebrews 9:12; 10:9-23).

(Hebrews 9:12) Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*.

(Hebrews 10:9-23) Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. (10) By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*. (11) And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: (12) But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God; (13) From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. (14) For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified. (15) *Whereof* the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after

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that he had said before, (16) This *is* the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; (17) And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. (18) Now where remission of these *is*, *there is* no more offering for sin. (19) Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, (20) By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; (21) And *having* an high priest over the house of God; (22) Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. (23) Let us hold fast the profession of *our* faith without wavering; (for he *is* faithful that promised.)

Our great Savior, who bore our sin in his own body on the tree, wears another garment now.

That body in which he was made to be sin for us, that

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body in which he bore our iniquities, that body in which he was made a curse for us, has now been made a glorious body! He has cast off and cast away our sins. He has carried his blood into a clean place, having by the merit of his blood obtained eternal redemption for us!

(Romans 4:25-5:11) Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

(1) Therefore being justified, by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:
(2) By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. (3) And not only *so*, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; (4) And patience, experience; and experience, hope: (5) And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

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(6) For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. (7) For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. (8) But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

(9) Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. (10) For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. (11) And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

THE FUEL FOR THE FIRE

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4th — Because the fire on the altar was never to be put out or allowed to go out, it had to have a constant supply of fuel. That is what is spoken of in verse 12.

(Leviticus 6:12) And the fire upon the altar shall be burning in it; it shall not be put out: and the priest shall burn wood on it every morning, and lay the burnt offering in order upon it; and he shall burn thereon the fat of the peace offerings.

Wood was constantly kept on the altar and the fat of the peace offering with the wood kept the fire burning continually. **It was the fat of the peace offering that fueled the fire.**

Justice fell upon Christ our Peace Offering. He bore the fire of God's fierce wrath for us. He endured the fire of hell as our Substitute. By his death under the vengeance of God's holy wrath, he obtained our peace.

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This ever-burning fire, portraying the burning fury of God's wrath against sin, the infinite, burning fury of divine wrath that fell upon our Lord Jesus Christ when he was made sin for us, was first lit by God himself (Leviticus 9:22-24).

(Leviticus 9:22-24) And Aaron lifted up his hand toward the people, and blessed them, and came down from offering of the sin offering, and the burnt offering, and peace offerings. (23) And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out, and blessed the people: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the people. (24) And there came a fire out from before the LORD, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat: *which* when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces.

Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, despised God's sacrifice and brought strange fire before the Lord. Despising Christ, they thought to find acceptance

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with God by a fire of their own. When they came into the holy place God killed them in the fury of his holy wrath. — **BE WARNED!** — Nadab and Abihu were justly slain, because no sacrifice of man can satisfy the justice of God (Leviticus 10:1-7). — **The very fire that consumed God's sacrifice consumed Nadab and Abihu! And the very justice of God that consumed his darling Son, our Sacrifice, the Sacrifice he requires, the Sacrifice he made, the Sacrifice he has accepted will consume you if you despise his Sacrifice!**

(Leviticus 10:1-7) And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and **offered strange fire before the LORD**, which he commanded them not. (2) And **there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD**. (3) Then Moses said unto Aaron, This *is it* that the LORD spake, saying, **I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me**, and before all the people I will

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be glorified. **And Aaron held his peace.** (4) And Moses called Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Uzziel the uncle of Aaron, and said unto them, Come near, carry your brethren from before the sanctuary out of the camp. (5) So they went near, and carried them in their coats out of the camp; as Moses had said. (6) And **Moses said unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar and unto Ithamar, his sons, Uncover not your heads, neither rend your clothes; lest ye die, and lest wrath come upon all the people:** but let your brethren, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning which the LORD hath kindled. (7) And ye shall not go out from the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: for the anointing oil of the LORD *is* upon you. And they did according to the word of Moses.

THE PERPETUITY OF THE FIRE

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5th — Now, look at verse 13 and understand that the perpetuity of this fire is intended to teach us that the fire of God's wrath has no end.

(Leviticus 6:13) The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out.

Throughout this instructive passage, we are constantly reminded that the fire of God's wrath has no end. **Three times our Lord Jesus declared (no doubt referring to this passage) that in hell the worm dies not and the fire is not quenched** (Mark 9:44, 46, 48). The eternal justice of God will never cease to find fuel for the fire of his wrath in hell. It is written, "*The wrath of God abideth!*" **Let every sinner tremble. The wrath of God is infinite! Hell is forever!** — But I cannot send you home with that.

So, I will close my message by reminding you that God has himself put out the fire. The Lord Jesus Christ has forever satisfied the wrath of God. He is that one Sacrifice which, when consumed by the

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fire of God's holy justice has consumed the fire.
The holy Lord God shall never cease to find complete satisfaction for his holy justice in his darling Son.

(Hebrews 13:10-12) “We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. (11) For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. (12) Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.”

Because Christ has forever satisfied the holy wrath and justice of God for sinners, God's word to every believer is “Fury is not in me!”
(Isaiah 27:4; Romans 8:1-4)

(Romans 8:1-4) *There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

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(2) For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. (3) For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: (4) That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

(Hebrews 13:20-21) “Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, (21) Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

Amen.