

# Leviticus 3:12-3:16

## ENTHUSIASM - MAKE IT SMOKE!



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**Text: Leviticus 3:1-16 (1-5, 16)**

The Laws of the Sacrifices take up several chapters of the Old Testament. Because we no longer operate under the sacrificial system, it sometimes makes for tedious reading.

Today I want to tell you about one of the least understood of the sacrificial offerings – the Fellowship or Peace or Thank Offering. It was a voluntary offering and because of that, the name varies based on the various reasons it was offered. But the thing that all have in common is that a grateful person or group or nation wanted to recognize and thank God for a blessing.

For example, a Jewish family may plan on having a celebration of some blessing, say an anniversary or the birth of a child. It would be a rare family occasion when a cow or sheep or goat would be roasted for the feast. However, because of genuine thankfulness to God, rather than just cook and eat the meat, they would voluntarily offer a small portion to God as a Fellowship/Thank Offering. So, what was distinctive about the fellowship offering was that only a portion of the animal was used in the offering, the fat portions, and outside of some given to the priests, the rest was returned to the offerer to be eaten.<sup>1</sup>

To those of us accustomed to buying neatly packaged meat from the local supermarket, it is sometimes hard to stomach reading about the requirements of the sacrifice (and today when I and others are fasting, it seems a little wicked to be talking about food). The Bible was very specific in describing the things that were to be placed on the fire. We know that the animal being sacrificed was first bled to death, its blood caught in a basin, then

<sup>1</sup> Rooker, M. F. (2001). *Vol. 3A: Leviticus* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (101). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

sprinkled upon the altar with the remainder poured out at the altar's base. Next, the animal had to be butchered, with all of the fat removed. All the inner fat surrounding the inner organs was collected (now that takes my appetite away). It was this fat that was placed on the fire to be burnt, as our text described.

Did you ever notice what happens when fat is placed on a fire? Meat will cook and if left too long, will eventually burn up leaving tough gristly charcoal. I know, because a few of my barbequing meals have come out like that!

But not fat. Because of its greasy content, fat will burn up. It will add fuel to the fire, causing the fire to flare and smoke. (I know this too, by experience.) When you are grilling fatty meat, the fat will drip onto the fire, causing flames and smoke.

What does that have to do with the Laws of the Sacrifice? The word “*burn*” in v. 16 is actually not “burn.” It is a word that describes what burning fat does. It SMOKE. The word literally means to “*turn it into smoke*.” A number of translations catch the subtle difference. <sup>2</sup>

**Leviticus 3:16** (NASB95)<sup>16</sup> *The priest shall offer them up in smoke on the altar as food, an offering by fire for a soothing aroma; all fat is the Lord's.*

**Leviticus 3:16** (NRSV)<sup>16</sup> *Then the priest shall turn these into smoke on the altar as a food offering by fire for a pleasing odor. All fat is the Lord's.*

Every time a sacrifice was made on the altar, it was the fatty parts and each time this word is used, meaning to “Make it Smoke.” God's requirement was this; when you offer the sacrifice, be sure to Make It Smoke! The whole sacrifice was to go up in flames and smoke. Everywhere the Bible talks of burning something on the altar, the it's really saying, “Make it

<sup>2</sup> Compare with Lev. 4:21. In the sacrifices, the fleshy parts of the animal were taken outside the temple and also burned up. But here is another word which actually means “burn” is used.

Smoke!” The smoke was like incense, offered to God. When it smoked, God was pleased.

And the applications are obvious. **Whatever you offer to God, be sure to *Make It Smoke!* In other words, give it everything you’ve got! Don’t stop until it’s fully, completely consumed.**

Constantly the Bible reminds us that God is not looking for halfhearted Christians to go through life with no enthusiasm. He is looking for those who are sold out to His cause. He is looking for people who will live for Him with passion!

Paul said; **Romans 12:1** (NIV)<sup>1</sup> Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.

We are not offering bulls, goats, lambs or turtledoves—we are offering ourselves. But just as God required that the priests made the fat to smoke, He requires us to serve Him with our whole hearts.

**Mark 12:29–30** (NIV)<sup>29</sup> *“The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.’<sup>30</sup> Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.”*

**Religion without passion is sacrifice without smoke!**

Today, as a church, we have asked those of you that can, to set it aside as a day of fasting and prayer. And we have asked you to especially be praying for Spiritual Awakening in our world and in the lives of those in our communities. (some of you did, others did not)

In the foyer you see a banner that says **"Find It Here."** And from now till Easter we are going to focus reaching out to friends and family, and homes around this church, to invite as many people as possible to join us to worship Easter Sunday. There will be banners, there will be road signs, little business card invitations, packets to hand out. We will ask you to prayer walk in neighborhoods that we will hand them out in. We are going to do everything we can to let people know we want them to join us in worshipping God.

But you know, and I know that what we might do means nothing unless God is working in their lives. And we will pray for that too.

But here's the thing. I can see very little evidence in the Bible where God sends precious new believers to a place where people are not enthusiastic about God and his ways. Why would he do that! Send them to people who don't seem to believe the things they say they believe in?

No, if God is going to use to be a part of his great work, first we must experience revival. He must first be working in OUR lives too! First we must care about the things that God cares about. We must rekindle our love for Him.

This sermon began when I was thinking about: how can we as Christians believe the things we say we believe in and NOT be enthusiastic about our faith? And I started to talk to God about that. And as I was doing my daily Bible reading – now in Leviticus, I began to think about these sacrifices.

## Half-hearted Sacrifice - I Samuel 2:12-17

You know the Bible talked a lot about half-hearted commitment – it’s never good.

How many of you are involved in some halfhearted commitment to God? Here at the church I can think of several areas it might be true in:

- you have never publicly declared your faith
- you have never been baptized
- you attend but you are not committed enough to become a member and serve
- I have stressed small groups over and over, but you still have not committed to one
- Prayer Meeting – House of Prayer – Evening Worship
- you know you should tithe but you're not
- quiet time, daily devotions?

How about in your family?

- You want to be considered a Christ follower, but you don't want it to affect how you treat your parents or your siblings.
- Your marriage is not what it should be, but you'll be darned if you're going to begin to pray

fervently for God to help you eat the husband or wife he wants you to be.

In the world?

- Speaking to others about Jesus – a witness....

### Hophni and Phinehas

How important was it that the sacrifice be made to smoke? Earlier **1 Samuel** was read. Eli the High Priest had two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, who became priests. Listen again what the Bible said:

**1 Samuel 2:15–16** (NIV)<sup>15</sup> *But even before the fat was burned (was made to smoke), the servant of the priest would come and say to the man who was sacrificing, “Give the priest some meat to roast; he won’t accept boiled meat from you, but only raw.”<sup>16</sup> If the man said to him, “Let the fat be burned up first, and then take whatever you want,” the servant would then answer, “No, hand it over now; if you don’t, I’ll take it by force.”*

Hophni and Phinehas - they offered the sacrifice, but they refused to let the fat smoke. I will say it again; *Religion without passion is sacrifice without smoke!* It looks good, it goes through the motions, but it lacks what God is looking for. Paul described it in **2 Timothy 3:5** as, *"Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."*

Now you remember that in the Fellowship Offering, God did not require that the whole animal be burnt-only the fat. And I said that the priest would also receive a portion of the meat to eat (the breast and right thigh), while the rest of the animal was returned to the one who offered the sacrifice.<sup>3</sup>

So Hophni and Phinehas sinned against the people by taking their share and they sinned against God by demanding for themselves what had been reserved for God alone. (see Leviticus 7:8-10).

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<sup>3</sup> Chafin, K. L., & Ogilvie, L. J. (1989). *Vol. 8: The Preacher's Commentary Series, Volume 8 : 1, 2 Samuel*. The Preacher's Commentary series (34). Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Inc.

So Eli’s sons, although knowing they would have meat to eat, refused to wait for the fat to smoke before enjoying the blessings.

Application: Some serve God only for the blessings. Their religion consists in what God can do for them, and not what they can offer God. On more time I must say; *Religion without passion is sacrifice without smoke!* It is time to Make It Smoke! Let’s serve Him with passion!

### Full Commitment Comes With Forgiveness

God has a lot of patience with people. With us. But half-heartedness seems to be the one thing that God can’t tolerate. To the Church in Laodecia, **Revelation 3:15–16** (NIV)<sup>15</sup> *I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other!<sup>16</sup> So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth.*

It’s amazing. God wants us to choose a full commitment, a high standard. He wants us to go all out living for Him.

Here’s the thing. If we don’t succeed doing that, if we fall on our face and royally screw up, he is more than willing to forgive us. We confess and he will forgive us. He will forgive us one time, two times, 770 times!

BUT if we choose to lower the goal, to set our own standard and not God’s, *“Well you know, I’ll be a Sunday Christian, I’ll be serious, but not too serious....”* - he is ready to puke us out! He is not happy unless we offer ourselves and Make it Smoke, so to speak!

### CONCLUSION AND INVITATION

Maybe today before you leave, you need to ask God to restore your spiritual passion. Perhaps You might ask God to help you act in accordance to what you believe. Things you believe, like: “I believe that..”

- “God saved me to be His,”
- “God saves anyone who believes, but only those who believe in his Son” and
- "He put me here with a purpose" and

- "I can do all things through him who gives me strength" and
- "greater is he that is in the than he who is in the world" and
- "God has my back"

Before I mentioned some practical actions committed Christians do. Are there some that you need to act on today because of what God is saying to you through his Word?

- Faith in Christ, baptism, membership and serving, small groups, tithing, being a witness...
- taking Christianity seriously (more than Sunday morning)
- membership and commitment
- small group...
- tithing
- being a witness

Salvation:

The sacrificial system is ended because God provided the Final Sacrifice....

