

**HWMR - CRYSTALLIZATION STUDY OF LEVITICUS, Book 3, Week 2**

**The Basis of All Our Priestly Service—  
the Fire from the Altar of Burnt Offering**

Scripture Reading: Lev. 9:24; 6:12-13; 10:1-11; Heb. 12:29; Luke 12:49-50; Rev. 4:5; Exo. 3:2-6

- Leviticus 9:24 Then **fire** came forth from before Jehovah and consumed the burnt offering and the fat portions on the altar; and when all the people saw it, they gave a ringing shout and fell on their faces.
- Leviticus 6:12 And the **fire** on the altar shall be kept burning on it; it must not go out. And the priest shall burn wood on it every morning, and he shall lay the burnt offering in order upon it and shall burn the fat of the peace offerings on it.
- Leviticus 6:13 **Fire** shall be kept burning on the altar continually; it shall not go out.<sup>20</sup> And he cut the ram into its pieces, and Moses burned the head and the pieces and the fat.
- Leviticus 10:1 And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer, and put **fire** in them and laid incense on it, and they presented strange **fire** before Jehovah, which He had not commanded them.
- Leviticus 10:2 And **fire** came out from before Jehovah and consumed them, and they died before Jehovah.
- Leviticus 10:3 Then Moses said to Aaron, This is what Jehovah spoke, saying, In those who come near to Me I will be sanctified, And before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron was silent.
- Leviticus 10:4 And Moses called Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Uzziel the uncle of Aaron, and said to them, Come near, carry your brothers from before the sanctuary to the outside of the camp.
- Leviticus 10:5 So they came near and carried them in their tunics to the outside of the camp, just as Moses had said.
- Leviticus 10:6 Then Moses said to Aaron and to his sons Eleazar and Ithamar, Do not dishevel the hair of your heads, and do not tear your garments, that you may not die and that He may not be angry with all the assembly. But let your brothers, the whole house of Israel, weep for the burning which Jehovah has kindled.
- Leviticus 10:7 And you shall not go out from the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, lest you die; for the anointing oil of Jehovah is upon you. And they did according to the word of Moses.
- Leviticus 10:8 Then Jehovah spoke to Aaron, saying,
- Leviticus 10:9 Drink no wine or strong drink, neither you nor your sons with you, when you come into the Tent of Meeting, that you may not die; it shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations,
- Leviticus 10:10 Both to make a distinction between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean;
- Leviticus 10:11 And to teach the children of Israel all the statutes which Jehovah has spoken to them through Moses.
- Hebrews 12:29 **For our God is also a consuming fire.**
- Luke 12:49 **I have come to cast fire on the earth, and how I wish that it were already kindled!**
- Luke 12:50 But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how I am pressed until it is accomplished!
- Revelation 4:5 And out of the throne come forth lightnings and voices and thunders. And there were **seven lamps of fire** burning before the throne, which are the **seven Spirits of God**;
- Exodus 3:2 And the Angel of Jehovah appeared to him in a flame of **fire** out of the midst of a thornbush. And when he looked, there was the thornbush, burning with **fire**; but the thornbush was not consumed.
- Exodus 3:3 And Moses said, I must turn aside now and see this great sight, why the thornbush does not burn up.
- Exodus 3:4 And when Jehovah saw that he had turned aside to look, God called to him out of the midst of the thornbush and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here I am.
- Exodus 3:5 And He said, Do not come near here. Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.
- Exodus 3:6 And He said, I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

Zechariah 3:9 *“For here is the stone that I have set before Joshua - upon one **stone** are **seven eyes**. I will engrave its engraving, declares Jehovah of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.” (seven eyes of the stone)*

Zechariah 4:2 *“And he said to me, What do you see? And I said, I see that there is a **lampstand** all of gold, with its bowl on top of it and **its seven lamps upon it**, with seven pipes for each of the lamps on top of it;” (The seven lamps are upon the lampstand)*

Zechariah 4:10 *“For who hath despised **the day of small things**? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with **those seven**; they are the **eyes of the Lord**, which run to and fro through the whole earth.”*

Revelation 4:5 “And out of the throne come forth lightnings and voices and thunders; and *seven lamps* of fire are burning before the throne, **which are the *seven Spirits of God***.” (The seven lamps are before the throne)  
[the seven lamps = the seven Spirits of God]

Revelation 5:6 “And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, a *Lamb* standing as having been slain, having seven horns and *seven eyes*, which are **the *seven Spirits of God***, sent forth into all the earth.” (seven eyes of the lamb)  
[the seven eyes of the Lamb = the seven Spirits of God]

### I. God is a consuming fire—Heb. 12:29; Deut. 4:24; 9:3:

- A. As the burning One, God is holy; **holiness is His nature**, and whatever does not correspond with His holy nature, He, as the consuming **fire**, will consume—Heb. 12:29.
- B. In Daniel 7:9-10 **God’s throne** was flames of **fire**, its wheels were a burning **fire**, and a stream of **fire** issued forth and came out from before Him; the **fire** here indicates that God is absolutely righteous and altogether holy.
- C. Through His death the Lord **released** Himself into man as the **fire** of life to burn on the earth—Luke 12:49-50; John 12:24:
  1. The pneumatic Christ as the **sevenfold intensified life-giving Spirit** is a burning **fire**—Heb. 12:29; Rev. 4:5; 5:6; 1:14; cf. Zech. 2:5.
  2. This **fire** is the impulse (the impelling force) of the spiritual life, an impulse that comes from the Lord’s released divine life.
  3. “We all have been **burned** by this **fire**; we have been **brought** together by this **fire**; and now we are **burdened** that this **fire** would burn many others. When the concealed glory of Christ’s divinity was released, a divine **fire** was cast on earth to burn the whole earth. Let the **fire** burn on! No one can stop it”—*The Issue of Christ Being Glorified by the Father with the Divine Glory*, pp. 11-12.
- D. The **seven Spirits of God** are the **seven lamps** of **fire** burning before the throne; these lamps of **fire** are **for the carrying out of God’s administration**—Rev. 4:5.

The **seven lamps** on the lampstand in Zechariah are the **seven eyes**. Firstly, these seven eyes are the eyes of Christ as the stone for God's building (Zech. 4:2, 10; 3:9). Revelation 5:6 also speaks of the seven eyes of Christ, the Lamb, saying that they are “the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.” **The seven Spirits are the seven eyes of Christ**. In Zechariah 3 and 4 Christ is the **stone** for God's **building**, and in Revelation 5 He is the **Lamb** for our **redemption**. This indicates that the redeeming Christ is the building stone. Both the Lamb and the stone have the seven eyes which are the seven Spirits of God. In Zechariah the **seven eyes** are the **eyes of the stone**, while in Revelation they are the **eyes of the Lamb**.

The seven lamps, which are the seven eyes of Christ, are also the eyes of God for His move (Zech. 4:10). Christ has the seven eyes, the seven Spirits of God, for God's move. Firstly, Christ is the **redeeming Lamb** and eventually He is the **building stone**. This is absolutely for God's move on earth, through redemption to the goal of building. Today **we are enjoying redemption for the building**. We enjoy Christ not only as the redeeming Lamb, but also as the building stone. Christ's redemption is for God's building. In Him we are **redeemed**, and in Him we are **built up**. He is accomplishing this by the seven Spirits of God which are for God's move today. (Life-Study of Revelation, Chapter 8, Section 2)

- E. The **fire** burning out of the midst of the **thornbush** was the Triune God, the God of resurrection—Exo. 3:2, 4, 6; Matt. 22:31-32.
- F. The **word of God** is a **fire** that burns us and many of the things in which we have confidence—Jer. 23:29; 5:14; 20:9.
- G. Those who have a desire to serve God must know that God is a consuming **fire** that **burns** and **energizes**; when God comes to the earth, **fire** comes to the earth, and when God enters into man, **fire** enters into man and burns in him—Heb. 12:29; Luke 12:49.
- H. The **fire** that burned on the altar of the burnt offering **came down from the heavens**—Lev. 9:24:
  1. After coming down from the heavens, this **fire** burned continually upon the altar—6:13.
  2. The divine **fire**, the burning Triune God, enables us to serve and even to sacrifice our lives—Rom. 12:11; cf. Acts 15:26; 20:24; 21:13.

### II. Every **priestly service** to God must be based on the fire from the altar of burnt offering, and our **service must be the issue of the burning of this fire**—Lev. 9:24; 16:12-13; 6:13; 10:1-11:

- A. God wanted the service of the children of Israel to be based on this **fire**; the burning of incense was their service to God, but the **fire** used for burning incense had to be taken from the altar—6:13; 16:12-13.
- B. Our service must come out of the burning of God's **fire**—Exo. 3:2-6.
- C. **Fire** is a **source of energy**; in order for our service to be full of energy, **our service must pass** through the **fire** from the altar—Lev. 6:13:
  1. This **fire** should be the **energy**, the driving **force**, the **impulse**, within us; if we have this **fire**, our service will be out of God, not out of ourselves—Luke 12:49.
  2. The energy and the **motivating** power for the New Testament service began with **fire** from heaven; the **fire** that descended upon the Galilean fishermen became the energy and the motivating power within them—Acts 2:3.
  3. This **fire** burns on those who **love** God, who **offer** themselves to God, who are willing to **forsake** everything for God, and who are willing to place themselves in His hands in order to be **broken**—Lev. 9:24.

D. The **fire** from the altar is the genuine motivating **power of service**—6:13:

1. What God does concerning our service is to send His **fire** to burn within us—**Luke 12:49**; Rom. 12:11.
2. If we offer ourselves to God sincerely, **fire** will descend from heaven and burn us; this burning will become the energy that moves us, and the issue of this burning will be our service.

### THREE ASPECTS OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST

... First, there is the Lord's **blood**. His blood speaks of His death as a substitution for us; He shed His precious blood on our behalf.

...Second, the Lord's death on the **cross** speaks of His identifying death. We do not have any part in the shedding of His blood, but we can have a part in His cross, because when the Lord went to the cross, He brought us along with Him...The Bible says that we have been crucified with Christ, but it does not say that we have participated in the shedding of His blood.

Third, the Lord's **flesh** refers to the aspect of His death that **released His life**. This aspect of the Lord's death has nothing to do with God or man. It refers to His flesh being given for the world. The Lord released His own life. The flesh signifies the Lord's life, the life released through the Lord Jesus' death. This is why it speaks of His flesh, not His corpse. The Lord Jesus was God. Yet He came to the earth, putting on a body of flesh and having the life of man. In order for Him to release His life, He first had to put off His human physical life. In **Luke 12:49-50** He said, *"I have come to cast fire on the earth, and how I wish that it were already kindled! But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how I am pressed until it is accomplished!"* The word "pressed" means "constricted" in the original language. "Fire" does not refer to a physical fire that is lit by a match or any other kind of fire. The expression "cast fire on the earth" proves that this fire is not from the earth, but from heaven. The book of Hebrews says that our **God is a consuming fire** (12:29). Here fire signifies God's life, which is the life of Christ.

The Lord wanted to see all **men filled with His fire, that is, His life**. But when the Lord spoke these words, they had not received His life yet. Therefore, He said, *"I have come to cast fire on the earth, and how I wish that it were already kindled!"* Following this He said, *"I have a baptism to be baptized with."* This is a strange word. Was not the Lord already baptized? He was baptized in Luke 3; it had been done already. He had been baptized at least three years earlier. Why did He say that He had a baptism to be baptized with? We have to realize that **baptism** in this verse refers to **His death on the cross**. The meaning of baptism is death and burial. It was right to say that the Lord still had *"a baptism to be baptized with."* This meant that the matter had not been consummated. At that time, the Lord had not passed through death, signified by baptism.

(Collected Works of Watchman Nee, The (Set 2) Vol. 42: Conferences, Messages, and Fellowship (2), Chapter 25, Section 1)

E. The **fire** from the altar produces a powerful service:

1. The altar of burnt offering is **the cross of the Lord Jesus**, and the **fire** is the Spirit—Gal. 2:20; Acts 2:3-4.
2. The basis of genuine service is knowing the cross and placing ourselves on the cross in order to be gained by God and to allow the divine **fire** to burn within us; this produces service—Lev. 6:13; Rom. 12:11.

F. Those who experience the **fire** from the altar build with gold, silver, and precious stones—1 Cor. 3:12:

1. Such a work is full of the **element** of God, has the **power** of the cross, and **expresses** God—1:18; Phil. 1:20.
2. Only the work that is produced through burning is of gold, silver, and precious stones; the work that is not produced through burning is of wood, grass, and stubble—1 Cor. 3:12.
3. The day will come when the work of each will be **tested** by **fire**; if our work is the issue of **fire**, our work will **stand the test** of **fire**—v. 13.

### III. We must serve God **not with strange fire but with the fire from the altar**—Lev. 10:1-2; 9:24; 6:13:

A. According to typology, **strange fire** is any **fire** other than that which burns on the altar—10:1.

B. The failure of Nadab and Abihu lay in their failure to use the **fire** from the altar; what they used was common **fire**, not holy **fire**.

C. Strange **fire** signifies man's natural **enthusiasm**, natural **affection**, natural **strength**, and natural **ability** offered to God.

D. Strange **fire** is **fire** of the self; it is **fire** that issues from the **soulish life**, the **fleshy life**, and the **natural life**—Matt. 16:24-26; 1 Cor. 2:14:

1. Strange **fire** means that the self-life **interferes** with the works of God.
2. Although the works are God's, the self-life wants to dictate the way that the works are carried out.
3. Offering up strange **fire** is **employing** the self's **methods** and wisdom and **insisting** on the self's **proposals** in the service of God.

E. Nadab and Abihu were judged not because they did something that was not for God but because they acted according to the natural life and did something for God in a natural way—Lev. 10:1-2.

F. The offering of strange **fire** was a **sin of presumption**; Nadab and Abihu presumed to do something for God—Psa. 19:13.

G. This is a strong warning showing us that, in touching the divine things, we need to apply the cross to our natural life; otherwise, we will suffer spiritual death.

H. God pays attention not only to whether there is **fire** but also to the source and nature of the **fire**; our zeal must come from the altar—Lev. 6:13.

I. Everyone who is called of God must realize that he is a **thornbush** with a **fire** burning within him and that this **fire** is God Himself—Exo. 3:2-6:

1. We need to learn one lesson: **to work for God without using the natural life, with its energy, strength, and ability, as the fuel but by letting God burn within us.**

### THE THORN AND THE FLAME OF FIRE IN EXODUS 3

Man's situation in Exodus 3 is much different from that in Genesis 3. In Exodus 3 **the cursed thorn becomes the vessel of God**, and the flame of **fire** becomes one with the thorn-bush. Through redemption, signified by the lamb slain and offered to God for fallen man (Gen. 4:4), **the curse has been taken away**, and **the fire has become one with the thorn**.

The reality of this picture is seen in Galatians 3:13 and 14. Verse 13 says, "*Christ has redeemed us out of the curse of the law, having become a curse on our behalf.*" This means that **through the death of Christ on the cross the curse has been taken away**. Verse 14 continues, "*That the blessing of Abraham might come to the nations in Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.*" Therefore, according to these verses the curse has been taken away, and the Spirit, the fire, has been given to us.

Acts 2:3 and 4 indicate that the outpoured Spirit is symbolized by **tongues of fire**. This outpouring of the Spirit as fire was predicted by the Lord Jesus in Luke 12:49: "*I came to cast fire on the earth, and what can I desire if it has already been kindled?*" On the day of Pentecost the promised Spirit, given through the redemption of Christ which took away the curse, came upon the disciples in the form of fire. This fire no longer excludes us from God; instead, it is **the flame of God's visitation**.

Considering this in the light of the picture in Exodus 3, we see that **the thorn and the flame are one**. In Genesis 3 fallen man was under the **curse** signified by the thorn. There the flame of **fire excluded** this fallen man from God as the tree of life. In Exodus 3, however, the thorn-bush, which can be considered a type of vessel, and the fire are one. **In Genesis 3 the fire keeps the man who is under the curse away from the tree of life**, away from God as the source of life. **But in Exodus 3 the flame of fire visits the thorn-bush and indwells it**. This indicates that through the redemption of Christ the very God Himself, the holy One whose holiness excludes sinners from His presence, can come to visit us, to stay with us, and even to dwell in us. Hallelujah, Christ has taken away the curse and has cast down to earth the fire of the Holy Spirit! Now that the curse has been taken away, we are no longer excluded from God as life. Praise the Lord that **the excluding flame of Genesis 3 has become the visiting and indwelling flame of Exodus 3!** Now the once-cursed thorn can become God's dwelling place. (Life-Study of Exodus, Chapter 7, Section 2)

2. We need to be burning in spirit, serving the Lord as a slave with the **fire** of His life, not with strange **fire**, which brings in spiritual death—Rom. 12:11; Lev. 10:1-2.

### THE FIRE ON THE ALTAR BURNING AND PRODUCING A POWERFUL SERVICE

Now we will consider how to apply this fellowship. We need to know what the Christian **service** is and what the **work** of the church is. We cannot start a service or initiate a work simply because we like it or are enthusiastic. To do so would be to serve God with strange fire, because the service would be of man, not of God. **Strange fire is unacceptable to God**. It is not what He wants.

The **service** that God desires is **carried out through the fire on the altar of burnt offering**. The altar of burnt offering has already been set up, and fire has also descended upon it. **The altar of burnt offering is the cross of the Lord Jesus, and the fire is the Spirit**. The Spirit has descended and is burning through the cross as the altar of burnt offering. Any person who is willing to touch the cross, that is, to receive the cross by applying the death of Christ, will be gained by God. Then the fire on the altar of burnt offering, that is, the Spirit, will burn in him until it produces a service. All genuine service comes out of such a burning. (The Service for Building Up the House of God, Chapter 2, Section 2)

### IV. The fire on the altar of burnt offering should be **kept burning continually; it must not go out, and it shall not go out—6:12-13:**

- A. Day by day and on many occasions, we need to offer ourselves in Christ to God as a continual burnt offering to be burned by Him so that we may burn others—cf. Rom. 12:1-2; Num. 28:2-4, 9-11, 16-19, 26-27; 29:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 39-40.
- B. The Spirit causes our spirit to be **burning** and our gifts to be **flaming**; hence, we should not quench Him—1 Thes. 5:19; Rom. 12:11; 2 Tim. 1:6:
  1. We **must** allow the Lord to burn us and to keep us burning continually by fanning our God-given spirit into flame— vv. 6-7.
  2. We **must** enjoy God as the **fire** of love to love Him and others with His love—2 Cor. 5:14; S. S. 8:6-7; 2 Tim. 1:7.
  3. We **must** have a time with the Lord every morning to have a new beginning and be revived by Him—Lev. 6:12; Prov. 4:18; Lam. 3:22-24; Psa. 119:147-148.
  4. We **must** call upon the Lord, stirring ourselves up to lay hold of Him—Rom. 10:12; 2 Tim. 2:22; Isa. 64:7a.
  5. We **must** pray-read God's Word, striking the Spirit of the Scripture with our spirit to catch the divine **fire**—Jer. 23:29; Eph. 6:17-18; 2 Tim. 3:16.
  6. We **must** be filled with the sevenfold intensified Spirit as the seven lamps of **fire** and the seven flaming eyes of Christ by opening ourselves to the Lord unreservedly in order to be enlightened by Him, burned by Him, and infused with Him—Rev. 4:5; 5:6; 1:14; Prov. 20:27; Mal. 3:2.
  7. We **must** always rejoice, pray unceasingly, and give thanks in everything—1 Thes. 5:16-18.
  8. We **must** speak for the Lord to impart Him into others, enjoying Him as our burning power for purging and motivating in God's economical move—Acts 2:3-4; 6:4.
  9. We **must** coordinate with one another in and among the churches to enjoy God as our sanctifying **fire** for His one move—Ezek. 1:4, 13; Rev. 1:20; Zech. 2:5.
  10. The burning of the **sevenfold intensified Spirit** as the seven lamps of **fire** motivates us to rise up and **take action** for the carrying out of God's economy—Dan. 11:32b.

### Seven Lamps of Fire Burning before the Throne

Revelation 4:5 also tells us that “*seven lamps of fire are burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.*” This indicates that God will touch the earth by the seven lamps, by His **seven Spirits** which are **burning, shining, observing, searching, and judging**. The seven lamps here refer to the seven lamps of the lampstand in Exodus 25:37 and the seven lamps of the lampstand in Zechariah 4:2. The seven lamps of fire which are the seven Spirits of God signify the enlightening and searching of the sevenfold intensified Spirit of God. In Exodus 25 and Zechariah 4, the seven lamps, signifying the enlightening of the Spirit of God in God's move, are for God's building, either for the tabernacle or the building of the temple. Here the seven lamps are for God's judgment, which will issue also in God's building—the building of the New Jerusalem. While God executes His judgment, **His sevenfold intensified Spirit will carry out God's eternal building** by searching, enlightening, judging, and infusing...The issue is the consummation of the holy city, New Jerusalem. (Life-Study of Revelation, Chapter 17, Section 2)

### THE NEED FOR AN INTENSIFIED INFUSION

Because of the darkness and degradation of this age, God has been forced to exercise **Himself** as the **sevenfold intensified Spirit** to **enlighten us**. We need the searching and enlightening of the seven Spirits. Perhaps you have been clinging to doctrines for years. What good have they done for you? The degraded recovered church has so much doctrine, but what did the Lord say of them? He said that they were neither hot nor cold, but rather that they were lukewarm and therefore qualified for being vomited out of His mouth (3:16). This is the condition of the church in Laodicea.

We thank the Lord that the light concerning **His building** is brighter today than it has ever been. The light is shining over us. It is not a matter of being an individualistic overcomer in some minor things, but of being an overcomer in the major things for God's building. Many Christians do not understand the meaning of overcoming in Revelation. **To overcome** in this book means to overcome degraded Christianity. We must overcome the degraded situation of the so-called church for the sake of God's building. Read the book of Revelation again and again and you will see that its governing view is the building of God. We must keep this before us. **Everything is for God's building**. The revelation of Christ in chapter one is for the building; the seven epistles to the seven churches in chapters two and three are for God's building; and the scene in heaven after Christ's ascension and the vision of Christ as the Lion-Lamb in chapter five are also for God's building. Christ's having the **seven eyes** which are the **seven lamps** and the **seven Spirits of God** is not that we might be individualistically holy, but is absolutely for God's building. May the Lord have mercy on us. In this age, **we are in a dark night and we need the intensified sevenfold Spirit as the seven shining lamps to enlighten, search, purge, and refine us**. Ultimately, what we need is the Lord's intensified infusion. We need to be infused with all that He is so that we might become transformed stones for God's building. (Life-Study of Revelation, Chapter 22, Section 3)