

Video: Burn Us Up (Shane and Shane): https://youtu.be/70PDuymQ_h0

1. **The Altar of Burnt Offering.** The bronze altar at the entrance of the tabernacle courtyard, was the place where offerings were brought, and sacrifices were killed and burned. The most common offering was the burnt offering (olah), so the altar was named after this offering. When an Israelite worshipper came to meet with God at His tabernacle, the altar was the place where the meeting with God occurred.
 - a. The altar was **very sacred**. It was considered “most holy” along with all the other tabernacle furniture. Read Ex 29:37. Whatever touched the altar becomes holy. Jesus agreed... Read Mat 23:18.
 - b. The altar was a place of **meeting God** and receiving grace from him.
Read Ex 20:24. What 2 promises does God make? 1) I will **come** to you 2) I will **bless** you
Read Ex 29:42. What promise does God make? I will **meet with you** to **speak to you** there
 - c. The altar was a **place of slaughter**, of blood sacrifice. The Hebrew word for altar (mizbēah) comes from the word for slaughter (zābah).
 - Blood was fundamental to drawing near to God. Read Lev 17:11. What is in the blood? The **life** of the flesh. God gave blood on the altar for **atonement** (acceptance, forgiveness, cleansing, consecration, appeasement of potential wrath from God, removal of sin or iniquity).
 - However, in the tabernacle **the blood-shedding never happened on the altar itself**, but beside it. Then blood from the slaughtered animal was collected and splashed on the 4 sides of the altar, poured out at the base of the altar, or rubbed on the 4 horns of the altar.
 - Non-bloody offerings such as the grain offering were also offered/burnt on the altar.
 - d. The altar was a **place of continual burning**, especially of the daily burnt offerings (olah). And the fire was not ordinary fire, it was **holy fire**.
 - Read Lev 9:24. Who lit the fire on the tabernacle altar? Read 2 Chron 7:1-3. Who lit the fire on the altar at Solomon’s temple? Read Acts 2:1-4. Who lit the fire at Pentecost?
 - Read Lev 6:9, 12-13. Who was responsible to ensure the fire **burns continually** and does **not go out**?
 - e. The altar was a **communion site**, a **table** where sacrificial meals were eaten and shared between God, priests, and the people. We’ll study more about this when we study the **peace offering**.
2. **Burnt Offering Distinctives.**
 - a. Its name in Hebrew is **olah** (Strong 5930) meaning “ascent.” A more precise name would be “ascension offering” because all the offering is transformed by burning to smoke and ascends heavenly to God.
 - b. It was an **ancient** offering. Job, Noah, and Abraham offered burnt offerings. Read Job 1:5, Gen 8:20-21, Gen 22:1-2.
 - c. The **whole** (entire) offering is burnt on the altar, except for the skin which is given to the priest. This is an obvious symbol of complete dedication and consecration of the offering to God. He gets all of it.
 - d. It was the **most common** offering. Read Ex 29:38-43. As a public offering God appointed burnt offerings daily, weekly, monthly and at festivals. See Num 28-29. During public offerings a 1 year old male lamb was the most frequent animal sacrificed.
 - e. As a personal offering, the burnt offering was **voluntary**. It was not a “I have to” but it was a “I get to.”

3. Burnt Offering Ritual. The ritual for the burnt offering is described in Lev 1, Lev 6:8-13, Lev 22:18-20 and Num 15:1-16. It consists of three main rites: presentation rite, blood rite, incineration rite. Anyone could bring the offering, a male or a female, a native Israelite or a foreigner living among them.

A. Presentation Rite.

1. Select the animal

- The offering was **personal** and **costly**. Domesticated (not wild); from the herd (cattle), flock (sheep, goats) or a bird (dove, pigeon). These animals lived with them and belonged to them. God provided a graded scale depending on the resources of the Israelite, but it was still costly. What did David say about burnt offering cost in 2 Sam 24:24?
- **Male** (if from herd or flock). Males were more expendable than females; females gave milk and birthed/nurtured new animals for the herd/flock.
- **Unblemished**. The animal could not have any defect. Read Lev 22:18-25 and 1 Pet 1:18-19. What did Pilate say in Luke 23:4?

2. Bring it near to the altar. Drawing near to God could be dangerous so the Israelite and priests were careful to approach God only in the manner He prescribed for them.

3. Lean a hand on the head of the animal. Only 1 hand was used. The verb indicates some pressure was applied. Most likely symbolic of establishing a legal ownership link between the animal and the worshipper as his/her substitute and designating the worshipper as the beneficiary of the benefits to be received. Christ is our substitute. Read 1 Pet 3:18.

B. Blood Rite

- 1. Slaughter** the animal. The worshipper did this, not the priest, by cutting the throat. For flocks it was always done on the north side of the altar. Golgotha was the place of slaughter on the north side of Jerusalem. The penalty for sin in the Bible is death. Read Gen 2:17 and Rom 6:23. Read Isa 53:7. Also read Rev 5:6, 9, 12. What adjective is used of the Lamb?
- 2. Catch the blood** in a basin. The priest did this. Blood was sacred because it represented the life of the animal. What does God call "precious" in 1 Pet 1:18-19?
- 3. Splash the blood** on the sides of the altar. It is not enough for blood to be shed. It must be presented to God. At Passover the blood had to be put on the door. Read Heb 9:11-12.

C. Incineration Rite

- 1. Skin** the animal. The worshipper did this. Christ was stripped of his clothing and scourged.
- 2. Cut up / dismember** the animal. The worshipper did this. The animal was divided into head, fat around the entrails (suet), body, lower legs, entrails.
- 3. Wash** dirty animal parts. The worshipper washed the legs (beneath the shins) and the entrails to remove dirt and dung.
- 4. Prepare the fire** by stoking it and adding wood to it. The priest did this.
- 5. Arrange the animal pieces** on the altar. The priest did this.
- 6. Burn the animal** until it was ashes. The burning created aromatic smoke that ascended to God and caused him pleasure. Christ endured the burning wrath of God and then rose/ascended to the heavens as a please aroma to God (Eph 5:2).

4. Yahweh's Acceptance and Pleasure. Yahweh promised to be pleased and provide atonement (acceptance, cover, favor) to the worshipper who presented the burnt offering as prescribed with a genuine heart. Read Psalm 20:3. We are now "accepted in the Beloved" (Eph 1:6) and Christ has accepted us (Rom 15:7). The burnt offering was primarily to please God and secure His continued acceptance and favor. It was not mainly about obtaining pardon/forgiveness (like the sin and guilt offerings).