

November 5 2023
Strange Fire Leviticus 10

Leviticus 10:1-3

1 Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it and laid incense on it and offered unauthorized fire before the Lord, which he had not commanded them. **2** And fire came out from before the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord. **3** Then Moses said to Aaron, “This is what the Lord has said: ‘Among those who are near me I will be sanctified, and before all the people I will be glorified.’” And Aaron held his peace.

Brief Intro on Leviticus 1-9

Remember the goal for the Israelites was to get into the presence of God or to get access to God. But God is a Holy and pure God, so we humans could not just enter into the presence of God. There are things in us that are not pure and Holy.

So God gives the Israelites the proper instructions to be in the presence of God. But we need a place to do it, and **this is where The tabernacle or the temple** comes in. It was designed in a way, where people can meet God and God can dwell among His people.

So there are three important things you need to do from the book of Leviticus to get into the presence of God.

1. **Sacrifice** (Animal) Or Offering
2. **Blood on the Alter**
3. **Mediator or Priest** (Representing Man to God)

Why the blood on the alter?

Leviticus 17:11 New Living Translation

for the life of the body is in its blood. I have given you the blood on the altar to purify you, making you right with the Lord. It is the blood, given in exchange for a life, that makes purification possible.

Remember in ancient times, other nations would sacrifice human blood to be in their alter, like the god of Molech. But in Leviticus the animal sacrifice was about making things right before God.

Leviticus 1-7 Explains the type of Offerings or Sacrifices you can give unto the Lord.

1. **Burnt** Offering (Leviticus 1)
2. **Grain / Meal** Offering (Leviticus 2)
3. **Peace / Fellowship** Offering (Leviticus 3)
4. **Sin** Offering (Leviticus 4)
5. **Trespass / Guilt** Offering (Leviticus 5)

Grain and Peace offerings were voluntary offerings to say **thank you** to God. “God, because of you we are set free. Because of you, we are no longer slaves to Egypt. So here is my thanksgiving offering.”

The **Burnt, Sin, and Guilt** offerings were given to God to say, “I’m sorry God for the sins that I’ve made. Please forgive me.” it was a **confession to God** and it was God’s way of saying, “*I forgive you, because of your offering. Your heart is in the right place.*”

So, instead of God’s wrath being upon us, we gave an animal sacrifice as an atonement, as an exchange. The word “**atonement**” means “**covering**” for our sins.

Through these offerings, the people are being reminded of God’s grace upon our ives, but also of God judgment. He reminds us that their are consequences of our sins.

In Leviticus you had three parts of worship:

1. **First part of worship**, you had to set up the tent or Tabernacle and that took a lot of people set up and clean up. Like today, we have our powerpoint team, translation team, praise team, chair (set up) team, manna ministry team, everyone gets involved in worship. What you do before we start praise is all part of worship.
2. **The second part of worship was sacrifice.** The sacrifice included animals for atonement. You lay your hand on the animal and confess before God of your sins, then the wrath of God would be upon the animal and not on humans.
3. **The Third and final part of worship** was that you needed a mediator between you and God and that was to have a priests. The priest would represent the people to God. This is where Leviticus chapters 8 and 9 comes in.

This is where we left off through Leviticus chapters 8 and 9, the ordination process to become priests. And Aaron and his sons would become the first priests to Israel.

For the priests you had to wear special clothing like the ephod.

[Show picture of an ephod]

Exodus 28:6,12

6 “And they shall make the ephod of gold, of blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and of fine twined linen, skillfully worked. 7 It shall have two shoulder pieces attached to its two edges, so that it may be joined together.

12 And you shall set the **two stones on the shoulder pieces of the ephod**, as **stones of remembrance for the sons of Israel**.

And Aaron shall **bear their names before the Lord** on his two shoulders for remembrance.

The names of the 12 Israelites on the shoulder pieces was the burden the priests had to carry. The 12 gemstones on the breastplate the priests had to carry represented the 12 Israelites the priests had to put into their hearts.

So this was a heavy responsibility for the priests to carry and you had to stay very diligent to God's instructions or there was going to be consequences for not following God's order.

And this is exactly what happened to two of Aaron's sons as they began in the early part of God's ministry.

Leviticus 10:1

Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it and laid incense on it and offered **unauthorized fire before the Lord**, which he had **not commanded** them.

"unauthorized" fire:

- profane fire
- A different kind of fire
- wrong kind of fire
- strange fire

The priests are mediators between men and God. So here are Nadab and Abihu, they did something wrong and they brought in their own human fire. If it's ordained by God, then it's God's fire, but this was brought in by human fire.

Now this hit me, pretty hard, because I am a pastor, and Nadab and Abihu died while doing the Lord's work. Basically they died at church. So I have to focus really hard on why this had to happen.

So the question is what is this “unauthorized” or “strange” fire?

Side Note: This is speaking to all men as they become spiritual leaders in their own home. Single men, you will eventually get married and you will become spiritual leaders. For married men, you are spiritual leaders in your home. So you have to be wise about, your leadership.

Here are two probable causes of their deaths:

(1) Fire should have been taken from the altar, and they might have made their own fire.

Leviticus 16:12

And he shall take a censer full of **coals of fire from the altar** before the Lord, and two handfuls of sweet incense beaten small, and he shall bring it inside the veil

Based upon this text, the priests are to take “**coals of fire from the altar.**” So it’s possible they might have brought in fire from other sources and not from the “**coals of fire from the altar.**” Meaning that they made their own fire.

So why did God allow them to die?

Possibility was pride. Their attitude might have been, “*God, your ways of making fire takes way too long, so my ways are quicker and faster.*” Or, “*I can make a better fire.*”

Proverbs 16:18

Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.

Because of pride, they might have gotten careless or lazy with their duty.

- Yes, they were chosen because of family. Aaron was the high priest and Moses was their uncle and he is in direct phone line to God.
- But even being in high position and having a family member in the highest office, could have led to pride and carelessness.

Side Note: Have you ever seen a fire taken out of a hot frying pan filled with oil, with water? You have an explosion of fire. Houses have been burned and people have died from pouring water into a hot pan filled with oil.

What lesson am I learning from this?

Because this is God's work, and when your doing God's work, we can't do it our own way, we have to do it God's way. And sometimes that means it's going to take awhile, but all in God's timing. God has a perfect plan and a purpose in all that He does. We just need to trust in Him and walk in His path.

It's like when God gave instructions to Noah to build the ark, He gave very specific instructions from inside to outside. In the middle of building the ark, Noah comes in and says, "*I think I would like a large window on the wall, so I can have a great view of the ocean.*" I am just imagining all the animals drowning, and a total destruction of Noah's ark because he wanted a window.

The bottom line is that we can't do God's work through our own way. We can not get into the presence of God our own way.

Where were they getting the source of fire?

Where do you get your primary source of energy? I remember a time where I was getting a lot of my source of health from medications and vitamin pills to get me better, but a nutritional doctor once told me, just eat the healthy and wholesome food as your primary source of health and energy.

Spiritually speaking, that's what a lot people do. I remember having a conversation with this one lady, who listen's to ten different pastors preach. She got her source of energy from all the different pastors. One day, I shared with her what the Bible actually said about a certain topic and she was stunned. **When she read the scripture for herself, she finally understood Jesus.**

When you get the authentic and genuine source of fire that comes from the alter, you will get into the presence of God.

(2) Maybe they came in drunk

Leviticus 10:8-9

8 And the Lord spoke to Aaron, saying, **9** "Drink no wine or strong drink, you or your sons with you, when you go into the tent of meeting, lest you die. It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations.

So it is possible from the text that they could have been doing their duty while they were drunk.

Ephesians 5:18-19

18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, **19** addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart,

Now if you want to get a high, then don't get it from the world. The Bible says, "be filled with the Holy Spirit." If you want to be in the presence of the Lord then share what God is doing in your life (Psalms), share the word of God, sing praise songs, or create something for God. Serve something for God. This is where you get the filling of the Spirit.

Nadab and Abihu might have been celebrating the offerings of God a little too much with wine and went into worship and fell down on the fire that they brought. That ephod blew up really quick.

Who lights your fire?

- Is it an unauthorized fire?
- Is it a strange fire?
- Or is the fire from the alter of God?

So how do you move on from this tragedy? What do you do when your two sons have just died? Do you continue on with the Lord's work? How do you continue on with prayer and studying the Bible when your loved one has just passed away?

Leviticus 10:12-15

12 Moses spoke to Aaron and to Eleazar and Ithamar, his surviving sons: "Take the **grain offering that is left** of the Lord's food offerings, and eat it unleavened beside the altar, for it is most holy. **13** You **shall eat it in a holy place**, because it is your due and your sons' due, from the Lord's food offerings, for so I am commanded. **14** But the breast that is waved and the thigh that is contributed you shall eat in a clean place, you and your sons and your daughters with you, for they are given as your due and your sons' due from the sacrifices of the peace offerings of the people of Israel. **15** The thigh that is contributed and the breast that is waved they shall bring with the food offerings of the fat **pieces to wave for a wave offering before the Lord**, and it shall be yours and your sons' with you as a due forever, as the Lord has commanded."

Leviticus 10:15 New King James Version

The thigh of the **heave offering** and the breast of the **wave offering** they shall bring with the offerings of fat made by fire, to offer as a wave offering before the Lord. And it shall be yours and your sons' with you, by a statute forever, as the Lord has commanded."

Nadab and Abihu have just died and Moses is commanding Aaron and his two remaining sons to go and take the left over food from the offerings and I want you to eat it with your family as a peace offerings. But I want you to do this as a "Heave Offering" and a "Wave Offering."

In essence, what Moses is trying to tell Aaron and his two surviving sons, *"Listen. I understand your two sons have died. But you still have to move on with the Lord's work. Don't stop the prayer for your people. Getting yourself back in relationship with God, will help you. So I want you to do the Heave and Wave offering."*

Heave Offering: Is an offering presented before the Lord, and is an upward movement. The sacrificed item is presented with an up-and-down motion.

The heave offering was not really a separate offering but the portion of another offering that was reserved for the use of the priests. The heave offering was often used in conjunction with a wave offering, and both were then given to the priests. The heave and the wave refer to the movement of the sacrificed item over the altar.

Wave Offering is also an offering presented before the Lord but the motion was from side to side. From right side to the left side over the altar.

Why? What's the deal?

The idea of Heave Offering is to show my dependence upon the Lord. I received this from the Lord and I'm offering up in the presence of the Lord. This is my acknowledgment saying that I am dependent upon the Lord. "*Life and death are in your hands.*"

It's like God telling Aaron, "*Look, I know that your sons have just died, I want you to be dependent upon God, trust in God and continue to walk in obedience to the Lord.*"

Now for the "**Wave Offering**" you are going from side to side, and this **signifies that God is among his people.**

The first is vertical between you and God and the second one is horizontal between God and His people. Even though God is Holy, on a vertical level, but God still desires to be with His people.

So the concept of the Heave and Wave offering is that God is with His people, but He is Holy and separate. This is where we get the "fear of the Lord" or giving God the highest honor in the presence of God. This is when God is with His people.

But because of the tragedy that just happened, the two remaining sons didn't do what Moses commanded. So Moses gets upset.

Leviticus 10:16-18

16 Now Moses diligently inquired about the goat of the sin offering, and behold, it was burned up! And he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, the surviving sons of Aaron, saying, **17 "Why have you not eaten the sin offering in the place of the sanctuary,** since it is a thing most holy and has been given to you that you may bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the Lord? **18** Behold, its blood was not brought into the inner part

of the sanctuary. You certainly ought to have eaten it in the sanctuary, as I commanded.”

When I first read this portion, I thought, “*Oh! No! The other two sons are going to perish like his older brothers!*”

it also might be that Eleazar and Ithamar weren’t fully trained like his two older brothers. They didn’t follow the priestly protocol, which was to take a portion of the food dedicated to the priests and you have to eat it right there in the Holy Place.

But their brothers have just died and even though they didn’t show any physical emotions but maybe they couldn’t just eat, because **they were still mourning the loss of their brothers.**

Leviticus 10:19-20

19 And Aaron said to Moses, “Behold, today they have offered their sin offering and their burnt offering before the Lord, and yet such things as these have happened to me! If I had eaten the sin offering today, would the Lord have approved?” **20** And when Moses heard that, he approved.

Grace of Moses and the Grace of God: Aaron is just letting it out. “*Come on man! I just lost my two sons! Let me spend some time processing what just happened. Moses, can you give me some space to spend some time with God and not do any duty for now.*” I’m just imagining the stress that Aaron is going through right now as a pastor.

“**If I had eaten the sin offering today, would the Lord have approved?**” meaning, “*I can do the duty, but my heart is mourning. My heart is aching. I can’t do the duty right away.*”

And Aaron spoke from his heart and let God know of his mourning. What I appreciated about God, is that he understood Aaron's heart and their two sons. Moses who hears God's voice responded with approval, meaning Moses was at peace.

John 16:19-22

19 Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him, so he said to them, "Is this what you are asking yourselves, what I meant by saying, 'A little while and you will not see me, and again a little while and you will see me'?" **20** Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy. **21** When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. **22** So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.