





**Learning to
Love
Leviticus**

Leviticus 1-3



Speak to the People of Israel

Leviticus 4-6 *7*

STRANGE FIRE

The Whole Story of Nadab and Abihu
Leviticus 8-10



The Back Story

- The two oldest sons of Aaron - **Num. 3:2; 26:60**
- They had “met” God at Mt. Sinai - **Ex. 19:16-22; 20:18-20**
- They went up with Moses, Aaron, and 70 elders - **Ex. 24:1-2**
- They “saw” the God of Israel - **Ex. 24:9-11**
 - *“There was under his feet as it were a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness.”* (**Ex. 24:10**)
 - They shared a meal in God's presence without harm - **Ex. 24:11**
- They had experienced God’s **power, majesty** and God’s **mercy**

The Back Story

- They were among the first priests appointed - **Ex. 28:1**
- They had been **anointed, ordained** and **consecrated** - **Ex. 28:41**
- *“Blood on... ear... thumb... toe...” (Ex. 29:19-21)*
 - *“The symbolism here is not hard to see... ear... must be always willing to hear God’s word; thumb...ever ready to do God’s will... toe...feet ever committed to walk in the Way of righteousness and truth.”*
- J.B. Coffman
 - Be careful what you **hear**, what you **do**, how you **walk**...
- They had been inundated with God’s **holiness**


The Back Story

- They had seen God's **righteous wrath**
- The Golden Calf - **Ex. 32**
 - Israel had broken the 1st and 2nd commandments
 - *"They have turned aside quickly out of **the way that I commanded them.**" (Ex. 32:8)*
- The *"sons of Levi"* had been *"the LORD's side"* (**Ex. 32:25-29**)
 - Nadab and Abihu were instruments of God's wrath
- They **knew** the *"name of the LORD"* (**Ex. 34:5-7**)

The Story

- Consecration of Aaron and his sons - **Lev. 8**
 - *“Moses did as the LORD commanded him” (4, 5, 9, 13, 17, 21, 29, 34)*
 - *“And Aaron and his sons did all the things that the LORD commanded by Moses” (Lev. 8:36)*
- The Lord accepts Aaron’s offering - **Lev. 9**
 - *“As the LORD has commanded” (5, 6, 7, 10, 21)*
 - *“And fire came out from before the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the pieces of fat on the altar, and when all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces.” (Lev. 9:24)*

The Story

- *“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.” (Lev. 10:1)*
- *“In these actions they showed carelessness, irreverence, and a want of faith, lamentable especially for those in the priestly service”
- Jewish Bible Commentary from the 11th through 13th Centuries*
- *“Anyone who altered the sacrificial system assumed a prerogative belonging to God alone.” - Adam Clarke*

The Story

- *“And fire came out from before the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD.” (Lev. 10:2)*
 - *“A precedent of such evil tendency was dangerous, and it was imperatively necessary, therefore, as well for the priests themselves as well as for the sacred things, that God should give a punishment.”*
- A Torah Commentary for Our Times
 - *“To mourn in this case could be seen by the people as accusing God of undue severity” – Adam Clarke*

Not The Lesson

- Nadab and Abihu were not punished for being drunk
 - Strong drink was prohibited for priests - **Lev. 10:8-11**
 - Drunkenness could have been a contributing factor?? But...
- The Holy Spirit confirms their “cause of death”
 - *“But Nadab and Abihu died before the LORD when they offered unauthorized fire before the LORD...” (Num. 3:4)*
 - *“But Nadab and Abihu died when they offered unauthorized fire before the LORD.” (Num. 26:61)*
- They did not **sanctify** and **glorify** God

The Lesson

- *“Among those who are near me **I will be sanctified**, and before all the people **I will be glorified.**” (ESV)*
- *“By those who come near Me **I must be regarded as holy**; And before all the people **I must be glorified.**’ ” (NKJV)*
- *“By those who come near Me **I will be treated as holy**, And before all the people **I will be honored.**” (NASB)*

The Application

“... ***you yourselves*** like living stones ***are being built up*** as a spiritual house, ***to be a holy priesthood***, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ..”

(1 Pet. 2:5)



The Application

- We have experienced God's **power, majesty** and God's **mercy**
- We have been overwhelmed by God's **holiness**
- We know of God's judicial **wrath**
- We **know** the "*name of the LORD*" (**cf. Rom. 11:22**)
- Will we **sanctify** and **glorify** God?
- Will we offer Him only what He has commanded?

STRANGE FIRE



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The Last “Theology” Discussion?

“I just don’t think God cares where the fire comes from. I mean the Law doesn’t say ‘thou shall not offer strange fire!’” - Nadab

*“Yeah, If God was concerned about us using different fire, He would have specifically condemned it, like He did adultery.”
- Abihu*

“You mean to tell me that if there was another tabernacle and they did everything just like we do except they offered a fire God had not commanded, that they’d be consumed by fire from God? I just don’t believe that.” - Nadab

The Last “Theology” Discussion?

“You know, before the Law of Moses, the patriarchs offered burnt offerings with fire God had not specified, so naturally we would bring that understanding of ‘burnt offering’ into this new covenant” - Abihu

“If we’re going to be consistent, we have no authority for knives in the tabernacle either” - Nadab

“Well, I would not feel comfortable offering strange fire, but we can’t say Nadab and Abihu are wrong if they do.” - Eleazar

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