

## Leviticus 10 (The Cost of Disobedience)

### The Death of Nadab and Abihu

**Lev 10:1** Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu took their censers, put fire in them and added incense; and they offered unauthorized fire before the LORD, contrary to his command.

**Lev 10:2** So fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD.

**Lev 10:3** Moses then said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD spoke of when he said: "'Among those who approach me I will be proved holy; in the sight of all the people I will be honored.'" Aaron remained silent.

**Lev 10:4** Moses summoned Mishael and Elzaphan, sons of Aaron's uncle Uzziel, and said to them, "Come here; carry your cousins outside the camp, away from the front of the sanctuary."

**Lev 10:5** So they came and carried them, still in their tunics, outside the camp, as Moses ordered.

**Lev 10:6** Then Moses said to Aaron and his sons Eleazar and Ithamar, "Do not let your hair become unkempt and do not tear your clothes, or you will die and the LORD will be angry with the whole community. But your relatives, all the Israelites, may mourn for those the LORD has destroyed by fire.

**Lev 10:7** Do not leave the entrance to the tent of meeting or you will die, because the LORD's anointing oil is on you." So they did as Moses said.

**Lev 10:8** Then the LORD said to Aaron,

**Lev 10:9** "You and your sons are not to drink wine or other fermented drink whenever you go into the tent of meeting, or you will die. This is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come,

**Lev 10:10** so that you can distinguish between the holy and the common, between the unclean and the clean,

**Lev 10:11** and so you can teach the Israelites all the decrees the LORD has given them through Moses."

**Lev 10:12** Moses said to Aaron and his remaining sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, "Take the grain offering left over from the food offerings prepared without yeast and presented to the LORD and eat it beside the altar, for it is most holy.

**Lev 10:13** Eat it in the sanctuary area, because it is your share and your sons' share of the food offerings presented to the LORD; for so I have been commanded.

**Lev 10:14** But you and your sons and your daughters may eat the breast that was waved and the thigh that was presented. Eat them in a

ceremonially clean place; they have been given to you and your children as your share of the Israelites' fellowship offerings.

**Lev 10:15** The thigh that was presented and the breast that was waved must be brought with the fat portions of the food offerings, to be waved before the LORD as a wave offering. This will be the perpetual share for you and your children, as the LORD has commanded."

**Lev 10:16** When Moses inquired about the goat of the sin offering and found that it had been burned up, he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's remaining sons, and asked,

**Lev 10:17** "Why didn't you eat the sin offering in the sanctuary area? It is most holy; it was given to you to take away the guilt of the community by making atonement for them before the LORD.

**Lev 10:18** Since its blood was not taken into the Holy Place, you should have eaten the goat in the sanctuary area, as I commanded."

**Lev 10:19** Aaron replied to Moses, "Today they sacrificed their sin offering and their burnt offering before the LORD, but such things as this have happened to me. Would the LORD have been pleased if I had eaten the sin offering today?"

**Lev 10:20** When Moses heard this, he was satisfied.

Leviticus chapter 10 centers on the strict holiness of God through the tragic judgment of Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, who offered unauthorized "strange fire" and were consumed by God's fire.

### **The Judgment of Nadab and Abihu**

- **The Violation:** Nadab and Abihu offered incense using unauthorized fire that God had not commanded.
- **The Penalty:** Fire came out from the presence of the Lord and immediately killed them.
- **The Principle:** God demands to be approached on His own terms, showing that human creativity or carelessness in worship is dangerous. Moses stated that God must be treated as holy and glorified by those who draw near.

### **Restrictions on Aaron and Surviving Sons**

- **No Mourning:** Moses forbade Aaron and his surviving sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, from publicly mourning their loss (tearing clothes or unkempt hair) to maintain their holy office and avoid judgment.
- **Sober Service:** God commanded that priests must never drink wine or strong drink before entering the tent of meeting.

- **The Purpose:** Sobriety and obedience allowed the priests to correctly distinguish between the holy and common, and the clean and unclean, to teach Israel God's laws.

### **Regulation of Offerings**

- **Eating the Sacrifice:** Moses gave instructions regarding what portions of the grain and sin offerings the priests were permitted to eat.
- **A Gracious Correction:** Moses questioned why a specific sin offering goat had been burned up rather than eaten; Aaron explained his actions due to the day's tragedy, and Moses accepted his reasoning.

Leviticus 10 relates to Jesus and the New Testament by demonstrating God's terrifying holiness, the vital need for a proper mediator, and the fulfillment of the priesthood through Christ. It shows that approaching God on human terms leads to death, pointing believers toward Jesus as the only safe and acceptable way to come before God.

### **The Danger of Unauthorized Worship**

- **Strange Fire:** Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, offered unauthorized ("strange") fire to God and were consumed by His judgment.
- **New Testament Contrast:** This illustrates that God defines how He must be approached. In the New Testament, attempting to reach God through self-made religion or outside of Christ' rejects God's appointed way.

### **The Need for a Perfect Mediator**

- **Flawed Human Priests:** The sudden death of the priests showed that ordinary, sinful humans cannot safely stand in God's presence on their own merits.
- **Jesus as the Ultimate Priest:** Jesus fulfills and surpasses the Levitical system. The book of Hebrews explains that Jesus is a permanent, sinless high priest who mediates a better covenant, allowing believers to approach God with confidence rather than destruction.

### **Holiness and Grace**

- **Consuming Fire:** God's holiness in Leviticus 10 acts as a destructive fire against sin.
- **Saved Through Christ:** Believers escape this judgment because Jesus took the penalty of sin in their place, transforming how God's holiness interacts with humanity—offering mercy instead of wrath to those who are in Christ.

Jesus is not from Aaron's priestly line; instead, he belongs to the tribe of Judah and holds an eternal priesthood in the order of Melchizedek, which is greater than and replaces the temporary Aaronic priesthood.

### **Lineage and Tribe**

- **Tribe of Judah:** Jesus comes from the line of King David, not from Aaron or the tribe of Levi.
- **No Legal Claim:** Under the old law, Jesus could not serve as a physical priest in the earthly temple because he lacked Aaronic ancestry.

### **Order of Melchizedek**

- **God's Oath:** The Bible states in Psalm 110:4 that the Messiah is a priest forever "according to the order of Melchizedek", which is independent of Aaron's line.

**Psalms 110:4** The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind: "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek."

- **King and Priest:** Melchizedek was both a king and a priest of God, foreshadowing how Jesus unites both roles.

**Gen 14:18** Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High,

**Gen 14:19** and he blessed Abram, saying, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth.

**Gen 14:20** And praise be to God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand." Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

### **Comparison with Aaron's Line**

- **Permanent vs. Temporary:** Aaronic priests died and needed replacements; Jesus lives forever, so his priesthood never ends.
- **Sacrifice:** Aaronic priests offered animal sacrifices over and over again; Jesus offered himself as a single sacrifice once for all time.
- **Access to God:** The old system kept people away from the holy place, but Jesus opened direct access for all believers.

In the New Testament, approaching God is defined by confidence, accessibility, and mediation through Jesus Christ. Believers no longer face the strict physical separation of the old temple curtain, but instead come

directly to God through faith.

### **Through Jesus Christ as Mediator**

- **The Only Way:** Jesus states He is the way, truth, and life, and no one comes to the Father except through Him ([John 14:6](#)).

**John 14:6** Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

- **New and Living Way:** Believers enter holy places by the blood of Jesus through the curtain of His flesh ([Hebrews 10:19-20](#)).

**Heb 10:19** Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus,

[Heb 10:20](#) by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body,

[Heb 10:21](#) and since we have a great priest over the house of God,

[Heb 10:22](#) let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

- **Great High Priest:** Jesus represents people before God and permanently intercedes for them ([Hebrews 4:14-15](#)).

**Heb 4:14** Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.

[Heb 4:15](#) For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet he did not sin.

### **With Boldness and Confidence**

- **Throne of Grace:** Believers may approach God's throne with confidence to receive mercy and find help ([Hebrews 4:16](#)).

[Heb 4:16](#) Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

- **Freedom and Boldness:** Faith in Christ grants entry into God's presence without fear ([Ephesians 3:12](#)).

**Eph 3:10** His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms,

**Eph 3:11** according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Eph 3:12** In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.

### **With Reverence and a True Heart**

- **Sincere Faith:** Drawing near requires a true heart in full assurance of faith with a clean conscience (Hebrews 10:22).

**Heb 10:19** Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus,

**Heb 10:20** by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body,

**Heb 10:21** and since we have a great priest over the house of God,

**Heb 10:22** let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

- **Awe and Gratitude:** Worship must still be offered with reverence and awe, recognizing God's ultimate holiness ([Hebrews 12:28-29](#)).

**Heb 12:28** Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe,

**Heb 12:29** for our "God is a consuming fire."