

**Message #17****Leviticus 10:1-11**

Now I believe not only are people to be holy, but the place is to be holy. Once a place has been established as a place where we worship God—that place should be viewed as a special and sacred place.

**WHEN GOD’S PEOPLE WANT TO ENTER INTO A DEEP RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM, GOD WANTS DISTINCTIONS MADE BETWEEN WHAT IS HOLY AND SACRED AND IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PRIESTS TO SEE TO IT THAT THESE DISTINCTIONS ARE MAINTAINED.**

**OBSERVATION #1** – The time that this event occurred was shortly after the priests had been ordained and consecrated to God. Lev. 8

Once things begin to move right, once God starts working, it is easy to become lax and let down and it is right here when problems can arise. May I say this—we need to be on careful guard especially when we have been used of God and good things are happening.

**OBSERVATION #2** – Two priests did something in the tabernacle that God had not commanded that they do. **10:1**

The two priests were Nadab and Abihu—both of whom were Aaron’s boys (10:1; Num. 26:60-61). The meaning of these two Hebrew names is interesting. The name “Nadab” is a Hebrew word that means spontaneous and liberal (Gesenius, p. 534). The name “Abihu” means “whose father is He.” We could understand this name to mean God is my father (Gesenius, p. 5).

Here is what you have—you have two boys raised in a godly environment under the direction of Moses and Aaron. They have God as their Father, but they are just a little loose, just a little liberal in their view of worship. They aren’t bad boys but they aren’t real serious about God either. When it came to offer an offering to God, they offered “strange fire.” It does not specifically say what the strange fire was and there have been a variety of views as to what was.

- 1) Some say it means they went too far into the sanctuary with their offering. Lev. 16:1-2
- 2) Some say it means they offered to God some unauthorized coals from outside the temple area—immediate context is a fire problem.
- 3) Some suggest they offered an offering that did not contain the proper ingredients.
- 4) Some suggest they offered incense at the wrong time of day.

Whatever they did or didn’t do, it was serious business because it was done in the context of priestly worship.

**OBSERVATION #3** – God executed these two priests with judgmental fire. **10:2**

These priests had been warned that if they did not obey God in worship, they could die (Lev. 8:35). God’s fire from heaven shows up some 12 times in the O.T.

Six times the fire is beneficial (Lev. 9:24; Judges 6:24; 13:20; I Chron. 21:26; II Chron. 7:2; I Kings 18:38). Six times the fire is judgmental (**Lev. 10:1**; Num. 11:1; Num. 16:35; Job 1:16; II Kings 1:10; II Kings 1:12). In this very context we get two glimpses of God's fire—it can be used to exalt Him for obedience (9:24) and it can be used to execute priests for disobedience (**10:2**). Those people who think God is a lovey-dovey God who will put up with any sin or anything do not know the God of the Bible. Just as God will reward those faithful, so He will punish those unfaithful.

**OBSERVATION #4** – Moses calls for relatives to come and remove the bodies of the two executed by God. **10:4-5**

Remember, no priest carrying out his responsibilities was to touch a dead body (Lev. 21:1-4).

**OBSERVATION #5** – The other priests were not to leave their responsibilities to mourn the two executed priests. **10:6-7**

In this text, God would not allow the other serving priests to leave their responsibilities for their funeral. Now typically when one died, God's people would mourn for about seven days (Gen. 50:10; I Sam. 31:13).

**OBSERVATION #6** – The other priests were warned by God not to drink any alcohol while performing priestly responsibilities. **10:8-9**

Most commentators agree that probably what caused Nadab and Abihu to not handle the offering properly was the fact that they had a little too much to drink and were a little fuzzy in their thinking. Let me say this right now—it is a very serious matter to come to worship God under the influence of anything but the Holy Spirit.

**OBSERVATION #7** – There is to be a continual distinction between the secular and sacred and priests are responsible to see this distinction is maintained. **10:10-11**

I believe the power and the fire of God have left many churches because leaders have not done their job. People are to realize when they come to church that this is serious and sacred. There are things clean and there are things unclean. There are things worldly and there are things spiritual. Priests are responsible to see to it that these distinctions are made and maintained.