

180411-4 Leviticus 10, The Deaths of Nadab & Abihu & the Drink Prohibition – Craig Thurman

The priests were consecrated to service in ch.8, and began their service under Moses' strict oversight in ch.9. From reading chapter 9 Aaron, as high priest takes the lead in offering the sacrifices and the sons offer their assistance. (comp. Aaron, 9.8, 12a, 13b, 14-18a; sons, 9.9, 12b, 13a, 18b) In this way, Aaron inaugurates the sacrificial system, and his sons assist him. We read that it is the officiating priest which receives a special allotment of the offerings for himself.

Of the sin offering, 6.26, the priest that offereth it for sin shall eat it;

Of the trespass offering, 7.7, the priest that maketh atonement therewith shall have it;

Of the burnt offering, 7.8, the priest that offereth any man's burnt offering, even the priest shall have to himself the skin of the burnt offering which he hath offered;

Of the meal offerings, 7.9, all the meat offering that is baked in the oven, and all this is dressed in the fryingpan, and in the pan, shall be the priest's that offereth it.

Of the peace offerings, 7.14, the priest that sprinkleth the blood of the peace offering shall receive one of everything of the breads in the meal offering that are heaved up to the LORD.

Of the peace offerings, 7.32, the priest that offereth the blood of the peace offerings... shall have the right shoulder for his part.

The events of chapter 9 are not completed. They have yet to eat of the sacrifices that are allotted to them. So ch.10 is a continuation of the day's events.

Chapter 10

1 ¶ And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron,

If Ex.6.23 records the names of the sons in the order of their birth, then Nadab and Abihu were the two eldest sons of Aaron. Aaron is upwards 84 years of age by this time.

At the time of the Exodus their ages are told:

Ex 7:7 And Moses was fourscore years old, and Aaron fourscore and three years old, when they spake unto Pharaoh.

took either of them his censer,

both

Or, And both Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron took his censer.

either, אִישׁ, eesh, masc. adj.; and in the same sense as the fem. in Ru.1.9, which means *each* or *both*; as an adjective: being the one and the other of two: each = other.

his censer, מִחֶתְתּוֹ, mach-ta-tho, fem. sing. noun, w/3psm suffixed pronoun of מִחֶתֶת, mach-tah, a noun, tss. in the KJV as *snuffdishes*, *firepans*, and *censer*; the verb, חָתַת, cha-thah, is tss. Is.30.14, *to take* (fire); Ps.52.5, *to take away*; Pv.25.22, *can ... take* (fire);, Pv. 25.22, *shalt heap* coals of fire, most often is has to do with the actual *handling* of the fire or coals of fire.

and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not.

strange, זָרָה, za-rah, Qal part. fem. of זָרַח, zoor; KJV, *estrangle*, *strange*, *another*; **same as in Ex.30.9, *strange incense*.**

The glory of the LORD appeared to all the people and a fire came out and consumed those offerings which remained upon the brazen altar. God was pleased with Israel based on the blood shed at the altar. Yet how suddenly he will chasten them for disobedience. If they will not honor the LORD, He will honor Himself in them. It was only the day before, on their day of

consecration they saw Moses prepare to offer the incense upon the altar of incense.

Ex 40:27 And he (Moses) burnt sweet incense thereon; as the LORD commanded Moses. (Like Leviticus chapter 8, Moses did all of the work on the day when the tabernacle was erected, and the priests were consecrated to the service of the LORD.

And at least all future incense offered, if not by the high priest directly, at least by those who are subordinated to him, that is by his sons. (Notice the plural pronoun implying others would be burning incense.)

Ex.30.7 And Aaron shall burn thereon (on the altar of incense) sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it. 8 And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations. 9 Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat offering; neither shall ye pour drink offering thereon.

*strange, זָרָה, za-rah, Qal part. fem. of זָוַר, zoor; KJV, *estrangle, strange, another; same as in Lev.10.1, **strange fire; cf. Nu.3.4; Le.16.1.****

The law concerning the burning of incense appears to be that the coals shall come from the altar of burnt offering, though the place for burning it will vary.

Le.16.12 And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the LORD, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the vail: 13 And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not...

Nu 16:46 And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them: for there is wrath gone out from the LORD; the plague is begun.

These two must have purposefully deviated from the pattern that he had showed to them. They had presumed to have a better way.

What it is that they did is not specifically stated. Here we read that they *offered strange fire*. In Ex.30.9, they are warned not to offer strange incense.

Ex.30.9 Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat offering; neither shall ye pour drink offering thereon.

They could have transgressed in at least any one of these things:

- That they didn't use the coals from the altar of burnt offering.
- That they didn't use the incense that was ordained for this purpose.
- Or,
- That they offered the incense in a manner that was unacceptable; in an intoxicated state.

There is much that could be said about each of these points, and the types which they would present:

- If the error was in the fire, their zeal was carnally driven. (Lk.24.32; 1Co.16.14; 2Co.5.14)
Prayers (incense) which originate from a common zeal rather than from a zeal for the LORD
- If the error was in incense, they sought to intercede to God apart from Christ. (1Ti.2.5)
- If they were intoxicated how irreverently they thought to approach God and despised His word. (He.10.29, *despised*, ὑβρίζω, KJV, to

I will be sanctified, שִׁקְדָּשׁ, eq-qa-daysh, Niphal (simple pass.) fut. of שִׁקְדָּשׁ; to be holy, to sanctify, hallow.

I will be glorified.

honored

Niphal (simple pass.) fut. of כָּבַד

And Aaron held his peace.

held his peace, נִיָּדַם, Qal fut. 3psm. of דָּמַם, da-mam; KJV, to rest, cease, be stilled, silent.

This is it that the LORD spake: The LORD was holy, and he would be approached by those which are holy. He commanded the priests to be holy, and he would have all the people holy too.

Ex 19:22 And let the priests also, which come near to the LORD, sanctify themselves, lest the LORD break forth upon them.

Ex.29.42 This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD: where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee. 43 And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory. 44 And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to me in the priest's office. 45 And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God. 46 And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them: I am the LORD their God.

In so many words, they are to sanctify the LORD by what they do or the LORD will sanctify Himself by what He does with them. Ananias and Sapphira are much like this. What was the end of them? The church feared God as they ought.

Acts 5:11 And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.

Holiness is important.

Heb 12:14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord ...

4 And Moses called Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Uzziel the uncle of Aaron,

Ex 6:22 And the sons of Uzziel; Mishael, and Elzaphan, and Zithri.

and said unto them, Come near, carry your brethren from before the sanctuary out of the camp.

5 So they went near, and carried them in their coats out of the camp; as Moses had said.

They died in their coats. They were clothed in the righteousness of Christ. But that righteousness was not a license to live as they pleased.

Ro 6:1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

The children of God, particularly those of the priesthood (and those of the New Testament church) are subject to chastening, even to death if they will not obey.

1Co 11:30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

Heb 3:12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. 13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end; 15 While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. 16 For some, when they had

heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. 17 But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? 19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

If we won't live for Christ the place not to be is in His church. Chastening begins here.

1Pe 4:17 For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?

6 And Moses said unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar and unto Ithamar, his sons, Uncover not your heads, neither rend your clothes;

These are things associated with *mourning*. To uncover the head would be to signify Aaron's displeasure with the LORD's judgment.

lest ye die, and lest wrath come upon all the people:

wrath, יִקְצֹף, yiq-zoph, Qal fut. 3psm. of יָצַף; KJV, wrath, anger, displeasure, provocation.

Aaron and the remaining two sons must keep to their business or else they too would die, and for lack of the priesthood wrath would destroy the people of Israel. Even the earth would know what the LORD judged them if that were to come.

but let your brethren, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning which the LORD hath kindled.

burned

the burning, שָׂרַף, s^e-rē-phah', a fem. noun; the masc. noun is tss. seraphim; the verb form is hath kindled

hath kindled, Qal pret. of שָׂרַף, sa-raph; and always tss. with the English word *burn*.

7 And ye shall not go out from the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: for the anointing oil of the LORD is upon you. And they did according to the word of Moses.

In other words they are to remain in this holy court about the tabernacle; not to leave the grounds. In ch.8.35, *they were to abide at the door*. And so, they were to, in the Gr. μένω, abide, continue, remain, tarry, endure, stand, dwell.

8 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Aaron, saying,

There is good reason to think that Nadab and Abihu were drunken in their service. And for this their minds were affected so that they were incapacitated to make good judgments. This is the very reason that the LORD gives for abstaining from drink during the ministry about the tabernacle.

9 Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations:

10 And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean;

In other words the ability to discern is hindered by drink. The Bible does not say that they could not drink wine and strong drink at all. But He bans it from them during their service. And for us, we are warned against it.

Eph 5:18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit ...

Ro 13:13 Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

It is no secret that our judgment is affected¹, and that we can be deceived easily by it², and it can be addictive³.

Pv.23.29 ¶ Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? 30 They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. 31 Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. 32 ² ^{deception} At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. 33 ¹ ^{judgement} Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things. 34 Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. 35 They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? ³ ^{addiction} I will seek it yet again.

The first mention of wine in the Bible marks a terrible event that took place because Noah became drunk. (Ge.9) It occasioned the issue with Lots daughters. (Ge.19) It was used to help Jacob deceive his father Isaac into bestowing his brother's birthright upon him. (Ge.27.25) And more.

11 And that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses.

may teach, root יָדַע; KJV, to teach, instruct, shew, inform.

Part of the priests' duties involved instructing Israel the right way. A mind influenced by drink will not be able to do this dependably.

12 ¶ And Moses spake unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar and unto Ithamar, his sons that were left, Take the meat offering that remaineth of the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and eat it without leaven beside the altar: for it is most holy: unleavened

This is the portion of 9.17; cf. 6.16, 16. The meal offering is an holy bread, a food without sin, therefore a holy fellowship.

13 And ye shall eat it in the holy place, because it is thy due, and thy sons' due, of the sacrifices of the LORD made by fire: for so I am commanded.

Le 2:3 And the remnant (cf. 9.17) of the meat offering shall be Aaron's and his sons': it is a thing most holy of the offerings of the LORD made by fire.

14 And the wave breast and heave shoulder shall ye eat in a clean place; thou, and thy sons, and thy daughters with thee: for they be thy due, and thy sons' due, which are given out of the sacrifices of peace offerings of the children of Israel. (cf. 7.31-34)

15 The heave shoulder and the wave breast shall they bring with the offerings made by fire of the fat, to wave it for a wave offering before the LORD; and it shall be thine, and thy sons' with thee, by a statute for ever; as the LORD hath commanded.

Nu 18:11 And this is thine; the heave offering of their gift, with all the wave offerings of the children of Israel: I have given them unto thee, and to thy sons and to thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever: every one that is clean in thy house shall eat of it.

16 And Moses diligently sought the goat of the sin offering (of 9.3, 15), and, behold, it was burnt: and he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, the sons of Aaron which were left alive, saying,

17 Wherefore have ye not eaten the sin offering in the holy place, seeing it is most holy, and God hath given it you to bear the iniquity of the congregation,

(by eating they took their sins to themselves) **to make atonement for them before the LORD?**

18 Behold, the blood of it was not brought in within the holy place: ye should indeed have eaten it in the holy place, as I commanded.

Le 6:26 The priest that offereth it for sin shall eat it: in the holy place shall it be eaten, in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation.

19 And Aaron said unto Moses, Behold, this day have they offered their sin offering and their burnt offering before the LORD;

Aaron says, Eleazar and Ithamar have offered what was commanded them. All has been done, but for the eating.

and such things have befallen me: and if I had eaten the sin offering to day, should it have been accepted in the sight of the LORD?

I have no idea what the priests did with the remaining sin offering, but suspect that it was brought outside the came to the place where the ashes of the altar were place (as J-F-B states, treated as the priests' sin offering; cf.4.12, 21), and there consumed upon the fire. Aaron made a judgment call which is acceptable to Moses, but I can't explain at this time what this means other than that his mourning was an hindrance.

De 26:14 I have not eaten thereof in my mourning, neither have I taken away ought thereof for any unclean use, nor given ought thereof for the dead: but I have hearkened to the voice of the LORD my God, and have done according to all that thou hast commanded me.

Probably this sets forth a significant difference between Aaron's action and Nadab and Abihu's: Aaron would not proceed on presumption, whereas that is the sin which resulted in Nadab and Abihu's deaths.

20 And when Moses heard that, he was content.