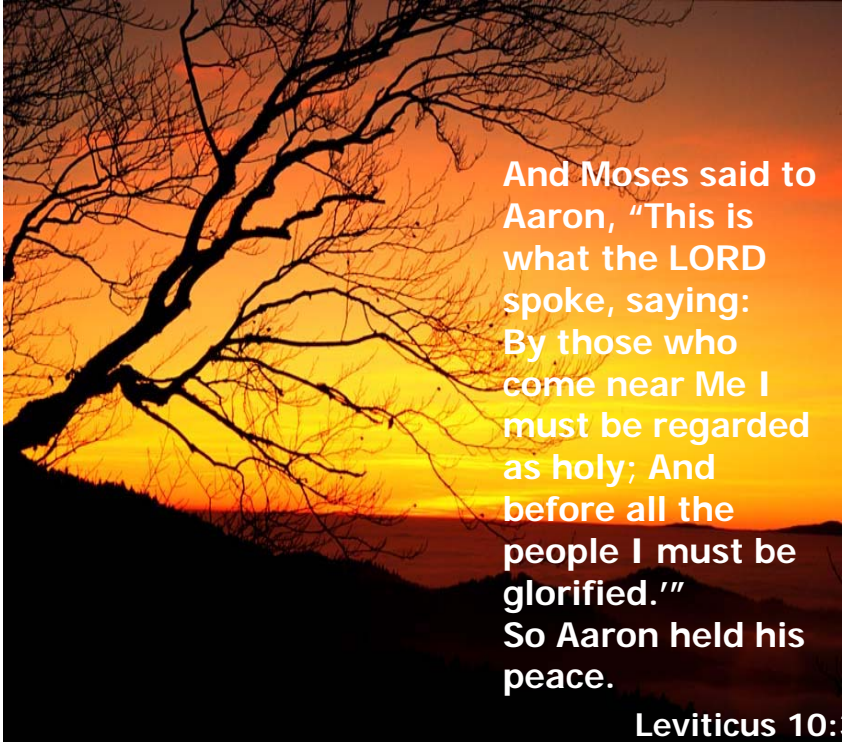




Sowing the Word



Leviticus 8-10

November 26th- December 2nd, 2009

So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped *them* to understand the reading.

(Nehemiah 8:8)

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Helpful Study Resource:

Explore the Book by J. Sidlow Baxter

Commentary:

The commentary used with permission throughout
this booklet is:

With the Word Bible Commentary

by Warren W. Wiersbe.

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Profane (or Strange) Fire?

In chapter 10, Nadab and Abihu became crispy critters. Moses tells us these priests got burned because they offered “profane fire” or “strange fire”.

Exactly what happened we’re not sure. There are different theories.

- Did they enter the Holy of Holies which was off limits to all but the High Priest?
- Did they get the fire from a source other than the bronze altar?
- Did they invent their own incense instead of the one specifically called for by the Lord?
- Was it a matter of timing - the right act at the wrong time?
- Was it a right act done from the wrong motive: pride, jealousy, self-glory.
- Verse 9 prohibits the priests from drinking wine while offering the sacrifices - it could they have been drunk when they went before the Lord?

There is enough vagueness in the text to see any of the above options. Maybe God left it a little vague for that for reason – to cover all of these options. In the most simple way, whatever it was – it was not something God proscribed, but that which they invented.

As God often does, He goes right to the heart of the matter. Whatever the wrong actions were – God shows they proceeded from a wrong heart. It is an important principle with wide ramifications – but if our heart and passion is right – it will help us to make the right choices in life. What was wrong in their hearts? Two things:

First—they did not regard God as Holy.

The error began here for them—somehow they took God too lightly, His presence to matter-of-factly. In serving God, in coming before Him—we need to be so careful that this does not happen.

Guys, this can happen to us. We can get so caught up in the emotion of the moment we stop thinking – we worship God in ways that don’t please Him. This often happens in Charismatic circles. Well-meaning folks get whipped up into a frenzy, then approach God in unbiblical ways, and from ungodly motives - profane fire!

When it comes to Christian ministry the ends never justifies the means. It’s not enough to just worship God – you need to worship Him in the way

that He desires. Henrietta Mears once wrote, "We need to learn to walk softly in the Divine Presence."

As we live for and serve God – one of the key aspects is that we always keep before us the character of God. Biblically, you could say that Holiness is God's central or key characteristic. Thus – we must regard God as Holy in all that we do.

Second—God needs to be glorified

When someone offers profane fire—in a sense they are drawing attention to themselves. They have something "new" - or some special service that no one has done before, or some strange thing. But when it comes down to it—they are drawing attention to themselves. When that is done...we are drawing attention away from the Lord.

This is partly why this is so serious—to mess this up as leaders—is to turn people away from the Lord, to get their eyes on men instead of God.

Sadly, many things in today's church are probably profane fire. I sometimes wonder if God were to judge across the church for one Sunday with the standard He showed here...how many pastors, leaders and worship leaders would be crispified? Graciously, God is not doing this...but the standard is still the same. We need to regard Him as Holy and make sure in what we do—He is glorified.

With the Word Bible Commentary

Leviticus 8-9

Altar is a key word in these chapters; it is used twenty-three times. Without an altar, there can be no acceptable sacrifice; without a sacrifice, man cannot approach a holy God. But there must also be a priesthood to serve at the altar. In the Old Testament, God's people had a priesthood, but in the New Testament, God's people are a priesthood (1 Pet. 2:5, 9).

What made the priests acceptable to God? Water (8:6), oil (8:10–12), blood (8:14–29), and garments (8:7–9). We have been washed (1 Cor. 6:11), anointed by the Spirit (1 John 2:20, 27), redeemed by Christ's blood (1 Pet. 1:18ff.), and dressed in His righteousness (Isa. 61:10).

The day of dedication began a week of consecration (8:31–36), and the week ended with Aaron's blessing the people and the Lord's accepting the sacrifices (9:22–24). The glory of the Lord appeared (9:6, 23), which is the purpose of sacrifice and service. Can people say of our worship, "God is truly among you" (1 Cor. 14:25)?

—Wiersbe, W. W. (1997, c1991). *With the word Bible commentary* (Le 8:1). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

With the Word Bible Commentary

Leviticus 10

It did not take long for sin to enter the priestly family. After a great experience with the Lord, beware the enemy's attack. Elijah ran away after the great victory at Mount Carmel (1 Kings 19), and Jesus was tempted after His baptism at the Jordan (Matt. 3:13–4:11). Great blessings sometimes mean great temptations.

Eleven times in chapters 8–9 you find the phrase “the Lord commanded.” Nadab and Abihu did what the Lord had not commanded, and the fire of God killed them (Heb. 12:29). At the beginning of new periods in redemptive history, God judged sin in a dramatic way so that the people would learn to fear Him (Josh. 7; Acts 5:1–11).

Did their sin have something to do with strong drink (vv. 8–11)? Paul's admonition in Ephesians 5:18ff. is appropriate here, for there is no acceptable substitute in ministry for the power of the Holy Spirit.

Aaron obeyed the spirit of the commandment but not the letter. Had he obeyed the letter, he would have been insincere before God, and God would have known that his heart was not in it. Moses looked at the outward appearance, but God looked on the heart (1 Sam. 16:7). God knows your heart and understands you, even when others are critical (1 John 3:20–21).

—Wiersbe, W. W. (1997, c1991). *With the word Bible commentary* (Le 10:1). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

“Ye shall not go out.”

Leviticus 8:33

Written by: F B Meyer

Taken from: Our Daily Homily

For seven days Aaron and his sons, newly consecrated by the blood and oil, waited together in the Holy Place. They were prohibited from going beyond the door, but fed on the consecrated food till the eighth day summoned them to begin their priestly duties. Similarly we are shut in with our Great Aaron, the High Priest of our profession. We are in Christ in the purposes of God, for we were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world. We are in Him, as Noah was in the ark, and as the child is in the home; as the member is in the body, and the branch in the vine; as the sponge in the ocean, or the jewel in the sunbeam. We are in Him as a strong enclosure, through which the malice and strength of our foes cannot break — a fortress, a strong tower, a castle keep. We are in Him, as a banqueting-hall, a Tabernacle with its spew-bread, an upper room with its descending fire.

It is highly necessary that we should maintain our walk and experience on this blessed elevation. The great enemy of our souls is perpetually tempting us to leave our abiding-place, and to try issues with him in the plains beneath. What is temptation but his subtle solicitation to come out from the secret place of the Most High. Beware! the bait may be very attractive, but the end is death. Keep the charge of the Lord, and abide day and night in the company of the Great High Priest. “He shall dwell among them.”

On what viands do such happy souls feast with Christ! A table is provided before them by the Lord Himself, and they feast on all that pertains to Him in blessed partnership. “Son, thou art ever with Me, and all that I have is thine.”

“Aaron lifted up his hand toward the people, and blessed them.”

Leviticus 9:22

Written by: F B Meyer

Taken from: Our Daily Homily

The eighth day is evidently the type of the bright millennial morning. During the present age we are hidden with Christ in God; the world knoweth us not, as it knew Him not; our hopes, and joys, and aims, are largely secret. But the day is not far distant when He shall be manifested, and then we shall be manifested with Him in glory. That group of priests, following the high priest out from the recesses of the Holy Place, is a picture of the Second Advent, when Christ and his own shall come forth to bless the world. When Jesus was parted in the Ascension from his disciples, He was in the act of blessing them; and in that attitude He will return. Who can doubt that all through the intervening ages those blessed hands have still been outstretched, that heart ever going forth, in blessing.

What a Savior is ours! In Him are combined meekness that bears all insult and hatred, and mercy that retaliates on wrong-doing in ministries of love. He fulfils his own idea of blessing those that hate, and praying for those that despitefully use. How truly can it be said of Him, as of Archbishop Ussher, that to do him a wrong is to make him your friend for ever!

Let us imitate Him in this, and let the going forth of our lives be one incessant stream of benediction to men, until they shall fall on their faces and acknowledge the overwhelming power of love. But in order to this we must be much in company with our blessed Lord; gazing on his face we shall reflect his likeness; the lineaments of the Divine beauty shall pass into our life, and light it up with a loveliness which is not of earth. Thus shall we bring glory to our God.

“Aaron held his peace.”

Leviticus 10:3

Written by: F B Meyer

Taken from: Our Daily Homily

His heart must have been rent with paroxysms of grief, as he beheld the bodies of his beloved sons on the floor of the Tabernacle, stretched out in death. He repressed the cry, choked back the sob, stanching the flowing tear, and continued to perform the holy duties with which he was charged. He was no stoic, and tears are not wrong for our dead; but his relationship to God was so overmastering as to still the expressions of nature.

He saw the wrong from God's standpoint. — It was of great importance that the Divine regulations and enactments should be maintained, and that the ministering priests should always prefer God's work and service above their own ideas. Aaron was able to appreciate that position, and saw the sin of which his children were guilty. They had forgotten the voice which said, Sanctify thou Me. Obedience is the foundation of reverence, honor, and service; and if it were relaxed with the priests, how for the people! How careful they should be who bear the vessels of the Lord! With what fear and trembling must they work, who work with God!

He acquiesced in the Divine dealings. — To take the yoke, and meekly bear it; to put the hand on the mouth, and bow in the dust — this is rest and peace. In this way we drink Christ's cup and become partakers of his sufferings.

He felt that his work as priest must take precedence. — It was a solemn and awful thing to be God's anointed priest, and the office must come first, even to the denial of the dues of nature, if that were necessary: so always with us, there must be the subordination of everything to our service and work for God.