

## Leviticus 10:4-20 | Sunday April 27, 2025

Israel was to be rejoicing for the fact that God's presence was dwelling in the tabernacle and they could worship Him. Instead, they were mourning the deaths of Nadab and Abihu who tried to approach God with an offering He had not commanded. They tried to worship based on their will and not the revealed will of God. This thinking is all around us today. We try to define God based on our opinion mixed with worldly thinking. It is examples like Nadab and Abihu that remind us of God's timeless holiness.

### Leviticus 10:1-20 ESV

(1) 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. (2) And fire came out from before the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD. (3) Then Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD has said: 'Among those who are near Me I will be sanctified, and before all the people I will be glorified.'" And Aaron held his peace. (4) And Moses called Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Uzziel the uncle of Aaron, and said to them, "Come near; carry your brothers away from the front of the sanctuary and out of the camp." (5) So they came near and carried them in their coats out of the camp, as Moses had said. (6) And Moses said to Aaron and to Eleazar and Ithamar his sons, "Do not let the hair of your heads hang loose, and do not tear your clothes, lest you die, and wrath come upon all the congregation; but let your brothers, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning that the LORD has kindled. (7) And do not go outside the entrance of the tent of meeting, lest you die, for the anointing oil of the LORD is upon you." And they did according to the word of Moses. (8) And the LORD spoke to Aaron, saying, (9) "Drink no wine or strong drink, you or your sons with you, when you go into the tent of meeting, lest you die. It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations. (10) You are to distinguish between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean, (11) and you are to teach the people of Israel all the statutes that the LORD has spoken to them by Moses." (12) Moses spoke to Aaron and to Eleazar and Ithamar, his surviving sons: "Take the grain offering that is left of the LORD's food offerings, and eat it unleavened beside the altar, for it is most holy. (13) You shall eat it in a holy place, because it is your due and your sons' due, from the LORD's food offerings, for so I am commanded. (14) But the breast that is waved and the thigh that is contributed you shall eat in a clean place, you and your sons and your daughters with you, for they are given as your due and your sons' due from the sacrifices of the peace offerings of the people of Israel. (15) The thigh that is contributed and the breast that is waved they shall bring with the food offerings of the fat pieces to wave for a wave offering before the LORD, and it shall be yours and your sons' with you as a due forever, as the LORD has commanded." (16) Now Moses diligently inquired about the goat of the sin offering, and behold, it was burned up! And he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, the surviving sons of Aaron, saying, (17) "Why have you not eaten the sin offering in the place of the sanctuary, since it is a thing most holy and has been given to you that you may bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the LORD? (18) Behold, its blood was not brought into the inner part of the sanctuary. You certainly ought to have eaten it in the sanctuary, as I commanded." (19) And Aaron said to Moses, "Behold, today they have offered their sin offering and their burnt offering before the LORD, and yet such things as these have

happened to me! If I had eaten the sin offering today, would the LORD have approved?"

(20) And when Moses heard that, he approved.

The supernatural death and immediate judgment of Nadab and Abihu does not necessitate that they were damned to hell. We saw two weeks ago that God disciplines His own. I will remind you that during the exodus Nadab and Abihu trusted in the blood of the Passover lamb. They even drew near to God and experienced His presence.

#### **Exodus 24:9-11 ESV**

(9) Then Moses and Aaron, **Nadab, and Abihu**, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up,

(10) and **they saw the God of Israel**. There was under His feet as it were a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness. (11) And He did not lay His hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; **they beheld God, and ate and drank**.

Nadab and Abihu enjoyed a meal of fellowship in the presence of God, and got to experience His glory and radiance. God let these specific leaders experience His presence with the desire that they would lead and serve with this in mind. **He wanted them to remember His glory and live considering who He is**. Unfortunately, Nadab and Abihu did not. Just like Annanias and Sapphira, who lied to the Holy Spirit and were killed at the start of the church God disciplined His own. Paul even encourages the Corinthian church to pray for this to happen.

#### **1 Corinthians 5:4-5 ESV**

(4) When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, (5) you are to deliver this man to Satan **for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord**.

This believer was in an unrepentant egregious sin and the church was to pray that His flesh, meaning his physical life, would end so that His spirit would be saved. **His actions were so offensive to the gospel and the Holy Spirit in him that He needed to die**. Even in this case the man's salvation is not questioned. He is saved by the blood. Even in their extreme death Nadab and Abihu's salvation is secured because of the coming Messiah. Aaron and his sons are given instructions in how to view God's just judgment.

#### **Leviticus 10:4-7 ESV**

(4) And Moses called **Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Uzziel the uncle of Aaron**, and said to them, "Come near; **carry your brothers away from the front of the sanctuary** and out of the camp."

(5) So they came near and carried them **in their coats out of the camp**, as Moses had said.

(6) And Moses said to **Aaron and to Eleazar and Ithamar his sons**, "Do not let the hair of your heads hang loose, and do not tear your clothes, **lest you die**, and wrath come upon all the congregation; **but let your brothers, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning that the LORD has kindled**.

(7) And **do not go outside the entrance of the tent of meeting, lest you die, for the anointing oil of the LORD is upon you.**" And they did according to the word of Moses.

The details of how to handle the bodies of Nadab and Abihu and how to grieve for them are going to be very specific. What happened was a holy action of God and Aaron and his other sons needed

to be careful not to incur God's justice on themselves. **Michael and Elzaphan** were the **second cousins once removed** of Nadab and Abihu. God did not use the immediate family. They were to carry the bodies that were still in the priests garments out of the camp. The rest of the nation could grieve what happened **but Aaron and His sons were forbidden to**. They still had the anointing oil on them and still were serving in the tabernacle. They were not allowed to show the outward expressions of grief in the tabernacle. **God's truth was to supersede the family relationship.**

#### **Luke 14:25-28 ESV**

(25) Now great crowds accompanied Him, and He turned and said to them,

(26) "If anyone comes to Me **and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.**

(27) Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.

(28) For which of you, desiring to build a tower, **does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?**

Jesus is teaching on the high cost of discipleship. He wants believers to count the cost. He is explaining that a growing and abiding walk with Him **is to come first even before family**, even before your own life. Many face the hard decision of what to value, the family relationship or the truth of God's word. To be a disciple we are called to honor the Word. Most of us have heard that blood is thicker than water, but as believers **we have been called to value the blood of Christ over even the blood of family.**

The family was created by God and is to be held in honor. **We are to use the truth of God's word to filter our family relationships.** When based on truth the family can flourish. When sin comes in though, it always causes hurt, and complicates relationships. How we are called to respond to a family member in sin should be based on if they are a believer or not.

#### **1 Corinthians 5:9-13 ESV**

(9) I wrote to you in my letter **not to associate with sexually immoral people—**

(10) **not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world**, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world.

(11) But now I am writing to you **not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother** if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—**not even to eat with such a one.**

(12) For what have I to do with judging outsiders? **Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge?** (13) God judges those outside. "Purge the evil person from among you."

In context Paul is addressing how to deal with sin within the church yet the principals here can be applied to the family. We are called to have a heart for the lost family member and understand that their life will reflect their spiritual condition. We do not accept their sin, yet we know **the biggest issue is for them to believe in Jesus.** For family members **who are believers we are called to hold to God's standard of holiness.** Depending on the relationship this may mean lovingly correcting and it always means to pray that God would help the person repent. A believer struggling with sin is very different then someone refusing to call it sin and repent. **At times ongoing, unrepentant sin will lead to a break in fellowship, even within the family.** This is painful and can seem harsh yet in the end it values the eternal for the person over the temporal.

Wisdom is needed in each case in how to apply the Word. We have to define love through God's word, and hold fast to His truth as we seek to maintain fellowship if possible. Aaron had to choose between mourning His sons and walking in truth.

#### **Leviticus 10:8-9 ESV**

(8) And the LORD **spoke to Aaron**, saying,

(9) **“Drink no wine or strong drink, you or your sons with you, when you go into the tent of meeting, lest you die.** It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations.

This is the only place in Leviticus that God speaks directly with Aaron. God is so gracious to meet Aaron at his point of need. **If their was ever a time he needed to hear directly from God it was right then.** God instructs how Aaron should go into the tent of meeting. The very place his sons died, Aaron will need to go back into appropriately or he would meet the same fate. God warns Aaron not to drink wine or other strong alcohol when going into the tent of meeting. This warning is very interesting. It is either tied to Nadab and Abihu's sin, or how Aaron would be tempted to grieve. **Ethier way it is clear that drinking in the tent of meeting would not help Aaron serve God.** Notice the command is location based. This is about serving in the tabernacle. He was called to be alert and careful in worshipping God exactly as He commanded. Any drink would hurt Him in this endeavor. Drinking itself was not prohibited in the Tabernacle/ Temple as worshipers might include it in their feast with their tithe (Deut 14:22-29). Intoxication though, was sin. At various times for Israel the priesthood would fall into the trap of Alcohol.

#### **Isaiah 28:1-2; 7-8 ESV**

(1) Ah, **the proud crown of the drunkards of Ephraim**, and the fading flower of its glorious beauty, which is on the head of the rich valley **of those overcome with wine!**

(2) Behold, the Lord has one who is mighty and strong; like a storm of hail, **a destroying tempest**, like a storm of mighty, overflowing waters, he casts down to the earth with his hand.

(7) These also reel with wine and stagger with strong drink; **the priest and the prophet reel with strong drink**, they are swallowed by wine, they stagger with strong drink, **they reel in vision, they stumble in giving judgment.**

(8) For all tables **are full of filthy vomit**, with no space left.

Drunkness is like a fading flower. It promises so many things and offers to numb and help someone forget or deal with life. In the end it leads to destruction and judgment. The drunkness became so severe that **even the priest and prophets were drunk** as they spoke of God's vision or gave judgments on cases. God's judgment was on them and it lead to their destruction. Our society will be no different. As our culture continues to find new ways to become intoxicated it will lead to our downfall. Humanity keeps turning to something so destructive in a poor attempt at mimicking something only God can provide.

#### **Ephesians 5:17-20 ESV**

(17) Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

(18) **And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,**

(19) addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, (20) giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

It is very important to notice the contrast between getting drunk and being filled by the Spirit. It is God's will that we would not let alcohol/drugs influence our thinking and end up guiding us. As believers we are called to let the Holy Spirit fill us. It is through Him where we can find true joy, contentment, and peace. **We are not to try and manufacture the work of the Holy Spirit.**

This not only applies to intoxication but also **all the man made efforts in mimicking the Holy Spirit.** There is no accident that Paul immediately addresses what our worship should look like. There are many efforts made in churches today to repeat and even schedule what only the Holy Spirit can do. We are to sing and give thanks to God the Father through Jesus. Nadab and Abihu tried to mimic or enhance the fire God provided and were judged for it. **We must worship through both Spirit and truth.** Aaron had an important role in leading and teaching the people how to worship God and he needed to be alert and not impaired as He did this.

#### **Leviticus 10:10-11 ESV**

(10) You are to distinguish between **the holy and the common**, and between **the unclean and the clean**, (11) and **you are to teach the people** of Israel all the statutes that the LORD has spoken to them by Moses."

Aaron was to teach and lead the people. God wanted Him to instruct them in what holiness was, what it meant to be set apart. He also wanted Aaron to teach what ceremonial cleanliness and uncleanness was. Leviticus will give us very detailed instructions on these categories. Israel was God's people and He wanted them to reflect this truth. **We are His people and we should reflect it.** No one does this perfect, our holy just God is so gracious when we seek after Him. After the death of Nadab and Abihu Moses double checked each detail to make sure things are done correctly.

#### **Leviticus 10:16-17 ESV**

(16) **Now Moses diligently inquired about the goat of the sin offering, and behold, it was burned up!** And he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, **the surviving sons of Aaron, saying,**

(17) **"Why have you not eaten the sin offering in the place of the sanctuary**, since **it is a thing most holy** and has been given to you that you may bear the iniquity of the congregation, **to make atonement for them before the LORD?**

Another mistake was made. The sin offering was not eaten by Aaron and his sons like it should have been. The blood did not go into the tent of meeting so the priests should have eaten it. This mistake raises the question why were they not immediately killed like Nadab and Abihu?

#### **Leviticus 10:19-20 ESV**

(19) And Aaron said to Moses, "Behold, today they have offered their sin offering and their burnt offering before the LORD, **and yet such things as these have happened to me! If I had eaten the sin offering today, would the LORD have approved?"**

(20) And when Moses heard that, **he approved.**

Aaron felt unqualified to partake of the meat of the sin offering as it is a most holy thing. This was not an oversight or a prideful attempt to worship God based on His own will. Aaron acted in humility, and desired to honor God. **He now understood more than ever the depths of his own sin** through the deaths of his sons. He made sure the offering was given correctly but felt inadequate on that day to eat of the animal as was his right. Moses hears this answer and approves.

## 2 Corinthians 7:10-11 ESV

(10) For **godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret**, whereas worldly grief produces death.

(11) For see what **earnestness** this godly grief has produced in you, but also **what eagerness to clear yourselves**, what indignation, **what fear**, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves innocent in the matter.

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