

Lesson Twenty-One: *Profane Worship*  
Leviticus 10:1-4

Themes:

- Leviticus 1-10:** Sinful men can only approach a holy God through His appointed mediations.  
(1-7) The mediation of sacrifice: a holy people must have sacrifices to remove their sins.  
(8-10) The mediation of the priesthood: a holy people must have an **obedient** mediator.
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I. **A Holy God**

- a. *I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves and be holy, for I am holy* (Lev 11:44).
  - i. A holy people must have an **obedient** mediator.
- b. Why is the holiness of the priesthood vital?
  - i. *The priests were offering up sacrifices instructive of Christ, as they ministered in a manner that foreshadowed His own ministry; and because of this, their service and actions, down to the smallest detail, were characterized by a very fearful solemnity, and had to be carried out with the most rigorous precision* (Nathan Pitchford).
- c. A holy God demands holy representation.
  - i. The need for cleansing and sanctification (Lev 8:6-9)
  - ii. The need to fulfill their duties in the power of the Holy Spirit (Lev 8:10-12)
  - iii. The need to be wholly consecrated to the LORD (Lev 8:22-24)
  - iv. The need to be distinct (Lev 10:7-11; 21:1-24)
    1. The priests are the forerunners to the perfect High Priest.
    2. Disobedience defiles Christ.
    3. Disobedience brings wrath.
      - a. *Those priests and sacrifices that are in accordance with God's commands, which everywhere foreshadow Christ, are effective to reconcile His people to Himself, and to facilitate His presence and good pleasure among them; but those that do not come from Himself He is very displeased with, and instead of being propitiated by them, He responds only in great wrath and fury* (Pitchford).
- d. As a "royal priesthood" (I Peter 2:9), our conduct matters.
  - i. God's holiness is revealed by particular obedience.

II. **An Unholy Sacrifice**

- a. *Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective firepans, and after putting fire in them, placed incense on it and offered strange fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them.*
- b. What factors contributed to the heinousness of Nadab and Abihu's sin?
  - i. Position: the eldest sons of Aaron, the high priest
    1. NC: faith in ancestry (Rom 9:6)
    2. C: adopted by God (Rom 8:15-16)
  - ii. Perspective: eyewitnesses to the presence of God (Ex 14:13; 24:1,9-10; Lev 9:24)
    1. NC: Denies the existence of God (Rom 1:18-23)
    2. C: Indwelt by God (Eph 3:17)
  - iii. Privilege: called, ordained, and sanctified by God for His service (Lev 8)
    1. NC: faith in titles (Phil 3:4-6)
    2. C: faith in Christ (I Peter 2:9)
  - iv. Presumption: offering "strange fire" before the LORD
    1. What made the fire strange?

- a. Drunkenness (Lev 10:8-9)
- b. The use of their personal firepans
- c. Entrance into the Holy Place (Lev 16:1)
- d. Improper incense (Ex 30:9)
- e. Coals not taken from the altar of burnt offering (most likely, given the emphasis in the text on fire)
2. *These and other questions about this story have evoked much speculation, some quite ingenious, but they mostly persist as dangling loose ends* (Samuel Balentine).
3. The heart of the matter: sinful presumption
  - a. Acting on their own (contrary to God's command 10:1)
  - b. A blatant disregard for the holiness of God (10:3)
  - c. Trusting in the "goodness" of their own offering
4. NC: Reliance upon works
5. C: Reliance upon Christ

### III. A Proper Sacrifice

- a. *By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy, and before all the people I will be honored.*
- b. Proper sacrifice: the example of Aaron
  - i. According to God's instruction (9:1-5, 8-21)
  - ii. According to God's command (9:6; cf. 10:1)
- c. Proper sacrifice: the example of Christ
  - i. Christ fulfilled all righteousness according to the call and instruction of the Lord.
    1. *I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do* (John 17:4).
    2. *When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high* (Heb 1:3).
- d. The failure of works:
  - i. *It is only Christ that can make us acceptable to God; any other sacrifice, that arises from the impulse of our own hearts, is entirely filthy and loathsome in His sight...Let us lay this lesson well to heart: for the principle is the same today. If we would be acceptable to God, we must only deny every thought and impulse of our heart, and lean at all times upon the perfect work of Jesus* (Pitchford).
    1. Cain (Gen 4:3-5), Uzzah (II Sam 6:6-7), Isaiah (Is 64:6), Paul (Phil 3:8)
    2. I Cor 1:26-29; II Cor 4:7; Ephesians 2:8-9
- e. The curse of disobedience:
  - i. Man's sacrifice is rejected (10:2).
    1. Resulted in judgment and death (separation)
      - a. God's wrath is poured out on Nadab and Abihu.
      - b. The final end of those who "come near" in their sins.
- f. The blessings of obedience:
  - i. God's sacrifice is honored (9:22-24).
    1. Resulted in blessing (9:22)
    2. Resulted in the LORD'S presence (9:23)
    3. Resulted in God's acceptance (9:24)
      - a. God's wrath is poured out on the sacrifice.
      - b. Fulfilled in Christ

***There is one place where that fire has been exhausted, because it burned itself out upon the one true Sacrifice. Let us fly thither, for rest and peace for our souls, and for the only certain hope of God's eternal reward and favor.***