

Day 130 - WEDNESDAY: March 22nd

Leviticus 10

Leviticus 10:1-20 NKJV

Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. So fire went out from the LORD and devoured them, and they died before the LORD. And Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD spoke, saying: 'By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; And before all the people I must be glorified.' " So Aaron held his peace. Then Moses called Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Uzziel the uncle of Aaron, and said to them, "Come near, carry your brethren from before the sanctuary out of the camp." So they went near and carried them by their tunics out of the camp, as Moses had said. And Moses said to Aaron, and to Eleazar and Ithamar, his sons, "Do not uncover your heads nor tear your clothes, lest you die, and wrath come upon all the people. But let your brethren, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning which the LORD has kindled. You shall not go out from the door of the tabernacle of meeting, lest you die, for the anointing oil of the LORD is upon you." And they did according to the word of Moses. Then the LORD spoke to Aaron, saying: "Do not drink wine or intoxicating drink, you, nor your sons with you, when you go into the tabernacle of meeting, lest you die. It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations, that you may distinguish between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean, and that you may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD has spoken to them by the hand of Moses." And Moses spoke to Aaron, and to Eleazar and Ithamar, his sons who were left: "Take the grain offering that remains of the offerings made by fire to the LORD, and eat it without leaven beside the altar; for it is most holy. You shall eat it in a holy place, because it is your due and your sons' due, of the sacrifices made by fire to the LORD; for so I have been commanded. The breast of the wave offering and the thigh of the heave offering you

shall eat in a clean place, you, your sons, and your daughters with you; for they are your due and your sons' due, which are given from the sacrifices of peace offerings of the children of Israel. The thigh of the heave offering and the breast of the wave offering they shall bring with the offerings of fat made by fire, to offer as a wave offering before the LORD. And it shall be yours and your sons' with you, by a statute forever, as the LORD has commanded." Then Moses made careful inquiry about the goat of the sin offering, and there it was—burned up. And he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, the sons of Aaron who were left, saying, "Why have you not eaten the sin offering in a holy place, since it is most holy, and God has given it to you to bear the guilt of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the LORD? See! Its blood was not brought inside the holy place; indeed you should have eaten it in a holy place, as I commanded." And Aaron said to Moses, "Look, this day they have offered their sin offering and their burnt offering before the LORD, and such things have befallen me! If I had eaten the sin offering today, would it have been accepted in the sight of the LORD?" So when Moses heard that, he was content.

Daily Deep Dive:

Here is the UCG reading plan for this chapter: “After Aaron's sons are later killed for bringing profane fire before the Lord, Moses explains to Aaron why God has done this and then instructs Aaron's cousins to remove the dead men from the sanctuary. God then commands Aaron and his sons to not drink alcohol before going into the tabernacle of meeting. But the account had only spoken of Nadab and Abihu bringing profane fire and incense before God—so why is this particular instruction regarding intoxicating drink given to Aaron in the midst of what had just happened? Although it is possible that God was simply relating another way that one could show disregard for him during these rituals, the text here may be indicating that the inappropriate use of alcohol had played a role in the two brothers' poor judgment and behavior.

The punishment God inflicted on the two was very severe. We know there are certainly many times where people have "worshiped" God in a way that He does not recognize or appreciate, yet for which He does not strike them down immediately. However, at the time of this account, God was playing a very visible role in the nation of Israel and was actually teaching the people the magnitude of reverence they needed to have for Him: "By those who come near Me I *must* be regarded as holy; and before all the people I *must* be glorified" (Leviticus 10:3)—it was critical for them to understand.

What Aaron's sons did was not in ignorance, for God had already given clear instructions through Moses on how He was to be regarded. In this situation, Nadab and Abihu's disregard and carelessness could not go uncorrected—it was not only offensive to God, but would have fostered a careless attitude about God's instructions among the people. When God says to regard Him as holy, He means it. The instructive nature of this event was so important that Aaron and his remaining sons were not allowed to show any outward sign of grievance—they were required to maintain their composure and to continue their priestly duties to illustrate the justice and righteousness of God's wrath.

The NIV Study Bible notes regarding the death of Nadab and Abihu: "They are regularly remembered as having died before the Lord and as having had no sons. Their death was tragic and at first seems harsh, but no more so than that of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11). In both cases a new era was being inaugurated.... The new community had to be made aware that it existed for God, not vice versa."

Moses pointing out that the goat of the sin offering (Leviticus 10:16) was not to be burned but eaten by the priests shows that this particular sin offering was not for the whole congregation or priesthood (see Leviticus 4). It is thus a later offering than the one referred to in Leviticus 9:15. Following the death of his nephews, Moses was rather

concerned about making sure everything was being done correctly. In verse 18, he isn't rebuking Aaron's sons for failing to bring the blood into the holy place, but rather pointing out that, because the blood was not brought in, the offering was to be eaten, not burned (see Leviticus 6:29-30).

Aaron explains that he himself did not eat of the offering because he was afraid God would not accept it. Eating of the sin offering was an act of worship symbolizing satisfaction with God's justice, and Aaron understood the need to be in a proper and reverential frame of mind. Yet he and his sons were sorely grieved and distracted by what had happened—perhaps even unnerved and unhappy with God's judgment for the moment.

"Aaron did not eat of the sacrificial meat because he was afraid of what more God might do. He was not being rebellious, as his dead sons had been in burning the incense. Aaron was arguing that in circumstances such as the one he faced that day, God would prefer the priest to err on the side of caution rather than presumption.... Rebellion arises from a heart that is not right toward God. Moses recognized that Aaron's failure was not rebellion, that his argument had merit, and that Aaron could be forgiven" (*Nelson Study Bible*, notes on verses 19-20)." [END]

Verse 10 – They were to distinguish between Holy and unholy, Clean and unclean.

The Hebrew for unholy means “commonness, common, unholy” (BDB). This is the first time this word has been used in the Bible and it’s only used 7 times in total. In every case, it’s used in contrast to that which is Holy (opposite of common). These verses clearly teach us that when God makes something Holy (set apart, dedicated to Him), we must never treat it in a usual/casual/common way. This is highly offensive to God and often comes with severe punishment.

God further drives home the point by using the words “clean” and “unclean”. These are the same words used in regard to clean/unclean animals. God uses principles of clean/unclean to help us learn the difference between Holy/unholy. Being in an unclean or unholy state, wasn’t always due to sin. For example, Mishael and Elzaphan, after touching the dead bodies of Nadab and Abihu in verses 4 & 5, were now in a state of being unclean. Had they done something wrong? No! They simply were following the instructions of Moses. What is wrong, is while in an unclean/unholy state, to approach God, or interact with something God has separated to Himself as Holy.

We will find immediately in the next chapter instructions between clean and unclean animals, which makes sense in the context of wanting to clearly teach Israel about the difference between Holy/unholy, Clean/unclean.