

# STRANGE FIRE

Leviticus 10:1-3

Written By Rev.

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## **Introduction**

The story of how two of the sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, were slain suddenly by God has caused a lot of interest in these last days before the coming of Christ. The reason for the interest is that the story reflects the attitudes of man apart from God trying to alter the will of God for its own purposes. Here's part of the story as written in R.C. Sproul's Legionier Ministries article..

“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. And fire came out from before the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD. 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.  
**(Lev. 10:1–3)**

Aaron, of course, was the older brother of Moses and the first high priest of Israel. God had consecrated Aaron and his sons to the holy vocation of the

priesthood. It was in the context of their priestly service that two of Aaron's four sons, Nadab and Abihu, each got a censer—a *kind of vessel* that was used in antiquity to contain the incense that was burned as an offering before God—and put fire in them, and put incense on them, and offered what the book of Leviticus calls “unauthorized fire.”

What is “unauthorized fire,” or, as it is rendered in other translations, “profane fire” or **“strange fire”**? We use the word *profane* to refer to that which is less than holy, but the word *profane* comes from the Latin *profanus*, which literally means “*outside the temple*.” So, in a literal sense, Moses, as the author of Leviticus, is saying that the fire that Nadab and Abihu introduced to the altar had not been purified or consecrated. For that, God took their lives.

To understand this incident more fully, we have to go back to the book of Exodus. Just before God gave His Ten Commandments, He told Moses that He soon would come to him in a thick cloud so that the people might hear Him speaking and believe (19:9). To prepare for that stupendous vision, God commanded the people to consecrate themselves (v. 10). He also set strict borders around Mount Sinai, saying that whoever touched the mountain would die (v. 12). When God came, “there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled” (v. 16). God called Moses to ascend the mountain, but before revealing His law, God sent Moses back down the mountain to repeat and expand the warning. He said:



“Go down and warn the people, lest they break through to the LORD to look and many of them perish. Also let the priests who come near to the LORD consecrate themselves, lest the LORD break out against them.” (vv. 21–22)

So, at the very formation of the nation of Israel, God laid down the fundamental laws of consecration for the priests. He warned them that if they were not consecrated or if they violated their consecration, He would “break out” against them. Nadab and Abihu violated the holy law of the priesthood. When they did so, God killed them, reminding Israel of the sanctity of His presence. That is why Moses reminded 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.’” When he heard this, Aaron “held his peace.” Even amid his grief, he knew his sons had committed a grave offense against Israel’s holy God.

## Reverence & Respect

These two sons of Aaron knew the ritual and how things were to be done but they ignored them to do it a different way. Maybe they felt that the way it was supposed to be was old fashion or boring. Maybe they disagreed with the entire priesthood duties and wanted to use a shortcut. Whatever the reason, they violated the responsibilities of their priestly office, insulted God by not doing it as He had prescribed, and disrespected the authority and will of God.

Our modern day church is much like theses two sons of Aaron. It changes the gospel to suit its own needs. It accepts social trends as doctrines and it overlooks moral integrity as a standard of righteousness.

The fear of the Lord is still the beginning of wisdom (**Ps. 111:10a**). God is still a consuming fire and a jealous God (**Deut. 4:24**). When we come into His presence, we are to come as children, as those who have been reconciled. There is to be a godly fear inspired by respect for the One with whom we are dealing.

I can hear someone saying, “What about that scripture that says we can come boldly before the throne of grace? The scripture is found in **Hebrews 14:6**, *“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”*

This we can do and it is so great. However, we are approaching God for the purpose of obtaining help in our times of difficulty or need. We are not bring Him “Strange Fire” and asking him to bless what He has not sanctified.



## What Made The Fire Strange or Unauthorized?

When God set up the priesthood, he gave specific instructions. This process was done because it reflected God's holiness. His glory was being respected. Man could not enter the, "Holy of Holies", which was a section of the temple that represented the very presence of God, without following certain protocols. When the sons of Aaron took fire that came outside of the temple into the Holy of holies, that had not been sanctified, they violated God's protocols. It was unholy. It was profane. It was unauthorized. It represented man's efforts, not God's. This was why it was so serious.

When man tells God what to do, he is off base to start with. Also, the entrance into the temple was to offer sacrifices as atonement for our sins. It was a picture or ever reminder of what was to come...the blood of Jesus, the final sacrifice. It must be all of God to redeem man. If man thinks he can redeem himself, he distorts the grace of God and violates redemptive protocols. **Zechariah 4:6** says, "Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts". It must come from God's Spirit. Our part is to flow with what God is doing, not tell Him what to do.

## The Law of The Burnt Offering

There were no previous violations or warnings specifically against the sons of Aaron. We learn precisely what Moses had conveyed to them from God:

*"Command Aaron and his sons, saying, This is the law of the burnt offering: It is the burnt offering, because of the burning upon the altar all night unto the morning, and the fire of the altar shall be burning in it. . . The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out" (Lev 6:9, 13).*

From this, the sons of Aaron knew that any fire except the specific fire burning continually on the altar was to be excluded from worship.

This seems like a small detail, surely not worthy of death, right? Wrong! Now from a logical standpoint, fire is fire. What difference does it make? How can you tell the difference between one fire and another? Whether we

strike flints together, or use some other ignition device, fire is fire, from our human perspective. This was quite reasonable to the two brothers. But it cost them their very lives, because, fire is not fire, in God's eyes. The Bible says:

*"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:9).*

In the worship of God, human reason must be restrained and subjugated to obedience. All acceptable worship will be ordered by a means found in God's word. This means is sometimes called the regulative principle of worship.

## **All Worship Is Not The Same**

Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king" (**1Sam. 15:22-23**). The worship of God is serious business. False worship cost Aaron his two sons. False worship cost Saul his kingship and ultimately his life.

Obedience is not only avoiding that which God has condemned, while carrying out what He has expressly commanded. In worship, we must also avoid to presume action where God has not commanded, either directly or indirectly by example.

The problem of worship is that men truly like the creativity of playing church. It makes them feel good, when people are pleased. And it brings bigger offerings. With practice, men get quite good at their exercises, since God no longer deals so swiftly with offenders, as He once did with Nadab and Abihu.

Men who play church in our day assume that strange fire is acceptable to God, since there is no swift fire from heaven to condemn it. Such man made ideas are far from the truth. Not only must we "worship Him in Spirit." If we will learn the lesson of Nadab and Abihu, and if we will learn the lesson of Saul, we will also worship God "in truth."

Another problem is the creativity and innovation in worship, versus following the regulative principle of worship. The example and shadow of heavenly things" (**Hebrews. 8:5**), is rooted in the early experiences when Israel came out of Egypt. You will recall that when Moses went into the

midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount . . . that Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights" (**Exodus. 24:18**). While he was in the mountain, the children rose up to play and created a golden calf and worshiped it. They changed the worship of God.

## **Sincerity Doesn't Count**

There is no indication of a lack of sincerity on the part of Aaron's two sons, who kindled the wrath of God with their strange fire. There is no indication that Saul was insincere when he brought back from the battle that which he was told to destroy... "the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good."

Sincerity alone, in both instances, engendered the wrath of Almighty God, because sincerity was not mixed with truth. Will we learn the lesson that when men offer strange fire, God is angry, even today? And all worship outside of truth is false worship, no matter how sincere, no matter how heart felt. Such worship is wicked because it is idolatry. "God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day" (**Psalms. 7:11**). God is angry with all men who will offer strange fire, by presuming to approach unto God with an offering not derived from His very word. (Some excerpts taken from Church of The Wilderness Press Internet article)

## **Lets Recap**

We have been talking about worship in accordance with God's divine instruction...and how man can pollute that process by changing the way things are done. Aaron's son's actions in bringing into the temple "Strange Fire" polluted the Holy of Holies, which represented the very presence of God. This "Strange Fire" depicts the natural man that has not been cleansed or sanctified by God. He has no place in the presence of a Holy God.

The Holy of Holies was the place where the burnt offering was consumed by God's Holy (Pure) fire. It was a picture of God consuming the spotless lamb as a penalty for our sins. Man's unholy fire could never do that but God's can.

## Extremes In Today's Churches

Some modern churches participate in things as part of their worship that reflects the presence of "Strange Fire". J. Lee Grady of Charisma Magazine writes about it in his article, "Strange Fire In The House of God". Here are a few excerpts.

He says..."I minister in various churches around this country. I am finding that strange fire is spreading in our midst-even in churches that call themselves "Spirit-filled." Pastors and leaders need to be aware of these trends:

1. **Deadly visitations.** In some charismatic circles today, people are claiming to have spiritual experiences that involve communication with the dead. One Michigan pastor told me last week that some church leaders he knows promote this bizarre practice and base it on Jesus' experience on the Mount of Transfiguration. The logic is that since Jesus talked to Moses and Elijah on the day He was glorified, this gives us permission to talk to dead Christians and our dead relatives. **(This is way out of line. Deut. 18:11)**

Although little is said about these experiences from the pulpit (since the average believer is not ready to handle this "new revelation"), people in some streams of the prophetic movement are claiming to have visitations from Aimee Semple McPherson, William Branham, John Wimber or various Bible characters. And we are expected to say, "Oooooooo, that's so deep"-and then go looking for our own mystical, beyond-the-grave epiphany.

That is creepy. Communication with the dead was strictly forbidden in the Old Testament (**Deut. 18:11**), and there is nothing in the New that indicates the rules were changed. Those who seek counsel from the dead-whether through mediums and séances or in "prophetic visions"-are taking a dangerous step toward demonization.

2. **Ecstatic rapture.** Not long after ecstasy became known as a recreational drug, someone in our movement got the bright idea to promote spiritual ecstasy as a form of legitimate worship. The concept evolved from "spiritual drunkenness" to the current fad in which people gather at church altars and pretend to shoot needles in their arms for a "spiritual high." Some preachers



today are encouraging people to "toke the Holy Ghost"-a reference to smoking marijuana. (**This is sick**)

I hate to be a party pooper, but the Bible warns us to "be of sound judgment and sober spirit" (**1 Pet. 4:7**). There is plenty of freedom and joy in the Holy Spirit; we don't have to quench it by introducing people to pagan revelry. Christian worship is not about losing control. Those who worship Jesus do it "in spirit and in truth" (**John 4:24**), and our love for God is not measured by how violently we shake or how many times we fall on the floor.

**3. Angels among us.** Angels have always played a vital role in the life of the church. They are "ministering spirits" sent to protect, guide and strengthen believers (**Heb. 1:14**). But suddenly angels have become the rage in some segments of our movement. People are claiming to see them everywhere, and often the stories don't line up with the Word of God. (**Demonic activity**)

During the Lakeland Revival last year in Florida, a man from Germany took the stage and claimed that an angel walked into a restaurant while he was eating a hamburger, took his intestines out and replaced them with a gold substance. Others have testified that angels took them to heaven and operated on them. And many are claiming that angels are dropping feathers, gold dust and precious gems on worshippers.

I know God can do anything. He can make an iron axe head float, hide a coin in a fish's mouth and use a little boy's lunch to feed a multitude. Those were genuine miracles that He can still do today. But we still have to use caution here. There are counterfeits. If we promote a false miracle or a false angel in the Lord's house, we are participating in strange fire.

I know of a case where a man was caught planting fake jewels on the floor of a church. He told his friends he was "seeding the room" to lift the people's faith. I know of others who have been caught putting gold glitter on themselves in a restroom and then running back in a church service, only to claim that God was blessing them with this special favor. Where is the fear of God when Christians would actually fabricate a miracle?

This is a time for all true believers with backbones to draw clear lines between what is godly worship and what is pagan practice. We want the miracles of God, but we also want the fear and reverence of God. We cannot allow this strange fire to spread unchecked. (**Remember, "Strange Fire" changes or pollutes the truth**)

Look up the word "strange." It comes from a word, which means, "to turn aside." It could be used of a traveler who is looking for a motel or a place to stay, yet, they are turned away, and for whatever the reason might be. Some commentators call it "false worship" and "will worship".

Strange Fire, In today's church can mean many things. Here's a list of practices that pollute true worship and angers God.

1. Teaching without divine leadership is strange fire.
2. Performance without power is strange fire.
3. Testimony without personal experience is strange fire.
4. Salvation without the blood is strange fire.

There are more, I am sure.

**Michael Scheifler of Bible Light tells us that the reason for Nadab and Abihu's transgression was drunkenness:**

*Lev 10:8-11 And the LORD spake unto Aaron, saying, 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: see also Eze 44:21) And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean; (see also Eze 44:23) And that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses."*

Aaron's sons had been drunk, their reasoning was impaired, and they could see no reason to bother with getting coals from the sacred fire of the altar of burnt offering. They did not discern the difference between the holy and unholy, and between the unclean and clean. Common unholy fire probably looked no different to them, and it surely would burn the incense in their censers too. Who cares? - they probably thought in their drunken stupor, it won't matter to God which fire we use, He can't be that particular. So they offered God what was common, instead of what was holy, as God required. They paid with their lives for their drunken disobedience.

# The Application To The End Times

As we now approach the second coming, and the end of this world as we know it, scripture tells us that most of Christianity is spiritually in a drunken stupor, unable to see a difference between the holy and the unholy, the sacred and the common, and as a result they are in transgression, offering strange fire before the Lord, much like Nadab and Abihu.

In **Revelation 17**, the apostate Christian church is described symbolically as a drunken whore with a golden cup in her hand, full of her corrupted doctrines, which she made the nations of the earth drink (**Rev. 14:8**). What was the result of the drunken state of Aaron's sons? They saw no difference between the holy things of God, and the common or profane, and as a result they offered God the common, instead of the sacred.

## The Danger of Strange Fire

by James Dale Coldiron

We need the glory! We need the pureness of God's presence... but we need to do it with a heart that is honest and humble before God. You see, it is a dangerous thing to come into the presence of God when we are unrepentant and have iniquity. The same glory that heals the needy and empowers the humble, kills the proud and unrepentant. **JAMES 4:6** “ **BUT HE GIVETH MORE GRACE. WHEREFORE HE SAITH, GOD RESISTETH THE PROUD, BUT GIVETH GRACE UNTO THE HUMBLE. “**

We are living in the age of the great compromise and we have fallen under the spell of a strange fire... as a moth flying into a flame, so have many who have known God turned to their “own way” before the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.. **2 TIMOTHY 3:4-5** “**4- TRAITORS, HEADY, HIGHMINDED, LOVERS OF PLEASURES MORE THAN LOVERS OF GOD; 5- HAVING A FORM OF GODLINESS, BUT DENYING THE POWER THEREOF: FROM SUCH TURN AWAY. “**



**1 TIMOTHY 4:1-2** “ **1- NOW THE SPIRIT SPEAKETH EXPRESSLY, THAT IN THE LATTER TIMES SOME SHALL DEPART FROM THE FAITH, GIVING HEED TO**

SEDUCING SPIRITS, AND DOCTRINES OF DEVILS; 2- SPEAKING LIES IN HYPOCRISY; HAVING THEIR CONSCIENCE SEARED WITH A HOT IRON; “

**2 THESSALONIANS 2:3** “LET NO MAN DECEIVE YOU BY ANY MEANS: FOR THAT DAY SHALL NOT COME, EXCEPT THERE COME A FALLING AWAY FIRST, AND THAT MAN OF SIN BE REVEALED, THE SON OF PERDITION; “

When the people had repented... when they had offered up the sacrifice that God wanted... then the HOLY FIRE FELL. THE HOLY GHOST FIRE OF GOD IS A FIRE BREAK for the destructive strange fire that is burning down homes and lives in our land! So shall it be when God's people repent. Hear what God says about the matter.

“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.” **II Chronicles 7:14**

## Conclusion

We have seen man, depicted by the two sons of Aaron, distort, alter, change and pollute the temple of God and His inner court, the holy of Holies, which housed the very presence of God. It was His Glory dwelling with man. The result of such an act was death for Aaron's two sons. It is also death for anyone in our generation but not necessarily instantaneous. **Galatians 6:7** says, **“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”** Whether fast or slow, it's still death.

We also saw that **“Strange Fire”** is unholy, soulish, unauthorized and a counterfeit of the real thing. An unlearned believer can easily mistake it for truth. The use of such a fire is meant to confuse, mislead, deceive and lead astray.

In times past, God showed His people error by exposing it with immediate judgment. Now, we rely on the Word of God to clarify, expose and validate. Truth is still truth and God's way is still the only way to achieve our divine destiny.

May I suggest that you examine your Christian Practices? You will need to hold them up to the truths found in the Bible to see if what you are doing is true worship. You could be using, **“Strange Fire”** before the Lord and bringing God’s judgment upon you and your family.

