## **Leviticus 10**

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[0:00] Leviticus 10 says this, now, now it's now, now is there for a reason, why? Because Leviticus 9 is all about the beginning or the institution of corporate worship.

If you remember, I know it's been several weeks so I'll kind of catch this up a little bit. Leviticus 9 is when they brought the Aaron and his sons in and they clothed them and then they anointed them and they put it on their earlobe of their right ear, the thumb of their right hand and the big toe of their right foot and dedicated everything they heard, everything they did and everything they went to the Lord their God.

They dedicated the temple and the fire was lit on the brazen altar there, the fire of God. Many Jewish scholars believe that God himself lit the fire on the altar.

The Shekinah glory of God had fallen upon the place and the fire was lit and they offered for the first time the sacrifice that God had called for inside the tabernacle. And if you remember, Aaron and his sons stayed there because they had been inaugurated for seven days.

They did this sacrificial system of symbolizing the national worship and the people of God, the nation of Israel, was gathered outside the gate or the door of the tabernacle and they were witnessing all this.

[1:16] Now at this time, at this time, many believe probably on that day, these events in Leviticus 10 happen. And we see, now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective fire pans and after putting fire in them, placed incense on it and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he had not commanded them.

And fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them and they died before the Lord. Then Moses said to Aaron, And it is what the Lord spoke, saying, By those who come near me, I will be treated as holy.

And before all the people, I will be honored. So Aaron therefore kept silent. And Moses called also to Michael and Elisaphan, the sons of Aaron's uncle Uziel, and said to them, Come forward to carry your relatives away from the front of the sanctuary to the outside of the camp.

So they came forward and carried them still in their tunics to the outside of the camp, as Moses had said. Then Moses said to Aaron and to his sons Eleazar and Ithamar, Do not uncover your heads nor tear your clothes, so that you will not die, and that he will not become wrathful against all the congregation.

But your kinsmen, the whole house of Israel, shall bewail the burning which the Lord has brought about. You shall not even go out from the doorway of the tent of meeting, or you will die, for the Lord's anointing oil is upon you.

[2:37] So they did according to the word of Moses. The Lord then spoke to Aaron, saying, Do not drink wine or strong drink, neither you nor your sons with you, when you come into the tent of meeting, so that you will not die.

It is a perpetual statute throughout your generations. And so as to make a distinction between the holy and the profane, and between the unclean and the clean. And so as to teach the sons of Israel all the statutes which the Lord has spoken to them through Moses.

Then Moses spoke to Aaron and to his surviving sons Eleazar and Ithamar, Take the grain offering that is left over from the Lord's offering by fire, and eat it unleavened beside the altar, for it is most holy.

You shall eat it moreover in a holy place, because it is your due and your son's due out of the Lord's offerings by fire. For thus I have been commanded, the breast of the way of offering, however, in the thigh of the offering, you may eat in a clean place, you and your sons and your daughters with you.

For they have been given as you do and your sons do, out of the sacrifices of the peace offerings of the sons of Israel. The thigh offered up by lifting up, and the breast offered by waving, they shall bring along with the offerings by fire of the portions of fat to present as a way of offering before the Lord, so it shall be a thing perpetually due you and your sons with you, just as the Lord has commanded.

Verse 16. But Moses searched carefully for the goat of the sin offering, and behold, it had been burned up. So he was angry with Aaron's surviving sons, Eliezer and Ithamar, saying, Why did you not eat the sin offering at the holy place?

For it is most holy, and he gave it to you, to bear away the guilt of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the Lord. Behold, since its blood had not been brought inside into the sanctuary, you should certainly have eaten it in the sanctuary, just as I commanded.

But Aaron spoke to Moses, Behold, this very day they presented their sin offering and their burnt offering before the Lord. When things like these happened to me, if I had eaten a sin offering today, would it have been good in the sight of the Lord?

When Moses heard that, it seemed good in his sight. Leviticus chapter 10. We are looking at the familiar story of Nadab and Abihu, and the offering of strange fire.

I want us to see tonight a worship of strange fire. This is a passage of Scripture that many of us have heard of, and we have kind of seen it, and we see the account of it, but it is a recurrent theme that we see throughout Scripture, not necessarily just in this setting, or actually in this way, but it is a theme of God's holiness, and His holiness being taken lightly.

[5:05] So I want us to see tonight this worship of strange fire, or choosing to approach God however we desire, and worship Him in any way that we see fit. We'll see three great truths from it, but we need to understand that this is really not pertaining to Nadab and Abihu, but the holiness of God, of who He is and what He has commanded.

Leviticus 8 and 9 gives us this recurrent phrase of, they did exactly what God had commanded them to do, as the Lord had commanded them, as the Lord had commanded them.

And we see over and over again that through the anointing, and the presentation of the priest, through the offering of the sacrifices, there is this theme, as the Lord had commanded them. But in Leviticus 10, we get, as the Lord had not commanded them.

We get a shift in focus, and what they did was something that God had not commanded them to do. Rather, they chose to approach Him in the way they thought was right, in the way they thought was proper, and paid the ultimate price for it.

Number one, in this worship of strange fire, we see the deceptive nature of it, because it says, now, during this season of rejoicing, during, in particular, this day of celebration, this day of the beginning of corporate worship for the nation of Israel, now, on this day, Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, what catches our attention immediately, is not that these were two just normal people.

These were not just two fellow Jewish individuals, who were on the outer fringes of the camp. It was not even the mixed group, that came with the nation of Israel when they left Egypt, which were not the Jewish people, but probably the Egyptians, who understood the power of God.

These, rather, were the sons of Aaron, the two oldest sons of Aaron. And if we go back to the book of Exodus, we see that these two were also invited by Moses, to go up on the mount of the Lord, and to be there.

Remember when they had that meal, underneath the footstool of the Lord, on the mount Sinai, and then Moses, and went up a little bit further. They were there in the presence of God, worshiping at a distance.

These two were those who had been drawn close, to the Lord God Almighty. They had not just seen the smoke, and the flame, and the cloud. They had not just heard the voice of the Ten Commandments.

They had actually ascended the mountain, and sat under the footstool of the Lord, and had a fellowship meal. They had been there, inside the tabernacle, where the Shekinah glory was dwelling.

[7:41] They had been there, when the fire on the brazen altar was lit. They were there, when worship began. They had been anointed, and clothed with the priestly garments. And it was these two people, that deviated from the truth.

This shows us, that the deceptive nature of sin, is not just reserved for those on the fringes. How long, or how often have we seen, even those closest to the Lord, tend to vary, to the slightest degree.

And that variation, is very dangerous, as we'll see in just a little bit. But these, were deceived, and these came after, a different way. It was not only deceptive, in who they were, it was deceptive, in what they used.

It says, they were the sons of Aaron, and they took, their respective fire pans. By the way, the burning of the incense, before the Lord, was to be done, in a fire pan. So they were using, the right tools, but it belonged, to the wrong person.

Because Exodus 30, tells us, that Aaron, was to use his fire pan, and burn the incense, before the Lord. There's a big difference, between the fire pan, of the high priest, and the fire pan, of another priest.

[8:50] Why? Because God, wasn't in the habit, of just welcoming, anyone, into his presence. So they had, what appeared to be, the right tool, the fire pan, but it was, their fire pan.

It wasn't, Aaron's fire pan. It wasn't, the one which belonged, to the high priest. It was there. And see how, close to the truth, they were walking. See how close, to the truth, the trail they were on, was getting.

And they were so similar. As Warren Wiersbe said, everything they did, was wrong. They were the wrong people, with the wrong tools, at the wrong time, in the wrong place, after in the wrong fire. They took, their fire pans, and they took, their fire.

It says that each one of them, took their respective fire pans, and after putting fire in them, placed incense on it, and offered strange fire. The word strange, in the original Hebrew, literally means other fire. They took a fire, which was not that of the Lord, and brought it before God.

This is deceptive, because God says, that he would have his incense, consumed by the coal of fire. But guess what? That fire could only come, from one place. The fire for the incense, had to come, from the bronze altar.

[9:56] See, God is not a God, of unclarity. He is not a God, of uncertainty. God has been very clear, in the truths that he reveals. And he had given, very detailed accounts, to Moses, and to Aaron, and to Aaron's sons, of what he, what he counted, as worthy worship.

What we see, is the deceptive nature, of this strange fire. That Nadab and Abihu, thought they were worthy. They thought they had, the right tools. They thought any fire, and incense would do.

But friend, they were thinking wrong. And many people believe. Many Bible scholars believe, and I tend to agree with them, as a result of what we find, in verse 9, which would be the institution, of the fact, that do not drink wine, or strong drink, neither you, nor your sons with you, when you come, into the tent of meaning, so that you will not die, in a perpetual statute, throughout your generations.

Many believe, that verse 9, was put in there, is because Nadab, and Abihu, were intoxicated, when they did this. That they were not, of the right mind. As someone said, they were not moved, by the right power.

It was the power of drink, and not the power of the Lord, that was leading them, to false worship. But what we see, is the deceptive nature. They thought, well hey, we have the right garments on.

[11:11] We've been anointed, with the oil. We have the right tools. We have a fire pen, right? I have fire here. You have incense there. Let's run into the presence, of the Lord friend. We can't do that.

This reiterates, what we saw, at the base of Mount Sinai. That God will not be worshipped, however we see fit. God will only be worshipped, however he sees fit. We cannot just run, into God's presence, any which way we long to.

This is the sad reality, that many people today, believe that all roads, lead to heaven. And they don't. Jesus himself said, there's only one way, right? There's a narrow gate, and there are few, who find it.

God, is very clear, and how we must approach him. Jesus himself, anyone that does not, come through the door, and he was the door, was a thief, and sought to, enter into heaven, the wrong way.

There is this very, narrow path. And in the Old Testament, God had given a very, narrow path, to come into his presence. But the deceptive nature of sin, is Satan whispers in our ears, and says, you can go, however you want to.

[12:17] I'm sure he will welcome you. But what's the theme, of Leviticus? Holiness. Holiness. Because holiness, does not, welcome, anything. It only welcomes, what it says.

This is why, when we come before him, we come before the, we come through, the veil of Jesus' flesh, the blood of the Lamb. This is why, when we come before him, in worship, Jesus said, the Father seeks those, who will worship him, in spirit, and truth.

So we need to be careful, of our worship. We need to be careful, of our manners, and so we need to be careful, of our heart condition. We understand, the deceptive nature of it, that anyone, is welcome.

And while, in the blood of Jesus Christ, whosoever will, is welcome, it has to be, whosoever will. We need to come, the right way.

And we see this, when Nadab and Abihu, even though, they had the right tools, and they looked to be, the right people, they were definitely, doing it the wrong way. Not only do we see, the deceptive nature of it, we see the danger to self, because of it.

[13:22] False worship, is always dangerous. Anytime, we mock the holiness of God, it is always dangerous. Because it says, that they came, and they offered strange fire, before the Lord, which he had not, commanded them.

God did not ask them, for this. He did not command them, to do this. Yet they thought, it was a good idea, to do it. And verse 2 says, and fire came out, from the presence of the Lord, and consumed them, and they died, before the Lord.

This false worship, led to an instantaneous, immediate judgment, which resulted in their death. It's amazing, the scripture says, that the fire came, from the presence of the Lord, literally, from the Holy of Holies, that's Shekinah glory, that's where he was present, above the seat, the mercy seat, the seat of propitiation.

It came from his presence, and consumed them. But what we notice, is where their bodies lay, their bodies lay, because Moses called, Aaron's uncle, usually one said to them, come forward, carry your relatives, away from the sanctuary, to the out, from the front of the sanctuary.

So evidently, their bodies were not, inside the Holy of Holies, it was in front, of the sanctuary, and it was there, that they were there. And what's amazing also, is that while God, consumed them, their bodies were neither, burned up, nor their clothing, gone.

Because it says, that when they carried them away, they were still, wearing the priestly garments. But it was all tainted, by sin. We see the danger, that comes to self, because of false worship. What we see in scripture, is that every time, God is doing something new, every time God, does something new, in salvific history, God always, sets the standard, of holiness high.

And by this, I mean, okay, let's just say, when the nation of Israel, or not, let's just say, let's just go back, and rehash this a little bit. They started temple worship, tabernacle worship here. This was the beginning, of corporate worship, for the nation of Israel.

In the day, they started it, someone began to, distort it, distort it, and kind of, make it halfway true. As someone said, and I can't remember the name, man has a way, of messing everything up.

Right? As soon as God, makes something holy, man tends to mess it up. And it did not take very long. It didn't take long, for heresy to creep, into the church, by the way, before the New Testament, was closed. The authors of the New Testament, were already combating heresy, or the false teaching.

It only took about a half a day, for heresy to creep, into tabernacle worship. And it came, through the priests, Nadab and Abihu. But what we see, is that God sets, this standard of holiness, immediately.

[15:47] Because on that day, when that worship is tainted, God judges, instantaneously, and they die. That is a very gracious act, by the way. We have a hard time with that, and we scratch our head.

And it is a gracious act, as we'll see with the last point, when we get to it. But God took care of it, immediately, because he showed the standard. They died, because God says, you will worship me in one way, and only one way, and it has to be the right way.

If he had allowed, a halfway worship, or a halfway truth, at the beginning, then where would we be today? And then later on, when Joshua comes in, and they fight the battle of Jericho. You remember, Joshua fighting the battle of Jericho.

God is doing something new. He's bringing his people, into the promised land, right? And the first battle they fight, is the battle of Jericho. And God does an amazing thing, and delivers the battle of Jericho.

But you remember, what God had said, was his standard. God's standard was what? Don't touch anything, everything belongs to me. Everything there is mine.

[16:46] The spoil is mine. The city is mine. The gold and the silver is mine. God says, I want the first fruits, of your spoil. You remember the story, of Achan, right? Achan looked.

He saw something, it looked good, so he took it. Which was the sin of all men. It was appealing to the eye, it looked good to the flesh, so he hid it in his tent. And he decided, he would take that. And then they decided, to go fight the battle of Ai, and they lost.

It didn't happen, because God says, there's sin in the camp. Achan, the judgment of Achan, falls immediately. Achan and his whole household, actually his sons, and his daughters.

You know, it never says, I wondered about this. Carrie and I actually discussed this, when we read it in our Bible reading. I saw it for the first time. I don't know how many times, I've read the story. It never says anything, think about Achan's wife. It says that his sons, and his daughters were consumed, unless it's just assumed.

I don't know. I mean, I'm just, just me being honest with you, as a pastor here, I'm just talking about, some of the things, that point out to you, the more you, but it says that, Achan died immediately. The earth opened, they stoned them, they burned them, and everything else there.

[17:47] Why? God's judgment fell. He was doing something new, bringing them into the promised land. He wanted them to know, when I say it's mine, it's mine. Let's fast forward a number of years, and let's get to the birth of the church.

The birth of the church found in the book of Acts. You remember that, right? And you remember how when the church was born, everything was going great, and the church was giving, and then there were those who sold a piece of property, and they decided to bring it, and lay it before the feet of Peter, and they lied, saying that is the entire amount we sold the land for.

You remember that story, right? And it was not, Peter didn't demand that they give them the full amount, but they tested the Holy Spirit. And what happened? The husband died.

A little bit later, the wife comes in and she dies. They die immediately. God will not be mocked. Every time something new starts in Scripture, every time something in salvific history is birthed, that is new, God sets the standard of holiness high.

Why? Because He is holy, and He expects His people to be holy. Be holy as I am holy, says the Lord God Almighty. And if He does not set the standard at the beginning, then we are sure to deviate from it very far throughout history.

[18:57] What we see is the danger to self because of false worship. God says, no, we're not going to do that. And He consumes them.

Why? By those who come near me, I will be treated as holy. Friend, listen to me. This is not just applicable in the Old Testament temple worship or tabernacle worship. We are those who draw near to the Father through Jesus Christ.

Sure. We are called priests of the Lord. I believe in the priesthood of the believers as recorded for us in 1 Peter. That He has called all believers to be priests for His glory. And we are clothed with the garments of the priesthood, which is the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

We have not been anointed with oil on our earlobe and our thumb and our toe. We have been anointed with the Holy Spirit, something far greater than oil. We have been anointed and we have been washed, as we sung about earlier, with the blood of the Lamb.

And we have been called into a greater covenant, a covenant of mercy and grace and forgiveness, but still a covenant that we represent through the drinking of the cup and the breaking of bread, the covenant of His blood.

[19:55] And we have been called to come near Him. And He says, By those who come near me, I will be treated as holy. I like how 1 Peter says, It is time for judgment to begin.

And if it begins with the household of God first, then will where the unrighteous and the ungodly appear. Peter rightfully says that the judgment of God will always begin with the people of God.

And we see this here. Just because we see a delay in God's judgment does not mean the standard has changed. What we see is those who approached God in an unholy, unworthy manner were instantaneously, immediately judged and died.

That standard is the same. Just in His grace and His mercy, now He delays that judgment, but it is a true judgment nonetheless. And we see the danger that comes to ourself because of a worship of strange fire.

Third and finally, we see from this passage is an application that we need to understand, and we see it again resounding throughout Scripture. Achan has a great picture of it. It is the damage that is done to others as a result of it.

[21:00] When Achan sinned, it wasn't just Achan who paid the price, if you remember. There were a number of soldiers in the nation of Israel that died when they went to fight the Battle of Ai, and it wasn't because they were a weaker army.

It was because there was sin in the camp. What I always found astounding is that Achan did not die in that battle, but a number of others did. And it was because of Achan's sin that they died.

But what we see here is the damage that is done to others. This is something that I tried to get across even to Braden and all of our children at a very young age, is that the choices we make will always, always, always affect others.

No sin, no sin or no decision to approach God in the wrong way or false way is an isolated event that only affects an individual. It's not that way.

One thing we find in Scripture is that God always deals with the corporate body. God, I don't know if you've realized this or not, but God is busy about the corporate body.

[22:07] This is an important message the church needs to hear, is that the individuals of the church are a part of the body of the church, and every individual's actions affect the corporate body.

And it is a reality that most of us do not want to accept because it calls us to a greater accountability. But this is why Paul says, what do I have to do with judging those who are outside the church?

I have the job of judging those who are inside the church because Paul knew the truth of the matter is that your choices and my choices affect one another. And that what I do affects you and what you do affects me.

And we see that it's not just a great effect, but it is a damage that is done to others. And we see that it is Nadab and Abihu who offer the strange fire to them who is consumed. But all of a sudden, we see that it begins to affect others because Moses called also to Mishael and Elisaphon, the sons of Aaron's uncle, Uziel, and said to them, come forward, carry your relatives away from the front of the sanctuary to the outside of the camp.

So now his cousins had to come carry them away. So they came forward and carried them still in their tunics outside the camp, as Moses had said. Then Moses said to Aaron and to his sons, Eliezer and Ithmar, do not uncover your heads nor tear your clothes so that you will not die and that he, that is God, will not become wrathful against all the congregation.

[ 23:21 ] So here we see the first damage that it caused. Aaron did not even have the ability to mourn the loss of his two sons because Aaron was to be a display to the nation of Israel, the holy standard of God.

Aaron, just like other prophets that we see throughout the scripture, was told not to mourn. Do not even weep. Do not uncover your head or let your hair down and get disheveled. Do not tear your garments. Do not show the sign of mourning because you are to be the one who displays to the nation that God was just in slaying your sons.

Think of this. As a father and the brothers, they could not even mourn the loss of his son or their brothers because they had to accept the fact that God was just in his judgment.

And if we do not think that that did not do some damage to Aaron, then we are failing to see him as a man. And we are failing to see him as flesh and blood just as we are. But it also led not only to the damage that was caused to them because he says in verse, we keep reading in verse six where he said that he says, but your kinsmen, the whole house of Israel shall be well the burning which the Lord has brought about.

So now the whole nation is going to mourn and be well and they're going to weep and they're going to understand the holiness of God. You should not even go out from the doorway of the tent of meeting or you will die for the Lord's anointing oil is upon you. So they did according to the word of Moses.

[ 24:41 ] What we see here is the whole nation was affected because of Nadab and Abihu. They were mourning and wailing and they were weeping over the loss and understanding the reality that God was holy.

It changed everything. It was a day of rejoicing. Remember that? They were celebrating the holiness of God. They were celebrating the presence of God. And now all of a sudden they're mourning and weeping over the loss of two of the priests of God because it begins to affect and damage everyone else.

And then the Lord spoke to Moses saying do not drink wine or strong. Drink neither you nor your sons with you when you come into the tent of meeting so that you will not die. It is a perpetual statute throughout all your generations.

One thing we see in the Old Testament, one reality we see with the nation of Israel is that every time they fall God adds a greater requirement to them. Now this is the covenant of the law.

One thing we see in reading the Pentateuch is that every time they stumble more is required of them after that. And it's not saying that God is legalistic.

[ 25:39 ] What he is doing is setting them up to need a savior. He does not make it easier on them. He makes it harder. He does not ease the burden. He actually increases it every time they fall.

He says, okay. We started out by saying the reality of the Old Testament is this as God was calling them to be a nation of priests. But in their rebellion and in their failures they became a nation with priests.

That's a big difference. Everyone was to be a priest. To be in the presence of God. And because they rebelled and because they fell and because they revolted and because they murmured and complained and all this other stuff then God said, okay.

Then I'll just let one man of your congregation come into my presence. And every time they fell God made it harder to access his glory and his holiness.

He set a higher, excuse me, a higher standard. And we see this. God is just showing that he is other. And we also see the reality that Moses comes back and tells them to continue eating.

[ 26:40 ] What he is saying here is it's okay. God has not rejected you as priests. Eat the offering that belongs to you. Do this. But we catch up with it here in verse 16 which seems kind of out of place. But Moses searched carefully for the goat of the sin offering and behold it had been burned up.

So he was angry with Aaron's surviving sons of Eleazar and Ithamar saying, why did you not eat the sin offering in the holy place? For it is most holy and he gave it to you to bear away the guilt of the congregation to make atonement for them before the Lord.

Behold, since its blood had not been brought inside into the sanctuary and you should certainly have eaten it in the sanctuary just as I commanded. But Aaron spoke to Moses, behold this very day they presented their sin offering and their burnt offering before the Lord

When things like these happened to me if I had eaten a sin offering today would it have been good in the sight of the Lord? When Moses heard that it seemed good in his sight. Here we see the damage. Part of the priestly service was for Aaron and his sons to eat of the sin offering and therefore serve as agents of atonement for the people of Israel.

Literally what happened is when Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire and they were consumed it interrupted the order of worship of the nation of Israel because Aaron said, Moses, I couldn't eat that offering today because I had part in their sin because they were my sons and would it have been pleasing to God if I had eaten a sin offering?

[ 28:00 ] Can I atone for the nation of Israel? Can I be one who fulfills that purpose when things like this are happening even today in my own family? It became an interruption to Aaron's work.

It became an interruption to Eleazar and Ithamar and their service. It became an interruption to the corporate worship. Friend, what I want you to see is that when we choose to worship in any way we see fit or we choose to deviate from the clearly revealed word of God not only are we following a deceptive path and bringing ourselves in danger but we are also doing great damage to an untold number of people around us.

One of the greatest damages is when the church does not take the word of God seriously and literally then the people who are lost suffer the greatest because the church sits in the confines of its comfort boat called the gospel ship as Max Lucado calls it and the world outside of that gospel ship is drowning and going to a Christless eternity and the whole time one of the greatest illustrations I've ever heard of this was Max Lucado sharing it.

Carrie and I were in Nashville and it was no we weren't we were in Franklin and Chris Tomlin was there this little theater and Franklin is pretty cool. Max Lucado was talking he said you know what's going on is the world is drowning and going to a place called Christless eternity and in the midst of that sea of the lost there's a ship floating that can rescue everyone on board everyone that is drowning but the sad reality is that the church is on that gospel ship and they're too busy arguing and fighting with one another to pull up any that are drowning in the sea of lostness and that's what happens when the church quits taking the word of God literally and we think we can go be the church however we see fit and we can do church however we think we can and we can do church whatever pleases to us we have the fire pan and we have a fire but it may be the wrong fire and if we offer the wrong incense at the wrong time then we're paying dearly and so will others let's pray Lord thank you so much for this night God I thank you for your word Lord we pray that this word would captivate our hearts and draw us closer to you Lord as always we pray that we would be greater tools in your hand for your glory and your honor and we ask it all in Jesus name

Amen Amen Amen

[31:45] Amen Amen Amen

[39:15] Amen Amen Amen

Amen Amen Amen

Amen Amen Amen

Amen