

Nadab And Abihu

“And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord. Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace.”

Leviticus 10:1-3

Leviticus shows the holiness of God and the sinfulness of man as the people would bring their animal sacrifices to the priests (the Levites) as an atonement on their behalf. Hebrews is a divine commentary on the book as the author demonstrates that the ceremonies and rituals of the Aaronic priesthood were fulfilled in Jesus Christ. He is now reigning as the High Priest forever (Hebrews 4:15; 8:2). In the sacrifices of the priests there was a reminder of sins year after year and the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin. But now Christ has been offered once for all time so that men might be perfected through Him (Hebrews 10:3-15). This article will study three lessons of Nadab and Abihu and make some important applications.

First, we cannot worship God however we want. Some have suggested that Nadab and Abihu were drunk while they were worshiping, and that is why He punished them so severely. While it is true that they were warned not to drink wine or strong drink (Leviticus 10:8), the text clearly says that they offered strange fire which He had not commanded them. The claim that Nadab and Abihu were guilty of drunkenness stems from an unwillingness to believe that God would punish them with death for what men would consider a minor offense of taking fire from an unauthorized source. This demonstrates the major difference between the way man thinks and God thinks (cp. Isaiah 55:8-9). What kind of worshipers does God seek? Those who will worship Him in spirit and truth (John 4:23-24). Is there a choice as to how we want to worship Him? We can no more worship with the instruments of our choice as we can choose to worship the god of our choice (cp. Ephesians 4:4-6) since we must do everything by the authority of Christ (Colossians 3:17). Some will take the mechanical instruments of music from the Old Covenant into the worship of the New Covenant but will not take all the animal sacrifices that were offered back then. Christ set us free from the bondage of the Law of Moses (Galatians 5:1; Ephesians 2:14-16). Regarding music in worship, we are commanded to “sing and make melody in your heart to the Lord” (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16-17), and not make melody on a piano, guitar, drum or any other kind of instrument. If anyone desires to bring the mechanical instruments into worship in the New Testament, he would be under obligation to keep all of the Old Law just like those who tried to bind circumcision on the Gentiles (Galatians 5:2-3). Those who desire to be justified by that law have severed themselves from Christ and have fallen from grace (Galatians 5:4), thereby cutting himself off from Christ.

Second, God is holy and will punish those in authority who disobey His laws. God did not try to cover up the sin of Nadab and Abihu (even though they were Aaron’s sons) or

make excuses for them as man might do, but punished them because they didn't treat Him as holy.

There are many examples of laws in America that show disrespect for God's holiness. Back in 1970, California instituted the first no-fault divorce law. By 1974, 45 states had enacted it and now all states approve of it. Tragically, many couples have decided to not fulfill their vows of being faithful to their spouse until death and now 50 percent of marriages end in divorce. Jesus said, "What God has joined together, let not man separate" (Matthew 19:6). Jesus only gives the right to the innocent (of sexual immorality) party to divorce and remarry: "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Matthew 19:9).

On January 22, 1973, the Supreme Court ruled in *Roe v. Wade* which gave women the right to have an abortion which overturned Texas law along with 45 other states. There is no doubt that God says there is life in the womb because the same Greek word *brephos* that is used for the unborn child Jesus (Luke 1:41) is also used for Him when He is a baby lying in the manger (Luke 2:16). How tragic that over 59 million babies have been murdered since that tragic decision that has caused many to have no respect for life in this country. This is 30 times the number of soldiers that have died fighting for our country and 9 times as many that died in the Holocaust.

On June 26, 2003, the Supreme Court ruled that sodomy laws are unconstitutional, striking down Texas law and all other states which said it was a "crime against nature". But the Supreme ruler of the universe still says that homosexuality is a degrading passion, unnatural, indecent, error, and comes from a depraved mind (Romans 1:26-28). God has given the government the right to punish evildoers (Romans 13:3-4), but now it is approved by men because of the pressure from the world. Those in authority do not have the right to change God's law; redefine God's definition of marriage; support, sanction, and make legal a promiscuous relationship; and, make demands for their rights when they are in sinful rebellion against God's will. God is holy and will punish those who disobey His laws. Is God being treated as holy when no-fault divorce, abortion, homosexuality, along with same-sex marriage, is sanctified by the state? The Bible says, "Evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived" (2 Timothy 3:13). Isaiah 5:20 says, "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!" They promise freedom and yet they themselves are slaves of corruption and enslave people in their sins (2 Peter 2:18-19). Many may claim to have their rights in this country, but it is never right in the sight of God to transgress His law (1 John 3:4). We cannot claim to have fellowship with God while we are walking in sin or else we lie and are not practicing the truth (cp. 1 John 1:6). God's wrath is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness since through His creation He has clearly demonstrated His eternal power and divine nature so that men are without excuse (Romans 1:18-20).

Third, God's law cannot be compromised to tolerate or justify ourselves or our family. Moses demonstrated that he would not compromise God's law to tolerate sin as he rebuked his own brother Aaron and the people as they worshiped the golden calf. He asked, "What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them" (Exodus 32:21)? He also did not get mad at God when his nephews were put to death and reasoned with Aaron that God must be honored before all the people. Aaron had compromised with the people to justify himself but now he kept silent (Leviticus 10:3).

How many times has the gospel preacher been pressured from a member of the church to marry those who have no right to marry and compromised the truth or their conscience because they don't want to lose their job or have to endure criticism? How many times has a member of the church committed sexual immorality with an unbeliever, there's a pregnancy, the member comes forward to confess, they get married, but they never bring forth fruits in keeping with repentance (Matthew 3:8) and fall away from the faith? How many times has it happened that a faithful gospel preacher has known and taught the truth for years but a relative gets a divorce (or they themselves get one) and remarry unscripturally that they will tolerate, justify, or say nothing about that adulterous union and therefore not preach the truth on the subject any longer? "And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but even expose them for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret" (Ephesians 5:11-12). Are we compromising God's law to justify ourselves or some of our family members? We cannot love our family members more than Jesus or He says we are not worthy of Him (Matthew 10:37).

Concerning the issue of homosexuality, there is much compromise. Many politicians still do not support homosexual marriages (because only about half of the public disapproves of it) but will compromise God's marriage law from the beginning between a man and a woman (Matthew 19:3-6) by approving of civil unions between same-sex couples in an election year for fear of losing their seat. But what is a civil union between same-sex couples? It is not a "gay relationship" (as that definition has been redefined by those who desire acceptance and tolerance), but as the Bible defines it "homosexuality" which means "one who lies with a male as with a female, sodomite, homosexual." It was punished with death in the Law of Moses (Leviticus 20:13) and in the New Testament those who practice such sins will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9-10). But even though there are all these warnings from scripture, those who promote gay marriage gleefully talk about the future. "The future has been on display in San Francisco over the past few days. That future is tolerant, respectful and supportive of the rights of all Americans to marry. And it's on the way, faster than even the most optimistic among us could have imagined," wrote The Capital Times & Wisconsin State Journal. Why should that bring great fear you ask? Because the gross immorality of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah in going after strange flesh are given as an example to all of those who would undergo the punishment of eternal fire (Jude 7). Can we tolerate, respect, or support a sinful relationship in which God gives it a picture of eternal torment? We need to wake up in America before it's too late!

God did not tolerate the sin, and punished Nadab and Abihu with death because they didn't treat Him as holy in the sight of the people. Will we praise God because of His truth (Psalm 138:2)? Will we treat God as holy by speaking the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15) and correcting those who are in opposition on these issues so that they can escape from the snare of the devil (2 Timothy 2:24-26)? Or will we compromise in order to please men and suffer the eternal consequences (cp. Hebrews 10:27-31; 12:25-29)?

Adapted from Steven L. Locklair