

## Playing with Fire

## Leviticus 9:1-10:3

It was the summer of 2000, and I had a life changing encounter with fire!

- I will never approach fire and gasoline the same way again!

**God is often depicted in Scripture as fire** – burning bush, pillar of fire, altar...

I wonder how often we think about how we approach God, & how being in His presence can be a lot like the experience I had with fire & gasoline!

Fire can provide light, warmth, & protection, but **it can also cause harm, destruction & death**, especially with an accelerant. The same is true of God!

We must approach both fire & God with caution & respect, because to fail to do so can bring about very harmful effects. As we will see in our text.

**Have you ever given thought to how you approach God in worship?** Do you ever think twice about what you wear, how you arrive, how you participate in worship, etc.? Do you think God cares about such things? Should we?

But didn't Jesus come to do away with all the rules & regulations? Don't we have freedom in Christ? Can't we come before God now in PJ's if we want?

**Jesus said that he came not to abolish the Law but to fulfill it! Matt. 5:17-20**

We must be careful not to completely throw out the O.T. ceremonial Law! It serves a great purpose of teaching us how God wants to be worshiped, & **what is necessary for us to be able to do so without consequence!**

Only with an accurate understanding of the ceremonial Law can we appreciate more what Christ has done & respond accordingly in our worship

Today we often think in terms of what we want to get out of worship, but even a quick read through Leviticus reveals that our focus ought to be **more on what God wants to receive rather than on what we want to get out of it!**

I personally am very grateful that we do not live under the Ceremonial Law & the sacrificial system of worship! It was messy, violent, costly, & risky!

**It was like playing with fire...** because you were coming before a Holy God! I guarantee no one fell asleep during these services! Let's read **Leviticus 9!**

**What a bloody mess!** Why was this required for worship to take place? In worship we are coming b/f the presence of God, but we are unworthy to do so!

**Our sin must be first dealt with, or else we would be consumed by Him!** If you have any doubt about that, we'll be looking at Ch. 10 in a moment!

God prescribed 4 offerings here in Ch. 9 (at this 1<sup>st</sup> worship service in the Tabernacle), for the purpose of purifying the priest & the people, & thus enable them to be in God's Holy presence w/out the fear of death.

- **Sin offering** – an animal sacrifice given to atone for the sins of the people
- **Burnt offering** – a 2<sup>nd</sup> animal sacrifice twice daily to show devotion to God
- **Peace offering** – a 3<sup>rd</sup> animal sacrifice during times of need or fulfillment
- **Grain offering** – a 4<sup>th</sup> offering of grain given out of covenant remembrance

Today, Jesus has already fulfilled every aspect of this ceremonial process w/ His perfect, once for all, sacrifice, & this is why this process is not still required of us

But what we should never forget is the seriousness behind how God wants to be approached in worship. **It matters how we worship, especially to God!**

If Chapter 9 shows us what is acceptable to God, Ch. 10 reveals what is not!

**Leviticus 10:1-3** – Aaron's sons were consumed by the fire of the Lord! Why? **Because they put accelerant on the fire!**

As followers of Jesus today, we do not need to follow the Ceremonial Law, but we do need to be aware of the dangers of worshipping Him wrongly!

A wrong approach to worshipping God today can take many forms:

- **Not taking God seriously enough and approaching Him irreverently!**
- **Not taking our sin seriously enough and approaching Him carelessly!**
- **Not accepting God's provisions & instead approaching Him on our own terms**
- **Making worship more about us than about God!**

The example of Nadab & Abihu should caution us in our approach to God!

**The example of Aaron should encourage us**, because though he failed to worship God rightly when he made a golden calf back @ Mt. Sinai, he now enters into God's holy presence through the blood of a worthy sacrifice!

We are all unworthy regardless of what we wear, how we sound, how much money we give, etc. Our worship is only acceptable to God when we too approach Him through the blood of **a worthy sacrifice - Jesus Christ!**

I learned the hard way, so did Nadab & Abihu. Let's learn from these mistakes!

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