

Friday, September 22, 2023 • Read Leviticus 10:1–7

Questions from the Scripture text: Who act in v1? Whose sons are they? What does this make them? What do they take? What do they put on it? What does the Holy Spirit call this fire? Before Whom do they offer it? What had He not done? What comes out in v2? From where/Whom? What does it do to Nadab and Abihu? What happens to them? Before Whom? Who speaks in v3? To whom? Whose words does he deliver? Concerning what group of people, or what action, is the Lord speaking? How must those who draw near regard the Lord? Before Whom does He insist upon being glorified? What does this imply that Nadab and Abihu were not doing? How does Aaron respond to Moses's statement? Whom does Moses call in v4? What relation are they to Aaron? Where does Moses tell them to go? And carry what? Where? So where do they go (v5)? How do they carry them? Where? What important qualifier ends v5? To whom does Moses now speak in v6? What does he tell them not to do to themselves? What will happen to them if they do? What will happen to all the people? Who must mourn this new burning? How many of them must do so? Who has kindled it? But where mustn't Aaron, Eleazar, and Ithamar go? What would happen to them? Why? What does the end of v7 say that they do?

What can turn God's glory from a blessing into a curse? Leviticus 10:1–7 looks forward to the evening sermon on the coming Lord's Day. In these seven verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **when we approach the Lord in our own way, His glory becomes a curse to us rather than a blessing.**

It must have seemed like a good idea to Nadab and Abihu. God has just displayed His glory. His people have just worshiped Him. Why not offer some burning incense in front of the tabernacle for all the people to rejoice in before Him?

Deadly worship. But in the worship of God, it is never a good idea to do anything that isn't God's idea for us to do that in His worship. v1 calls the fire strange (NKJ "profane") and explains that by saying, "which He had not commanded them."

Here are 40% of the priestly family. On the first day after their ordination had been completed. Seven days' worth of special sin offerings have been made for them. "The anointing oil of YHWH was upon" them (cf. v7). If anyone could ever have been permitted to offer just a little of their own addition to the prescribed worship, it would be they.

But that's part of the point, isn't it? YHWH says that if we come in our own way despises His holiness and denies His glory (v3). And no amount of seeming worshipfulness or sincerity can compensate for that.

Christless worship. Indeed, we have been hearing for months, from the beginning of Leviticus, that all that the Lord has given as the way of worship is really coming through Christ. The tabernacle, the priesthood, the sacrifices—all were shadow-pictures of Christ. To come to God in any other way than what He has commanded is to come without Christ!

This explains a shocking detail in v2. The fire comes out from YHWH to devour them. It passes over the mercy seat, out of the holy of holies, past the altar of incense, past the lampstand, past the table of showbread, out the front of the tent, and consumed them. Even the mercy seat could not save them. Without Christ, the glory of God is a curse, not a blessing.

And the supernatural nature of this cursing fire is all-the-more highlighted by an easy-to-miss detail in v5. The fire that consumed Nadab and Abihu was focused so particularly upon them that their holy clothing is so intact that it can carry their corpses out of the camp. This was a display of God's glory like in 9:24. But without Christ, the glory of God is a curse, not a blessing.

Mournful worship. What a mercy the end of v3 is: "so Aaron held his peace." Many have responded with indignation at the idea that sincerely offered worship deserves God's wrath and curse if it comes in actions not commanded by God. But God gives Aaron the grace to hold his peace, even when it has cost his sons their lives. He, Eleazar, and Ithamar can't go out mustn't follow ordinary mourning rituals, because their hats and garments are holy (v6). They must all hold their peace.

So the providence of God requires others to do what Aaron and his remaining sons would otherwise do. Aaron's cousins are permitted to come and retrieve the bodies (v4–5). And it leaves the mourning to their "brethren, the whole house of Israel" (v6). In this way, the passage teaches us how we should all respond to manmade worship and God's curse upon it. Not with indifference or complacency. Not with self-righteousness. But with humility and mourning that the Name of God would be defamed in the midst of His people's worship.

Our patient God. The Lord is a merciful God. Slow to anger. Longsuffering. One need only to look at the mess of manmade worship that is offered in the church—from the papists and the eastern churches, to the worldly ("relevant"?) worship of so many evangelicals, to the liturgies full of supposedly wise "instructive" additions by some who even call themselves Reformed. When God does not incinerate all these worshipers, we do not conclude that they are somehow not committing the same sin as Nadab and Abihu. Rather, we conclude that God is merciful and patient! And therefore, He is all the more worthy of being worshiped only in the way that He has commanded.

How do we treat God as holy in the actions of worship? How do we treat Him as holy in the manner in which we do the actions? What place does mourning over worship sins have in your thoughts and prayers for the church?

Sample prayer: Lord, we thank You that You have made the way to Yourself in Christ. And we thank You that You have given us the actions of worship by which we may know that we are coming through Him. Grant also that Your Spirit would give us true faith in Him to come to You sincerely from our hearts in those actions that You have commanded, which we ask in His Name, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP51B "From My Sins, O Hide Your Face" or TPH274 "Jesus, My Great High Priest"

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Leviticus 10 versus 1 through 7. These are God's words. The nadab and to buy who the sons of Aaron. Each took his sensor and put fire in it. But incense on it. And offered profane fire. Before y'all play. Which he had not commanded them. So, fire went out from Yahweh and devoured them.

And they died before. Yahweh And Moses said to Aaron. This is what your wife 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. Than Moses called, Michelle and alzafan. The sons of its, 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 said. And Moses said to Aaron and to oh yeah, it's our atomar his sons. Do not uncover your heads nor tear your clothes.

Unless you die. And draft come upon all the people. But let your brethren the whole house of israel. Below the burning. Which Yahweh has kindled. He shall not go out from the door of the tabernacle of meeting. Unless you die. The anointing oil of Yahweh is upon you. And they did, according to the word.

Of moses.

So, farther reading of gods inspired and Inherentworth.

They'd open about who were the right men. There were two of the five. In all of israel. To could offer. The incense on unto the lord. And there were the right men from the right family. They each had. Their sensor, their little shovel for the incense and the fire.

That had been designed by god. Been formed by spirit, sustained skill, holy spirit, sustained skill. It was the right shovel. It was the right day. This, they Had been properly ordained. Now to the priesthood, having gone through the seven day or nation. Priesthood. Ordination of the priesthood. And this was the Eighth day.

Same day as Chapter 9, where It is shown that god's way of coming to him. Works god's way of coming to him. Enables man. To approach with atonement and blessing. It was probably even the right incense the That, which was Um, So devoted to The public worship of god that No other incense could be made like it.

But according to verse 1, it was the wrong fire.

It was. Strange fire. And it's answered. Uh, by god with consuming fire.

And so, we Wants to know. What made the difference? We want to avoid. Coming to god in the way that need having to buy. You did. If it is possible to get so much right? But just get a little bit wrong. And, The worship go from being. Accepted by god.

To bring us near. With the Intensity of his glory. Uh, being unto our blessing. If just if one small thing can change. And it goes from the intensity of his glory being unto our blessing to the intensity of his glory being unto our Destruction and our curse. We want to know what it's going wrong.

So that we don't come. Making the same sort of error. And so what we see, In this passage is that uncommanded worship is foreign. Uncommanded worship deserves fire. And uncommanded worship. For six, the gospel or disobeys. The gospel. As we will see the language in second Thessalonians one. But may help, if we use the threefs foreign Fire.

And for six, First. Uncommanded worship is foreign. They offered verse 1 says profane. Fire before. Yahweh Other translations say strange. Fire. That's the same word from which you get stranger or foreigner. It was not the fire. That was from the lord. It was not the familiar. Fire. The appointed fire.

It was. Foreign. Fire not from the lord himself. It doesn't belong. Here. And therefore it fails. To regard him as holy if god is holy, if he is devoted to himself. Then. That which is used in his worship that which comes near as worship needs to be that which he has consecrated to himself.

Those are the things that are holy, But if we come with something strange that god has not consecrated to himself, then our worship is foreign to him. And this is dangerous, not just Because it's strange and unusual. But because the foreign worship. Is not holy. And so he says in verse 3, By those who come near me.

I must be regarded as holy. And so we must give the holy god, his holy worship. Not foreign worship. Not something other. Than what he has consecrated. To himself. And we can see, The reinforcement of this. A statement in verse 3. That it does not regard him as holy With the commit, with the comment at the end of verse 1, That the strange fire, the The, the great strangeness of it, the great profanity of it, and that's why The the translation profane is okay in verse 1, although not quite as literal.

The great profanity of it is. It was worship, which he Had not commanded. And so native and about who put their ideas. In the place of god's commandments. And they put Sincerity, they're intentions. In the place of what god desires. They did not treat god. As holy. So, the first Problem with uncommanded worship is that it is foreign.

If we. Have some other form of music. Than congregational song. You know, the solo music that is in so many of the churches. Or a performance music in which it's not the congregation, but some Uh group, however smaller large. Up front. Or something other. Then. The. The music making that god has appointed.

Whether that which he had appointed for the temple. Which was Levitical voices. Uh, Levitical choir. And Levitical instrument. But now, there are no levites. So you can't go to the temple worship and say here's what God appointed for the temple. Then take Uh, levitical choirs and instruments that were furnishings of the temple.

And import them into new testament, worship any more than we would import an altar. Or incense. Maybe that's not a good example because there are those who try to import incense. And they're even those who refer to the front. Of the worship room as the altar. And as we see how, Easily idolatry creeps.

Um, We do not replace. The sermon. With a drama. Or a film. Or. Any sort of thing? However, well intended, or cleverly devised. That is not the lord's servant preaching. As the lord's ambassador through whom the lord himself. Authoritatively addresses, his people in the worship today, when you hear his voice, And the the warning not to refuse him who speaks from heaven.

In the book of hebrews. We do not add. Sacraments that the lord has. Not command it.

You know, you don't add The washing of feet. To the public worship. However, Uh, sincerely meant. Or devised. Cleverly devised by men. It's foreign. Anything that we invent. We might be the right people. We might be in the right place. We might have had the right preparation. We have all of these things that native gonna buy, who had And yet if we bring something other than what God has devoted to himself consecrated himself, Declared as his holy worship.

If we don't bring the holy god, his holy worship. We bring. Worship, that is foreign. And we disregard him as holy. But he says by those who come near me. I must be. Regarded as holy. So i'm commanded worship for supporting. The second place we see that uncommanded worship deserves.

Fire. Verse two fire went out from yahweh. And devoured them. And then, Um, Verse. Six, what they are especially to be whale is the burning Which Yahweh has kindled. And so the sacrifices We're no longer accepted on their behalf. There is, there was the the fire by which The sacrifices were accepted in their behalf as their substitutes, and you remember with the With the substitute accepted as your behalf.

The fire of the lord on his altar, would convert them to smoke and you could ascend to the lord. And so, the glory of the lord represented by the fire, was a means by which he brought, you near was, a means, by which he blessed you in the substitute that he has provided But if we come in our way instead of his way, Then we're saying no, thank you to your way.

Which includes those substitutes. But there is still the fire of the glory. Of the lord. And so, uncommanded worship. Deserves god's curse. You know, we mean it so ever so well. But it's not just foreign it deserves. Fire. And so the fire of yahweh comes out, but it doesn't go to the altar.

And burn up sacrifices in their place. The fire comes out from, before yahweh. And devours them. First two. Uncommanded worship deserves fire. It comes without a substitute. Here is the tabernacle. In which is the holy of holies in which is the ark upon, which is the mercy seat. And, Yahweh is enthroned.

Upon the terabynne. There, he makes the greatest. Display. The great display. Of his presence in all the earth. And all the creation. And, Within what he has designed.

Shows, mercy to his people. But now the mercy seat. The arc. The holy of holies. The tabernacle. None of these mediate for them. None of these help. The fire comes out from, before yahweh. Even the mercy of god. Would not save them. Because they were not coming in the way.

That was provided. By god. He must be regarded as holy. And so we cannot bring that uncommanded worship, that is foreign. And he will be glorified. The fire of his glory will burn. And if it's not burning, To bring us near by way of substitute. Then it will burn against us.

In wrath and curse. Notice that this is a supernatural fire. Of judgment. How do we see the supernatural nature? Well, first of all, it comes from Before y'all layer from yahweh. Himself actually. Verse 2 fire went out from yahua, but second of all. It's supernatural fire of the sort that the lord had hinted at at the burning bush.

You remember the fire on the bush was not consumed. Well, this fire consumes native in a bayou, but what doesn't it? Consume, if you look at verse 5, It doesn't consume their tunics. They'd happen to buy, who are incinerated. But they're tunics can still carry their bodies outside of the camp.

This was a fire that burned only and specifically against them. It was the fire of the wrath of god. And so it is a fire. That is to be more and God commands. And providentially arranges. That the whole of israel. The whales, the burning. Which Yahweh is kindled. Aaron.

Liaisonar. Uh, they can't mourn. And morning, you would Put ashes on your head, tear your clothes. The problem is, The priests have, holy hats and Aaron has the high priest's turban. And they have their holy garments and Aaron has the high priest's robe. You can't remove those. In the, in the The.

Tabernacle. And they aren't allowed to leave the tabernacle. They're still in the eighth, day of their anointing. They, they have to stay there. And so, the lord has providentially arranged, That they can't carry the bodies out. Aaron's cousins, have to come and carry the body bodies out. They can't do the morning.

Go on commands, that the whole church. Mourn and grief. He providentially calls the whole of israel. Took a well the burning which Yahweh is kindled. And when we see, The wrath of god coming. Against his church. For centuries. Of degrading worship. Increasingly foreign worship, increasingly fire, deserving worship. What he calls us to.

There's not a holy spirit. He doesn't say that. The rest of israel are to despise, the memory of nadab and abaihu. And you feel self-righteous in themselves because they did not offer the strange fire. But he calls us to grieve.

He calls us to mourn. God has been disregarded as holy god's holiness has been disregarded. God's glory. Has been has been shown not in blessing. But in curse. And so, That's a cause. For morning. And grieving. And if we learned to mourn that which Our flesh would celebrate. Right?

The churches are full of foreign fire deserving worship, aren't they? And yet it is celebrated and one of the first things we need to do. Is to see. How god has been cursing us? To see. The weak theological state of the church. To see. The spiritually, lifeless, state of the church.

In which man has to has to ape, has to pretend real spiritual life by his frenzy of activity and start up emotions to see. The morally degraded state of the church. In which we do not love and follow god's law with joy. And devotion to him. In the life, in which we are increasingly worldly, and self-satisfied.

And we ourselves and our family. Led by me. God forgive me and help me to repent. Are very easily satisfied. By earthly things by worldly things. And this is something that we have in common with our age. In the churches. We see all those things we see. We see.

God's right? And just judgments. That have come upon his church. For centuries. Now of degrading increasingly foreign increasingly fire deserving worship and the first step. Is to mourn. Is to grieve. Now, why? Is. This uncommanded worship. So foreign And so fire deserving. Well, i was verse 3 has told us In being foreign it disregards, god is holy.

And then being fired deserving. Um, does not. In being fired deserving, it does not embrace The. Display of his glory in saving us and yet he must be glorified. And if his glory is not going to be displayed in saving us, Then it will be displayed in cursing us.

But it is, especially because uncommanded worship forsakes the gospel. Then the course of the book of leiticus here. God has provided the way. And they forsake the way. That god has provided. They disobey the gospel, the way, of course, is jesus. Wasn't a magical tint. With magical bowls and magical, goats magical, blood and magical fire.

No, all of these things. Where god's provision by which they looked to christ. And by which he made display of christ in the creation in which he delighted in his son. Uncommanded worship. For six, the gospel. And this is the most frightening thing. Because that Uh, which happens in the public worship.

Can happen. Um, in the life if we can come to god over and over again, in ways that we have devised using the name, Of jesus. And yet, not coming. In submission to how god says, jesus. Um, Mediates, our worship. Then how are we to know that we aren't with our life as a whole coming to god using the name of jesus but not coming.

By resting in him. As our life, not coming by hoping in him as our substitute righteousness. As our mediator as our covenant head as our savior. Uncommanded worship forsakes the gospel. Listen to the. The similarity. As second Thessalonians one. Talks about the last day. He's talking to persecuted Thessalonians and he's saying it is a righteous thing with god to repay with tribulation those who trouble you.

We pick up in verse 7 and to give you who our troubled, rest. Uh, to give you who are troubled rest with us. When the lord jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire. Taking vengeance. On those who do not know God. And so inflaming fire.

And who are foreign. They do not know god. How to, how do we know? They do not know god and on those who do not obey the gospel. Of our lord, jesus christ. These shall be punished with. Everlasting destruction from the presence of the lord. And from the glory, Of his power, everyone is going to be Ultimately at the last in the presence of the lord.

And the glory of his power. And the great differences, whether it's going to be. An everlasting destruction. That comes. From the flaming fire of his glory. Or. Whether having come through christ, Not being foreign. Coming through the lord, jesus. His glory is unto our blessing. When he comes in that day verse 10, To be glorified in his saints.

And to be admired among all those who believe Because our testimony among you was believed. Therefore, we also pray for you that our god would count you worthy of this calling and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power. That the name of g, our lord, jesus christ may be glorified in you.

And you in him. According to the grace of our god. And the lord jesus christ. So god must be glorified, and he will be in his son at the last Everyone. We'll draw near to god in his glory. Particularly his glory has displayed in expressed in. The lord jesus christ.

This is a great blessing for those who are in him. But it is a great curse. For those who are for, Because they have not obeyed. The gospel. And so, we can see. Second Thessalonians, 1. Leviticus 10. The great. Offense of the uncommanded worship. Is that it doesn't come through the lord jesus christ.

Uncommanded worship. Is foreign. It deserves fire. It's forsakes the gospel. It comes without christ. Each one of you will be in god's. And the immediate presence of god's glory. Forever. And you will either be there in christ glorified like him as hard as that is to believe. And we pray for the help of the holy spirit to stir up our faith that we can believe we will be glorified like jesus.

So that god's glory will be Unto our blessing and magnified and praised even by what he has done in us. Each one of you will be in the presence of God's glory forever, either like that, Or. As an object of his fiery wrath. One for whom. The glory of god is unendorable.

But inescapable forever.

Coming in the way that he has commanded. Is to come through christ. So, one of the great Benefits to us of the public worship. As that week by week. As we give the holy god. His own holy worship. Which we know comes through the lord jesus christ. He trains our hearts.

To embrace his gospel. And come to him in the way that he has provided. Abandoning and forsaking anything that comes from us. And even this way of coming to him in the public worship, Reinforces in our hearts. Coming to him with our life. And the way that he has provided, Which is his son.

Our lord jesus christ. And that way public worship is rehearsal. For the last day. For eternity. The lord give us. To regard him as holy And so that his glory, Will be unto our everlasting blessing. Because we have come. Through the lord, jesus christ has provided in the gospel.

Let's pray. Our father in heaven, how we thank you for your gospel. How we thank you for your son. Whom you have given to us, and Through whom we can come to you. And we pray that you would. Give us to mourn. Over the state of the worship. In the churches.

Put the due to give us to rejoice. Over your provision. Of blessing and glory forever. Then the lord jesus. And that you would give us to come rejoicing week by week. To come in the way. That you have provided. And an abandoning the way. That man has devised. So that we My practice and have our hearts trained and shaped.

Strengthened. In saving faith. We thank you that it is not the faith. But the savior. Who saves us? And so we commit ourselves. Into your care, we throw ourselves upon your mercy. Depend upon your strength, your spirit. Help us. Oh, lord. Help your church. Oh lord. For, we ask it in jesus name.

Amen.