



Lesson 56 Strange Fire

Story Elements

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Text: Leviticus 10:1-20• Setting: circa 1445 B.C. at Mt. Sinai• Characters God, Moses, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu.• Key word(s) “ _____, _____ ” (v 3) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plot: Aaron’s sons minister in an unauthorized way and suffer the consequences.• Climax: “And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.” (v 2) |
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The Presence of God

1. The final chapters of Exodus describe the building of the Tabernacle and the preparations of the sacrificial system. In Exodus chapter 40, after the tabernacle was finished, “a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.” (Exo. 40:34)
 - a. When the tabernacle was finished, this initial manifestation of the presence of God filled the tabernacle to the degree that Moses was unable to enter.
 - b. The _____ was how God directed the nation of Israel in their wilderness travel. (cf. vv Exo. 40:36-38)
2. The book of Leviticus opens with the LORD calling to Moses from within the _____.

Lev 1:1 And the LORD called unto Moses, and spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying...

The Priests of Israel

3. The opening chapters of Leviticus contain divine instructions for sacrifices and the consecration of priests. Chapter 9 tells of Aaron’s first sacrificial offering.
 - a. In testimony of God’s approbation, _____ came out from the Holy Place and consumed the sacrifice on the altar. (Lev. 9:24)
 - b. The people were amazed and “shouted and fell on their faces.”

The Punishment of Blasphemers

4. (10:1) Aaron’s sons, Nadab and Abihu, took each of them a censer and offered “strange fire” before the LORD. It was called strange fire for two possible reasons:
 - a. They did not use the proper _____ Moses had made (Exo. 39:38) but instead mixed their own.
 - b. They did not use the fire that _____ sent to ignite the coals on the altar (Lev. 9) but used some common fire to heat their censers.
5. (10:2) Fire came out from the Holy Place and killed Nadab and Abihu for their sin. We can understand the severity of the sin of these new priests by realizing that...
 - a. ...they were possibly _____ at the time (which would explain the prohibition against drinking in 10:8-9)
 - b. ...they were probably performing out of a sense of _____ and self-self-glory. (Remember how the people were shouting and amazed in chapter 9).
6. (10:3) In the aftermath of the sudden tragedy, Moses explained to 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.” Matthew Henry explains, “Whenever we worship God, we come nigh unto him, as spiritual

_____. This consideration ought to make us very reverent and serious in all acts of devotion, that in them we approach to God, and present ourselves before him.”¹

- 7. (10:4-7) Mishael and Elzaphan, Aaron’s cousins, removed the bodies of Nadab and Abihu outside the camp. The other priests were instructed to stay in the tabernacle grounds and to show no signs of mourning “for the anointing oil of the LORD is upon you,” that is, the honor of serving God should not be marred by the _____ of just punishment of sin.
- 8. (10:8-11) Moses then warned the priests against drinking while they were serving in ministry, the reasons for which are:
 - a. The priests need to make a distinction between holy and unholy, and between clean and _____.”
 - b. They also needed to teach the people those distinctions so “that you may, by your example in your ministrations, preserve the minds of the Israelites from confusion in regard to the distinctions made by the divine Law.”²

APPLICATION → Matthew Henry warned, “those that are addicted to drunkenness are very unfit to teach people God’s statutes, both because those that live after the flesh can have no experimental acquaintance with the things of the Spirit, and because such teachers pull down with one hand what they build up with the other.”³

- 9. (10:16-20) Another irregularity was committed by the priests: a sacrifice was not eaten as it should have been. Aaron explained that he was afraid the LORD would not accept the ceremony because he would be eating with a _____ heart (versus a celebratory spirit). Moses acquiesced and “was content,” that is, he believed Aaron truly sought to please God in his decision to refrain from eating the sacrifice.

APPLICATION → We should strive to worship God according to his commandments and always with an eye on pleasing him in all we do.

Romans 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. 18 For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.

Notes: _____

Answer Key: Key word(s): “sanctified, glorified” 1. b. glory cloud • 2. Tabernacle • 3. a. fire • 4. a. incense; b. God • 5. a. drunk; b. pride • 6. priests • 7. sorrow • 8. a. unclean • 9. grieving

How to use this worksheet for personal Bible study: (1) Read the Bible passage given in the **Story Elements** section. (2) Read through the worksheet and try to fill in the blanks without looking at the **Answer Key**. (3) Check your answers with the key and make the necessary corrections. (Note: some answers are a matter of opinion, and often more than one answer is correct. (4) Write down your own thoughts, applications, and questions for further study in the **Notes** section.

¹ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 161.
² Albert Barnes, *Notes on the Old Testament: Exodus to Ruth*, ed. F. C. Cook and J. M. Fuller (London: John Murray, 1879), 133.
³ Henry, 162.