

Nadab and Abihu
7-15-18 AM

Christians today are priests of God (1 Peter 2:9). We are told that the priest hood of the past was a foreshadow of the priesthood of all believers, with Jesus Christ as our high priest (Hebrews 5:1-5). From passages such as Hebrews 5 we are given a clear understanding of the important principles of being a priest. Priests can only be made by God (through obedience to the Gospel). Priests must offer those gifts and sacrifices approved by God. Priests minister in garments designed by God (in our case, it is the putting on of Christ, Galatians 3:27). Finally, our offerings must be on an altar in the temple that is our body (1 Corinthians 6:19) and the church (1 Corinthians 3:16).

We are told that the things recorded in the Old Testament are there to teach us how to behave in the New Testament (1 Corinthians 10:11). In the Old Testament, the priesthood of Aaron was the main priesthood for the covenant of Israel. The priests were given a special book in the law, Leviticus, to teach them the proper way to serve as priests. In the middle of this book there is a story of two priests who approached God the wrong way and were destroyed.

Leviticus 10 tells how Aaron's two oldest sons, Nadab and Abihu, came into the tabernacle with incense from a fire that was not the one God had ordained. Upon entering the tabernacle they were immediately struck dead. God then commanded Aaron through Moses not to mourn for them, nor to neglect the continuation of the worship service. The point was that everyone needed to see this truth:

*"By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy;
And before all the people I must be glorified."*

Worship is like electricity. We need it to maintain the lives we live. Could you imagine suddenly being without it? Many would die without electricity. Yet we also know that electricity is very dangerous, and must be handled very delicately. So it is with worship. When we worship we are before God. As a side point, not everything we do is worship (or we'd be dead). God sets special times and circumstances for worship in places such as 1 Corinthians 11 and 14. What we need to determine is that casual handling of worship is DEADLY.

It is a simple truth: Not all worship pleases God. In this cause, we see that UNAUTHORIZED (that which God did not prescribe) invokes God's displeasure. Some may think that this is an Old Testament truth only, but it is not. We are told this in John 4:20-24. In Hebrews 10:26-29 we are told that the penalties for failure are GREATER in the New Covenant than the Old. So who decides what matters? Too often we hear people cry "legalism" when we look at God's law and determine adding more is error, yet that misses a profound truth about worship – God decides what matters.

Does this truth mean God does not accept worship from the heart? Not at all; heartfelt worship IS what God wants. Consider what David said in 1 Chronicles 28:9. But for many, heartfelt worship really means what their heart desires, not what God desires. Obedience reveals the true heart (Jeremiah 17:9-10, Romans 8:27).

If we want to worship God, the word "Authorized" needs to be in the conversation. Authorized means to possess authority. Authority does not come from the heart, the preacher/pastors, or even the church. Authority comes from the Word (1 Corinthians 4:6, 1 Timothy 3:15). God only accepts worship that is true spiritual worship, meaning we must follow what He reveals is His desire.