

The Old-Time Evangelistic News

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How Will You Worship the Next Time? (Part 7)

Exodus 24:1-2, 9-11

Last month we finished with The Comment about The Mixed Up Worship. We now look at the last thought—The Consequence. We must always remember that sin will be judged. Many, even some professing believers, will laugh at the thought that God will judge their sin. Some have the mentality of just enjoying everything about life, even sin. They talk just like the rich man in Christ's parable in Luke 12:19—*“Take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.”* That is the same thought that Paul expressed in I Corinthians 15:32 if the dead rise not—*“Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die.”* Many never think of the consequences of sin, but that does not mean that there are none. The Bible gives warning after warning about the consequences of sin.

In Exodus 32:28 we have the consequence of Israel's idolatry. After the people have Aaron make the golden calf and worship it, God tells Moses that the people have corrupted themselves and made a golden calf. God says that He will consume them and make a nation out of Moses. Moses intercedes for the people and the Lord withholds His judgment on the whole nation. As Moses and Joshua come down the mountain, Joshua thinks there is a noise of war, but Moses tells him that it is not war but singing. As Moses sees the people in their debauchery, he is filled with wrath and throws down the tables of stone that God had made. He then destroys the golden calf, grinds it to powder, puts it in the water, and makes the people drink it (summary of Exodus 32:7-20).

Moses then confronts Aaron and asks him why he allowed such wickedness to take place. In a reaction that is common to all of us, Aaron took no responsibility, but blamed the people. He said, *“Thou*

-2-

knowest the people, that they are set on mischief.” Then he lied and said that he gathered the gold from the people, threw it into the fire, *“and there came out this calf.”* I am not sure what Aaron is trying to express when he says that the calf came out of the fire. He knows that he fashioned it with a graving tool as stated earlier in Exodus 32:4. The only conclusion that I can reach is that Aaron is trying to say that the calf appeared miraculously, as if it was the hand of God. By saying that, Aaron is stating that God approved of the idolatry. It was bad enough that Aaron gave in to the people, made the calf, and led them in the worship. Now he is trying to justify his actions and say that God made the calf, thereby giving His approval. God did not make the calf in a miraculous way. He had stated from the mountain that there were to be no other gods and no images of any kind. Aaron should have acknowledged his sin and accepted the blame. He never should have tried to explain what happened (summary and quotations from Exodus 32:21-24).

But what Aaron did, most of us have tried to do in the past. We are convicted by the Holy Ghost in our heart privately, or we hear sin preached against and then the Holy Ghost convicts us. Either way, we argue in our hearts and sometimes with the preacher. We say that what we are doing is not really sin. We even express the idea that God really approves of our sin. We might tell the preacher himself, or more commonly, we will just say to ourselves that the verse does not mean what the preacher is saying that it means. “That is his personal interpretation,” we will say piously, “I do not see it that way.” In reality, we do not see it that way because we refuse to read the Bible or honestly listen to the preaching of Scripture. We must stop being like Aaron and confess our sin honestly in the sight of God.

Moses then challenges the people with the question, *“Who is on the LORD's side?”* The people are allowed a chance to acknowledge their sin, confess it, and realign themselves with God. You would think that all of them would accept God's mercy. It is clearly stated that all of the sons of Levi gathered themselves unto Moses. The

implication is that others did as well, but some did not. Moses then orders that those who did not repent must be put to death. Because they practiced idolatry and did not repent, 3,000 men died that day. Their practice of idolatry was awful, but when given a chance to repent, they did not and suffered the consequence of that sin. Friend, God does not ignore sin. You will not get away with what you are involved in. There are consequences to sin. You may not be experiencing God's wrath right now, and it may seem that you are getting away with your sin right now, but do not be foolish enough to think that you will get away with your sin forever. God is a holy God; He will judge sin. You will suffer God's wrath against sin. Friend, to be honest, you may not experience God's wrath on this earth. Many have sinned and never suffered the consequences on this earth. But those who have died are now suffering the consequences of their sin, and they will for all of eternity. You might get away with something on this earth, but you will never escape God's wrath throughout eternity. Confess your sin now and experience God's mercy, or you will experience God's wrath.

The people wanted to enjoy the pleasures of a god that they could see. They did not want to live by faith and obey God's Word. They got what they wanted, but they also received God's judgment. However, the 3,000 dying was not the only expression of God's judgment. The chapter concludes with the statement, "*And the LORD plagued the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made*" (Exodus 32:35). Exactly what that plague was, the Bible does not say, but there is something that we must understand from this verse—sin always has lasting consequences. God did forgive those who came back to His side, and did not kill them, but He did not remove the consequence of sin completely. Those who did not repent, died immediately. But even those who did repent experienced the plague that is described in verse 35. Some will say that is not fair, but one who says that does not understand the seriousness and the far-reaching consequence of sin. Someone said in a series of comments about sin that sin will cost more than you want to pay. Some have enjoyed sin for a season, but experienced the consequence and pain

of that sin for a lifetime. Sin never results in good things. Sin always results in terrible consequences.

Now we turn to the second type of worship expressed by two of the men who were on the mountain and saw God. For this we go to Leviticus 10 and consider how Nadab and Abihu worshiped God. Leviticus 10:1-2 say, "*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.*" At first glance, this may seem a harsh reaction by God to what Nadab and Abihu had done. To understand the passage better, we must look at what the men were doing. When we understand what they were doing, we can see why God killed them instantly.

The actions of Nadab and Abihu are what I call **Man-made Worship**. I call it that because verse 1 clearly states that they were doing something that God had not commanded them. As we will see, God had given some of the details of worship in the tabernacle in the last part of Exodus. However, He had not given the details about the incense itself and the burning of it. For whatever reason, Nadab and Abihu wanted to start the burning of incense. To do so, they made up their own way of doing it and suffered God's judgment for doing so.

The first thing we will consider about Man-made Worship is The Contributors. Leviticus 10:1 clearly states that the men offering the strange fire are Nadab and Abihu. This is the fourth passage where they are mentioned by name. The first time they are mentioned is in Exodus 6 when the tribe of Levi, including Aaron's family, is listed. They are mentioned a second time in Exodus 24. The third time they are mentioned by name is in Exodus 28 where the description of the priest's clothing and the command to anoint them is given. We will focus on their mention in Exodus 24.

I mentioned this much in describing Aaron's worship in the first

part of the message, so I will try to be concise in talking about Nadab and Abihu from Exodus 24. However, we will never get the impact of Leviticus 10 if we neglect Exodus 24. Notice again Exodus 24:1–“*And he said unto Moses, Come up unto the LORD, thou, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship ye afar off.*” It is interesting to note that the other two sons of Aaron, Eleazar and Ithamar, are mentioned in Exodus 28, but are not called up to the mountain to worship God. We cannot be certain because the Bible does not say, but it seems that eventually the high priestly work would have been done by both Nadab and Abihu after Aaron’s death. Nadab is called Aaron’s firstborn in Numbers 3:2, but in the other passages they are always listed together. I know of no other reason that they would always have been listed together. Because they will eventually be the high priests, they are called up to the mountain to worship God. They participate in the eating and drinking on the mountain and, more importantly, two times they are included in the statement, “*They saw God.*” They were allowed to participate in something that their brothers did not. It should have impelled them to always do right. But it did not. We will continue next month.