

The Old-Time Evangelistic News

Evangelist W. Paul Redmond Sr.

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How Will You Worship the Next Time? (Part 9)

Exodus 24:1-2, 9-11

Last month as we finished up, we were considering The Comment that was made about the actions of Nadab and Abihu. Verse 1 closes out with the solemn statement, “*Which he commanded them not.*” God had clearly stated who was to offer the incense—Aaron. It was not their responsibility to offer it, but they did so anyway. But God would not accept it and judged them for it.

In our worship today, we must be sure that what we are offering to God is acceptable according to His standards. As I mentioned last month, the attitude of some today is, “God will just have to accept what I give Him.” Some will argue that God really does not care how we worship, as long as we worship Him. Others will say that they do not care what God says; they like what they are doing and will continue to do it.

But can one truly worship God if they do not know or do not care what God says? The answer is clear, Absolutely not! Ignorance or carelessness is not a sign of true worship. If one truly desires to worship God, they will want to know what God says, and they will care if what they are doing is acceptable to God.

Our worship today is different than in the Old Testament period. There are no animal sacrifices to make and there is no incense to burn. We are not responsible to a priest, nor is there a tabernacle or temple to which we must go to worship God. Old Testament worship was, to a great degree, very outward. That is not to say that the heart did not matter, but worship was manifested by the outward evidences of bringing a sacrifice to the priest to be offered and all of the ceremonies described in Exodus and Leviticus. Now I would argue

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very strongly that one’s heart would have to be right towards God to want to bring a sacrifice, but Old Testament worship was very outward.

That is what makes Jesus’ statement in John 4:23-24 so important. The woman at the well had just mentioned in verse 20 that the Samaritans had their place of worship in Mount Gerizim, and the Jews had their own place of worship in Jerusalem. Jesus told her in verse 21 that the time would come when neither of those places would be the place to worship. He says in verses 23 and 24, “*But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*” With those words Jesus contrasted the Old Testament worship with what would become the New Testament worship. He focused on the internality of worship by saying it must be “*in spirit.*” Because of what is revealed later about the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in believers, Christ is saying that New Testament worship will not be about sacrifices and incense, but it will be led from the inside out by the Holy Ghost. There will be outward manifestations of worship, but it will be a result of the Holy Ghost’s leading from the inside of the believer.

Jesus also said that worship must be “*in truth.*” This shows the importance of New Testament worship. It must be Scriptural. It is not my purpose to go into an in-depth study of worship in the New Testament, but many commands about worship are found throughout the epistles. We must read, know, and obey them, so that our worship will be acceptable in the sight of God. The music that we use to praise God, the messages that we preach or listen to—all of it—must line up with what God says in His Word. That means the message (words) of the music will be based upon Scripture and the manner of the music itself will be distinct from the music of the world. It will not sound like rock, country, or any other ungodly music. The messages that we preach and listen to must come from the Word of God. Preaching is not little homilies that make people laugh and feel

good about themselves, but rather they must be based upon the explaining and applying of the Word of God to our lives. God did not accept worship in the Old Testament that did not line up with His commands, nor will He accept worship today that is not obedient to His commands.

We now come to the fourth part of Man-made Worship. Notice The Consequence that came about because of Nadab and Abihu's actions. Leviticus 10:2 says, "*And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.*" Most of us read that and think, whether we want to admit it or not, that God was a little harsh on Nadab and Abihu. We reason that it was just a little incense. Punish them—well, yes—but kill them—that seems a little extreme. But we must remember that God never does anything wrong. There is a reason that the punishment was so severe. As I have said throughout the discussion of Nadab and Abihu's actions, we do not know anything else other than what is mentioned here. The episode is never discussed again and is only mentioned briefly in a few of the passages listing the priests where it says that Nadab and Abihu died when offering strange fire (Numbers 3:4; 26:61; I Chronicles 24:2). Because of the lack of explanation, we can only conjecture why God killed them. Combining the details of the duties of the priests given in the latter part of Exodus and the first part of Leviticus, along with what Moses told Aaron in Leviticus 10:3, I think it was the attitude of Nadab and Abihu along with their actions that caused God to kill them. Leviticus 10:3 says, "*Then Moses said unto 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.*" God said, "*I will be sanctified [set apart] in them that come nigh me.*" God will not accept just anything that is offered unto Him. It must be done His way and with the right attitude. As I read what they did and God's reaction to it, I can see a careless, "my way" attitude in Nadab and Abihu. God did not put up with it.

Along with their attitude, direct disobedience to God's clear

command caused the death of Nadab and Abihu. God had specifically stated that only the high priest could offer incense. That was Aaron, not Nadab and Abihu. Perhaps they flippantly said that they could do it too, but God showed them that He would not accept their disobedience. As the sons of Aaron, God held them to a higher standard. They were disobedient and God slew them.

One final conjecture, perhaps it was the combination of the golden calf incident and this that caused God's judgment. Nadab and Abihu are not mentioned by name in Exodus 32, but I do not think that it is a stretch to say that they participated in the idolatry. God allowed Aaron and them to repent, but apparently their rebellion and sinful desires never fully departed. When they tried to add their own ideas to the worship of God, God killed them. How serious was it? God would not even allow Aaron and his other sons to mourn the deaths when He said in Leviticus 10:6—"*And Moses said unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar and unto Ithamar, his sons, Uncover not your heads, neither rend your clothes; lest ye die, and lest wrath come upon all the people: but let your brethren, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning which the LORD hath kindled.*" Worship of God is not to be done contrary to God's commands, nor should it be done our way, or in a careless, half-hearted manner. God deserves our worship, but He only wants it done the way He said to do it.

God will probably not kill someone today who worships Him in the wrong manner. But that does not make unbiblical worship acceptable. For the believer there is something even more serious than physical death. What could that be? It is the Judgment Seat of Christ. At the Judgment Seat, we will give an account of everything that we have done for Christ. Do you want Him to tell you that your worship has not been acceptable? I would never want to hear that. If you do not, then you had better make sure that your worship is right according to His commandments.

We now come to the third part of this message. It is the only worship that is right in God's eyes. It is what I call **Marvelous**

Worship and hopefully it will be what we always desire to offer unto God. The first two are given for our examples, so we will know what we should not do. This is given, so we can know what God desires and try to offer it unto Him.

The first thing we notice about the Marvelous Worship is The Contributor. Sadly, unlike the others, it is only one man. Aaron led the entire nation into Mixed Up Worship. Nadab and Abihu fashioned the Man-made Worship. Of all of the 74 men who were on the mountain and saw God in Exodus 24, the only one who desired to worship God again in the right way was Moses. The others all worshiped again, but in terribly wrong ways. Moses saw God in Exodus 24, but that was not the first time that he had unique fellowship with God. It began at the burning bush when God told him that he would lead the people out of Egypt. It continued while he was in Egypt as God talked with Moses several times. Then after God gave the ten commandments from Mt. Sinai and the people complained, Moses went up the mountain. There is more, and we will continue next month.