**BIBLE TALK Radio Broadcast**

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**Nadab and Abihu**

Nadab and Abihu were sons of Aaron, and they were priests under the Old Covenant, the covenant God made with the children of Israel. The priests were allowed to come near the Lord and to serve at the tabernacle, and they were the only ones who were allowed to do so. In Leviticus 10:1-3 we read of Nadab and Abihu offering fire before the Lord. It says, *“Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. So fire went out from the LORD and devoured them, and they died before the LORD. And Moses said to Aaron, ‘This is what the LORD 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.”*

There are some major lesson to be learned from the story of Nadab and Abihu that we want to consider on our program today.

First of all, we learn that God will not tolerate sin. Nadab and Abihu disobeyed God. God had commanded a certain fire in the burning of incense, but Nadab and Abihu offered that which God had not commanded. They committed sin. This passage shows us God’s attitude toward sin. God cannot tolerate it. We see His attitude toward sin when God destroyed man from the face of the earth by means of a flood, because of their great wickedness (recorded in **Gen. 6**). We see it when God rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah because their sin was so grievous (recorded in **Gen. 19**). We see it when Ananias and Saphira lied to God and were stricken dead (recorded in **Acts 5**). We see it here when Nadab and Abihu offered profane fire before the Lord, which God had not commanded them. All of these examples state in a strong and dramatic way that God will not tolerate sin.

We also see God’s attitude toward sin when we understand that only the blood of His own Son could

remove sin. You see, the wages of sin is death (**Rom. 6:23**). Death is what we deserve because of our sin. We deserve death, spiritual death, eternal banishment from God’s presence in hell as the result of sin. This is justice. It took the death of the sinless Son of God to be the payment for our sins, so that God could be just in forgiving us of our sins. **1 Peter 2:24** says, *“who Himself* [that is Jesus] *bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness--by whose stripes you were healed.”*  God takes sin seriously. God does not tolerate sin. Those who persist in their sins are subject to the wrath of God.

Secondly, we learn from this story of Nadab and Abihu that God will not tolerate presumptuous sin. I don’t know what caused Nadab and Abihu to go get that fire they used for the incense, but I know they acted presumptuously because God had never authorized that fire to be used. It wasn’t that they didn’t know what fire to offer. God had told them the formula for the incense and where to get the fire. They knew what they were to do. They just went out on their own to offer the fire they wanted. I don’t know what they were thinking. Maybe they were thinking, “one fire is as good as another. What difference does it make?” Or “God did not say not to use this other fire.”

The teachings of God can be divided into three parts. First, there is the teaching of God in which we can see the moral benefits. Can’t you see the benefits in the teachings don’t steal, don’t murder, and don’t commit adultery? We can understand that those are good laws. Secondly, there is the teaching of God in which we can see the spiritual benefits. Don’t you see the benefits of His teachings that we should pray, study His word, or to meet with the saints for worship? We can understand that these help us spiritually.

But, thirdly, there is the teaching of God where we may not be able to see any benefit. We may not be able to give any explanation of why God said do this or that. Could this have been a part of Adam and Eve’s problem? “Why that tree?” “Why that fruit?” “Why can’t we eat of this tree? What’s the difference between that tree and the other trees?” I don’t know if Adam and Eve knew the answers to those questions? But what they did know is that God had said, *“in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”* (Gen. 2:17). In the case of Nadab and Abihu, “Why that fire instead of this fire?” Whether they could answer that question or not did not change the fact that God had commanded a certain fire. To go out on their own and choose their own fire was indeed a grievous sin. Today someone might ask, “Why unleavened bread and fruit of the vine in partaking of the Lord’s Supper in remembrance of Jesus?” Because that is what Jesus authorized. Why immersion in water to have sins washed away? That is what the Lord commanded. The story of Nadab and Abihu tells us, “If God says something, do it, whether we understand the reasons for it or not.” Don’t make any changes in what God says do. Don’t substitute your own ideas, or what you think will be a good idea for what God said. Jesus said in Matthew 7:21-23, *“Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'”* It is not enough to acknowledge Jesus as Lord. It is not enough to have done some right things in His service. The question is have we done the will of the Father? Are we doing exactly what He says?

A third thing we learn from this story of Nadab and Abihu is that the evil of presumptuous sin is its failure to sanctify and glorify God. Look again at verses 2 and 3 of Lev. 10: *“So fire went out from the LORD and devoured them, and they died before the LORD. And Moses said to Aaron, ‘This is what the LORD spoke, saying: 'By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; And before all the people I must be glorified.'’”* When Nadab and Abihu offered fire which God had not commanded, they were not sanctifying and glorifying God. It is a reverence for God and His word; it is a recognition of God and His sovereignty; it is a recognition of His greatness and our littleness that brings us to do exactly what God says. And it is pride that causes us to say, “Yes I know that is what God said, but I’m sure He will be just as happy with something else.” Who do we think we are to change what God said and think He will be glorified?

Jesus said in John 7:16, *“My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me.”* And then He said in verse 18, *“He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him.”* Jesus said that one who speaks from himself seeks his own glory. How did Jesus seek the glory of the Father, the One who sent Him? He did that by teaching and doing the will of the Father. The only way we can glorify God is by teaching and doing exactly what He says.

Peter said in 1 Peter 4:11, *“If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.”* To glorify God we must not speak our own ideas and opinions, but we must speak as the oracles of God, that is the utterances or words of God. That means we must have book, chapter and verse for what we teach.

Fourthly, another lesson we learn from this story of Nadab and Abihu is that we must accept in silence that which is the will and the working of God. Now remember, Nadab and Abihu were the sons of Aaron. Look at **verses 2 and 3** again*. “So fire went out from the LORD and devoured them, and they died before the LORD. And Moses said to Aaron, ‘This is what the LORD 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.”* How do you think Aaron reacted when he saw his two sons dead, having been stricken by the LORD? Did Aaron raise his voice in protest? Did he clinch his fist at God? We don’t know. What would you have done, if they were your two sons? When Moses said to Aaron, *“This is what the LORD spoke, saying: ‘By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; And before all the* *people I must be glorified”* it says, *“So Aaron held his peace.”* This is how we must accept the will and working of God. Silence, Acceptance, Reverence

God means what He says. He expects His people to honor Him. He expects us to listen to Him and obey Him. I may not understand God’s judgment, but I must accept it with silence. It is God who is working. I may not understand why God struck and killed Uzzah when he did what was not lawful, he put his hand to the ark of God, recorded in **2 Sam. 6:6-7**. I may not understand why He killed Ananias and Saphira when they lied to God, recorded in **Acts 5:1-10**. I may not understand the eternal punishment which God will meet out to those who do not know Him and who do not obey the gospel (**2 Thess. 1:7-9**). This teaching may even mean my mother or father, or my grandmother or grandfather is lost, but I must hold my peace. It is God who is acting. He means what He says. We are not to talk back to God.

Now I don’t want to leave the impression that the Bible teaches that God is some unreasonable tyrant that acts toward men just on a whim. God always does what is right and just. Daniel lived in the days of captivity after God had brought disaster on Jerusalem and scattered the children of Israel to other nations because of their sins. In a prayer to God, Daniel said, *“As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us; yet we have not made our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities and understand Your truth. Therefore the LORD has kept the disaster in mind, and brought it upon us; for the LORD our God is righteous in all the works which He does, though we have not obeyed His voice.”* (**Dan. 9:13-14**)

The story of Nadab and Abihu tells us something about God. It tells us that He will not tolerate sin. He will not tolerate presumptuous sin. He wants us to obey Him, to glorify Him. He expects us to accept in silence His will and working. The story of Nadab and Abihu teaches us that we must not play God. Don’t try to judge for God what He will accept and what He will not accept. Just listen and obey. Can we then emphasize too much the importance of obeying God and obeying Him in all He says? We cannot over emphasize this point, and it is a lesson we must strongly emphasize in this day and time.

Our time is gone for today, and we thank you for listening.

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