Strange Fire

A Brief Commentary

By Ken Rush

**Strange Fire**

*Leviticus 10:1,2 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.*

God had given specific instructions concerning the burning of incense, as well as all instructions of worship in the tabernacle.

*Exodus 30:7- 9 And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it. And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations. Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat offering; neither shall ye pour drink offering thereon.*

**What was this strange fire?**

*Leviticus 6:12.13 And the fire upon the altar shall be burning in it; it shall not be put out: and the priest shall burn wood on it every morning, and lay the burnt offering in order upon it; and he shall burn thereon the fat of the peace offerings. The fire shall* ***ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out****.*

This fire was evidently judgement fire, sent down from God to burn continually on the alter of burnt offerings, for these offerings represented the sacrifice of Our Lord on the cross. This fire was sacred before God.

We see other examples of this type of judgement fire in the Scripture. When Elijah was contending with the prophets of Baal. Elijah prayed to God, and God sent fire to consume the sacrifice.

*Kings 18:38 Then the* ***fire of the LORD fell,*** *and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.*

Also when the work on the Lord’s house was finished, king Solomon made a sacrifice and called on God for His blessings.

*2Chronicles 7:1 Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the* ***fire******came down from heaven****, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the house.*

It seems quite evident that this was the means God used to show that he approved of the sacrifice.

It was necessary that the fire for burning sacrifices on the brazen altar must not go out. Since sin was ever present it must be atoned for. This altar of sacrifice, where the sacrifices were burned, was sacred before The Lord, because this was showing forth the sacrifice of Our Lord on the cross, looking forward to the time when Christ would be our sacrifice **once** **for all.**  This fire was perpetually burning, and any fire used in the tabernacle must be taken from this altar. Any other fire used for this purpose was unacceptable to God,It is **“strange fire.”**

The golden censer was placed in the “Holiest of all” which was behind the second veil where the ark of the covenant was kept. The coals for the golden censer were taken from the alter of burnt offerings and placed in the golden censer and there sprinkled with incense to create a perpetual incense before the Lord

*Hebrews 9:3,4 And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant;*

*Exodus 40:5 And thou shalt set the altar of gold for the incense before the ark of the testimony, and put the hanging of the door to the* *tabernacle.*

*Leviticus 16:12,13* ***And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the LORD****, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the Vail: And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony,* ***that he die not***

This is precious To God. In Revelation Chapter 8, the incense in the golden censer was offered up with the “prayers of the Saints.”

Evidently Nadab and Abihu ignited their own fire to burn the incense.

**What difference does it make?**

Without the atonement for sin (represented by the altar of sacrifice) God could not accept the sweet incense offered.

**This was the problem with Cain’s sacrifice:**

*Genesis 4:3-5 And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering:*

*But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.*

No doubt Cain was offering the very best of his harvest. But God had commanded a blood sacrifice. A blood sacrifice was necessary, as an atonement for sin, until the time when Christ would die and shed his blood in payment for sin, **once for all.**

I have talked to many (unsaved people) who say they worship God **in their own way.** One man whom I had invited to our Church said “If I wanted to worship God I would just go out into a field somewhere alone” It seems man always wants to do things his own way.

*Proverbs 16:25 There is a way that* ***seemeth*** *right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.*

*Isaiah 55:8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.*

We must worship as God instructs, no other way will be accepted.

God can accept nothing from man that has not been cleansed by the blood of Our Lord, anything else is polluted with sin.

Any offering to God, must meet His requirements. “Obedience is better than sacrifice”. When we give our tithe or offering it must be of a willing heart, not begrudgingly.

*Exodus 35:5 Take ye from among you an offering unto the LORD: whosoever is of a* ***willing heart,*** *let him bring it, an offering of the LORD; gold, and silver, and brass,*

Any offering we make to God, whether it be worship of tithes & offerings, prayers, praise, or any other worship, if it is not done according to the instruction in God’s word, it is as **“strange fire”** before God, and although He may not strike us dead immediately as He did Nadab and Abihu, but He certainly will not accept that kind of offering.

Did you ever wonder if your prayers, your gifts; your worship really reach God? Perhaps we should all ask ourselves that question. We need to be sure we are following the guidelines God has set down for our worship. Make sure we are not offering **“Strange fire**.”

We find in the New Testament that Our Lord spoke to the religious leaders of that day, calling them hypocrites because they were not true to God’s Word. Pretending to be Godly men these Pharisees (religious leaders) were living very ungodly lives.

*Matthew 23:27 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchers, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.*

*Matthew 23:14 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.*

Likewise, we find today there are many who preach God’s word, but ignore God’s instructions..

*Matthew 7:21-23 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?*

*And then will I profess unto them,* ***I never knew you****: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*

These were preachers, who **ignored** the instructions in God’s Word and as a result were never saved themselves*.*

My friends, never ignore God. Ignore anyone else you wish, but NEVER ignore God.

God is all knowing, all powerful, and always supreme. God’s word is above all else, and **must** be obeyed.

*Psalms 50:21-22 These things hast thou done, and I kept silence;* ***thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself:*** *but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes.* ***Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.***

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*1Cointhians 10:1-10 Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that* ***all*** *our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were* ***all*** *baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did* ***all*** *eat the same spiritual meat;*

*And did* ***all*** *drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them:* ***and that Rock was Christ****.* ***But with many of them God was not well pleased****: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.*

*Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.*

The above Scripture is referring to the Israelites in the wilderness. What was their problem? They did not give attention to what God had said. And their worship was as **“strange fire”** before God. Some were idolaters, **“strange fire!”** Some committed fornication, **“strange fire!”** Some who were bitten by serpents and failed to look upon the brazen serpent God had prepared, **“strange fire!”** Some murmured against God because they didn’t have what they wanted, **“Strange fire!”**

Why do I call all this **“strange fire?”** Because as the **strange fire** of Nadab and Abihu, their worship and manner of life was all in willful disobedience to God’s direction.

How much **“strange fire”** is in our lives? If God struck us down for disobedience today as He did Nadab and Abihu, we would all be destroyed today.

**Do we assemble with God’s people regularly to worship?**

*Hebrews 10:25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*

Do we sing praises to our God, songs of praise and exaltation, or do we sing songs that tell what **I did** for God or that which **I did** to come to God?**(**Those songs I call **“I did songs”).** Many of the songs today fit that “I did” category. Perhaps we need to find some good praise songs, or sing the Psalms as the early Church did.

*Psalms 9:11 Sing praises to the LORD, which dwelleth in Zion: declare among the people his doings.*

**Do we memorize God’s Word and teach it to our families?**

*Deuteronomy 11:18,19 Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.*

**Is God asking too much from us?**

God created us, gave us life and breath, then when we fell in sin, Christ died and shed his blood for us to purchase our salvation and give us new life. Again I ask, IsGod asking too much from us? **Certainly not.** We should have God’s Word constantly before us, God should be foremost in our conversation, and in every aspect of our lives.

**Most of all, do we worship God properly?**

*John 4:23,24 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.*

Thank God for His longsuffering in this day, for I fear that many are often presenting **“strange fire,”** as it were before the Lord.

We who are saved today, have been made kings and priests. Do we walk worthy of that calling? Or are we offering **“strange fire”** before the Lord?

*Revelation 1:6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen*.

**Can we say with David?**

*Psalms 139:17 How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!*

*Psalms 139:23 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts*:

God knows our very thoughts and intents, so we must be honest and sincere in all things, whether dealing with others, or directly with God for all we do is known of God.

*Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is discerned of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

How then can we be sure we are not offering **“strange fire”** before Our Lord? I believe the answer is in the following verses.

*Proverbs 3:5,6 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.*

*In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.*

*Psalms 119:11 Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee*.

Let us memorize God’s word and hide it in our heart so we do not err as we walk in obedience before our Lord. Trusting completely in Him we cannot fail.

*Ephesians 6:13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*

When we are studying God’s Word, seeking His face, walking in the light as he instructs, we will have a correct attitude concerning God, and be aware of His good pleasure. Therefore our offering will not be **“strange fire.”**

*1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanest us from all sin.*

**Praise God, for His promise to those who love Him. “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.**”

*Hebrews 13:5 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said,* ***I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.***