

The Naked Bible Podcast 2.0

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“Leviticus 10”

Dr. Michael S. Heiser

With

**Residential Layman
Trey Stricklin**

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Leviticus 10

Leviticus 10 describes the deaths of the priests Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, for offering “strange fire”. The nature of their transgression and other admonitions from God to the priesthood are discussed in this episode.

TS: Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 73, Leviticus 10. I'm your layman, Trey Stricklin, and he's the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey Mike, how are you doing this week?

MSH: Very good, glad to be back and to jump into Leviticus again.

TS: I'm excited about Leviticus 10. We got some action on this one.

MSH: I've actually heard from a few people that are enjoying Leviticus so I can't diss it. I can't diss it anymore. I got to get away from that.

TS: There's a lot to it that people don't touch these types of books so I'm glad we're doing it because somebody has to.

MSH: Yeah, somebody has to.

TS: I mean the first time I read it, you just don't absorb it. You just kind of skim through it because it's just so in-depth and it doesn't apply. It's just not practical so there's a lot of people who just don't focus on Leviticus more than just reading it and moving on.

MSH: Yeah, I got to get through it so I can say I read the Bible. Well, here in chapter 10, if listeners can recall, this follows the ordination of Aaron and his sons. Last time we talked about some of the priestly garments and the ceremony associated with consecrating them and making sure that the tabernacle and the people who minister in the tabernacle were expunged of impurity, decontaminated, that sort of thing. And right on the heels of that we get chapter 10, and we're sort of prepped for this by versus 23-24 of the preceding chapter, chapter 9, so I'm going to read those. It says,

²³ And Moses and Aaron went into the tent of meeting, and when they came out they blessed the people, and the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people. ²⁴ And fire came out from before the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the pieces of fat on the altar, and when all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces.

MSH: So here we have this phrase, 'before the Lord,' which we're going to talk about. It refers to the immediate presence which we know from preceding material and other biblical passages was the holy of holies inside the tent. So somehow fire comes out through the structure and the apparatus of the tabernacle, consumes the offering, and basically it's a signal that everything is okay, everything's decontaminated. We're all set to go. And then we move into chapter 10 and sort of to emphasize the necessity of precise complete compliance with all the ritual laws that we've read about up to this point and maintaining this decontaminated status, this chapter preserves a brief story, a brief episode of the death of two of Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, because they do something improper.

They make an improper incense offering and they're struck down by God's fire. So if you look at the chapter, There's actually four things going on here. You have the death of these two men, prematurely obviously in the first seven verses. And then you get some regulations about

prohibiting priests from consuming alcoholic or intoxicating beverages prior to officiating in the ritual, in the cult, in the tabernacle. And some people because that little, that's verses 8-11, some people assume that because we have those three verses follow the Nadab and Abihu tragedy that Nadab and Abihu were drunk. I don't take that view. I think there's nothing in the text that can actually make that direct accusation but there's still a logic to the beverage prohibition. We'll get to that.

And then after verse 11, you have sort of a restatement of the requirement that priests eat the portions of the sacrifices that they're allowed to eat within specified areas of sacred space, of the holy ground that is the tabernacle complex. And then lastly, the chapter ends with Moses' instructions to Aaron and a little bit of a problem regarding the disposition of the sin offering that had been brought by the people as part of the dedication of the tabernacle. We'll get to what the problem was there and an explanation that Moses accepts. Some wonder if it's really satisfactory or not but we'll get to that. But essentially what you have happen in this chapter is you have an object lesson of the importance, in other words, God's ultralow level of tolerance for contaminating sacred space and for not going through the proper procedures.

And then you also have sort of supplemental content to that to remind the priests, okay, to do your duties correctly and to not mess up don't drink alcohol before it's your turn to officiate. Make sure that you eat the proper portion of the sacrifice. Not only that, but eat it where it should be eaten. There's just these little sort of re-emphasize stipulations because the lesson is pretty simple. Don't be like Nadab and Abihu or else you're going to wind up dead. I was going to say toast. Almost literally they were toast. That's the big lesson, just reminding you of their example. Don't be like this. Don't let this happen to you. So let's jump in here to the actual violation here. I'll read the first few verses here of chapter 10. It says,

Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it and laid incense on it and offered unauthorized fire before the LORD, which he had not commanded them. ² And fire came out from before the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD. ³ Then Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD has said: 'Among those who are near me I will be sanctified, and before all the people I will be glorified.'" And Aaron held his peace. ⁴ And Moses called Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Uzziel the uncle of Aaron, and said to them, "Come near; carry your brothers away from the front of the sanctuary and out of the camp." ⁵ So they came near and carried them in their coats out of the camp, as Moses had said. ⁶ And Moses said to Aaron and to Eleazar and Ithamar his sons, "Do not let the hair of your heads hang loose, and do not tear your clothes, lest you die, and wrath come upon all the congregation; but let your brothers, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning that the LORD has kindled. ⁷ And do not go outside the entrance of the tent of meeting, lest you die, for the anointing oil of the LORD is upon you." And they did according to the word of Moses.

MSH: Now those are the first seven verses and sort of what's memorable about this chapter. Some of these instructions can basically be summed up into don't mourn. Don't do some of the mourning things. Go to your house and rip your clothes and all that kind of stuff. You stay right

here and you don't do any of that. So we'll get to that as well. But let's go back to the beginning of the passage where the two sons of Aaron take the sensor and put fire in it. It's a term that just means coals of fire and lay incense on it so they're going to sprinkle something on it to create not only the scent but also the smoke for the burning incense. But they offer unauthorized fire, more literally, it would be strange fire.

I think that's the way the King James renders it. They offer unauthorized fire before the Lord which is a good translation because the following line, which he had not commanded them. So they do something that they were not commanded to do. It sort of befuddled people, and it is sort of a somewhat difficult scene to sort of figure out. What exactly did they do? The Hebrew here is *'esh zarah*, alien fire, strange fire, unauthorized is a translation that picks up on the line that follows. It's legit because they weren't commanded to do it. So, the less difficult word *'esh*, fire, is clear, something that's burning. The difficult word is *zarah*. So why is this act, why is this burning of incense here, why is it alien or unauthorized?

The text doesn't really specify the offense committed by the two priests but it just says that they do something that had not been specifically ordained, in other words, it wasn't part of the procedure. Now, there's a way to sort of construct an answer here and that's what I'm going to try to do, go through some other passages and look for some of these parallel phrases, because I think if we do that, an answer sort of emerges as to what they did, what was offensive. And I think generally speaking we can say that what they do wrong was that Nadab and Abihu penetrate too far into the sanctuary, in other words, they went on to sacred space designated for the high priest in accord with a specific procedure.

And they also could have brought coals for burning incense from an incorrect source, where the coals were actually taken from. But I think the one thing that's more apparent is that they're doing something that the high priest was supposed to do and therefore was not prescribed to them because they're not the high priest. And that procedure required them to penetrate too far into the sanctuary, into the sacred space, and that's what they did wrong, at least that's sort of a core aspect of it. And the way you get that is to look at parallel reference to this episode in Leviticus 16:1-3. So I'm going to flip over there quickly and read the first three verses here in Leviticus 16. It says,

The LORD spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they drew near before the LORD and died, ² and the LORD said to Moses, "Tell Aaron your brother not to come at any time into the Holy Place inside the veil, before the mercy seat that is on the ark, so that he may not die.

MSH: So that suggests that perhaps Nadab and Abihu had penetrated the veil or gotten too close to it because the high priest is supposed to do this once a year, and that's what Leviticus 16 is about. So God's saying look, you don't do this just any time. I'm going to tell you when you're supposed to do this, when you're supposed to offer incense on the altar of incense that is positioned, if you remember the layout of the tabernacle, it's positioned right in front of the veil behind which is the ark of the covenant. So I'm going to tell you when you're supposed to do that. So that's a hint that maybe, very possibly, this is what they had done. God continues in the rest of verse 2, Leviticus 16,

² and the LORD said to Moses, “Tell Aaron your brother not to come at any time into the Holy Place inside the veil, before the mercy seat that is on the ark, so that he may not die. For I will appear in the cloud over the mercy seat. ³ But in this way Aaron shall come into the Holy Place: with a bull from the herd for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering.

MSH: So procedurally, not only is it the high priest that’s supposed to go to this point and do a certain thing on a certain day of the calendar, but before doing it, you’ve got to bring the proper offerings to decontaminate yourself and to sanctify the area. And there’s no record of Nadab and Abihu preceding, doing that to preemptively prepare the space or themselves for penetrating that far into the sanctuary. Even if they had done it, they’re not the ones that supposed to be doing it. They still would’ve created a problem. They still would’ve transgressed. But Leviticus 16 gives us a bit of an idea. If you continue on in Leviticus 16, without getting too much into the content because we’ll obviously hit Leviticus 16 at some point in the podcast, it says this in verse 11,

¹¹ “Aaron shall present the bull as a sin offering for himself, and shall make atonement for himself and for his house. He shall kill the bull as a sin offering for himself. ¹² And he shall take a censer full of coals of fire from the altar before the LORD, and two handfuls of sweet incense beaten small, and he shall bring it inside the veil

MSH: So here we have a specific location for the coals that they should be taken from this altar, this location, and then brought in, penetrating the sacred space to this point. We don’t see anything like that in Leviticus 10. It just says that Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took a sensor and put fire in it, coals of fire, and laid incense on it. They offered unauthorized fire before the Lord which He had not commanded them. So here Leviticus, Leviticus 16, we have a specific procedure that mentions where you get the coals, what you’re supposed to do. You’re supposed to precede your presence there with the blood offering and all this kind of stuff, and going back to Leviticus 16 after the proper procedure, verse 13 says,

¹³ and put the incense on the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is over the testimony, so that he does not die.

MSH: So you have this phrase ‘so that he may not die’ repeated twice in Leviticus 16 and the context of Leviticus 16 as it opens is what happens to Nadab and Abihu because that’s the way Leviticus 16 opens. The Lord spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron. Basically here’s what they did wrong. You don’t just go in anytime and by implication any way but this is the way, verse 3, Aaron shall come in a holy place. So I think it’s a really strong suggestion that this is the problem with Nadab and Abihu, the penetration and the violation of the procedure, and they weren’t the ones supposed to be doing it anyway so they weren’t the ones commanded to do this. So I think that is what’s going on here. Now yet another parallel passage that sort of alludes to some of these things in Exodus 30:1-10. Let’s read a little bit of that. It says in Exodus 30 starting in verse 1,

“You shall make an altar on which to burn incense; you shall make it of acacia wood. ² A cubit shall be its length, and a cubit its breadth. It shall be square, and two cubits shall be its height. Its horns shall be of one piece with it. ³ You shall overlay it with pure gold, its top and around its sides and its horns. And you shall make a molding of gold around it. ⁴ And you shall make two golden rings for it. Under its molding on two opposite sides of it you shall make them, and they shall be holders for poles with which to carry it. ⁵ You shall make the poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold. ⁶ And you shall put it in front of the veil that is above the ark of the testimony, in front of the mercy seat that is above the testimony, where I will meet with you. ⁷ And Aaron shall burn fragrant incense on it. Every morning when he dresses the lamps he shall burn it,

MSH: So he can burn incense on it, just on that. But there's only one time a year error when he's actually going to move beyond the veil and incense is involved in that, but also sanctifying the presence through the blood offering. It is just a little hint that sort of helps frame the discussion of Leviticus 10, that in verse 9 in Exodus 30 it says,

⁹ You shall not offer unauthorized incense on it,

MSH: *Qetoreth zarah*, there's that word *zarah* again. The incense altar that's right in front of the veil, which obscures the ark from vision and frankly, from your presence, that's only supposed to have incense burned on it in a certain way with coals from a certain place by a certain person. And you take all this back to Leviticus 10 and I think it does frame the issue there. So I would say that Nadab and Abihu penetrate too far into sacred space that was meant only for the high priest and not only had they not going to the purification procedure that we just read about in Leviticus 16 but they also sort of assume they could do his job to offer incense “before the Lord.” Now let's take a look at that language. I want to say a little something about the ‘before the Lord’ language. We read in verse 2 of Leviticus 10 that the fire that killed Nadab and Abihu came out from before the Lord.

So the language ‘before the Lord’ is the same as occurs in these related passages for the space at the veil where the altar of incense was. Curiously though, the fire that emanated from the Lord's presence killed Nadab and Abihu after-the-fact of their violation, in other words, either after they'd gone back out of the holy place, like right after they get out of the tented area. That's either how we would read where they find the bodies or they are struck with fire on the spot before the Lord and they manage to get out of the tented area then they die outside the area because that's where the corpses are picked up. Their bodies are removed from ‘in front of the sanctuary.’ So either they're struck with fire on the spot and they make it out or God strikes them as soon as they leave the tented holy area.

There's a little bit of an ambiguity there but the fire originates from the divine presence, that much is clear. So it suggests that the death and the corpse actually took place in its finality terms outside the holy tented area, the holy place and then part of that is the Most Holy place, the inner sanctum. That kind of makes sense because a corpse would have defiled any sacred space but it sort of removes death at least in terms of the corpse from the Most Holy area because we talked about this before with like blood, loss of blood and seminal emissions and

things like that. Yahweh, predominantly speaking, was associated with life, not death. Now it was very clear that Yahweh had power over life and death, working both directions there. But he was the God of the living.

He was the source of life. He was the creator, that kind of thing. So it could be, this is a bit speculative, it could be that the fact that they don't have to be picked up, the corpses don't have to be picked up in the actual tented holy place might've been sort of theological messaging that, especially if God waits until they get outside to zap them, that this notion of I have to punish this violation but I'm not a God of death, I'm a God of life. I don't want death to be associated with me. I'm the living God and that sort of thing. It could have had sort of a peripheral object lesson other than the main object lesson that don't screw up. Don't screw up the procedures. Don't presume to usurp the duties of a high priest and so on so forth. SO who's the lesson for? There's an interesting phrase that I think has kind of an interesting application for us and that is in verse 3. It says,

³ Then Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD has said: 'Among those who are near me I will be sanctified, and before all the people I will be glorified.'" And Aaron held his peace.

MSH: So there's a distinction here between the people, generally, they're going to get the message and they're going to fear God. I will be glorified. But then there's this other group, those who are near me, among those who are near me, I will be sanctified. Of course it's a reference to the priesthood that My presence needs to be protected from you because you will profane it. You are lesser. You will bring impurity into My presence. It's the lesson of sacred space that that which is sanctified versus that which is common. I think it's kind of interesting that the text for obvious reasons in the Old Testament context draws this distinction between the masses and then the priests.

The priests are *qarob*, those who come near. They're special, they're different. You get the same language in Ezekiel 42 in Ezekiel's Temple vision. It's only the *qarob* priests that are near to God. They draw near because they're sanctified, so on so forth. You have phrases like *qarobem l'adonai*, those who draw near to me shall eat the holy offerings, in Ezekiel and different passages. This distinction between priesthood and laity is what I'm getting at here because now, think about it. Put yourself in the mind of a first century Jew who knows the system and had been taught about the distinction between the priesthood and the laity. We don't have that anymore. That's foreign to the New Testament. There's this concept of every believer is a priest and that's the way everyone's looked at so every believer, every follower of Yahweh, the entirety of the people of God, the masses here that can rightfully be called the people of God, every one of those are those who draw near and can draw near and ought to and God wants them to.

We've read some of these passages before Hebrews about boldly entering into the sacred space. So it's another distinction that is illegitimate for today. I don't mean to sort of pound too much on the idea of a priesthood or professional ministry but I could go off on a lot of directions about vocational ministry, pro and con and all that kind of stuff. This isn't really the podcast episode for that. But I think there's a line that's crossed when Christian service, let's just be as broad as we possibly can, when those who are in full-time Christian service, vocational Christian service make too much of the distinction that their office and even their clothing and where they

can stand and walk any given church service, how that distances them from the laity. And that's where a lot of this priest stuff in Christianity comes from. It comes from a reading back to Leviticus into the theocracy. Well, newsflash, the theocracy is over with and it was planned to become obsolete.

So I don't know why we have to sort of bring the baggage along. This is just something that I think is an important element of biblical theology. It really touches on the whole Divine Council thing about God originally wanting a family. He wanted a family who worked for him. At the beginning there were no priest and laity distinction. Everybody was in the presence of God. Humans were supposed to be part of the Divine Council group that helped God gets things done, either in the invisible world or the visible world, the world of humanity, the world of embodiment. God wanted us to work for the same company, Divine Council Inc., whatever you want to call it and it was a family business. The ground was equal, the ground was level, and then that goes its way and when we get these reinstallments of the kingdom of God, then God institutes a theocracy.

But even that's planned to be obsolete because that's how the New Testament salvation history plan plays out until you get into the New Testament and it says we're all priests. Every believer is a priest. I think there's a point to that. I think it actually means something and for us to blur it or obscure it. There's nothing wrong with elevating certain people in terms of respect. Paul talks about that as well and the writer of Hebrews does, too, about respecting the elders and whatnot. But ontologically and in terms of worship, in terms of nearness to God, there is no distinction. The only thing that distinguishes them is frankly responsibility. It's not nearness to God. It's accountability and I think when we get away from that when we start to professionalize the ministry or super sanctify it, we're getting away from an important element of New Testament theology, and frankly biblical theology.

So in verse 4, back to Leviticus 10 here, we've read verse 4 about carrying the bodies in their coats and so on so forth. And that was done, that was necessary to avoid contamination. It's also necessary for Aaron's cousins to remove the bodies of the dead priests because the two remaining sons of Aaron, Eleazar and Ithamar, had just been consecrated as priests. And so they can't be the ones to carry the corpses out because what happens if they defile themselves? Who's going to do the priestly stuff, because Nadab and Abihu are dead? So we get the cousins here in on the action to take care of the problem and that's why they're singled out, because we just lost half the priesthood in this episode. Now the second section is about intoxicants in verse 8. We'll just read that.

⁸ And the LORD spoke to Aaron, saying, ⁹ "Drink no wine or strong drink, you or your sons with you, when you go into the tent of meeting, lest you die. It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations.

MSH: Now, this has been read as having something to do with Nadab and Abihu. And I'm not saying that can't be the case. I'm just saying I think a better case is to go to Leviticus 16 and say the problem was penetrating too far and not doing the proper procedures and usurping. It's something that was for the high priest. And you can say maybe they were drunk, maybe that's what led to those bad decisions. Okay, you could say that. I don't think that is the explanation

though, which on occasion you'll read. But just generally, intoxicants, alcoholic beverages, are forbidden to the priest precisely because drinking them would impair their abilities, their faculties, their ability to perform their task.

They would not be able to do what they needed to do or they might be blinded or have their senses dulled to distinguishing between the sacred and the profane and whether it's an object or someplace they're supposed to walk or not walk. This is just a precautionary note because of the concept of sacred space, and because in this day and age you could be struck down, just like Nadab and Abihu were, for messing up. And so the larger lesson is don't be like this. Don't do this. You get the third section in Leviticus 10 requirement that priests eat their allotted portions within the specified areas. At verse 12 it says,

¹² Moses spoke to Aaron and to Eleazar and Ithamar, his surviving sons: “Take the grain offering that is left of the LORD's food offerings, and eat it unleavened beside the altar, for it is most holy. ¹³ You shall eat it in a holy place, because it is your due and your sons' due, from the LORD's food offerings, for so I am commanded. ¹⁴ But the breast that is waved and the thigh that is contributed you shall eat in a clean place, you and your sons and your daughters with you,

MSH: We get these regulations of where to eat, what to eat, that sort of thing. The point is the same. Follow the procedures. We've already given you the procedures in prior chapters, prior revelation, prior Scripture here leading up to Leviticus 10. It's all been laid out so follow the rules. Don't violate sacred space. Now you'd think that would sort of be the end of it but the chapter actually doesn't end there. It ends with sort a little kind of a mini-episode that was possibly another close call but it was averted. SO let me just read that and we'll finish up here in Leviticus 10. Verse 16 says,

¹⁶ Now Moses diligently inquired about the goat of the sin offering, and behold, it was burned up! And he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, the surviving sons of Aaron, saying, ¹⁷ “Why have you not eaten the sin offering in the place of the sanctuary, since it is a thing most holy and has been given to you that you may bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the LORD? ¹⁸ Behold, its blood was not brought into the inner part of the sanctuary. You certainly ought to have eaten it in the sanctuary, as I commanded.” ¹⁹ And Aaron said to Moses, “Behold, today they have offered their sin offering and their burnt offering before the LORD, and yet such things as these have happened to me! If I had eaten the sin offering today, would the LORD have approved?” ²⁰ And when Moses heard that, he approved.

MSH: Now the point is there's a reference here back to the rule which is in Leviticus 6 about bringing the blood inside the sanctuary and so on so forth. It says,

³⁰ But no sin offering shall be eaten from which any blood is brought into the tent of meeting to make atonement in the Holy Place; it shall be burned up with fire.

MSH: That's the problem here. So since the blood of this sin offering had not been brought inside the sanctuary, the proper portions of the sacrifice were to be eaten by the priest at this specific location. Now Aaron sort of excuses this. He excuses the failure of the priests to do what they should've done by explaining to Moses that his sons thought that they shouldn't eat of the sacrifice because of what had happened Nadab and Abihu. In other words, even though they were forbidden from mourning gestures and from leaving the sacred area and going to their house to mourn. even though that had been forbidden to them, Aaron says look, they're in mourning anyway because of what happened and so they just thought that they shouldn't eat of the sacrifice. They shouldn't participate. It's not a happy time. It's not an occasion for having sort of a celebratory meal with God. And the chapter ends when Moses heard that he approved. Okay, I get it.

In other words, Moses accepts it. We don't read any more about God being upset with that rationale or Moses having to take that to the Lord or anything like that. So it was possibly a close call because it's true, they didn't do what they normally should have done, but this is what Aaron says. We can say it's an excuse made but I think there is coherence to it. Whether we can sit here and judge Aaron and say well, maybe he made that up, maybe it wasn't, but let's give him the benefit of the doubt because the text doesn't rail on him for anything additional. Okay, it wasn't a happy time and they just decided we're not going to pretend it is a happy time. This is the only way we can express our mourning and we feel bad about what happened so that's okay. That's the way the chapter ends and answers the issue.

So just to sort of summarize here with just a few points, teaching points, application points, whatever you want to call them. The whole chapter really focuses on the importance of sacred space, the idea that Yahweh space needs to be distinguished from other space. It's not just theory anymore. It changed from theory to reality when two guys got fried. It's not just theoretical and the people, the priesthood and all the people know this now. So it's going to strike fear into them and it's going to put a seriousness to the matter. We need to learn the lesson God wants us to learn. We need to learn the theology God wants us to learn because we don't want this to ever happen again. And that's the point that's reinforced by the chapter. It's a good life lesson.

Why keep repeating the same sorts of errors in our own Christian life? We know what we're supposed to do and we don't. Well, sometimes God has to let us suffer. Sometimes it has to hurt for the lesson to sink in. That's sort of the point of Leviticus 10. Second thought, even though we don't need or have a physical temple, sacred space can still be violated. And you say well, where do you get that Mike? Well, in 1 Corinthians 11, remember this is the Lord's supper chapter. Paul says because of something you're doing in connection with the Lord's supper observance, some are sick and some have died prematurely. So the implication is that God is holding people accountable in some way for some offense, 1 Corinthians 11. If any of you've ever gone to my blog and read my take on what's going on there, I don't think it's about unconfessed sin. I think it's about what Paul actually tells us in the context that some of the poor are being mistreated.

They used to have a celebratory feast, a love feast, in conjunction with observing the Lord's Supper in New Testament times and Paul's big gripe is look, those of you who don't need the food, you have enough. You're crowding out the poor or you're neglecting them or you're doing something where they're not getting enough to eat but you're just sort of filling your faces at this thing. That just isn't right. If you want to have a meal, go home because you have the goods. You have enough. But some people don't and so this is really a blessing to them to be able to eat a full meal like this, shared goods. To them it's not just a luxury it's really important. So that's the problem 1 Corinthians 11. Apparently God was judging that. In 2 Corinthians 6, God talks about how, through Paul, that we are the temple of God and we shouldn't be partnering with the powers of darkness and just people who are not loyal to Yahweh, and so on so forth.

And again, 2 Corinthians 6 talks about some of the ill-effects of some of the polluting effects that can have. So even though we don't have sacred space that's ground, and even though we are, our bodies as believers, are indwelt by the Spirit, we are sacred space. There are things we can do to violate sacred space even today. That's the point. Then lastly, the line about among those where near me I kind of like because I am a big believer in the priesthood of the believer idea because it's biblical theology. So we need to take care if we are in vocational ministry, for those who were under in church that have a vocational ministry, we need to help them remember this and say look, it's not about spirituality.

It's not about being nearer to God than someone who's not in vocational ministry. It's about accountability. It's about responsibility. You're no more sanctified than I am. You have no more of the Spirit dwelling in you than I do. We are all believer priests. We can all be ones that draw near to the Lord. It's not about spirituality or standing before God. It's about these other things, accountability and responsibility. So I think we can take some good lessons from Leviticus 10. It's an interesting chapter but also I think a fairly practical one too.

TS: How much of God did the Jews fear? I mean back in Leviticus 9 when the fire came out before the Lord and consumed the burnt offerings, and here, the fire came out again before the Lord and consumed the brothers, that's got to be pretty scary. And then they fall to their faces at the end of Leviticus 9 when the Jews fall to their face. I mean how scary and scared of God were they?

MSH: I personally think I would not say that every passage that refers to the fear of the Lord is not about mere reverence because that's the way these passages usually get taken. Oh, that refers to revering God and respecting God. It certainly does but I think some of them, for sure because of these kind of contexts, makes the fear of the Lord to be even more than just reverence. They're living in a day and time when God could directly intervene and make a point like this. And I think they did, especially the nearer you were I think to the Mosaic period, the more prone you probably would have been to something like this. Now I'm not saying these sorts of things didn't happen later in Israel's history, they did. But I think that was part of it, that there was legitimate concern about your bodily well-being if you were out of step with God. That would've been part of the way you process that or least you should have. And I think a lot of the godly Israelites would have.

God can judge us this way. In the New Testament this actually isn't foreign. I mean like John says, there is a sin unto death. There's a point at which if you persist in sin, God is no longer interested in forgiveness or that kind of process. God has to intervene and say okay, we're

past the point of return. I need to take this believer, you're still a believer, but I need to take this believer home, because John is writing that to Christians. There is this sense of this. The writer of Hebrews, it's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. You can say that's about eschatological judgment and it sort of is but there's still this sense that God will act. It's not just theory, it's not just passive, that sort of idea. 1 Corinthians 11 I think is a good case where there apparently is some sort of judgment going on because of what they were doing. This is not foreign to the New Testament. \

We went through Acts. Ananias and Saphira, apparently God decides we need to have an object lesson here. And it's not indiscriminate, it's not repetitive, it's not frequent. The fact that it is infrequent I think makes the whole notion of God looking at a situation. Okay, we need an object lesson. We've crossed the line here. People need to be reminded and better one or two to make the point than something more drastic, that kind of thing. So I think this was part of their theology and it wasn't just mere behave or respective, that kind of thing, but that's certainly a part of it. You don't lose that but this other thing over there is sort of the elephant in the room when it comes to how they're thinking about what they're doing.

TS: Yeah, and remember Ananias, Acts, that's Luke's Testament. That's after Christ.

MSH: Yeah, same with the Corinthian church. You have these instances, sin unto death, this thinking is not utterly foreign to the New Testament after the cross. It just isn't.