

Dear Heavenly Father,

Praise

My desire is to offer to you “acceptable worship, with reverence and awe,” for you truly are “a consuming fire” (Heb 12:28–29). You are worthy of my deepest honor and respect. When you appeared in thunder and fire on Mount Sinai, Moses trembled with fear, and he told the people that you had come to test them: “That the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin” (Exod 20:20). I praise you today for your mighty power and glory. You are a holy God!

Today in Your Word

Today you told me how you inaugurated and confirmed the Levitical priesthood. After Moses, Aaron and his sons carried out your commands, your glory appeared to all the people. Fire came out from before you and consumed the burnt offering and pieces of fat on the altar. This spectacular display of your presence showed that you approved of the priesthood and accepted the people’s worship. You were now pleased to dwell with your people in the midst of the camp. This teaches me that you are a holy God, who must be worshiped in the manner you decide. Through Christ, I can come boldly to your throne, but I am still called to holiness and careful living. Sadly, this wonderful day was marred with tragedy. You killed Nadab and Abihu, Aaron’s eldest sons, for offering “strange fire” which you had not commanded. The wording of Leviticus 16:1–2 suggests that their sin may have been twofold: (1) they tried to come into your presence at a time which you had not authorized (Aaron was warned not to “come at *any* time”), and (2) they tried to enter a place which you had not authorized (Aaron was warned not to go “into the Holy Place inside the veil” except under *special* circumstances). Also, Leviticus 10:9 hints that Nadab and Abihu may have been drinking and so their judgment and sense of caution would have been impaired. In short, Aaron’s sons likely tried to present an incense offering at an unauthorized time (one of their own choosing) in an unauthorized place (they barged into the most Holy Place). You told Aaron, “Through those who are near me I will show myself holy, and before all the people I will be glorified” (Lev 10:3 NRSV). This teaches me that if I will not sanctify you by my actions as the God worthy of fear and reverence, then you may use my death as an opportunity to remind those around me that you are indeed the God who is to be honored and feared above all.

Reflection

The dispute between Moses and Aaron in Leviticus 10:16–20 over Aaron’s failure to eat the sin offering (Aaron was likely afraid to eat “a thing most holy” after the death of his sons) shows that you are not capricious and uncaring. Though technically, Aaron should have eaten his portion of the offering, you didn’t punish him in light of the terrible experience he had just been through. This teaches me that you are more gracious to those who make mistakes because they fear you, than to those who carelessly and impudently enter your presence, as did Nadab and Abihu.

Request

Father, impress on my heart the responsibility I have to worship you with obedience and holiness. May the fear of you be ever before me, that I may not sin! (Matt 10:28).

Thanksgiving

Thank you for the Levitical priesthood. It speaks to me of spiritual realities and testifies to the marvelous work of your precious Son, Jesus Christ, my Mediator and Sacrifice!

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Suggested Hymn: “[The Fear of God](#)” – Ken Bible.

Meditation Verse: Leviticus 10:3.