

“Strange Fire (I)”

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Text: Numbers 3:1-4

Theme: There are many who are offering “strange fire” to the Lord today in that their practices are not in harmony with the revealed will of God. These practices must desist and cease forever or else those engaging in such activities will be eternally lost.

Introduction:

1. Nadab and Abihu
 - a. They were Levites
 - b. They were priests, being of the priestly tribe -
 - c. They were the sons of Aaron, the high priest -
2. They sinned against God
3. Their sin was that of offering “strange fire before the Lord.”
4. Disobedience to God has in all dispensations involved the wrath of God.
 - a. Patriarchal - Cain - Genesis 4
 - b. Mosaical - Moses - Deuteronomy 34
 - c. Christian - Ananias and Sapphira - Acts 5

Discussion:

- I. Nadab and Abihu were disobedient to God and therefore had to pay the price
 - A. They offered fire which the Lord didn't tell them to offer - Leviticus 10:1,2.
 1. Notice that the Lord did not feel obliged to specifically point out all the things which they could not do.
 2. Other examples of this type language being used in the Bible. "Which He commanded them not."
 - a. Jeremiah 7:31- burning of sons and daughters in Hinnon
 - b. Jeremiah 29:23- They speak lying words
 - c. Deuteronomy 18:20- Making God say something he didn't say.
 - d. Acts 15:24 - binding circumcision on Christians
 - B. God has always meant what he said and demanded obedience. Those violating his desires have been and will be punished severely.
 1. Saul - I Samuel 13:8-14
 - a. Saul was too anxious to sacrifice -
 - b. He did the right thing
 - c. Except that he was the wrong person to do it
 2. Uzziah - II Chronicles 26:16-21
 - a. Uzziah the king went into the temple to offer incense
 - b. But he was not supposed to do that because of the fact that he was not a priest.
 - c. He was stricken with leprosy for his disobedience.
 3. Uzzah - I Chronicles 13:9,10
 - a. Uzzah stayed the ark with his hand lest it fall.

- b. But this kindled the anger of the Lord for Uzzah was not authorized to touch the ark.
- c. Nothing morally wrong; it was wrong only because God so made it.

II. The disobedience of Nadab and Abihu involved a false religious practice.

A. Their sin - Numbers 3:4

- 1. They did not use fire taken from the altar of burnt offering.
- 2. They used a different fire of their own desire, hence it is called "strange."

B. Lessons to be learned from this

- 1. There is such a thing as false religious practices.
 - a. Many today think that as long as a person thinks he is right, God will recognize him and nothing will be counted wrong.
 - b. But God must be worshipped in spirit and in truth - John 4:24
 - 1. Right attitude
 - 2. According to the right standard
 - 3. John 17:17
 - c. Anything contrary to the truth, the Bible, is not a doctrine of God and constitutes false religious practice.
 - 1) Matthew 15:9 - "the commandments of men."
 - 2) Mark 7:7
 - 3) I Timothy 4:1-3 - examples of doctrines of men, false religious ideas-
- 2. False religious practices cause condemnation to ensue -
 - a. Nadab and Abihu were destroyed by fire -

- b. Only the truth, not error, is able to set men free - John 8:32
- c. That which is not planted by God will be rooted up and hewn into the fire - Matthew 15:13
- d. The false teacher and those that follow after will both fall into the ditch - Matthew 15:14
- e. False teachers cannot go to heaven - Revelation 21:27 - Their names are not in the Lamb's book of life because they make lies.

III. *Strange fire* is being offered to the Lord today-

- A. It is a strange idea to suppose that a runner would receive a crown before he has run the race.
 - 1. The Christian life is compared to a race - Hebrews 12:13; I Corinthians 9:24
 - a. A runner can win or lose
 - b. He only receives a crown when he has won.
 - 2. But false teachers today have changed this -
 - a. They say there can be no losers - "once saved always saved"
 - b. They say the runner has already received his crown - he has eternal life now.
 - c. It's a strange idea -
 - 3. The Bible opposes this strange idea -
 - a. A child of God can fall from grace - Galatians 5:4; II Peter 2:20-22
 - b. We do not in the full sense possess eternal life - we but have the hope of eternal life - Titus 3:4-7
 - 1. Desire and expectation

2. Not possession
- c. We receive a crown only at the end of a race which we have won-
 1. Faithful unto death - crown of life - Revelation 2:10
 2. Finished the course - crown of righteousness - II Timothy 4:7,8
- B. It is a strange idea to think that something has been purchased (paid for) before the purchase price has been rendered.
 1. The church is paid for by the blood of Christ - Acts 20:28
 2. But false teachers have changed this -
 - a. Many say the church started before he died -
 - b. It was a credit purchase - receive now, pay later
 3. But Jesus is not in the credit business -
 - a. He does not have to borrow
 - b. He can pay in cash - Ephesians 5:25 - His life.
 4. The church started on Pentecost -
 - a. It would start with power - Mark 9:1
 - b. The power came on Pentecost - Acts 1:8; 2:4
 5. Consequences of the church starting before the death of Christ. - Reasons that the church could not have existed before the cross.
 - a. No blood in it - Hebrews 10:1-4; 9:22,23
 - b. New Testament not in force - Hebrews 9:16,17
 - c. No Spirit in it - John 6:70; 13:27
 - d. Not allowed to preach Christ - Matthew 23:20

- e. Before atonement - Matthew 20:28; 26:28; Hebrews 9:12-15
 - f. Many more could be offered
- C. It is a strange idea to think that there can be unity in diversity
1. "Can two walk together except they be agreed?"
 - a. Amos 3:3
 - b. Obviously not!
 2. Yet false teachers answer, "yes!"
 - a. Lots of ecumenical councils promoting unity
 - b. Yet they have only agreed to allow disagreements.
 - c. Everybody is right in their view.
 3. But the Bible opposes this line of reasoning.
 - a. Must speak the same things - I Corinthians 1:10.
 - b. Must walk by the same rule - Philippians 3:16.
 - c. Unity is important with a view of evangelizing the world - John 17:20,21.
 4. Our basis of unity is the Bible - John 17:17.

Conclusion:

1. God will not tolerate disobedience.
2. We must practice pure and undefiled religion - cf. James 1:27.
3. Let's bring out the water hoses of truth and quench the *strange fire* of error and false teaching - I Peter 4:11.
 - a. "Do Bible things in Bible ways and call Bible things by Bible names."
 - b. "Speak where the scriptures speak, remain silent where the scriptures are silent."

Invitation:

1. Must obey true plan of salvation and not the strange ideas of men.
2. FRCB - Live faithfully

