

## Leviticus 10

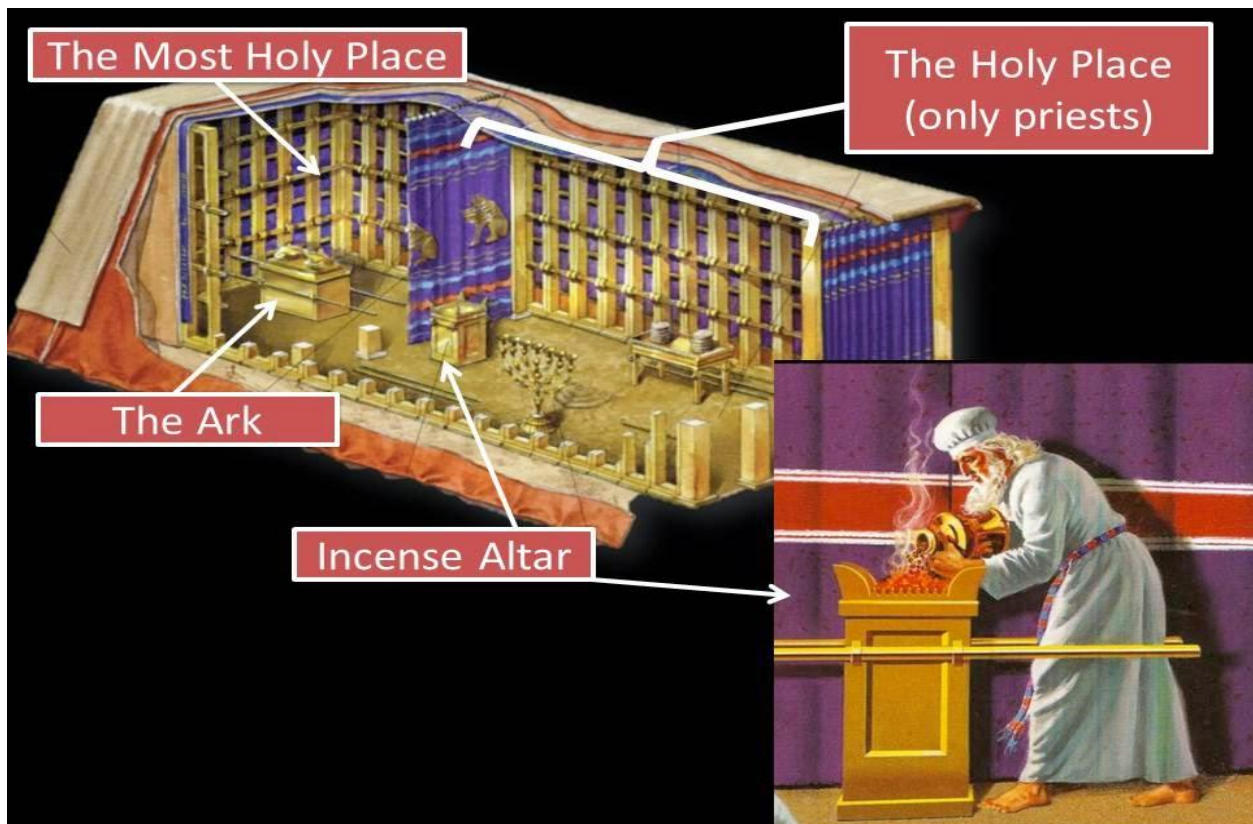
Verses 1- 3

Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective firepans, and after putting fire in them, placed incense on it and offered strange fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them. <sup>2</sup> And fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord. <sup>3</sup> Then Moses said to Aaron, “It is what the Lord spoke, saying, ‘By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy, And before all the people I will be honored.’” So Aaron, therefore, kept silent.

Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective firepans, and after putting fire in them, placed incense on it and offered strange fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them.

Since incense was used, we can assume it was at the altar of incense.

See Pic 1005



What made this fire strange? Did they take coals of fire from some place other than the brazen altar? Did they put incense on the firepans, instead of sprinkling it on the altar? Some commentators have suggested that they may have entered the Holy of Holies.

See Lev. 16:1- 2

**Now the Lord spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they had approached the presence of the Lord and died. <sup>2</sup> The Lord said to Moses: “Tell your brother Aaron that he shall not enter at any time into the Holy Place inside the veil, before the atoning cover which is on the ark, or he will die; for I will appear in the cloud over the atoning cover.**

However, verse 1 seems to imply that the strange fire was the problem. If they had entered the Holy of Holies it seems like that would have been mentioned here, since it seems like the greater of these two sins. However, in scripture, it is not uncommon for additional details of a past event to be revealed at a later point in time.

**<sup>2</sup> And fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord.**

The translation here seems a bit odd when they use the word “consumed”. Neither their bodies nor their ceremonial dress were consumed (see verse 5). However, we do know that the two men were killed instantaneously.

**<sup>3</sup> Then Moses said to Aaron, “It is what the Lord spoke, saying, ‘By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy, And before all the people I will be honored.’” So Aaron, therefore, kept silent.**

God choose to set an example at critical moments in the history of Israel and the church to make a dramatic point. The following are two other examples.

1. The death of Uzzah.

See 2 Samuel 6:7- 8.

**<sup>6</sup> But when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah reached out toward the ark of God and took hold of it, because the oxen nearly overturned it. <sup>7</sup> And the anger of the Lord burned against Uzzah, and God struck him down there for his irreverence; and he died there by the ark of God.**

## 2. The death of Ananias and Sapphira

See Acts 5:9 - 11

<sup>9</sup> Then Peter said to her, “Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out as well.” <sup>10</sup> And immediately she collapsed at his feet and died; and the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. <sup>11</sup> And great fear came over the whole church, and over all who heard about these things.

We should not assume that their punishment meant they were lost.

See 1 Corinthians 11:27 – 32

<sup>27</sup> Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy way, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. <sup>28</sup> But a person must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. <sup>29</sup> For the one who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not properly recognize the body. <sup>30</sup> For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number are asleep. <sup>31</sup> But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged. <sup>32</sup> But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world.

Because of their disrespect for the Lord's Supper some Corinthians died but the judgment was sent in order that they might not perish.

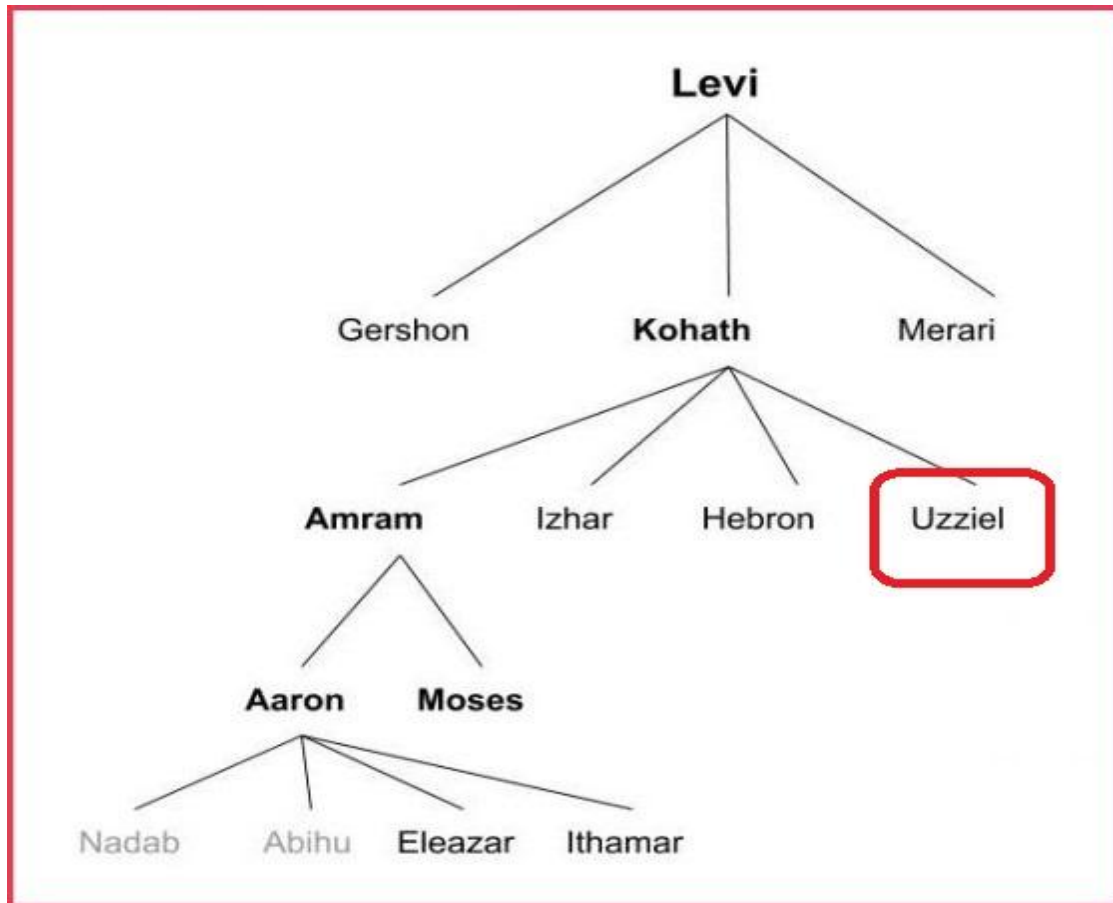
Verses 4 - 7

<sup>4</sup> Moses called also to Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Aaron's uncle Uzziel, and said to them, “Come forward, carry your relatives away from the front of the sanctuary to the outside of the camp.” <sup>5</sup> So they came forward and carried them still in their tunics to the outside of the camp, as Moses had said. <sup>6</sup> Then Moses said to Aaron and to his sons Eleazar and Ithamar, “Do not uncover your heads nor tear your clothes, so that you will not die and that He will not become wrathful against all the congregation. But your kinsmen, the whole house of Israel, shall bewail the burning which the Lord has brought about. <sup>7</sup> You shall not even go out from the doorway of the tent of meeting, or you will die; for the Lord's anointing oil is upon you.” So they did according to the word of Moses.

<sup>4</sup> Moses called also to Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Aaron's uncle Uzziel, and said to them, "Come forward, carry your relatives away from the front of the sanctuary to the outside of the camp."

They were Levites (but not priests) and cousins of the stricken brothers.

See pic 1010



The Levites who were not priests were given various duties in the caretaking of the Tabernacle and its furnishings. But only the priests could offer sacrifices in the Tabernacle.

<sup>5</sup> So they came forward and carried them still in their tunics to the outside of the camp, as Moses had said.

This fire that killed them did not destroy their garments. It seems the Lord may have used some strange fire on them. It should also be noted that Nadab and Abihu were put to death on the first day after they officially became priests.

**<sup>6</sup> Then Moses said to Aaron and to his sons Eleazar and Ithamar, “Do not uncover your heads nor tear your clothes, so that you will not die and that He will not become wrathful against all the congregation. But your kinsmen, the whole house of Israel, shall bewail the burning which the Lord has brought about.**

Aaron and his two sons were not allowed to show sorrow for Nadab and Abihu but all the rest of Israel was able to show their respect for these two men. At first glance this may appear unfair, but the two men were punished for disrespecting the Lord and the priesthood could not be seen as being upset with the Lord's judgment.

**<sup>7</sup> You shall not even go out from the doorway of the tent of meeting, or you will die; for the Lord's anointing oil is upon you.” So they did according to the word of Moses.**

At this point in time there were only 3 priests to take care of the work of the Tabernacle. If they left to attend the funeral of their brother there would be no one to attend to the daily work at the tabernacle.

Verses 8 - 11

**The Lord then spoke to Aaron, saying, <sup>9</sup> “Do not drink wine or strong drink, neither you nor your sons with you, when you come into the tent of meeting, so that you will not die—it is a perpetual statute throughout your generations—<sup>10</sup> and so as to make a distinction between the holy and the profane, and between the unclean and the clean, <sup>11</sup> and so as to teach the sons of Israel all the statutes which the Lord has spoken to them through Moses.”**

The priests had a position of authority and influence in the Jewish community.

1. They offered sacrifices for the only True God
2. They were to be teachers to the people:

They taught the distinction between what was holy and unholy and between what was clean and unclean.

They also had the duty to teach the people all the statutes which the Lord had spoken to them through Moses.

A person of that standing could not be seen indulging in wine or strong drink because of the bad example it would set.

Verses 12 - 15

<sup>12</sup> Then Moses spoke to Aaron, and to his surviving sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, “Take the grain offering that is left over from the Lord’s offerings by fire and eat it unleavened beside the altar, for it is most holy. <sup>13</sup> You shall eat it, moreover, in a holy place, because it is your due and your sons’ due out of the Lord’s offerings by fire; for thus I have been commanded. <sup>14</sup> The breast of the wave offering, however, and the thigh of the offering you may eat in a clean place, you and your sons and your daughters with you; for they have been given as your due and your sons’ due out of the sacrifices of the peace offerings of the sons of Israel. <sup>15</sup> The thigh offered by lifting up and the breast offered by waving they shall bring along with the offerings by fire of the portions of fat, to present as a wave offering before the Lord; so it shall be a thing perpetually due you and your sons with you, just as the Lord has commanded.”

<sup>12</sup> Then Moses spoke to Aaron, and to his surviving sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, “Take the grain offering that is left over from the Lord’s offerings by fire and eat it unleavened beside the altar, for it is most holy. <sup>13</sup> You shall eat it, moreover, in a holy place, because it is your due and your sons’ due out of the Lord’s offerings by fire; for thus I have been commanded.

This is in reference to the offerings made in chapter 9 before the story was interrupted by the strange fire of their now deceased brothers. A handful of the grain offering was a burnt offering to God but the rest of the grain offering went to Aaron and his two remaining sons.

<sup>14</sup> The breast of the wave offering, however, and the thigh of the offering you may eat in a clean place, you and your sons and your daughters with you; for they have been given as your due and your sons’ due out of the sacrifices of the peace offerings of the sons of Israel.

The breast and thigh went to Aaron and his immediate family (we learn here that Aaron had at least two daughters).

One important difference is that the meat could be eaten in a clean place, whereas the grain offering could only be eaten by Aaron and his two sons because it had to be eaten near the Altar.

Verses 16 - 20

**<sup>16</sup> But Moses searched carefully for the goat of the sin offering, and behold, it had been burned up! So he was angry with Aaron's surviving sons Eleazar and Ithamar, saying, <sup>17</sup> "Why did you not eat the sin offering at the holy place? For it is most holy, and He gave it to you to bear away the guilt of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the Lord. <sup>18</sup> Behold, since its blood had not been brought inside, into the sanctuary, you should certainly have eaten it in the sanctuary, just as I commanded." <sup>19</sup> But Aaron spoke to Moses, "Behold, this very day they presented their sin offering and their burnt offering before the Lord. When things like these happened to me, if I had eaten a sin offering today, would it have been good in the sight of the Lord?" <sup>20</sup> When Moses heard *that*, it seemed good in his sight.**

**<sup>16</sup> But Moses searched carefully for the goat of the sin offering, and behold, it had been burned up! So he was angry with Aaron's surviving sons Eleazar and Ithamar, saying, <sup>17</sup> "Why did you not eat the sin offering at the holy place? For it is most holy, and He gave it to you to bear away the guilt of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the Lord.**

Aaron's sons were told not to grieve for their dead brothers but the circumstances of that day caused them to decline the portion that was due to them from their sin offering. They must have paused in answering Moses so Aaron spoke.

**<sup>19</sup> But Aaron spoke to Moses, "Behold, this very day they presented their sin offering and their burnt offering before the Lord. When things like these happened to me, if I had eaten a sin offering today, would it have been good in the sight of the Lord?" <sup>20</sup> When Moses heard *that*, it seemed good in his sight.**

Aaron told Moses he would have done the same thing. Enjoying a meal after the death of their two brothers would have been disrespectful. If Aaron and his two sons were wrong about this matter, God would have told them so.