**Glorifying God in Worship**

On any given Sunday morning, groups of people engage in acts of worship meant to honor the God of heaven. If you take a look around, you will find a veritable smorgasbord of activities, many of which came directly from the creative minds of men without the authority of the very God they claim to be worshipping. If you were to ask them what they are doing, the likely answer would be, “why, I am glorifying God, of course!” While it is wonderful that sincere folks want to glorify God, it is important that we look to His revealed word to find out how to truly bring glory to His name.

Leviticus 10 tells us about the two oldest sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu. As the chapter opens, we find these two priests burning incense in worship to God. As the peaceful scene unfolds, suddenly fire from heaven consumed the two men. What could possibly have gone so horribly wrong? They appeared to have been sincerely motivated to glorify God in their actions but, instead, they managed only to anger Him.

God had Aaron, the High Priest to carry coals from the altar in his firepan to the Most Holy Place and burn two handfuls of incense made according to a specified recipe. Somehow his two sons offered “strange fire”; Had they overstepped their bounds and performed a ceremony reserved for the High Priest? Did they get the coals from somewhere other than the altar? Did they burn incense of a recipe other than that authorized by God? We don’t have to know the answers to these questions to get the lesson. Their cavalier attitude toward God’s commands rendered their worship to God vain and resulted in angering Him instead of pleasing Him.

Listen to the words Jehovah used to explain the gravity of the problem: “By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy, and before all the people I will be honored” (Leviticus 10:3). Had God simply said, “Worship me in any way you see fit and I will be pleased”, these men would have been at liberty to do as they thought best, but when God specified what He wanted, the only way to glorify Him was to do what He commanded.

God is pleased when His people assemble to pray together (1 Timothy 2:8), sing together (Ephesians 5:19), and hear the gospel proclaimed (Acts 20:7). On the first day of the week, He wants us to contribute to the work of the local church (1 Corinthians 16:1-2) and partake of the Lord’s Supper together (Acts 20:7). The error of Nadab and Abihu was revealed to us for a reason. The only way to glorify the name of God is to offer up worship that He has authorized.

**John McKee**

**West Murray church of Christ**