

Cover to Cover: The Death of Nadab and Abihu

 *Leviticus 10:1–7*

Big Picture: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJ-FekWUZzE>

Context: One of the blessings of Cover to Cover is that we’ll not only come across some familiar stories but also uncommon ones. Today’s story about the death of Aaron’s sons, Nadab and Abihu, is probably an unfamiliar story to most of us, yet it helps us enter into key themes of Leviticus.

This past Lord’s Day we were introduced the oft neglected, misunderstood and mysterious book of Leviticus. The book answers the question of how Israel can be reconciled to a holy God. There parallel sections book end the Day of Atonement in the middle of the book, sections about rituals, priests and ritual and moral purity. The two parallel sections of Leviticus concerning priests centre around the ordination of priests (8–10) and the qualifications of priests (21–22). The priests were important as they represented the people of Israel to a holy God, and this holy God to the people.

*Questions from the “Loving Leviticus” introductory sermon this past Lord’s Day morning.*

1. Why is it important to love Leviticus? (Acts 20:27; 2 Ti 3:15–6)
2. What is Moses not able to do until the Lord speaks to him about how to approach a holy God (Ex 40:34–38; Lev 1:1–2, 27:34; Nu 1:1)?
3. What does it mean that God is holy?
4. What is the difference between holy and unholy, clean and unclean, pure and impure. Was the analogy of a person “registered” or “unregistered” to vote helpful to understand this?
5. What important lessons can Leviticus teach New Covenant believers?

*Questions*

1. *The priests were ordained so that they might enter God’s holy presence on behalf of the people of Israel. They were called to the highest level of ritual and moral purity as a result. In today’s story we catch a glimpse of why this matters and what God’s holiness looks like.* *Right after a portion of Leviticus that describes the ordination of priests comes our story today.*
2. Why was Nadab and Abihu’s offering unorthorized? What had the LORD commanded about approaching Him?
3. Heb 12:29 says the LORD is a consuming fire. How is this true figuratively, but also here in a literal sense? How should we view their deaths? Was it just of God to kill them? What do their deaths teach us?
4. What do you think the LORD meant in v. 3? Why did Aaron hold his peace?
5. Why did their bodies need to be carried outside of the camp? (See a clue in the text and also in 21:1–4).
6. *Aaron’s two sons flagrantly waltzed into God’s presence and violated all of the rules that had just been established to allow the priests to safely enter God’s presence. His holiness consumed them on the spot. It is a reminder of the paradox of God’s holiness: it is pure goodness, yet it is dangerous to those who rebel and insult His holiness and approach Him wrongly.*
7. What does this story teach us about holiness?
8. What does this story teach us about faith and obedience?
9. How is this story a picture of the Gospel and our need for Christ’s righteousness to please God?

*BIG Questions to bear in mind:*

* *Where is this passage in the wider story of salvation history?*
* *In what ways does this passage point to Jesus? (Lk 24:27)*

The New Testament describes Christians as saints, or holy ones, and also as priests (1 Pe 2:9). How are we priests?