

Lev. 10:1 And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put **incense** thereon, and **offered strange fire** before the LORD, which he commanded them not. **2** And **there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.** **3** Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace.

Lev. 10:8 And the LORD spake unto Aaron, saying, **9 Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die:** it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations: **10** And **that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean;** **11** And **that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD hath spoken** unto them by the hand of Moses.

Exo. 31:2 See, I have called **Bezaleel** the son of Uri, the son of Hur, **of the tribe of Judah:** **3** And **I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, understanding, and knowledge and in all manner of workmanship,** **4** **To devise cunning works...** in gold, silver, brass, and **5** **cutting of stones, to set them, & in carving timber,** to work in all manner of workmanship.

Exo 30:1 And (**Bezaleel**) shalt make an **altar** to **burn incense** upon: of shittim wood.

Exo 30:6 And thou shalt put it **before the veil** that is by **the ark** of the testimony, before the mercy seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with thee. **7** And **Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning:** when he dresseth the lamps, **he** shall **burn incense** upon it. **8** And when **Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations.** **9** **Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon** (cp. Lev. 10:1) nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat offering; neither shall ye pour drink offering thereon. **10** And **Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonements** (Day of Atonement: Lev. 16): once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations: **it is most holy unto the LORD.**

Moses was appointed by God to consecrate Aaron as High Priest and his four sons as priest (Lev. 8:1-2). Aaron was anointed before the sacrifices were slain, and the anointing oil was poured only on him. As first high priest, Aaron was a type of Christ – as Melchizedek, the great type (Heb. 5:5-6).

From the time of their consecration (Lev. chapter 8) – only Aaron, and all following high priests, could thereafter burn the incense. Therefore, it is strongly offered that the “strange fire” of Nadab and Abihu in Leviticus 10:1 was that they arrogated unto themselves authority beyond which God had appointed unto them (Exo. 30:9). Burning the incense intruded into the responsibilities of their father – and, as High Priest, his alone! This taught that the true High Priest “after the order of Melchizedek” would all by Himself finish that earthly priesthood – and so He did (Heb. 1:3).

All four of Aaron’s sons had been most carefully taught and instructed directly by God through Moses; hence, this intrusion was most egregious. Nadab and Abihu paid for it with their lives. All Israel learned that day (as should we today) the seriousness and importance of following our Lord’s words – especially over something “most holy” to Him.

Finally, although not directly stated, the admonition immediately following their death (to drink neither wine nor strong drink when any of the priesthood entered the tabernacle: Leviticus 10:9-10) strongly implies Nadab and Abihu had indeed so done.
