

Strange Fire (By Matthew Hosier)

Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it and laid incense on it and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he had not commanded them. And fire came out from before the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD. Then Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD has said: 'Among those who are near me I will be sanctified, and before all the people I will be glorified.'" And Aaron held his peace. (Lev. 10:1-3)

This is one of those stories we tend to wish wasn't there. It always comes with a jolt, and something of a sense of horror. The burning up of Nadab and Abihu feels shockingly disproportionate to us, and there is the terrible pathos of Aaron holding his peace—a silence that only breaks at the end of the chapter with his anguished cry to Moses, "Such things as these have happened to me!" It reads like a story without mercy; a story dominated by a capricious God rather than a tender Father.

Reading backwards in the story helps explain it in some measure. The tabernacle, the epicentre of true worship of the one true God, has just been erected, and filled with the smoking glory of God (Exodus 40). Moses then receives detailed instructions about sacrifices which are to be made at the tabernacle—sacrifices that represent the holiness of God, the means by which a holy God might be reconciled to his sinful people, and the manner in which those people will be identified as the holy God's holy and set-apart people. This culminates with the consecration of Aaron and his sons as priests who will be the bridge between heaven and earth, as they minister in the tabernacle on behalf of the people, in service of the LORD (Leviticus 8). Aaron then offers a sacrifice to the LORD, to "make atonement for yourself and for the people" (Lev. 9:8), a sacrifice that is consumed by fire from the LORD (Lev. 9:24).

This is the very beginning of a whole new chapter in God's dealing with man. The existence of the tabernacle, of priests, and of sacrifice, means that Israel has at her heart the visible, physically, worked out means of knowing peace with God. The tabernacle, the priests and the sacrifice are the bridge to life, but also mark the standard of perfection required by God of his people. The tabernacle, priests and sacrifice are at once liberating and terrifying.

Which is why when Nadab and Abihu decide to take matters into their own hands and offer "strange fire" it is not merely a case of misguided enthusiasm, but an act of rebellion against YHWH himself—an act of rebellion that must be stopped in its tracks. Where before the sacrifice had smouldered, now the priests themselves burn.

It is a terrifying story, and reading backwards helps explain it, but so does reading forwards, because in Acts 5 we find a close parallel.

In the early chapters of Acts the people of God are once more constituted and defined, not this time by a tabernacle and priests and sacrifice, but by the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Just as tabernacle worship identified the people of Israel in Sinai, now the presence and activity of the Spirit in his people identifies the Church in the world. Miracles, boldness in witness, and incredible generosity are the fruit of the Spirit's work. Against this background, the decision on the part of Ananias and Sapphira, just like Nadab and Abihu, pay the price for their rebellion. (https://thinktheology.co.uk/blog/article/strange_fire) *****

What stands out is that both insincere, self-serving worship (Acts 5) as well as sincere, self-determining worship (Lev. 10), result in judgement. Worship has to be according to God's revealed ways; access to God has to be through His clearly revealed means (that is, through Christ alone). Our sincere AND total obedience in worship shows that we truly revere God as Holy, and trust His ways as the only way.



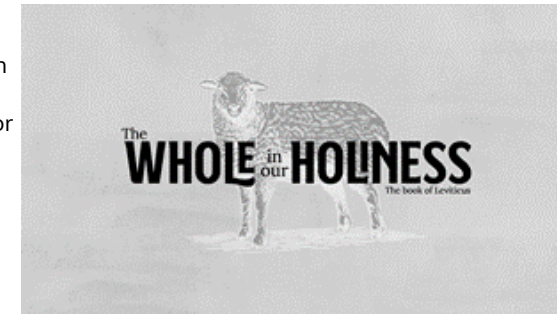
27 October 2019 | Service Times: 9am & 11:30am

Welcome, we're glad you're here!

We are a church family committed to following Jesus Christ as Lord. We do this by getting to know him through his living Word, the Bible, which is why the sermon is the key part of our Sunday services. Find out more about us at www.slechurch.org.au.

This Week: The Whole in Our Holiness 3 — Clean Eating

These laws regarding foods, menstruation, skin issues, and various discharges are given to educate Israel on what makes a person clean or unclean before God. These laws are given to warn Israel that God is holy and you cannot enter his presence in an unclean state, lest you die. So they must be holy as God, who saved them, is holy.



Next Sunday: Leviticus 16-17

Today's Service

Welcome and Singing	Only a Holy God Rock of Ages You Made Us Your Own
Holy Communion	
Offering	
Community News	
Bible Reading	Leviticus 11:1-47, 15:31; Mark 7:18-23; 1 Peter 1:13-16
Sermon	By Pastor Steven Tran
Song of Response	Surrender All

Stay Connected

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Check out slechurch.org.au/groups to find a group that you can join.

Say hello

Join us for morning tea at 10:30am.
We'd love to have a chat and get to know you better.

Our Pastors

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Financial Update

Last Week	\$5,818.43
Weekly Required	\$5,750.00
Shortfall 2019	\$0.00

Giving by Electronic Funds Transfer

A/C Name: SLE Church
Bank: National Australia Bank
BSB: 084-424
A/C No: 396558544

SLE Church is a branch church of Chinese Christian Church Brisbane

Prayer Points

PRAISE GOD THAT HE IS MORE HOLY THAN WE CAN EVER UNDERSTAND OR IMAGINE. Pray for a growing awareness, appreciation and awe of God's holiness, even and especially as we read the many laws in the Old Testament that shows how much had to be done to dwell in the presence of God and live as His set apart, holy people.

PRAISE GOD THAT HE THE HOLY GOD WOULD DRAW UNHOLY PEOPLE TO HIMSELF. Praise God that it is in progressive revelation, that God established the priesthood to show us our need for a mediator. Give great thanks that we live on this side of history, where the final revelation through Jesus Christ has been given to us. Thank God that in Christ, we have amazing, intimate and free access simply through faith in Christ.

CONTINUE TO PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE SUFFERING AND GRIEVING. Pray that they would lament well before God and others. Pray especially for Chris and Auntie Mee Lan and their family as they grieve the loss of Chris' father (Auntie Mee Lan's brother) last week.

Community News

CHURCH WIDE PRAYER MEETING

It's not often that SLE Church has church wide prayer meetings and we are excited to announce that the next prayer meeting will be on **Saturday 16 November at North Hall.**

Please come along at 8am for a BYO breakfast with free coffee, and stay for the prayer meeting from 8:30am to 10am.

Serving

	Today	Next Sunday
Chair	Mervin	Ps Steven
Prayer	Mervin <i>Jolene</i>	Ps Steven <i>Ps Steven</i>
Preach	Ps Steven	Ps Ben
Bible Read	Andrew <i>Ps Ben</i>	Alice <i>Alan</i>
M.Tea	Muriel, Cecilia	Winnie T., Tania
Wash Up	SOS West	SOS West
Welcome	Richard Georgie Amy <i>Sarah</i> <i>Sean</i> <i>James</i>	Ken Steph Meng Yin <i>Andrew</i> <i>Marcus</i> <i>Marilyn</i>
Stewards	Philip Simeon Meng Yin <i>Josh</i> <i>Josiah</i> <i>Edwina</i>	Jeffrey John Richard <i>Stanley</i> <i>Yong Seng</i> <i>Aaron</i>
Piano	Liesl	Dan Lowe
Guitar	Shaopeng/ Mark	Keith
Bass	Kevin	Aaron
Drums	Nigel	Ivan
Vocal	Shaun/ Amanda	Sharne
PA	Chris	
		<i>Daniel</i>

Clean Eating [Leviticus 11]

Introduction:

1. What's going on here? (The (quick) big picture)

2. The smaller details

a. Land animals (11:3-8)

b. Sea animals (11:9-12)

c. Air animals (11:13-19)

d. Creepy crawly animals (11:20-23, 41-43)

3. Contagious Uncleanliness

a. Dead bodies (11:24-28, 39-40)

b. Other contagiousness (11:29-38)

4. Main point (11:44-45)

5. And now in Christ...

So what?