Leviticus 10:1-5 (Grandma Smith) 89723

God's Wonderful Stories: Volume 1, Strange Fire (10:1-5)

If you are camping on a chilly evening, it is a big challenge to light a fire without matches. It takes a skilled camper to do this. But if he really needs a fire, he will probably succeed.

Here is a greater challenge. You or I happen to come along and see a campfire with a pot of water boiling and a pan of sizzling fish and no one around. We see no clues, so how can we tell how that fire was lighted? God certainly knows the answer, but we would have no way of finding out. Maybe there are two other fires close by where other campers are cooking supper. Was this fire started from one of those? We just cannot tell. Now let me tell you a story about a fire, and since it is one of God's stories, we know it is true.

Nadab and Abihu were the two oldest sons of Aaron the high priest. They could well remember being up in the holy mountain with their father, and they knew their religion well. Now they were dressed in priestly robes and had a very important place in the worship of the Lord. Their duty was to carry a censer with smoking incense in it. (A censer was a metal pot that held burning coals. The priest sprinkled incense made of sweet spices over the burning coals. As the incense burned, it gave off a cloud of sweet-smelling smoke.) I'm sure it was a very impressive sight. Nadab and Abihu were important religious men, and they were doing their job.

But . . . there was something wrong. God had told them exactly where to get the burning coals for lighting the incense. They were to get them from the fire from the great brass altar where God had ordered that a clean animal should be offered in sacrifice to Himself. This was the only right way to light the incense, but they had lighted it from some other source. Probably no one knew what they had done, not even their father. But God knew. They were offering to God strange fire.

Who could tell that they had gotten the fire from some other source? No one but God. You and I must meet God too, and many of us offer our praises to Him now and often come together to worship. But our worship must be according to His directions. It must begin with the perfect sacrifice of Christ on the cross where He suffered God's judgment against sin. If you offer any praise which does not begin with this perfect sacrifice, God will not accept you.

The sacrifice of Christ on the cross is not only for everyone - it is for you personally. God has given you and me the Bible so that we will know that nothing but the death of Christ will ever make us welcome in His presence.

God tells us what happened to those two priests. "There went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them." Right there, all of a sudden, those two men lay dead. Their cousins came and carried their bodies away. Their father was a faithful priest and his heart was very sad, but he could not save them. If they had taken the fire from the burnt offering upon the brass altar, they would have lived. But they made their own choice and disobeyed God.

We have a choice to make too before we meet God. We may choose the Savior who died for sinners, or we may choose something else and disobey God. Robes and religion and incense will not save you from the wrath of God, but the Lord Jesus who loves you and died for you can save you right now. Will you accept Him as the sacrifice for your sins?

"There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).