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# STRANGE FIRE

## Chapter by Chapter | Leviticus 10 — Episode #100

by Pastor Tim Dilena, *Senior Pastor*

Welcome to the 100th day of Chapter by Chapter, a 4-year journey through the greatest book given to the human race—the Word of God, the Bible—and we get to go through it chapter by chapter. Seven minutes a day and seven days a week. Join us each day and share it with others so they can join this journey that will be life changing. We will stop at unexpected places on the journey and be challenged. Some verses will create awe and wonder. We will have chapters that will be instructive, and in others we will find joy and comfort.

We will occasionally be convicted and want to change. All in all, the journey will be worth it. Once in a while we may take a detour on the journey and hear from some of God's servants on their favorite passages from a chapter of Scripture and let them give you their insight—every journey needs a small detour occasionally. The best way to get the most from this podcast is to read the chapter

we are discussing before or after. It's His Word that transforms. You will find more and see more than I could ever articulate.

Today we will be looking at Leviticus 10.

Michelangelo was asked why he bothered with perfect detail on figures high up on the Sistine Chapel ceiling, where viewers from below wouldn't notice. He replied, "I will notice." God would notice if His priests missed steps and added their own opinions and additions to the process. The result to the natural eye would be the same—fire—but the assessment from heaven would be completely different. God would call it strange fire. This is Leviticus 10 and God was mad.

I was not looking forward to Leviticus 10. I know this chapter and have always read it with caution. After 8 chapters of clear instructions on how He wants to be approached and worshipped in Leviticus, still the men who are called to lead this process somehow feel that

they have an equal vote with God to tweak what has been spoken from heaven. This is high treason. This is foolish. This will be fatal. This will be the choosing of Nadab and Abihu.

**God would notice if His priests missed steps and added their own opinions and additions to the process.**

*"Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective firepans, and after putting fire in them, placed incense on it and offered strange fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them. And fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord. Then Moses said to Aaron, 'It is what the Lord spoke, saying, 'By those who come near Me I will be*

## STRANGE FIRE

(continued)

*treated as holy, and before all the people I will be honored." So Aaron, therefore, kept silent"* (Leviticus 10:1-3, NASB).

When you are living in rebellion but think your gift cancels your disobedience—that is playing with strange fire.

### What could have gone wrong?

#### What made the fire strange?

To the onlooker, none could tell the fire was strange—but to God, man's ideas got mixed in. Bible teacher Warren Wiersbe was so insightful on this horrific event. He said, "Everything that these two men did was wrong. To begin with, they were the **wrong people** to be handling the incense and presenting it to the Lord. This was the task of their father, the high priest (Exodus 30:7-10). They also used the **wrong instruments**, their own censers instead of the censer of the high priest, sanctified by the special anointing oil (40:9). They acted at the **wrong time**, for it was only on the annual Day of Atonement that the high priest was permitted to take incense into the holy of holies. They acted under the **wrong authority**. They didn't consult with Moses or their father, nor did they seek to follow the Word of God, which Moses had received. In burning the incense, they used the **wrong fire**, what Scripture calls 'strange fire' (10:1; NIV says 'unauthorized fire'). The high priest was commanded to burn the incense on coals taken from the brazen altar (16:12), but Nadab and Abihu supplied their own fire, and God rejected it. They acted from the **wrong motive** and didn't seek to glorify God alone (10:3). Finally, they depended on the **wrong energy**; for verses 9-10 imply that they were under the influence of alcohol."

#### Everything was wrong.

The great Puritan pastor John Owen says,

"He that hath slight thoughts of sin never had great thoughts of God." To these two boys, they had those slight thoughts of sin. They did not see it as a big deal to do things their way—thus leading them to have low thoughts of God—which at the end would be their end. They would lose their lives.

The burial of Nadab and Abihu was swift. They were taken out of the camp with no mourners. Verse 6 is a strange command to a grieving father and two shocked brothers.

*"Then Moses said to Aaron and to his sons Eleazar and Ithamar, "Do not uncover your heads nor tear your clothes, so that you will not die and that He will not become wrathful against all the congregation. But your kinsmen, the whole house of Israel, shall bewail the burning which the Lord has brought about"* (Leviticus 10:6, NASB).

They were not to mourn the loss of these two boys. Why? To mourn for their judgment was to feel sorry for them and to raise an accusation that God did something wrong.

The fire of God was never intended to consume the people of God—that's why God always intended for there to be a sacrifice. There are two ways whereby God punishes sin: the fires of hell and the blood of Jesus. It's not a question of whether your sin will be punished—it's a question of how it will be punished.

Leviticus 9:24 says, *"Then fire came out from before the Lord and consumed the burnt offering..."* Leviticus 10:2 says, *"And fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them."* When you come to God you must do it His way—the only way. He is not interested in our additions or opinions. Nadab and Abihu thought more highly of themselves than they should have.

Whatever made that fire strange did not please God and angered God. In essence, they were offering a new way to worship. This is a trumpet blast for the church today. I believe churches are playing with strange fire. When you are living in rebellion and sin but feel that a gift or a talent you have is being used in the house of God—and this nullifies

your disobedience—that is playing with strange fire.

After fire consumed two men, something happened that I have not seen happen before or after this shocking moment in the tabernacle. It says in Leviticus 10:8, *"The Lord then spoke to Aaron..."* God always speaks to Moses. Now God will talk to Aaron. What does God say to this man who has just lost two of his four sons to judgment?

When you come to God you must do it His way—the only way.

*"The Lord then spoke to Aaron, saying, "Do not drink wine or strong drink, neither you nor your sons with you, when you come into the tent of meeting, so that you will not die—it is a perpetual statute throughout your generations—and so as to make a distinction between the holy and the profane, and between the unclean and the clean"* (Leviticus 10:8-10, NASB).

God says that you will have to keep your eye on worship in My house. There will be times you will have to see that the profane is trying to sneak into the house of God. You will see the unclean proclaiming all is well. You must take this fire seriously.

Residents of the state of Washington are no strangers to wildfires. However, even veterans of the fire-ridden west can become too comfortable with the blazes. Officials in Chelan County, WA reported that even as one of the most vicious wildfires of the summer bore down on homes and businesses in Chelan, hundreds of local residents refused to seek safety. They said, "We thought it was a little fire." What had begun only three days earlier as a seemingly insignificant flame had escalated to a raging, life-threatening inferno.

Leviticus 10 was no little fire. Aaron's sons did not take the fire seriously—as the residents of this Washington county did not take the fire seriously. Both were fatal. ■

# 100 REASONS TO DO CHAPTER BY CHAPTER

1. You keep saying you'll "read the Bible this year" but never do.
2. 7 minutes is shorter than your morning scroll through Instagram.
3. You've seen every Marvel movie but haven't finished Genesis.
4. Your kids ask Bible questions and you Google the answers.
5. "I don't have time" is the excuse we all use.
6. Netflix can wait.
7. You're tired of only knowing the "greatest hits" of Scripture.
8. Leviticus isn't as boring as you think.
9. Job will wreck you in the best way.
10. The genealogies actually matter.
11. You'll finally understand what people mean by "the Old Testament points to Jesus."
12. Revelation makes more sense when you've read the other 65 books first.
13.  $1,189 \text{ chapters} \div 1,189 \text{ days} = \text{totally doable}$ .
14. Pastor Tim makes it make sense.
15. You've always wondered what Habakkuk is about. (It's a book. Look it up.)
16. Audio learning is real learning.
17. Your commute could be holy ground.
18. Dishes don't have to be wasted time.
19. The Bible you got for graduation is still in the box.
20. You want to be the person who actually knows Scripture, not just shares verses on social media.
21. 2 Timothy 2:15 says "study to show yourself approved" and you've been winging it.
22. You'll finally ace Bible trivia at church.
23. Sermons won't fly over your head.
24. Context changes everything.
25. You'll stop misquoting Philipians 4:13. (It's not about sports.)
26. Proverbs 31 isn't just for women.
27. The Psalms will meet you in your mess.
28. Ecclesiastes gets your existential crisis.
29. Song of Solomon is... well, you'll see.
30. You'll discover books you didn't know existed. (Looking at you, Obadiah.)
31. The minor prophets aren't minor.
32. Romans will blow your mind.
33. Ephesians will expand your view of God's love.
34. James will convict you and comfort you in the same chapter.
35. Jesus quoted the Old Testament constantly and you should know what He was talking about.
36. "All Scripture is God-breathed" includes the parts you skip.
37. Discipleship requires more than a daily devotional app.
38. One chapter a day. Four years. Rest included.
39. Sundays will hit different when you've been in the Word all week.
40. Your prayers will sound less like guessing and more like conversations with someone you know.
41. Knowing God's character changes how you see everything.
42. Theology isn't just for pastors.
43. The Holy Spirit illuminates Scripture, and you're missing out.
44. Biblical illiteracy is epidemic and you don't have to be part of the problem.
45. Your kids are watching. And listening.
46. Legacy matters and you want to pass down more than possessions.
47. No one ever regrets time in God's Word.
48. Future you is begging you to start.
49. Comparison is the thief of joy, but the Bible is the giver of it.
50. Anxiety is real, and so is the peace that comes from knowing God's promises.
51. Hope isn't a feeling; it's in the Word.
52. You need truth in a world drowning in noise.
53. You're one "share" away from spreading bad theology—let's fix that.
54. Jeremiah 29:11 has a whole context you've never read.
55. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John aren't interchangeable. They each tell the story differently for a reason.
56. Acts will make you want to do something crazy for God.
57. Acts will make you rethink modern church.
58. You'll finally understand communion.
59. You'll see the thread of redemption from Genesis to Revelation.
60. Every story points to Jesus. Every. Single. One.
61. The Bible isn't a rulebook; it's a love letter.
62. You're more than a conqueror, but you keep forgetting.
63. The armor of God only works if you know what it is.
64. "The Word of God is living and active" and your life needs both.
65. Pastor Tim has been preparing for this for years. Don't waste it.
66. Accountability works, and we're all doing this together.
67. Connect Groups are better when everyone's on the same page. Literally.
68. You'll have something to talk about besides the weather.
69. Dinner table conversations will get deeper.
70. Your spouse/roommate/friend will thank you for finally understanding that random Bible reference they made.
71. You won't feel lost when someone says "that's very Jonah of you."
72. Hosea's love story will wreck you.
73. Ruth's loyalty will inspire you.

74. Esther's courage will embolden you.

75. David's failures will humble you.

76. Peter's restoration will give you hope.

77. Paul's transformation will remind you that no one is beyond God's reach.

78. The Bible has answers to questions you didn't know you had.

79. Doubt isn't the opposite of faith, and Scripture proves it.

80. Lament is biblical, and the Psalms give you permission to grieve.

81. Justice and mercy aren't opposites—they meet at the cross.

82. You'll stop fearing the book of Revelation.

83. The end of the story is already written, and we win.

84. "It is finished" means something.

85. The resurrection isn't just an Easter sermon; it's the heartbeat of our faith.

86. You're going to stand before God one day, and "I didn't have time" won't cut it.

87. This is your year.

88. Community is better than isolation, and we're doing this together.

89. Showing up matters.

90. 4 years will pass anyway. Might as well finish the Bible.

91. You've binged entire TV series in less time.

92. If you can memorize song lyrics, you can remember Scripture.

93. The Bible app on your phone is gathering dust.

94. Sermons will make more sense.

95. You'll stop saying "the Bible says" when it actually doesn't.

96. Discernment requires knowledge.

97. The gospel is good news, and you should know the whole story.

98. "Just have faith" won't be your only answer.

99. Apologetics starts with knowing what you believe and why.

100. God's Word doesn't return void. Ever. (Isaiah 55:11)

It's never too late to join Chapter by Chapter.

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# What Chapter by Chapter Has Done for Me

by Daniel Resto

I've been following Pastor Tim and Times Square Church for some time now. I've always loved the teaching and the worship, but Chapter by Chapter has done something different in my life.

For the first time in my Christian walk, I was able to read an entire book of the Bible. That may sound simple to some people, but for me, it was a huge accomplishment. It gave me confidence and reminded me that I can be consistent in the Word.

I start my day with Chapter by Chapter. It's the first thing I listen to when I wake up. It sets the tone for everything that follows. But what's impacted me most is that I'm not just listening—I'm applying it. I look

for ways to take what I've learned and live it out both personally and professionally.

The podcast has ministered to me in a beautiful way. It's deepened my relationship with Christ and strengthened my discipline in staying in Scripture. I thank God for Chapter by Chapter, for TSC, and for Pastor Tim. His passion, commitment, and love for people and for saving souls are evident.

I'm already getting ready for the next book.

This journey has changed me—one chapter at a time.



AFTER 11.  
the world. 3 The building of  
the tower of Babel.  
the earth was of one  
kind of speech.  
as they jour-  
neyed, that they found  
them of Shinar; and  
one to another. Go  
down, and burn them  
brick for brick.

Friday,  
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7PM ET

Online &  
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GOOD  
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# Three Prayers. One Journey. 100 Episodes.

by Pastor Tim Dilena

CHAPTER BY CHAPTER is a long journey, but it is worth it. It will take us almost four years to reach the 1,189th chapter of the Bible.

When you go on a long journey, you have to stop regularly to fill up your tank so you can keep going. I must do the same for Chapter by Chapter. Every day I go to a place where I fill up before I begin writing.

I prepare for the journey by praying three prayers before writing each chapter of the Word of God. They come from Psalm 119, Psalm 45, and Genesis 29. I pray:

Lord, OPEN MY EYES TO BEHOLD WONDERFUL THINGS.  
Lord, MAY MY HEART OVERFLOW WITH A GOOD THEME.  
Lord, MAKE THE YEARS AS DAYS.

The first prayer, "Open my eyes," comes from Psalm 119:18 (NASB):

*Open my eyes, that I may behold  
Wonderful things from Your law.*

Then I pray for an overflowing heart as I write. The Psalmist says in Psalm 45:1 (NKJV):

*My heart is overflowing with a good theme;  
I recite my composition concerning the King;  
My tongue is the pen of a ready writer.*

Finally, I ask God to do something that Jacob experienced while serving for the woman he loved. Jacob committed seven years of his life working for his uncle so that Rachel could become his wife. Yet in the midst of that labor, something remarkable happened.

Genesis 29:20 (NASB) says:

*So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of his love for her.*

How does that happen? It was the love Jacob had for Rachel.

I love the Word of God and the privilege of sharing it every day. I can truly say that love has fixed the long clock.

Each chapter of this daily devotional passes through these three prayers:

Open my eyes. Let my heart overflow with a good theme. Make the years as days.

## Testimonies from the Podcast

"I can't remember the date or the chapter we were on in Genesis, but I do remember the sadness I was feeling about my little boy that I adopted who at times has impulse control problems at school. I remember when I listened to **Chapter by Chapter** that day, and I heard Pastor Dilena say, 'Don't look at what you're seeing or what you're feeling. Trust in the Word of God.' Those words were so comforting to me. I remember thinking no matter what I hear or see regarding my boy whom I love so fiercely, I'm going to trust God's words."

— South Jersey loves your podcast, Pastor Dilena

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"I have shared the **Chapter by Chapter** podcast with many people. It's actually changed my daily devotional time. I now wake up at 4 AM and listen to it, and go into prayer. I have used it to start a renewed fire for prayer."

— Listening from Florida

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"I was just sharing with my husband the pages of notes I took over the last 50 days of Genesis, and I was amazed that I didn't miss a day. All glory to God. I've never stuck with a study for this long, and I'm so thankful to God for the anointing He placed on Pastor Dilena. God is using him in so many ways. I'm excited each morning!"

— All glory to God



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## TIMES SQUARE CHURCH

Times Square Church was founded in 1987 by Pastor David Wilkerson, author of "The Cross and the Switchblade." It is an interdenominational church located in the heart of New York City.

### CONTACT

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