

## **A Consuming Fire**

The Hebrew writer states, "Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:28-29). We can appreciate the consistency and unchangeable nature of God as Moses scribed the same thoughts in Deuteronomy. "For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God" (Deuteronomy 4:24). Why would God need to express Himself as a jealous, consuming fire? Because He expects and is due the factual recognition that He is God, the God, the creator of the Heavens, the earth, and all that exists within them (Psalm 19). Thus deserving of submission and worship by mankind.

God created mankind in His image, with intelligence, language, and love. He then loved us by revealing Himself to us that mankind could know Him. All God has ever expected in return is submissive obedience by having no other gods before Him (Deuteronomy 5:7). Jesus helps us understand the importance of placing God first in our lives in Matthew 6:33 - "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." God demands to be first, but the resulting outcome to the submissively obedient believer is certainly beneficial.

Many outright reject God in rejecting the idea of a Supreme Creator. After all, a Supreme God goes against human logic. And therein is the problem - human logic. Others reject God a bit more subtlety by placing God wherever they need Him to fit in their lives. By rejecting the God of heaven, or by making something else out to be our god, we have spurn and slander God. Thereby, we not only displace Him in our hearts, but also insult Him in all that He is. Paul help us put this in perspective declaring, "Therefore, put to death your members which are on the

earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry" (Colossians 3:5).

We need to understand that God becomes a consuming fire because He is jealous for our devotion and love. Moses even stated, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength" (Deuteronomy 6:5). Jesus repeats the words of Moses in Mark 12:30, thus reiterating the importance of placing God first under the New Law. God has always expected such from mankind. He wants to be our God. Therefore, His jealousy is based upon His goodness, His holiness, His righteousness, and His eternal character.

John sums it up well by saying, "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore, the world does not know us, because it did not know Him" (1 John 3:1).