

responsibility in our lives: how to live before God and how to live with others. The New Testament summarizes this as... "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God... and thy Neighbor as thyself." (Luke 10:27) Thus we often visualize the two tables of the law with the first stating that one will honor the Lord and the second one teaching us to honor others. This is a vital message and nowhere is the truth more clearly stated than in these words. So as we approach the ten words given by God to His people, it is with the hope that we shall learn better to honor the Lord and respect one another.

#### The First Commandment

The stress placed on the Person of God in the first four commands is gripping. These words uniquely belong to Israel and the attention of the people is drawn to their covenant-keeping God as they are charged to respect Him in all aspects of life. This is emphatically stated in the first law:

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me..."

Declaring His sovereign relationship to the nation, the Lord insists that His Person be honored by holding a solitary place in the affection of the people. The command is absolute... "You shall not do it." The content is readily understood... "Have anyone in my presence to whom you will give honor in preference to me." The positive side is thus explicitly stated:

"Honor my Person!"

#### The Basis of the First Commandment

This command is based on two points of truth. First, "I am the Lord thy God." Speaking as the living One, the eternal God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob certifies His presence in the days of the wilderness and in the power of the