

manipulate. The other found them in a powerless posture and made them seem inept and inferior. They could not manipulate the Lord of heaven and, unwilling to accept the reality of His control, they sought those objects they could control. This was the behaviour Israel had seen in Egypt where idolatrous worship was rampant. Now the Lord admonishes them not to turn that way, not to allow the things created to displace the Creator.

History has not lessened the temptation of course. Jesus warned about serving God and Mammon (Matthew 6) and Paul emphasized that one could not serve the temple of God and that of idols (2 Cor. 6:14--7:1). We must maintain clarity of vision with regard to our worship. There must be no division of devotion. The thrust of the commandment is to honor the worship of God.

The Second Commandment: The underlying reasoning

The explanation given this commandment is searching. "I the Lord your God am a jealous God." Jealous is hard to define in our culture due to its overuse in romance and mystery. While the common ideas are not totally absent from the Hebrew word, ~~they~~ are not the dominant ideas. God is represented as unwilling to share us with other deities because He alone knows what is best and right for us. In that sense He is jealous for our affection and zealous for our well-being. Jealousy with God is not a petty emotional grieving. It is an accorded of knowledge of what is best.

Isaiah 44 offers a commentary on this idea and elaborates on the problem. The Lord sets forth His divine character forcefully (Isaiah 44:6-8) and declares that there is none beside Him, He alone is God. But as the passage continues, verses 9-20 describe the activity and work of those who