

# God's Consuming Fire

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#1 **Malachi 3:6-7** *(For the full passage, read 3:1-18)*

**“For I am the Lord, I do not change; therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob. Yet from the days of your fathers you have gone away from My ordinances and have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you,” says the Lord of hosts.**

God does not change, but note the context: We all deserve to be consumed by the fire of His wrath for our countless sins against Him, but because of His unchanging mercy and grace, those whom He has saved are not consumed.

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#2 **Deuteronomy 4:23-24** *(For the full passage, read 4:1-40)*

**Take heed to yourselves, lest you forget the covenant of the Lord your God which He made with you, and make for yourselves a carved image in the form of anything which the Lord your God has forbidden you. For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.**

God warned His people, the Israelites in the Old Testament, against the sin of idolatry, because the wrath of His consuming fire might come against them. God is rightfully jealous in that all things were made by Him, all things belong to Him, and therefore all worship is due to Him.

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#3 **Exodus 33:3-5a** *(For the full passage, read 32:1-33:23)*

**“Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey; for I will not go up in your midst, lest I consume you on the way, for you are a stiff-necked people.” And when the people heard this bad news, they mourned, and no one put on his ornaments. For the Lord had said to Moses, “Say to the children of Israel, ‘You are a stiff-necked people. I could come up into your midst in one moment and consume you.’”**

Here we see God intentionally restraining His own wrath, as a display of His mercy, even though His wrath was fully deserved by the people of Israel for their ongoing disobedience. God could consume them all in a moment, and He would be perfectly just in doing so, because of their sins and disobedience.

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#4

**Numbers 11:1-2**

*(For the full passage, read 11:1-35)*

**Now when the people complained, it displeased the Lord; for the Lord heard it, and His anger was aroused. So the fire of the Lord burned among them, and consumed some in the outskirts of the camp. Then the people cried out to Moses, and when Moses prayed to the Lord, the fire was quenched.**

This time, the Lord chose to not restrain Himself. The Israelites continually complained, not trusting God to provide and care for them. God shows us two attributes of His character (love and wrath) in different ways—His mercy, grace, and forgiveness show us His love, while His righteous punishment of sin shows us His wrath.

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#5

**Isaiah 64:5b-7**

*(For the full passage, read 64:1-12)*

**You are indeed angry, for we have sinned—in these ways we continue; And we need to be saved. But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; we all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. And there is no one who calls on Your name, who stirs himself up to take hold of You; for You have hidden Your face from us, and have consumed us because of our iniquities.**

We fail to comprehend our great sinfulness before a perfect, holy, righteous God. Even the things we do that seem good to us are like filthy rags to Him, if we are not doing them for His glory. God has every right to consume us for our sins.

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#6

**2 Thessalonians 2:8**

*(For the full passage, read 2:1-17)*

**And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.**

The New Testament speaks of God's consuming wrath just as the Old Testament does. God is no different now than He was back then; He still hates sin.

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#7

**Hebrews 12:28-29**

*(For the full passage, read 12:14-29)*

**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.**

We have a tendency to not reverence God as we should, and sadly this is often true for believers and non-believers alike. God is a consuming fire, and He totally, utterly hates all sin. Worship is about praising Him, not pleasing ourselves. We should approach Him with a reverential fear and respect, in awe of who He is and all that He has done for us.