

**Subject: *Our Jealous God***

**Scripture: *Exodus 20:1-6***

In the Bible jealousy is sometimes used in a negative sense, but it is sometimes used in a positive way. He revealed Himself as the one and only God who would not tolerate any false gods as rivals. We think of jealousy as a vice instead of a virtue, so why would God say He is a jealous God? Sounds strange, doesn't it?

One thing is for sure. We're not making this up. God actually said it: "I am a jealous God." Everything we know about God has been revealed to us and God recorded the truth in a permanent written form. The Bible has been called "God's public record." He has gone on record to say I am a jealous God, and this is something He said more than once.

### **WE MUST UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE GOD'S JEALOUSY**

There are two ways in which we need to understand God's jealousy.

First, He is jealous for His own name and character. Second, He is jealous over His own people and the special love relationship He has with them.

God always seeks to protect His own honor. This is the point made in Exodus 20:5. He wants people to think of Him and worship Him for who He is, and He is angry when He is falsely represented. When God brought Israel out of Egypt to Mt. Sinai to give them His law and instructions for living in the Promised Land, one of the first things He taught them was that He is a jealous God. One of the great themes in Exodus is God making His name known. In chapter 3, He reveals His name as the "I AM" (Jehovah, Yahweh). This name revealed Him as the eternal, self-existent, sovereign and unchanging God. Then God revealed His name in ***Exodus 34:5-7***<sup>5</sup> *And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD.*<sup>6</sup> *And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,*<sup>7</sup> *Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.*

Then God said one more thing about His name (character) in ***Exodus 34:12-14***<sup>12</sup> *Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee:*<sup>13</sup> *But ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves:*<sup>14</sup> *For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.* This is not inconsistent with the other qualities of God, but in fact, it is the summary of all that He is. He is protective of His honor and character.

But there is a second sense in which God is jealous. He is jealous over His people because of His special relationship with them. We can understand that human jealousy is not always a vice or a bad thing. There is a petty jealousy, but there is a godly jealousy in protecting a marriage relationship. God takes the sanctity of marriage very seriously. God expected a husband to have the right to be protective and watchful over his own wife.

In Numbers 5, we read about the provision God made for a husband if he suspected his wife of unfaithfulness. God prescribed a plan of dealing with that sort of thing. The husband was to bring an offering of jealousy and the wife was required to prove her innocence before the priest. This whole process was called the law of jealousies. All of this indicates that God thought it was proper for a husband to have a jealous concern over the purity of his marriage.

**Proverbs 6:32-35** <sup>32</sup> But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul. <sup>33</sup> A wound and dishonor shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away. <sup>34</sup> For jealousy is the rage of a man: therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance. <sup>35</sup> He will not regard any ransom; neither will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts. Apparently God thought the husband would be justified in his anger. This was a legitimate form of jealousy with regard to marriage.

The Old Testament describes God's covenant with Israel as a marriage that carries with it a desire for love and loyalty. Worship of other gods is considered unfaithfulness or spiritual adultery that provokes God to jealousy. God's jealousy is to be understood in this context.

**Deuteronomy 6:14-15** <sup>14</sup> Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which are round about you; <sup>15</sup> (For the LORD thy God is a jealous God among you) lest the anger of the LORD thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth.

**Joshua 24:19-20** <sup>19</sup> And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. <sup>20</sup> If ye forsake the LORD, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good.

**Psalms 78:58** For they provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images.

**Zechariah 1:14** Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy. One Bible book (Hosea) describes God's special love for His people Israel and how Israel was unfaithful to God and His covenant love.

God reminds us of this in the New Testament in **1 Corinthians 10:21-22** <sup>21</sup> Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils. <sup>22</sup> Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?

He is jealous of our love and devotion. He is jealous of our faith and trust. He is jealous of our company and fellowship. He deserves and expects us to be devoted to Him. He does not allow us to serve Him and other gods. This is what He means when He says I am a jealous God. We must be careful not to provoke God to jealousy.

### **WE MUST UPHOLD AND HONOR GOD'S JEALOUSY**

We should be fully devoted and committed to Him. We should be just as protective of God's honor as He is. We have two prime examples of godly jealousy in the life of Elijah and Paul.

**1 Kings 19:10** And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

**2 Corinthians 11:1-2** <sup>1</sup> Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly: and indeed bear with me. <sup>2</sup> For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

The relationship of Christ and the church is the same as God had with Israel. Christ is the bridegroom and we are His bride. He is protective of His relationship with us and we should be just as protective of our relationship with Him. We must not provoke Him to jealousy.

**James 4:4** *Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.*

If you really love someone you don't provoke them to jealousy. You do everything possible to prove your love, trust, and commitment to them. Imagine how you would feel if the one you love most wanted to share his or her love with someone else. Imagine how that would hurt you. Does your life prove that you are fully committed to God or does it tell another story? Are some other things competing for your love and affection?