

# The Jealousy of God

## *Zechariah 1:14*

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Introduction: When speaking to the Corinthians, Paul says, “*For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy*” (II Cor. 11:2). Why was Paul jealous concerning the Corinthians? What is meant by a “*godly jealousy*”? I call our attention tonight to Zechariah 1:14 where we read, “*Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I am jealous for Jerusalem & for Zion with a great jealousy.*” The first mention of God’s jealousy is found in Exodus 20:5 in the giving of the Ten Commandments: “*Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God...*” And compare Exodus 34:14, “*For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.*” In the context of Zechariah 1:13-17, the LORD speaks “*good words & comfortable words*” which are found in verses 14-17. These words speak of God’s love for His people & the city of Jerusalem as well as His anger toward her enemies. Note with me tonight how we are to define the terms & then demonstrate the truth of “*godly jealousy.*” The jealousy of God requires our exclusive loyalty to Him.

### I. Defining the terms “*jealous & jealousy*” >

#### A. Academically (Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary):

1. “Very watchful or careful in guarding or keeping (jealous of one’s rights).”
2. “Resentfully suspicious of a rival or a rival’s influence (a husband jealous of other men).”
  - 2b. “Resentfully envious (of what someone else has).”
3. “Now rare – requiring exclusive loyalty (the Lord is a jealous God).”

#### B. Biblically:

1. The root word appears some 85 times in the O.T., often in the realm of marriage. It indicates “to be enflamed” [cf. “*zeal*” – on fire; which speaks of a “righteous, burning zeal for His honor, worship & kingdom” (RSB)].
2. In light of Webster’s definition #3 above, this speaks of the Lord’s fervent commitment to His people for their protection & His exclusive claim to obedience by His people for their good.
3. Because our God is a jealous God, demanding exclusive loyalty & devotion, He is also a wrathful God (see Deut. 4:24, “*For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God*” & cf. 29:18-28).

#### C. Practically:

1. Since “jealous” & “zealous” come from the same root, if you are jealous over someone or something, you will be zealous to protect that relationship.
2. “Jealousy is a sin if it means being envious of what others have & wanting to possess it, but it’s a virtue if it means cherishing what we have & wanting to protect it” (Wiersbe).
  - a. “A faithful husband & wife are jealous over one another & do everything they can to keep their relationship exclusive” (Wiersbe). Is that true of your marriage relationship?
  - b. “Just as a husband refuses to share his wife with another man, God refuses to share His people with another god” (Rooker). Review Exodus 20:4-6.
3. “Godly jealousy is not the insecure, insane, & possessive human jealousy that we often interpret this word to mean. Rather, it is an intensely caring devotion to the objects of His love, like a mother’s jealous protection of her children, a father’s jealous guarding of his home” (Schenck).

## II. Demonstrating the truths >

### A. In the marriage relationship:

1. This is the only human relationship in which the partners are bound by an exclusive tie – where jealousy is not only tolerated, but deemed right.
2. This speaks of the exclusivity of the partners (see I Peter 3:1-7).

### B. In the spiritual relationship (with God):

1. “The act of unfaithfulness on the part of God’s people is as repugnant as adultery. The relationship between a husband & a wife is the principal image used by the prophets for the explication of idolatry” (Rooker).
2. James 4:4 says, “*Ye adulterers & 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.*”  
Note: Friendship with the world is here equated with adultery. Why? Romans 7:4, “*Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ,; that ye should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.*” Recall that the Church is referred to spiritually as the Bride of Christ (see II Cor. 11:2 & Eph. 5:25-27). Therefore since the believer is “married” to Christ, he is to be faithful to Him.

Application: The “*world*” in James 4 speaks of human society apart from God. John 14:30 speaks of Satan as the prince of this world & Luke 16:8 says that the unsaved are children of this world. By contrast, in John 17:11-16, the children of God are described as in the world physically yet not of the world spiritually, & we are sent into the world to reach others for Christ (17:18).

Conclusion: In closing, I call your attention to James 4:5, “*Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The Spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?*” This verse is teaching that “the Spirit that dwells in us longs jealously over us” (Ryrie). This is a warning following verse 4, friendship with the world. Such friendship with the world can lead to being “spotted by the world” (areas of our life being approved by this society apart from God). This can then lead to a “love for the world” (I John 2:15-17), resulting in conformity to it (Rom. 12:1-2). The end result is to be condemned with the world (I Cor. 11:32); yet not a loss of salvation, but a loss of testimony & effectiveness in reaching the world for Christ. Living in the flesh (friendship with, love for, & conformity to the world) is referred to here as being the enemy of God. “Living for the flesh means grieving the Holy Spirit of God who lives in us. The Spirit within jealously guards our relationship to God, & the Spirit is grieved when we sin against God’s love” (Wiersbe). Ryrie concludes, “The Spirit does not want us to have divided allegiance.”

Does God have the right to be jealous over our time, our talent, our treasure, our tongue, our true love & devotion? Are we not commanded to love the Lord our God with all of our heart, soul, mind, & strength? “God not only loves us, but He also wants us to love Him in return” (Ryken). Be aware the God is jealous in His love for His people for He wants the very best for them. But He will not tolerate competition. He not only desires but He deserves our exclusive love for Him. Are you rendering such exclusive loyalty to Him?