



EL KANNA

JEALOUS GOD

“You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord, your God, am a jealous God.”

EXODUS 20:5

Who wants to be thought of as *jealous*? This unflattering description brings to mind the petty schoolgirl who bitterly resents the spotlight that a peer is enjoying, or the fact that her rival’s boyfriend is cuter than hers. To be jealous is to be vain, selfish, suspicious. It is to want what others have, never fully acknowledging or appreciating the good things in one’s own life.

And yet, there is another kind of jealousy—a holy version. It’s this noble form of jealousy that God has for His people, according to the Bible. But why is this a fitting jealousy? Why is God right to want us exclusively for Himself? Because He made us, and in Christ He purchased us (1 Corinthians 6:20; 7:23).

Divine jealousy isn’t motivated by greed or selfishness. God’s holy jealousy is rooted in a desire to protect, provide, and bless. He always and only wants what is best for His chosen ones. And what can be better than His perfect love?

Instead of imagining the negative and hurtful jealousy displayed by a petty schoolgirl, we need to imagine the protecting and providing jealousy of God. Picture God more as a loving father who discovers his homeless son sleeping in a filthy gutter. Imagine how this father might jealously seek to rescue his son. The father’s goal is to restore his son’s life, not to further punish him.

When God freed the Hebrew people from slavery in Egypt, He took them to Mount Sinai. At the foot of the mountain, God told them they would soon be surrounded by neighbors who were devoted to other gods. He warned them they would be tempted to turn away and be unfaithful. Lastly, He assured them He would not stand idly by and allow that to happen. As a jealous God, He would fight fervently for their attention and affection.

When God calls Himself *jealous*, it is a reminder to us that our worship cannot be divided. The Great Commandment is to love God with “all” (not part of) our hearts. He alone is worthy of our devotion. He alone is deserving of our hearts. He knows that the ones He loves will find life, ultimate meaning, purpose, and joy nowhere else. He knows that He alone always seeks what’s best for us. He also knows that He alone is the one place where our hearts will find their true home.

This is why when Jesus came, He reminded us that we cannot serve two masters (Matthew 6:24). He told us that whoever is not for God is against Him (Luke 11:23). It is tempting to be “sort of,” “sometimes,” or “mostly” devoted to God. But we either give ourselves to Him or we give ourselves to other lovers. God is jealous for our love because He is zealous for us to know His.

What are the rivals for God in your heart and life?



PRAYER

God, drive from my heart anything that captures my attention and affection more than You. May I not make You jealous today by being unfaithful. Amen.

READ MORE: EXODUS 34:13-14; ISAIAH 42:7-8

ELOHIM

MIGHTY CREATOR

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

GENESIS 1:1

When you introduce yourself to someone, what name do you use? Does it depend on your audience? If you want to impress someone, do you throw a title before (or after) your name? If you're introducing yourself to a child, you might use a "Mr." or "Ms." Or if you want to put someone at ease, you might introduce yourself with a nickname—"My friends call me Chipper."

We often use introductions as opportunities to tell people about ourselves. Within a fraction of a second, we decide what we want a person to know about us, and we convey some of that information through our introduction. Imagine God extending His hand to you in introduction. "Hello," He says, "My name is Elohim." Essentially, that's what He does in the Bible: "In the beginning, *Elohim* created the heavens and the earth."

The Bible includes more than one hundred names for God, yet this is the one He starts with: *Elohim*—supreme God, strong One. Say it aloud; the name even sounds mighty. *Elohim* is used 2,570 times in Scripture. Over and over, God's Word reminds us of God's strength, His might. And the more we seek God, the more we come to personally know and experience His power. Sometimes we face obstacles that seem huge. Sometimes we find ourselves staring at a wall too tall to see over, too thick to knock down. It is then we must remember to call out to *Elohim*. We are not designed to live this life using our own strength;

we are designed to need His. When we are scared, we have *Elohim*. When we are suffering, we have *Elohim*. When we are overwhelmed, anxious, or exhausted, we have *Elohim*.

God has made Himself and His supernatural power available to us. All we have to do is take His hand.

What struggles in your life reveal your inadequate strength? In what areas do you need the life-sustaining power that can only come from Elohim?



PRAYER

Elohim, thank You for making Yourself known to me. Thank You for Your power, Your might, Your strength. Help me to never doubt Your strength but to rely on it every minute of every day. Please continue to reveal Yourself to me. I want to know more of You. Amen.

READ MORE: ISAIAH 41:10; 2 CORINTHIANS 12:9-10

EL ROI

THE GOD WHO SEES ME

*"She gave this name to the L^{ord}, who spoke to her:
'You are the God who sees me,' for she said, 'I have now seen
the One who sees me.'"*

GENESIS 16:13

When we're up to no good, we'd prefer to go unnoticed. But who wants to be overlooked when life is unraveling?

The encouraging story of Hagar is for everyone who's ever felt invisible. Everything changed for this Egyptian servant when she was given by her barren mistress, Sarai, to Abram in order to conceive an heir for him. Hagar's affection for Sarai quickly morphed into condescension once Hagar became pregnant with Abram's child. This led to abusive behavior at the hands of Sarai. When the harassment became intolerable, Hagar abruptly fled into the wilderness without money, food, water, or a plan.

Trudging all alone and pregnant through a desert wasteland, no doubt feeling forgotten, Hagar stumbled upon a desert spring. When she stopped to drink, she found more than refreshing water. She found supernatural help! In angelic form, the Lord met her. He reassured her with lavish promises. He promised that her son would live and become a father with descendants "too numerous to count." Then he sent her back home filled and strengthened with new hope. Is it any wonder Hagar gave the Lord the name "The God who sees me"?

Implicit in this name is God's overriding compassion. When Hagar had no idea where to go or what to do next, she was reminded that God is real, that He sees the needs of His

creatures, and that He draws near to help. God doesn't just glance our way; long and hard, He studies the difficulties we face. And then He acts.

Do you feel like you're alone, that nobody really sees (much less understands) the troubles you face? Maybe you feel like injustice is rampant in your life. Even in such dark times, trust that God is *El Roi*. He sees—and He sees you. He looks intently. He notices. He studies everything and misses nothing. Others may overlook you or forget you, but God never will. And because He sees you, He knows what you need and gladly provides the comfort you are looking for.

Do you see the God who is watching you?

*Where do you feel most helpless and alone?
In what ways would it comfort you to know that
God sees and intimately knows your situation?*

PRAYER

You are the God who sees me. Thank You for keeping Your eye on me, for knowing my situation, and for caring about what happens to me. Amen.

READ MORE: PSALM 139:1; MATTHEW 6:4