



# Godly Jealousy

## A Theology of Intolerant Love

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**MENTOR**





To my faithful wife, Donna.

‘This is my beloved and this is my friend’  
(Song of Songs 5:16).

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

That God is a jealous God is a clear teaching of the Bible. Gerhard von Rad considers God's jealousy to be one of the most foundational divine attributes. He understands it as 'an emotion springing from the very depths of [God's] personality.'<sup>1</sup> Walter Eichrodt believes divine jealousy to be the 'basic element of the whole Old Testament idea of God.'<sup>2</sup> Jealousy is the reason God gives for the second commandment:

You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them; *for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God*, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me. (Exod. 20:3-5)

When God renews the covenant with Moses in Exodus 34:10-28, he tells him that he is a jealous God. In the same verse, he goes to the extent of affirming that 'Jealous' is an appropriate personal name for himself: 'for you shall not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.' Repeatedly throughout the Bible God reminds his people that he is a jealous God.<sup>3</sup> His jealousy is for his own honor, and for the faithfulness

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<sup>1</sup>Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, trans. D. G. M. Stalker (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1962), 1:207.

<sup>2</sup>Walter Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961), 1:44.

<sup>3</sup>E.g., Exodus 20:5; 34:14; Numbers 25:11; Deuteronomy 4:24; 5:9; 6:15; 29:20; 31:16; 32:16, 21; Joshua 24:19; 1 Kings 14:22; 2 Kings 19:31; Psalms 78:58; 79:5; Isaiah 9:7; 26:11; 37:32; 42:13; 59:17; 63:15; Ezekiel 5:13; 8:3-5; 16:38, 42; 23:25; 36:5-6; 39:25; Joel 2:18; Nahum 1:2; Zephaniah 1:18; 3:8; Zechariah 1:14-15; 8:2; John 2:17; 1 Corinthians 10:22; 11:2; James 4:5.



of those with whom he has established a covenant relationship. Any violation of the exclusive favor in this relationship is met with a strong emotional response of jealousy, which results in wrathful and restorative action.

In the Bible we also see that humans demonstrate godly jealousy in relationship to other persons and on behalf of God.<sup>4</sup> Although human jealousy is seldom uncontaminated with sin, can be unwarranted,<sup>5</sup> and taken to ungodly extremes,<sup>6</sup> there is, nevertheless, an important place in the Bible for human jealousy that is righteous and godly.

### The Definition of Godly Jealousy

This book will focus on occurrences where the concept of jealousy is present in the Bible even if the word is not. However, while this study of godly jealousy in the Bible is not limited to the occurrence of the Greek and Hebrew words that may be translated 'jealousy,' these words are nevertheless vital to a proper understanding of the Biblical understanding of this concept.

Most of the biblical reference sources provide good general definitions of jealousy and acknowledge the possibility of a positive sense for it.<sup>7</sup> The Hebrew and Greek words *qinah* (זְנִיחַ) and ζήλος (*zēlos*), which may be translated 'jealousy,' have a similar, and broad range of meanings. In addition to

<sup>4</sup>E.g., Numbers 5:11-31; 11:29; 25:11, 13; Deuteronomy 32:21; 1 Kings 19:10, 14; 2 Kings 10:16; Psalms 69:9; 119:139; Proverbs 6:34; 23:17; Song of Songs 8:6; John 2:17; 2 Corinthians 11:2.

<sup>5</sup>The rituals for determining the justification of the jealousy of a husband detailed in Numbers 5 assume that there were times that the husband's jealousy was unjustified. Joshua's jealousy on behalf of Moses was also unwarranted in Numbers 11:29.

<sup>6</sup>As it was with Jehu in 2 Kings 10:16 who seems to have had an appropriate godly jealousy that was taken too far in the massacre at Jezreel, as Hosea 1:4 indicates.

<sup>7</sup>One notable exception is the *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, which has no entry for jealousy. It does have an extensive entry for 'Zealots,' in which it deals with the concept of zeal. It defines zeal as 'behavior motivated by the desire to protect one's self, group, space, or time against violations.' David Rhoads, 'Zealots,' in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed., David Noel Freedman (Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday, 1992) 6:1044.

‘jealousy,’ other possible translations are ‘zeal,’ ‘envy,’ ‘ardor’ or ‘emulation.’<sup>8</sup> The focus of this study will not examine the occurrences in Scripture where the meanings of קִנְיָהּ (*qinah*) and ζῆλος (*zēlos*) are envy, zeal, or emulation. Our focus will be upon the instances in the Bible where, as indicated by the context, a positive and relational ‘jealousy’ is the intended meaning.

קִנְיָהּ (*qna*) has an etymological connection with the Akkadian *uqnû*, meaning ‘to become red or alternatively black.’<sup>9</sup> *BDB* provides ‘ardor,’ ‘zeal’ and ‘jealousy’ as possible translations of the noun form of קִנְיָהּ (*qna*) and connects it with the ‘colour produced in [the] face by deep emotion.’<sup>10</sup> The possible definitions *BDB* provides for the noun forms are: (1) Ardour of jealousy of husband; (2) Ardour of zeal: a. of men for God, b. of God for his people especially in battle; (3) Ardour of anger: a. of men against adversaries, b. of God against men. For the verb forms the definitions it provides are: (1) Be jealous. (2) Be envious. (3) Be zealous for: a. of man, for God, b. of God. (4) Excite to jealous anger. *BDB* also defines the adjective form as ‘jealous,’ and points out that it is used only of God, and in the context of his ‘demanding exclusive service.’<sup>11</sup> Hendrik G. L. Peels defines קִנְיָהּ as an ‘intense energetic state of mind towards action which is caused by an infringement of someone’s rights or injury to the subject’s honor.’<sup>12</sup> He also adds ‘furious’ as a possible translation of the verb form. When used of humans in a positive sense, he notes that קִנְיָהּ (*qna*) is used ‘to express

<sup>8</sup>Please see the charts in appendix 1 and 2 for all of the occurrences of the קִנְיָהּ (*qna*) and ζῆλος (*zēl-*) roots in the Bible, along with the subject, object, cause, positive or negative use, and the translation I believe fits best.

<sup>9</sup>Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, and Johann J. Stamm, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, ed. and trans. M. E. J. Richardson (New York: E. J. Brill, 1996), 3:109-10; cf. Hendrik G. L. Peels, ‘קִנְיָהּ (*qna*),’ in *NIDOTTE*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 3:937.

<sup>10</sup>Francis Brown, et al., *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Genesis Hebrew-English Lexicon* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1979), 888.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup>Peels, *NIDOTTE*, 3:938.

religious fervor, impassioned devotion to God.<sup>13</sup> As examples of this religious fervor he gives Phinehas (Num. 25:11), David's words in Psalm 69:9, Elijah (1 Kings 19:10), and Paul (2 Cor 11:2). When used of God, Peels observes  $\text{קנא}$  (*qna*) is often the response to Israel's idolatry and is God's 'fiery, angry reaction to the infringement of his rights *vis-à-vis* Israel and the violation of the *berît*.'<sup>14</sup>

Leonard Coppes defines  $\text{קנא}$  (*qna*) as 'a very strong emotion whereby some quality or possession of the object is desired by the subject.'<sup>15</sup> While he acknowledges that 'envy' or 'zeal' are legitimate translations, he says that the 'central meaning of our word, however, relates to "jealousy" especially in the marriage relationship.'<sup>16</sup> As we shall see as our study develops, for God, his jealous response is based in his love, for his people, love that he expects to be reciprocated by them. This love God expects from his people is not only an emotional response, but also necessarily results in obedient behavior. When a person experiences godly jealousy, he has a 'passionate, consuming "zeal" focused on God that results in the doing of his will and the maintaining of his honor in the face of the ungodly acts of men and nations.'<sup>17</sup>

*The Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* adds 'fervor' to the possible translations of  $\text{קנאה}$  (*qinah*). It recognizes that meaning when there is an interpersonal context for the word family; 'it indicates the attitude, often accompanied by a strong emotional component, of one partner toward the other regular partner.'<sup>18</sup> It also recognizes the strong link between

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Leonard J. Coppes, ' $\text{קנא}$ ,' (*qna*) in *TWOT*, ed. Harris, R. L., Gleason L. Archer, and Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody, 1980), 2:802.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 803. Coppes gives Phinehas, Elijah, and the Messiah (Ps. 69:9) as examples of this kind of jealousy.

<sup>18</sup>G. Sauer, ' $\text{קנאה}$ ,' (*qinah*) in *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*, trans. Mark E. Biddle, ed. Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1997), 3:1146.

God's jealousy and his holiness. Sauer agrees with Eichrodt when he says that '[t]he concept of Yahweh's jealousy that corresponds to his transcendence, majesty, and holiness is "the basic element in the whole Old Testament idea of God."' <sup>19</sup>

In the New Testament, the definitions and possible translations of ζήλος (*zēlos*) are very close to those of *qna*. When used positively, Hans-Christoph Hahn defines ζήλος (*zēlos*) generally as 'an emotional going out to a person, idea or cause.'<sup>20</sup> *BDAG* and *TDNT* leave little place for a positive translation rendered 'jealousy,' and limit the possible positive translations to 'zeal' or 'ardor.'<sup>21</sup> *BDAG* gives the following definitions for the noun form: (1) Intense positive interest in something, zeal, ardor, marked by a sense of dedication; (2) Intense negative feelings over another's achievements or success, jealous, envy. For the verb form *BDAG* gives the following definitions: (1) Be positively and intensely interested in something, strive, desire, exert oneself earnestly, be dedicated; (2) To have intense negative feelings over another's achievements or success, be filled with jealous, envy.<sup>22</sup> Liddell and Scott gives 'jealousy,' 'zeal,' 'envy,' 'fervour,' 'indignation,' and 'emulation' as possible translations of ζήλος (*zēlos*).<sup>23</sup>

Boyd Luter does recognize a distinction between the positive use of 'jealousy' and the more general 'zeal.' When used in a positive sense he says, 'jealousy is the relational counterpart to zeal, primarily a focusing of emotion toward a person in the

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Hans-Christoph Hahn, 'ζήλος' (*zēlos*) *NIDNTT*, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 3:1166.

<sup>21</sup>Walter Bauer, *A Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd edition, revised and edited by Fredrick W. Danker (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2000), 427; Albrecht Stumpff, 'ζήλος' (*zēlos*) trans. G. W. Bromiley, in *TDNT*, ed. Gerhardt Kittel and G. Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 2:279-290.

<sup>22</sup>Bauer, *BDAG*, 427.

<sup>23</sup>Henry G. Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, revised and augmented by Henry A. Jones (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), 755.



desire for a closer or renewed bond.<sup>24</sup> Other sources I examined did not add anything more to the basic definitions given for *קִנְיָה* (*qinah*) and ζήλος (*zēlos*) than we have seen thus far.<sup>25</sup>

As the aforementioned lexical studies indicate, and as my analysis of the ninety occurrences of these words in the Bible shows, *קִנְיָה* (*qinah*) and ζήλος (*zēlos*) both represent exclusive single-mindedness of emotion, which may be morally blameworthy or praiseworthy, depending on the object and motive of the jealousy.<sup>26</sup> The objects of God's holy jealousy are the honor of his name and his people who are bound to him through covenant. The jealousy of God is vital to the essence of his moral character, a major cause for worship and confidence on the part of his people, and a ground for fear on the part of his enemies.

For the purposes of this study, jealousy, in distinction to envy and zeal, will be understood always to carry with it a relational element in which the one who is jealous desires exclusive favor in the relationship.<sup>27</sup> Zeal is the more general emotion of which jealousy is a sub-category. Jealousy is always a zealous emotion, but zeal is not always a jealous emotion. At its core jealousy is an emotion based on a perceived infidelity to covenant exclusivity. This desire to remain exclusively

<sup>24</sup>Boyd A. Luter, 'Jealousy, Zeal,' in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Gerald F. Hawthorne, Daniel G. Reid (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1993), 461.

<sup>25</sup>Other sources I consulted were: E. M. Good, 'Jealousy,' *IDB* (N.Y.: Abingdon, 1962), 2; Bruce A. Milne, 'Jealousy,' in *New Bible Dictionary*, ed. J. D. Douglas, (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale, 1962), 553; Norman H. Snaith, 'Jealous, Zealous,' in *A Theological Wordbook of the Bible*, ed. Alan Richardson (London: SCM, 1957), 115-16. N. J. Opperwall, 'Jealous,' in *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, et al (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 971.

<sup>26</sup>In my study of the 90 occurrences of the *קנא* (*qna*) and *זל* (*zēl-*) roots that could be translated with the 'jealous' words, 64 are used positively and 43 are used to describe God himself.

<sup>27</sup>This relational distinction is explained in Daniel M. Farrell, 'Jealousy,' *The Philosophical Review* 89, no. 4 (1980): 527-59 and D. H. Semdahl, 'God and the Concept of Jealousy' (Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1983). See also Daniel M. Farrell, 'Jealousy and Desire,' *Love Analyzed* (ed. Roger E. Lamb), Boulder: Co., Western Press, 1997.



avored in covenant relationship grows out of recognition of the righteousness of this fidelity. It is also based in the desire for the pleasure this fidelity produces.

Jealousy expresses the unique character of the covenant relationship between Yahweh and his people. The word 'jealousy' translates *qna* and *zēlos* most accurately, when it is intended to describe the emotional response to infidelity that a personal being experiences. God's transcendent qualities do not diminish his personal immanence. Indeed, 'God is not only the master who commands, he is the Father who loves and passes this love into the reality of the life of human history.'<sup>28</sup>

To refrain from using 'jealousy' as a translation and opt for the less particular 'zeal' means that the relational sense of the concept is lost, and God's genuine intimacy with, and love for, his people is diminished. 'Zeal' is a far too broad word for many of the contexts with which we will be dealing. In these interpersonal contexts, jealousy is the preferable translation 'on the condition that from it we eliminate all pejorative characteristics of narrowness and pettiness and to situate jealousy in a larger context than that of conjugal symbolism.'<sup>29</sup>

#### *Definitions of Jealousy and Related Words*

In this study, the following definitions for jealousy and related words will be employed:

- ◆ *Jealousy*: The ardent desire to maintain exclusive devotion within a relationship in the face of a challenge to that exclusive devotion. Necessary requirements for jealousy to be present are:

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<sup>28</sup>Bernard Renaud, *Je Suis un Dieu Jaloux* (I am a Jealous God), (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1963), 70-71. 'Dieu n'est pas seulement le Maître qui commande, il est le Père qui aime et qui fait passer cet amour dans la réalité de la vie et de l'histoire humaine.'

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 153. 'à condition d'en éliminer tout caractère péjoratif d'étroitesse et de mesquinerie, et de le situer dans un cadre plus large que celui du symbolisme conjugal.'



- (1) A Lover
- (2) A Beloved
- (3) A Rival
- (4) Infidelity Expressed In Some Way by the Beloved<sup>30</sup>
- (5) An Emotional Response to that Infidelity

The covenant, and metaphors, of sexual relations, father-son relationships, and marriage relationships<sup>31</sup> are common in the biblical expressions of jealousy. The Bible understands jealousy as a very powerful emotion. ‘Wrath is fierce and anger is a flood, but who can stand before jealousy?’ (Prov 27:4).

- ◆ *Zeal*: An ardent general desire to see a particular result come about. This emotion differs from jealousy in that it is a much less specific desire. Zeal is the most general of the translations, and means the eager ardent desire for something.<sup>32</sup> This emotion is clearly evident in Nehemiah 3:20. ‘Baruch the son of Zabbai *zealously* repaired another section, from the angle to the doorway of the house of Eliashib the high priest.’
- ◆ *Envy*: The ardent desire to gain possession of something that is not currently possessed. This emotion differs from jealousy in that it is never godly, is not necessarily a relational emotion (one can be envious of inanimate objects), and the object desired is not the possession of the one experiencing the emotion. While jealousy desires the protection of something

<sup>30</sup>For the sake of clarity in this book, for godly jealousy to be present, there must be due cause. This means that even if the beloved is enticed to infidelity, godly jealousy will not be present unless the beloved is in some way unfaithful. A range of other godly emotions may be felt in response to the attempt of a rival to seduce a beloved (indignation, anger, a sense of betrayal, etc.), but godly jealousy is always in response to the expressed or intended infidelity of the beloved.

<sup>31</sup>קנא (*qna*) and זיל (zēl-) are used in relation to the marriage metaphor in the Bible at least seventeen times: Genesis 30:1; Numbers 5:14-30 (10 times); Proverbs 6:34; Song of Songs 8:6; Ezekiel 16:38, 42; 23:25; 2 Corinthians 11:2. Although the words occur in relation to marriage in only in these passages, as we shall see, jealousy is expressed in many more passages in relation to the marriage metaphor even when the words for jealousy are not used.

<sup>32</sup>Noah Webster, *Webster's Tenth New International Dictionary of the English Language* (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1993), 760.

possessed, envy is the resentful desire to possess something not currently possessed. Envy never carries a positive connotation.<sup>33</sup>

- ◆ *Malicious envy*: The ardent desire to gain possession of something not currently possessed, *and to deny it of the current possessor*. This is the especially evil form of envy.<sup>34</sup>
- ◆ *Desire to emulate*: A positive desire to gain possession of a trait or ability of another. Emulation is to aspire to be like someone in a particular characteristic while not wanting to deny him of that characteristic.
- ◆ *Covetousness*: A selfish inordinate desire to gain wealth or possessions.
- ◆ *Resentment*: A feeling of indignant displeasure or persistent ill will at something regarded as a wrong, insult, or injury (Webster). Resentment often accompanies these other emotions of possession.

<sup>33</sup>This usage is found in passages such as Genesis 26:14, where the Philistines were envious of Isaac's possessions and Psalm 73:3, 'For I was envious of the arrogant, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.'

<sup>34</sup>This category of envy comes from Peter Salovey's very helpful, *The Psychology of Jealousy and Envy* (New York: Guilford, 1991). Although based upon naturalistic presuppositions, this is the definitive book on jealousy from a psychological perspective, and very helpful for thinking through the concept and experience of human jealousy. The field of psychology has studied this emotion, and emotions in general, more than any other. Philosophy is a distant second with works like Daniel Farrell's, 'Jealousy,' *The Philosophical Review* 89, no. 4 (Oct. 1980): 527-59 and Immanuel Kant's, 'Jealousy, Envy, and Spite,' trans. Louis Enfield, in *Virtue and Vice in Everyday Life*, ed. Christina Sommers and Fred Sommers (New York: Harcourt Brace Janovich College Publishers, 1993), 384-92. Aaron Ben-Ze'ev, 'Are Envy, Anger, and Resentment Moral Brothers?' *Philosophical Explorations* 5:2 (May 2002), 148-54. Aaron Ben-Ze'ev, 'Envy and Jealousy,' *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* (December 1990), 487-516. Kristjan Kristjansson, *Justifying Emotions, Pride and Jealousy* (NY: Routledge, 2002). Kristjan Kristjansson, 'Why Persons Need Jealousy,' *Personalist Forum*, 12.2 (Fall 1996), 163-81. Michael Wren, 'Jealousy,' *Nous* 23.5 (December 1989), 635-52. Theologians and biblical scholars have woefully neglected jealousy and the issue of emotions in general. One notable exception is Dan Allender and Tremper Longman's, *The Cry of the Soul: How Our Emotions Reveal Our Deepest Questions About God* (Colorado Springs, Colo.: NavPress 1994), 132, a book co-authored by a psychologist and an Old Testament scholar.

- ◆ *Honor*: Respect, esteem, or devotion shown one as his due or claimed by one as a right. This concept is related to jealousy, because often honor is the key relational element that is denied when jealousy is aroused.
- ◆ *Indignation* (righteous): Anger aroused by something unjust, unworthy, or mean.
- ◆ *Vengeance* (revenge): Punishment inflicted in retaliation for an injury or offense.
- ◆ *Devotion*: The fact or state of being ardently dedicated and loyal (as to an idea or person).
- ◆ *Ambition*: An ardent desire for rank, fame, or power.

It is important to point out here that emotions are never experienced to the exclusion of, or in isolation from, other emotions. One might add, as philosopher Richard Swinburne points out, 'Emotional states differ from each other according to the different thoughts, beliefs and desires which enter into them.'<sup>35</sup> I might add, then, that having proper belief-desire sets will make for mature decision-making. Furthermore, Jennifer Robinson has argued that it is characteristic of the role of desire in emotion that the desire causes the thought (viz. judgment).<sup>36</sup>

Jealousy is often experienced as a blended emotion, along with zeal, anger, indignation, or even grief. It is even possible to have godly and ungodly emotions at the same time. It is no easy task figuring out what emotions are at work in someone, even in oneself. This may be why the study of emotions tends to be neglected. However, the Bible puts significant emphasis on the importance of the internal emotions that motivate behavior. For this reason, and because emotions are such a vital part of the human experience this study on jealousy is greatly needed and has vital implications for the church.

<sup>35</sup>Richard Swinburne, *The Evolution of the Soul*, revised edition (Oxford, 1997), 140.

<sup>36</sup>Jennifer Robinson, 'Emotion, Judgment, and Desire,' *Journal of Philosophy* (1983), 80



### Contemporary Views of Jealousy

In spite of the considerable emphasis on the jealousy of God, and godly human jealousy in the Bible, the common understanding of jealousy in the secular *and* Christian realms is mostly negative. A survey of the relevant literature shows relatively little written on this subject.<sup>37</sup> When it is dealt with in secular literature, jealousy is often seen as the main cause of wife abuse and is generally considered a destructive primitive emotion for God or mankind to exhibit.<sup>38</sup> Because jealousy is primarily seen as a result of personal and relational insecurity<sup>39</sup> it is assumed that a God who is jealous must therefore be insecure. 'Thus the jealousy of God correlates with the insecurity of his Chosen People.'<sup>40</sup> A good example of the disdain for divine jealousy can be seen in Gerald Ringer's article on contemporary spirituality, 'Report from a Far Meridian: Yahweh, God of the Fireball,' where he blames the idea of divine jealousy for much of the destruction in history including the dropping of the atom bomb on Japan.<sup>41</sup>

In a balance of terror maintained by nuclear arsenals, the jealousy of God and the insecurity of people together induce structural

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<sup>37</sup>Bernard Renaud's, *Je Suis un Dieu Jaloux* (I am a Jealous God), was the only monograph I was able to find that is devoted to jealousy from a biblical perspective. There are two Th.M. theses on the subject, which both leave considerable work to be done. Cf. Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, 'A Study of the Root  $\text{קנא}$  (*qna*)' (Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1971); D. H. Semdahl, 'God and the Concept of Jealousy' (Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1983).

<sup>38</sup>Examples of secular literature that have this strongly negative understanding of jealousy can be found in the following: James B. Ashbrook, *The Humanizing Brain: Where Science and Religion Meet* (Cleveland, Ohio: Pilgrim Press, 1997); Charles Darwin, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965); Carolyn Gard, 'Taming Jealousy: 'The Green-Eyed Monster,'' *Current Health* 25, no. 7 (1999): 26-28; Salovey, *The Psychology of Jealousy and Envy*; Ira L. Reiss, 'A Sociological Journey Into Sexuality,' *Journal of Marriage and Family* 48, no. 2 (1986): 233-42; Gerald Ringer, 'Report from a Far Meridian: Yahweh, God of the Fireball,' in *Fireball and the Lotus: Emerging Spirituality from Ancient Roots*, ed. Ron Miller and Jim Kenney (Santa Fe, N.M.: Bear & Co., 1987), 85; Swami Anand Veereshwar, 'Jealousy and the Abyss (Ego Defenses Against Nothingness),' *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 23, no. 2 (1983): 70-84.

<sup>39</sup>Ringer, *Yahweh, God of the Fireball*, 85.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.



instability. Yahweh, whether under the banner of Adam Smith or Karl Marx, remains the jealous God of the fireball of righteous wrath.<sup>42</sup>

Ringer believes that the repression of ‘the matrist sensitivity to mercy’<sup>43</sup> and the idea of the jealousy of God are responsible for the nuclear destruction he believed loomed on the horizon. For Ringer, and most people in our culture today, the idea of a wrathful jealous God is an ‘unutterable horror.’<sup>44</sup>

While there are notable exceptions,<sup>45</sup> many in the field of psychology view the idea of God’s jealousy as a great evil that is the result of the ‘territorial imperative of the primal mind,’<sup>46</sup> which produces the ‘my turf’<sup>47</sup> mentality of territorial religion. It is also seen as the reason for hierarchical, watchful, persistent, unchanging ideas of God.<sup>48</sup> Jealousy is often explained as the product of the evolutionary process. Among men, jealousy is viewed as an emotion that is intended to ‘defend paternity confidence.’<sup>49</sup> This jealousy often results in violence done in order to achieve sexual exclusivity and control over women, thereby satisfying their motive—their inclination (stemming from evolution) for assurance that they are passing on their own gene pool and not wasting their resources on raising the children

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 86.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 85.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 86.

<sup>45</sup>One of these exceptions can be seen in the following statement of psychologist Bram P. Buunk in his chapter, ‘Jealousy in Close Relationships: An Exchange Theoretical Perspective,’ in *The Psychology of Jealousy and Envy*, ed. Peter Solovey, 172, who recognizes a positive sense of jealousy:

It has been shown that some forms of jealousy may arise from the desire to protect a valued and satisfying relationship whereas other types of jealousy seem to be indicative of insecurity, too much dependence and lack of trust.... Interdependence theory makes it quite clear that to attempt to eradicate all forms of jealousy completely would mean to give up all forms of interdependence. And that would mean giving up what can be considered the core of intimate relationships.

<sup>46</sup>Ashbrook, *Humanizing Brain*, 63.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid.

<sup>49</sup>Ralph B. Hupka, ‘The Motive for the Arousal of Romantic Jealousy: Its Cultural Origin,’ in *The Psychology of Jealousy and Envy*, ed. Peter Solovey, 257.

of interlopers.<sup>50</sup> It is even believed that the idea of a jealous God is the result of vestiges of our reptilian brains.<sup>51</sup>

The perception of jealousy in the church does not fare much better than outside of it. Emotions in general and jealousy as a positive emotion suffer from neglect and ignorance in the church. Like those outside the church, few Christians realize that a godly jealousy exists, and seldom is any distinction made between jealousy, which can be godly, and envy, which never is. Part of the problem is that for most English speakers envy (which is the desire to gain possession of something that does not belong to you) and jealousy (which is the desire to maintain possession of something that does belong to you) are used synonymously.

When human jealousy is spoken of in Christian literature, it is more often than not used as Catherine Clark Kroeger does when she describes an ‘insanely jealous’ husband who abuses his wife.<sup>52</sup> Few Christian authors leave much room for a positive understanding of jealousy. Most see the emotion as do secular psychologists who view jealousy as little more than ‘the motive in homicide and wife beating.’<sup>53</sup>

While it is likely that the jealousy of God has never been easy for students of the Bible to feel comfortable with or understand, this is especially true in contemporary western culture, with its increasing disrespect for exclusive relationship in general, as well as a de-emphasis on God’s transcendent holiness. The negative connotations that commonly accompany the concept of jealousy have left little place for a positive idea of it, even among Bible scholars. H. C. Hahn and Albrecht Stumpff believe the term ‘jealousy,’ when used of God, is a ‘misleading and unfortunate’ rendering of the  $\kappa\eta$  (*qna*) and  $\zeta\eta\lambda$  (*zēl-*) word

<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

<sup>51</sup>Ashbrook, *Humanizing Brain*, 63.

<sup>52</sup>Catherine Clark Kroeger, Prologue in *Women, Abuse and the Bible: How Scripture Can Be Used to Hurt or Heal*, ed. Catherine Clark Kroeger and James R. Beck (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 9-12.

<sup>53</sup>Hupka, ‘Romantic Jealousy,’ 257.



groups.<sup>54</sup> Because of the negative connotation that jealousy carries, there seems to be an increasing tendency to opt for the more general and vague ‘zeal.’ This is true even when context indicates that the emotion exhibited is the result of the violation of an exclusive relationship.

The emotions of God in general present a difficulty in light of traditional views of God’s immutability.<sup>55</sup> God’s immutability can be emphasized to the point where his emotions are not sufficiently acknowledged.<sup>56</sup> Or God’s emotions can be emphasized to the point where the result is a god who is impotent and capricious. Orthodox priest Theodore Pulcini represents an increasingly common view when he quotes John Cassian<sup>57</sup> who says of anger, ‘one dare not attribute this most pernicious disease of the soul to God.’<sup>58</sup> Pulcini allows for none of the ‘taint of human passions’ to be attributed to God and believes that to apply these and other ‘gross anthropomorphisms’ to the immutable nature of God is nothing short of blasphemy.<sup>59</sup> At times, negatively perceived emotions of God have been underappreciated and dismissed as merely incomprehensible anthropomorphisms.<sup>60</sup> One wonders why this is not the approach

<sup>54</sup>Hahn, ‘ζήλος,’ (*zēlos*) *TNIDNTT*, ed. Colin Brown, 3:1166-69; Stumpff, ‘ζήλος,’ (*zēlos*) in *TDNT*, ed. Gerhardt Kittel and G. Friedrich, 2:279-90.

<sup>55</sup>For a helpful treatment on this difficulty see, Joseph M. Hallman, ‘The Emotions of God in the Theology of St. Augustine,’ *Recherches de Theologie Ancienne et Medievale* 51, no. 4 (Jan-Dec 1984): 5-19.

<sup>56</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup>Cassian was an ascetic monk who died in AD 435. He was ordained a deacon by Chrysostom in Constantinople and is commemorated by the Eastern Church on February 29.

<sup>58</sup>Theodore Pulcini, ‘Cultivating “Christian Anger”: A Warning from the Fifth Century,’ *Touchstone* 11, no. 1 (Jan-Feb 1998): 8-10.

<sup>59</sup>*Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>60</sup>For instance John Chrysostom says, ‘God is jealous, for He loves, God is wroth, not as yielding to passion, but for the purpose of chastising, and punishing.... For God also is said to be jealous, not that any should suppose passion, (for the Godhead is impassible,) but that all may know that He doeth all things from no other regard than their sakes over whom He is jealous.’ John Chrysostom, *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, Series I, Vol. XIII, Homilies on First Corinthians*, available from the internet on <http://www.ceeel.org/s/schaff/npnf1ld/cuchc/npnf112.pdf>. And even John Calvin shows a failure to fully appreciate God’s genuine emotions when he says, ‘Whenever we hear that God is angered, we ought not to imagine any emotion in him, but rather to



taken to God's positive emotions as well. Other theologians who want to have a place for genuine emotions in God at times only want to preserve ones that are popular with societal opinion. This diminishing of God's transcendent qualities easily heads down the road of process theism.<sup>61</sup>

Augustine recognized the frailty of human words when he said, 'nothing is able to be said that is worthy of God.'<sup>62</sup> Indeed, every time an infinite God reveals himself to finite creatures, he necessarily uses limiting analogical language.<sup>63</sup> When we use terms like 'jealousy' to describe God we are using limiting anthropopathisms, which run the risk of misunderstanding and misinterpretation. However, God has chosen to reveal himself in frail human language, and this language should be respected and understood to the best of our ability. The jealousy of God affirms his personhood and relational nature that must be acknowledged along with his immutability. The revelation of God's emotions must be taken seriously and appreciated along with his immutability. We speak truly of God when we speak about him as he has spoken about himself. And he has told us that he is a jealous God.

Human understanding of jealousy is often primarily based on our experience of it in our own lives, which is often unwarranted or sinfully expressed, and destructive. Because of this, it can be extremely difficult for many to understand how this could be a

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consider that this expression has been taken from our own human experience; because God, whenever he is exercising judgment, exhibits *the appearance* of one kindled and angered (italics mine).' Calvin, *Institutes*, 1:227. See also, The Westminster Confession, Ch 2, which says that God is without passions.

<sup>61</sup>Examples of this approach can be found in: Clark H. Pinnock, *Most Moved Mover: a Theology of God's Openness* (Grand Rapids: Baker 2001); Gregory Boyd, *God of the Possible* (Grand Rapids, Baker, 2000) John Sanders, *The God Who Risks: A Theology of Providence* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1998) and Clark Pinnock et al., *The Open View of God: A Biblical Challenge to the Traditional View of God* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1994).

<sup>62</sup>Hallman, 'Emotions of God,' 14.

<sup>63</sup>For an excellent discussion of this idea, see Michael S. Horton, 'Hellenistic or Hebrew: Open Theism and Reformed Theological Method,' *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Vol. 45, No. 2 (June, 2002), 317-41.





godly emotion. Some would suggest that the concept of jealousy as a godly emotion has lost its ability to be intelligible to the modern mind. However, for those who base their understanding of God, humans and relationships on God's revelation, the teaching of the Bible must continue to be understood, affirmed and taught, regardless of contemporary sensibilities.

But can we, when it concerns the question of our picture of God, ignore the source of our belief, the Holy Scriptures? Do not we give up too quickly, in the dangerous waters of religious projection, when we let our picture of God be determined by our experiences and buckle under the pressure of our own life relationships?<sup>64</sup>

### **God's Jealousy for His Own Glory**

While godly human jealousy will be the main focus of this work, it is obvious that an accurate understanding of God's jealousy must first be understood before godly human jealousy can be. Therefore, the nature of the jealousy of God will be established in chapters 2, 3 and 4 before human jealousy is investigated. God's jealousy for his own glory is his inherent jealousy that desires that his glory be acknowledged and proclaimed.

God's jealousy is more than a passing mood; it springs from his innate character and is the foundation of all godly jealousy. It is one of the enduring characteristics that make up his communicable attributes.<sup>65</sup> It is with jealousy that God always responds to the abrogation of his exclusive right to be acknowledged as the only true God. God 'will admit no

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<sup>64</sup>Christoph Dohmen, "Eifersuchtiger ist Sein Name' (Ex 34, 14): Ursprung und Bedeutung der Alttestamentlichen Rede von Gottes Eifersucht,' *Theologische Zeitschrift* 46, no. 4 (1990): 290. Aber können wir, wenn es um die Frage unseres Gottesbildes geht, die Urkunde unseres Glaubens, die Heilige Schrift, beiseite lassen? Geraten wir nicht allzusehr in das gefährliche Fahrwasser religiöser Projektionen, wenn wir unter dem Druck eigener Lebensverhältnisse unser Gottesbild unmittelbar und ausschliesslich von unseren Erfahrungen und Bedürfnissen her bestimmen lassen?

<sup>65</sup>God's communicable attributes are those attributes that humans share with him in greater degree than his incommunicable attributes which we share in much lesser degree, if at all.





derogation from his majesty.<sup>66</sup> God demands that his people recognize his exclusive claims on them (Deut. 6:13-15). When God is jealous, it means that he ‘continually seeks to protect his own honor.’<sup>67</sup> It is not only the emotion that leads to divine wrath, it is also the cause of God’s loving pursuit of his rebellious people when they go astray.

The key passages in this in this category are: Exodus 10:1-2; Isaiah 48:9-11; Ezekiel 20:42-44; 36:21-23; 39:25-27; Matthew 4:10; Mark 8:38; John 12:28-29; 17:1-5; Acts 12:21-23; 2 Corinthians 4:7, 15; and Hebrews 1:4-14.

- ◆ Exodus 10:2: I performed My signs among them, *that you may know that I am the LORD.*
- ◆ Isaiah 48:9-11: *For the sake of My name I delay My wrath, and for My praise I restrain it for you, in order not to cut you off. Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction. For My own sake, for My own sake, I will act; for how can My name be profaned? And My glory I will not give to another.*
- ◆ Ezekiel 20:44: ‘*Then you will know that I am the LORD when I have dealt with you for My name’s sake, not according to your evil ways or according to your corrupt deeds, O house of Israel,*’ declares the Lord GOD.
- ◆ Ezekiel 36:21-23: *But I had concern for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations where they went. Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for My holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went. I will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD,’ declares the Lord GOD, ‘when I prove Myself holy among you in their sight.’*

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<sup>66</sup>Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 1:210.

<sup>67</sup>Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 205.



- ◆ Ezekiel 39:25: Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, ‘Now I will restore the fortunes of Jacob and have mercy on the whole house of Israel; and *I will be jealous for My holy name.*’
- ◆ Matthew 4:10: Then Jesus said to him, ‘Go, Satan! For it is written, “YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.” ’
- ◆ Acts 12:23: And immediately an angel of the Lord struck him *because he did not give God the glory*, and he was eaten by worms and died.
- ◆ 2 Corinthians 4:7: But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so *that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves.*

This kind of self-directed jealousy for one’s own glory is unique to God, for no created thing is in a position to rightly assume this right. Only God deserves absolute honor, worship, and glory and he reacts with jealousy and anger when those he has created do not ascribe it to him or when they desire it for themselves.<sup>68</sup> This kind of divine jealousy will be examined in chapter 2.

### **God’s Jealousy for the Faithfulness of His People**

The primary means by which God is glorified is through the faithfulness of his people with whom he has established a covenant relationship. When his people are unfaithful he naturally reacts with jealousy. The category dealt with in chapters 3 and 4 will be passages of Scripture where the emphasis of God’s jealousy is most clearly on the faithfulness of his people. The key passages on this category are Exodus 20:1-6; 34:14; Deuteronomy 4:23-24; Ezekiel 16; 1 Corinthians 10:22; and James 4:5.

- ◆ Exodus 20:5: You shall not worship them or serve them; for *I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God.*
- ◆ Exodus 34:14: for you shall not worship any other god, for *the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.*

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<sup>68</sup>Ibid., 1005.



- ◆ Deuteronomy 4:24: For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, *a jealous God*.
- ◆ Ezekiel 16:38, 42: Thus I will judge you like women who commit adultery or shed blood are judged; and *I will bring on you the blood of wrath and jealousy....* So I will calm My fury against you and *My jealousy will depart from you*, and I will be pacified and angry no more.
- ◆ 1 Corinthians 10:22: Or do we *provoke the Lord to jealousy*? We are not stronger than He, are we?
- ◆ James 4:5: Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: *'He jealously desires the Spirit* which He has made to dwell in us'?

Here we see God's jealousy expressed toward his people who exclusively belong to him. Yahweh has the right of possession simply because he is God, and he specifically demands this exclusive favor from those with whom he has established his covenant relationship. His people are in a marriage relationship with him and any violation of it is cause for a jealous reaction. Jealousy is the foundational emotion underlying God's wrathful response to infidelity. God's jealousy when caused by the unfaithfulness of his people will be examined in chapters 3 and 4.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>69</sup>In addition to God's jealousy for his own glory and his jealousy for the faithfulness of his people, it is possible to consider a third kind of divine jealousy as well; namely, God's jealousy on behalf of his people. This is when God is intensely concerned with, and takes action for, the well being of his people. I have not included this category in this study because these passages did not clearly fit the definition of jealousy as it is being used in this dissertation. Jealousy is 'an ardent desire to maintain exclusive devotion within a relationship in the face of a challenge to that devotion. The passage where God seeks the well being of his people more clearly fits the more general definition of 'zeal.' The following forty-three passages fit this description (italicised passages contain the anq (*qna*) root). Genesis 12:2-3,17; 20:3; 22:12; 29:31; Exodus 9:17; Leviticus 20:10; Numbers 12:1-12; 14:13-19; 16:28-30; Deuteronomy 1:29-31; 21:15-17; 22:13-30; 32:40-43; 2 Kings 2:23-24; 19:31; 1 Chronicles 5:1; Psalm 105:12-15; Isaiah 9:7; *26:11*; 37:23, 32; 43:3-4; 47:6-9; 51:22-23; *59:17-18*; *63:15*; Jeremiah 50:33-34; Ezekiel 35:10-11; *36:5-6*, 18; *38:18-19*; *Joel 2:18-19*; Nahum 1:2; 3:3-5; Zephaniah 2:10-11; *Zechariah 1:14-15*; *8:1-2*; 10:2; 13:2; Malachi 2:13-16; Revelation 18:19-20, 19:2.



### Godly Human Jealousy

There are many instances in Scripture where humans express godly jealousy. These instances occur throughout every major phase of salvation history.<sup>70</sup> There are primarily three kinds of godly human jealousy: jealousy on behalf of God's honor, jealousy for the faithfulness of another person,<sup>71</sup> and jealousy on behalf of another person.<sup>72</sup> All three of these represent legitimate expressions of this righteous emotion. However, because it is most obviously representative of God's self-glorifying goal in salvation history, jealousy that is on behalf of God's honor is the purest and clearest type of godly jealousy. This type of jealousy will be the main focus of this study.

#### *Human Jealousy on Behalf of God's Honor*

Godly human jealousy that has God's honor as its object represents the highest form of human jealousy. This emotion earnestly desires that God be recognized for who he is, and that he be responded to accordingly. It is to take God's side, and represent his case before man. Many of the great leaders of God's people have exhibited this emotion. A godly perspective causes one to act on God's behalf to bring about covenant fidelity and obedience in the lives of his people. This emotion is a primary basis for the courage, boldness, and integrity with which great leaders of God's people lived their lives.

There are hundreds of examples in the Bible where men and women express this kind of jealousy. When Moses smashed the tablets and ground the golden calf to powder and made the Israelites drink it, he was most likely motivated by jealousy for God's exclusive right to be worshipped. Whenever religious

<sup>70</sup>Please see appendix 3 for an illustration showing some of the key examples of godly human jealousy as they occur in major events of salvation history.

<sup>71</sup>Genesis 49:3; Numbers 5:12-31; Proverbs 6:24-35; 7:1-27; Song of Songs 2:16; 6:3; 8:6; 2 Corinthians 11:1-4; 12:14.

<sup>72</sup>Genesis 34:7, 31; 49:5-7; 39:9-10; 48:17-18; Numbers 11:28-29; 1 Samuel 31:11-13; 2 Samuel 1:14-15; 1 Kings 1:17-18; 1 Chronicles 10:11-12; Job 31:9-12; Proverbs 2:16-17, 5:15-20; Malachi 2:13-16; Matthew 14:3-5, 19:4-9; Mark 6:18, 7:9-13, 10:11-12; Luke 3:19-20; John 3:29-30; Romans 7:1-4; 1 Corinthians 7:1-4.



reform and revival was brought about in Israel, behind it always stood a jealous leader. Whether it was Hezekiah smashing the sacred pillars and cutting down Asherah poles (2 Kings 18:3-4; 19:15-19), Jehoiada tearing down the house and altars of Baal (2 Kings 11:17-18), or Josiah removing the high places (2 Kings 23:19), jealousy on behalf of God, and his exclusive right to worship and covenant fidelity, is the motivating emotion behind these actions.

The limitations of this study do not allow for treatment of all of the passages that fit into this category of godly jealousy, so we will focus on the passages where jealousy on behalf of God's honor is most clearly expressed. Among the hundreds of examples and individuals we could focus on, five of them stand out as the strongest examples of godly jealousy: Phinehas, David, Elijah, Jesus, and Paul. The key passages that epitomize this attribute for each of them are Numbers 25 (Phinehas), Psalm 69:9 (David), 1 Kings 19:10-14 (Elijah), John 2:13-17 (Jesus), and 2 Corinthians 11:1-4 (Paul). Each of these passages use either *qna* or *zelos* to describe these men, and they all show their intense desire for the preservation of God's honor in the face of a challenge to that honor.

The most obvious example of human jealousy on God's behalf is found in Numbers 25:11 where God says, 'Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, has turned away My wrath from the sons of Israel in that he was jealous with My jealousy among them, so that I did not destroy the sons of Israel in My jealousy.' The people had fallen into sexual immorality with Moabite women, which led to worshipping Baal. As a result, God's jealous anger went out against Israel in the form of a plague. In the midst of the tears of repentance, an Israelite takes a Midianite woman into his home in sight of the Tent of Meeting. With the jealousy and anger of God, Phinehas carries out justice by killing the guilty parties. Here Phinehas represents God before the people in his reaction to the gross public affront to God's covenant requirements that had just occurred. His action stops the plague, and God rewards





him with an everlasting right to the priesthood. This righteous action causes Phinehas to stand as a type of Christ in that he took action to atone for the sin of God's people and thereby received a perpetual priesthood.

David stands as another leader of God's people who was jealous for God's honor. This is what must have stood behind his bravery and indignation as a young man, as he stood before the giant from Gath and said, 'Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, since he has defied the armies of the living God' (1 Sam. 17:36). It is David's jealous love for God and devotion to preserving his honor that made him the passionate, fearless leader he became. As he says in Psalm 69:10: 'For *qinah* for Your house has consumed me, and the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me.'

We see this same attitude expressed by Elijah as he flees from Jezebel after killing the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. In his despondence he reveals the emotion that was behind his bravery and zeal in confronting the prophets. He cries to God,

I have been very jealous (*qana qanah*) for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the sons of Israel have forsaken your covenant, torn down your altars and killed Your prophets with the sword. And I alone am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.' (I Kings 19:14)

God then assures Elijah that he is not alone in his jealousy for God's honor. He tells him to go and anoint Hazael, Jehu and Elisha as his successors who will carry on his jealousy for the honor of God and the fidelity of his people. God then lets Elijah know that he has reserved 7000 in Israel who have stood with him and not succumbed to playing the harlot for Baal.

The jealous attitude of these great leaders of God's people also motivates the wrath of the God-man as he over-turned tables in the temple and drove out the moneychangers with a whip. His disciples recognized this attitude as the same one that drove David. For it is his words from Psalm 69 they recall after Jesus cleanses the temple, 'His disciples remembered that it was

written, “jealousy (ζήλος, *zēlos*) for your house will consume me.”’ The apostle Paul also shows his godly jealousy at the core of his ministry when he demands faithfulness to God in the lives of the believers in Corinth when he says: ‘For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin’ (2 Cor. 11:2).

For our discussion of godly human jealousy, we will focus on the five key passages for each jealous leader we have mentioned. These passages will be considered within biographical sketches that highlight the godly jealousy of these five persons. In chapter 5 we will consider the Old Testament examples of Phinehas, David, and Elijah. In chapter 6 we will examine the lives of Jesus and Paul.

### **The Goals and Methodology of the Study**

Dynamic, progressive, visionary, strong, articulate, sensitive, energetic, are common adjectives used to describe the kind of leader churches are looking for today. However, if one were to peruse the want ads looking for church leaders, it is highly unlikely that ‘jealous’ would be among the desired character traits. What place does this often misunderstood and maligned emotion have among the important qualities of a leader of God’s people? How do godly and sinful jealousies differ? What are proper objects of godly jealousy? The intent of this study is to answer these questions and thereby gain an accurate understanding of the role of godly jealousy in the life of the Christian. We will be asking the broad question, ‘What does the Bible as a whole tell us about godly human jealousy, and what does this mean in the life and ministry of believers today?’

The greatest challenge to this study is the contemporary ignorance and disdain for all jealousy both in society and the church. The vital importance this emotion has for our understanding of God, man, love, and covenant relationships demands that we have a solid grasp of its meaning in the Bible.

The direction of the goal of the handling of the theme 'jealousy of God' is to be determined from the contemporary disinterest or even ignoring of this, in which it is attempted to show how the use of the 'jealousy of God' is to be understood. That means: where it has its worth and how it, in the context of Old Testament beliefs, is further developed and formulated, and that it in the center of Old Testament theology in the most narrow sense of the word belongs to God and therefore also is in the forefront of the Christian understanding of the unity of the holy Scriptures as script in two parts has its place and cannot be suppressed without a loss of meaning.<sup>73</sup>

The doctrine of God is deeply influenced by an ignorance of or appreciation for the biblical teaching on God's jealousy. God's emotions in general and his jealousy in particular have significant implications for understanding his character. While God's jealousy is foundational for his wrath and indignation, it also motivates his relentless pursuit of his loved ones when they go astray. It does not allow him to remain ambivalent when his betrothed wanders from his side. 'It is our confidence that the divine Lover will win His bride.'<sup>74</sup>

In this study of godly human jealousy, I have no desire to draw theological meaning, even if it represents truth found elsewhere in Scripture, from a text where that meaning is not truly found. To that end, great effort will be made to consider each major passage with sensitivity to its historical and literary contexts.<sup>75</sup> While great effort will be made to understand each

<sup>73</sup>Dohmen, 'Eifersuchtiger ist Sein Name,' 290. Die sich daraus ergebene Zielrichtung der Behandlung des Themas 'Eifersucht Gottes' ist bestimmt von der Auseinandersetzung mit dem häufig anzutreffenden – zwar verständlichen – Desinteresse oder gar Verschweigen dieser Thematik, indem zu zeigen versucht wird, wie die Rede von der 'Eifersucht Gottes' zu verstehen ist, d.h. wo sie ihre Wurzeln hat und wie sie im Kontext alttestamentlicher Glaubensgeschichte weiterentwickelt und formuliert worden ist, und dass sie ins Zentrum alttestamentlicher Theologie im engeren Sinn des Wortes als Rede von Gott gehört und deshalb auch und gerade im christlichen Verständnis der Einheit der Heiligen Schrift als einer Schrift aus zwei Teilen ihren Platz hat und nicht ohne Verlust unterdrückt werden kann.

<sup>74</sup>Allender, and Longman, *The Cry of the Soul*, 132.

<sup>75</sup>I will also strive to pay sufficient attention to the literary elements as described in Peter Cottrell's excellent article on the subject in 'Linguistics, Meaning Semantics,

relevant passage in its appropriate context, the unified coherent message of the Bible will be the goal.

While significant text-critical issues will be dealt with when they have bearing on the theological meaning of a passage, the text in its final canonical form will be the subject of the study.<sup>76</sup> This study is grounded in my understanding of the Bible to be the coherent, clear, inerrant, authoritative, inspired word of God. Because I believe that the Bible ultimately has one divine author, I also believe that it has one unified theological perspective. Because of these assumptions, I believe that when systematic theology is grounded in rigorous exegesis and sound biblical theology, it will elucidate God's definitive truth on a theological issue.

This study will search the whole Bible to learn about godly human jealousy. It will seek to show that God, and godly persons, are intensely jealous for God's glory and the faithfulness of his people.

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and Discourse Analysis,' in *NIDOTTE*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren, et al., (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 1:134-60.

<sup>76</sup>For the student of the Bible who reads it to know God, and what he requires of those who wish to live in obedience to him, the questions of the historical critical method regarding the historicity, composition, and transmission of the biblical text can hold varying degrees of importance. Some may see the questions of the historical critical method as irrelevant to faith and practice. However, those who recognize that the Christian faith is inextricably tied to historical events will be concerned that the Biblical witness is historically accurate and compositionally reliable. One's understanding of the nature of inspiration will also determine the amount of importance one places on the methods of source, form, tradition and redaction criticism. If we grant that God used human processes in transmitting the text of the Bible, an interest in the sources and means he used can be appropriate.

When this interest is based in a belief in the inspiration and authority of the Bible, the quest must be dictated and controlled by the verifiable data that the text provides, not theories about the data. As the critical problems of the passages considered are examined in this book, the methodology of Timothy Ashley will be used, Timothy R. Ashley, *The Book of Numbers*, ed. R. K. Harrison, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 7.

I will attempt to find a literary solution from within the text itself, rather than simply positing a combination of sources by an editor who had little appreciation for logic, cogency, and literary style. God was at work through all the stages. Inspiration should not be limited to any one stage of the transmission and composition of the text.