

## **Excursus** | The Jealousy of God

### **I. The Meaning of Jealousy Today**

#### Dictionary

“What does jealousy mean? Jealousy is a feeling or state of **resentment**, **bitterness**, or **hostility** toward someone because they have something that you don't. Jealousy usually occurs as a result of someone owning something you want but can't have or having achieved some kind of success that you want to achieve but have not been able to. This sense of jealousy is very similar in meaning to **envy**, which refers to a mostly **negative feeling of desire** for something that someone else has and you do not—like a mix of admiration and **discontent**. However, while envy is not necessarily malicious, jealousy usually implies a **deeper resentment**, perhaps because you feel that you deserve the thing more than the other person, or that it is **unfair** that they have it and you don't.” (dictionary.com)

#### Dawkins

#### Divorcee

#### Dilemma

This survey of our cultural context seems to show the following characteristics are part of, or at adjacent to, jealousy:

anger

fear

general malice

general pettiness

If the scriptures indicate that God is a jealous God, how do we make sense of His being characterized in a way that seems to charge Him with committing sin?

### **II. The Meaning of Jealousy in the Bible**

Hebrew Term: *qana* (אָנָה)

HALOT: ardour (enthusiasm or passion), zeal (great energy or enthusiasm in pursuit of a cause or an objective), or jealousy.

#### Other Scholarship:

intense energetic state of mind towards action which is caused by an infringement of someone's rights or injury to the subject's honor (H.G.L. Peels)

furious (Theological Lexicon of the OT)

a very strong emotion whereby some quality or possession of the object is desired by the subject (L. Coppes)

Greek Term: *zēlos* (ζῆλος)

#### BDAG:

intense, positive interest in something (BDAG, def. 1)

intense negative feelings over another's achievement or success (BDAG, def. 2)

#### Other Scholarship:

jealousy, zeal, envy, fervour, indignation, and emulation (Liddell and Scott)

'an emotional going out to a person, idea or cause.' (H.C. Hahn)

Erik Thoennes, *Godly Jealousy*:

The big idea of biblical jealousy...

"As the aforementioned lexical studies indicate, and as my analysis of the ninety occurrences of these words in the Bible shows, *qinah* (נָחַדָּ) and *zēlos* (ζῆλος) both represent exclusive single-mindedness of emotion, which may be morally blameworthy or praiseworthy, depending on the object and motive of the jealousy." K. Erik Thoennes, *Godly Jealousy: A Theology of Intolerant Love* (Fearn, UK: Christian Focus Publications, 2005), 12.

Jealousy is a proper thing for God.

"It is akin an infringement of a right, where we seek to right that infringement. With God, this is perfectly proper. Yet, many still refrain from using Jealousy, as he explains: "Because of the negative connotation that jealousy carries, there seems to be an increasing tendency to opt for the more general and vague ' K. Erik Thoennes, *Godly Jealousy: A Theology of Intolerant Love* (Fearn, UK: Christian Focus Publications, 2005), 20.

The Problem of Jealousy

"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. K. Erik Thoennes, *Godly Jealousy: A Theology of Intolerant Love* (Fearn, UK: Christian Focus Publications, 2005), 21.

### III. The God Who is Jealous

#### Examples of Righteous Jealousy (Illustrations)

The stolen possession

The stolen child

The "stolen" spouse?

Pursuing Gomer

Why it's good that God is Jealous

The Implications of No Jealousy

The Implications of (Righteous) Jealousy

The Goodness of God's Jealousy

We are prone to wrath when people wrong us.

God is not like us, and that's a good thing!

Considering the Jealousy of God in our own lives.

As Friends . . .

As Parents . . .

As Spouses . . .