

Israel The Wife of Jehovah

SUMMARY - Jehovah was the "**Husband**" of Israel as described in Je 31:31, 32+, Isa 54:5 (cf Ho 2:2, 19, 20). Note that the word "**husband**" is [baal](#) (master, owner - see [baal](#), [ba'al](#), [ba'al](#)) and is the same word used for Israel's "lover" with whom she had an adulterous affair, for these idols were often named "**Baal!**" (cf Jdg 2:11-13+) In the **OT**, under the Old Covenant, Israel formally became Jehovah's "Wife" in the "ceremony" at the foot of Mt. Sinai (Ex 19:1,2+) when God gave Moses the Law and Israel said "**Yes**" (cf marriage ceremony where bride says "I do" - Israel the "bride" of Yahweh said "We will do"! - Ex 24:3,7+) to the vows. Note that the solemn, binding nature of their entrance into this covenant was ratified by the blood of the covenant (Ex 24:3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8+, cf Dt 29:25+ and Heb 9:18-21+). Israel was (repeatedly) an unfaithful, adulterous wife and was thus disowned by Jehovah (e.g., see Dt 29:25-28+), but will she will one day in the future repent (cf Zech 12:10-14+) and be restored (Isa 62:4, 5 - where the verb "**married**" = [baal!](#)), a prophecy which will be fulfilled in the Messianic Age -

Related Resources:

- **Baal** (verb)(husband, marry, rule)([01166](#)) [baal](#)
- **Baal** (noun)(husband, lord, master, owner, possessor)([01167](#)) [ba'al](#)
- **Baal** (proper noun)([01168](#)) [ba'al](#)
- **Baal** - See [uses in combination with other Hebrew words](#)
- **Baal** (Canaanite god)([01168](#)) [ba'al](#) (see also **Married** [01166](#) and **Husband** [01167](#))
- [Events Leading up to the Millennium](#);
- [OT Promises of God to Israel which will finally be fulfilled in the Millennium](#)

An understanding of the "marriage" covenant between Jehovah and Israel helps one better appreciate the many passages in the OT which speak of Israel playing the harlot, of being unfaithful, of God's righteous jealousy, etc,

Play the harlot ([02181](#)) [zanah](#) is a verb meaning to fornicate, to prostitute and refers to marital infidelity or unfaithfulness. It was word used elsewhere in the OT to describe prostitution (Lev 21:7, Pr 7:10). Many of the uses of zarah are figurative describing Israel 's (Jehovah's "wife") commission of "spiritual prostitution" by having "intercourse" so to speak with other gods (cp 1 Co 6:16). Indeed, idolatry is looked upon as prostitution (Isa 50:1, 2, 3; 54:6, 7, 8; Jer 2:1, 2, 3; 3:1ff; Hos 2:1ff; Jas 4:4-note; Rev 2:4-note). In addition zarah describes Israel's improper relationships with other nations (Isa. 23:17; Ezek. 23:30; Nah. 3:4). "The thought seems to be of having relations with these nations for the sake of political and monetary benefit, although in the case of Nineveh the added element of alluring, deceitful tactics leading on to oppressive dominance is implied." (TWOT) "A third figurative meaning is found in Isa 1:21, where the Israelites' departure from God's approved moral standards is called harlotry." (TWOT)

PLAYED THE HARLOT

Here are passages that speak of Jehovah's "Wife" Israel **playing the harlot** (KJV = went a whoring)

Exodus 34:15 otherwise you might make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land and they would **play the harlot with their gods** and sacrifice to their gods, and someone might invite you to eat of his sacrifice,

Exodus 34:16 and you might take some of his daughters for your sons, and his daughters might **play the harlot with their gods** and cause your sons also to **play the harlot with their gods**.

Leviticus 17:7 "They shall no longer sacrifice their sacrifices to the goat demons with which they **play the harlot**. This shall be a permanent statute to them throughout their generations."

Leviticus 20:5 then I Myself will set My face against that man and against his family, and I will cut off from among their people both him and **all those who play the harlot after him, by playing the harlot after Molech**.

Leviticus 20:6 'As for the person who turns to mediums and to spiritists, **to play the harlot after them**, I will also set My face against that person and will cut him off from among his people.

Numbers 15:39 "It shall be a tassel for you to look at and remember all the commandments of the LORD, so

as to do them and not follow after your own heart and your own eyes, **after which you played the harlot,**

Numbers 25:1 (NOTE THIS IS NOW THE SECOND GENERATION OF ISRAELITES, THOSE WHO WILL CROSS THE JORDAN RIVER!) While Israel remained at Shittim, the people began to play the harlot with the daughters of Moab.

Deuteronomy 22:21 then they shall bring out the girl to the doorway of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her to death because she has committed an act of folly in Israel by playing the harlot in her father's house; thus you shall purge the evil from among you.

Deuteronomy 31:16 The LORD said to Moses, "Behold, you are about to lie down with your fathers; and this people will arise and play the harlot with the strange gods of the land, into the midst of which they are going, and will forsake Me and break My covenant which I have made with them.

Judges 2:17 (Yet they did not listen to their judges, for they played the harlot after other gods and bowed themselves down to them. They turned aside quickly from the way in which their fathers had walked in obeying the commandments of the LORD; they did not do as their fathers.

Judges 8:27 Gideon made it into an ephod, and placed it in his city, Ophrah, and all Israel played the harlot with it there, so that it became a snare to Gideon and his household.

Judges 8:33 Then it came about, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the sons of Israel again played the harlot with the Baals, and made Baal-berith their god.

1 Chronicles 5:25 But they acted treacherously against the God of their fathers and played the harlot after the gods of the peoples of the land, whom God had destroyed before them.

2 Chronicles 21:11 Moreover, he made high places in the mountains of Judah, and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to play the harlot and led Judah astray.

2 Chronicles 21:13 but have walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and have caused Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to play the harlot as the house of Ahab played the harlot, and you have also killed your brothers, your own family, who were better than you,

Psalms 106:39 Thus they became unclean in their practices, And played the harlot in their deeds.

Isaiah 23:17 It will come about at the end of seventy years that the LORD will visit Tyre. Then she will go back to her harlot's wages and will play the harlot with all the kingdoms on the face of the earth.

Ezekiel 6:9 "Then those of you who escape will remember Me among the nations to which they will be carried captive, how I have been hurt by their adulterous hearts which turned away from Me, and by their eyes which played the harlot after their idols; and they will loathe themselves in their own sight for the evils which they have committed, for all their abominations.

Ezekiel 16:15 "But you trusted in your beauty and played the harlot because of your fame, and you poured out your harlotries on every passer-by who might be willing.

Ezekiel 16:16 "You took some of your clothes, made for yourself high places of various colors and played the harlot on them, which should never come about nor happen.

Ezekiel 16:17 "You also took your beautiful jewels made of My gold and of My silver, which I had given you, and made for yourself male images that you might play the harlot with them.

Ezekiel 16:26 "You also played the harlot with the Egyptians, your lustful neighbors, and multiplied your harlotry to make Me angry.

Ezekiel 16:28 "Moreover, you played the harlot with the Assyrians because you were not satisfied; you played the harlot with them and still were not satisfied.

Ezekiel 16:34 "Thus you are different from those women in your harlotries, in that no one plays the harlot as you do, because you give money and no money is given you; thus you are different."

Ezekiel 16:41 "They will burn your houses with fire and execute judgments on you in the sight of many women. Then I will stop you from playing the harlot, and you will also no longer pay your lovers.

Ezekiel 20:30 "Therefore, say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Will you defile yourselves after the manner of your fathers and play the harlot after their detestable things?"

Ezekiel 23:3 and they played the harlot in Egypt. They played the harlot in their youth; there their breasts were pressed and there their virgin bosom was handled.

Ezekiel 23:5 "Oholah played the harlot while she was Mine; and she lusted after her lovers, after the Assyrians, her neighbors,

Ezekiel 23:19 "Yet she multiplied her harlotries, remembering the days of her youth, when she played the harlot in the land of Egypt.

Ezekiel 23:30 'These things will be done to you because you have played the harlot with the nations, because you have defiled yourself with their idols.

Hosea 2:5 "For their mother has played the harlot; She who conceived them has acted shamefully. For she said, 'I will go after my lovers, Who give me my bread and my water, My wool and my flax, my oil and my drink.'

Hosea 3:3 Then I said to her, "You shall stay with me for many days. You shall not play the harlot, nor shall you have a man; so I will also be toward you."

Hosea 4:10 (They will eat, but not have enough; They will play the harlot, but not increase, Because they have stopped giving heed to the LORD.

Hosea 4:12 My people consult their wooden idol, and their diviner's wand informs them; For a spirit of harlotry has led them astray, And they have played the harlot, departing from their God.

Hosea 4:13 They offer sacrifices on the tops of the mountains And burn incense on the hills, Under oak, poplar and terebinth, Because their shade is pleasant. Therefore your daughters play the harlot And your brides commit adultery.

Hosea 4:14 I will not punish your daughters when they play the harlot Or your brides when they commit adultery, For the men themselves go apart with harlots And offer sacrifices with temple prostitutes; So the people without understanding are ruined.

Hosea 4:15 Though you, Israel, play the harlot, Do not let Judah become guilty; Also do not go to Gilgal, Or go up to Beth-aven And take the oath: "As the LORD lives!"

Hosea 4:18 Their liquor gone, They play the harlot continually; Their rulers dearly love shame.

Hosea 5:3 I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hidden from Me; For now, O Ephraim, you have played the harlot, Israel has defiled itself.

Hosea 9:1 Do not rejoice, O Israel, with exultation like the nations! For you have played the harlot, forsaking your God. You have loved harlots' earnings on every threshing floor.

Jealous Jealousy

Rod Mattoon -

The word "jealous" also means "to be zealous." The Arabic word means "to be intensely red." In a good sense, God is jealous for His people. God is jealous of His people when they worship other gods. His holiness cannot bear a false rival. He demands to be first and the glory that belongs only to Him. We are the same. A husband or wife does not want to be a rival of another man or woman. Adultery enrages a husband or wife. Idolatry is spiritual adultery. God is angered by idolatry and will avenge it. When we allow something other than the Lord to control our devotion and love, it angers Him.

C H Spurgeon - Nahum 1:2 God is Jealous

Believer, your Lord is jealous of your love. Did He choose you? Then He cannot bear that you would choose another. Did He buy you with His own blood? Then He cannot endure that you would think you are your own or that you belong to this world. He loved you with such a love that He would sooner die than you should perish. He cannot endure anything standing between Him and your heart's love.

He is jealous of your trust. He will not permit you to trust in an arm of flesh. He cannot bear that you should hew broken cisterns that can hold no water (Jer. 2:13).

When we lean on Him, He is glad. But when we transfer our dependence to another, when we rely on our own wisdom or that of a friend, or worst of all, when we trust in any works of our own, then He is displeased, and He will chasten us to bring us back to Him.

He is also jealous of our company. There should be no one with whom we converse so much as with Jesus. To abide in Him alone is true love. To fellowship with the world, to find sufficient solace in our carnal comforts, is grievous to our jealous Lord. He wants us to abide in Him and enjoy His constant fellowship. Many of the trials He sends are to wean our hearts from the creature and fix them more closely on Him.

Let this jealousy, which should keep us near Christ, also comfort us. If He loves so much as to care about our love, we may be sure that nothing will harm us, for He will protect us from all enemies.

May we have grace today to keep our hearts in a sacred purity for our Beloved alone. May we with sacred jealousy shut our eyes to all the fascinations of the world.

Allen Ross - Jealousy

The Bible tells us that jealousy is an important aspect of the way that the Lord deals with people. For example, we often read in the Old Testament that God is a jealous God. The word "jealous" can mean ordinary jealousy, or it can mean zeal. It basically describes a passion to protect what something that has been threatened. God is jealous in that he will not let his glory be given to another; and he will protect his institutions by his zeal. One recalls how the Lord Jesus cleansed the temple because he was filled with the zeal of the Lord.

But there is another way that the Lord uses jealousy, and that is in his effort to draw Israel to faith. In Romans 10 Paul has been explaining that Israel did not believe the word of the Lord about the message of salvation, just as generations of Israelites in the past did not believe the messages of the prophets. And so God has turned to Gentiles with the good news, a people who were not formerly a people, to make Israel jealous.

Paul cites Deuteronomy 32:21 to make this point. In that prophetic chapter, the Song of Moses, we read how the Israelites would abandon their Lord God to serve other gods, because they were a perverse generation. By defecting and going after other gods, they made the Lord God jealous with something that was not even a god, something that could not save them. They took what rightfully belonged to God and gave it to a false religion. Recall how Hosea will dramatize this with the illustration of an unfaithful wife leaving her husband for her lovers.

And because they made God jealous with other gods, God would make them jealous by turning to other people to become the people of God. He would take to himself a people that were not a people, and build his kingdom with them. Jesus told the people of his generation that the kingdom had been taken from them and given to a nation that would bear fruit (Matt. 21:43). And so we who are Gentiles, who were not the chosen race of Israel, have become the people of God by God's grace. We possess as our heritage the Old Testament--the Israelites' Scriptures, the New Covenant--promised to Israel, and of course Jesus Christ--Israel's Messiah. God's plan is that all of this should make Israel envious, and draw many of them to salvation.

But one has to wonder in view of the condition of Christianity in the world today whether there is enough there to make anyone jealous. This part of God's reason for turning to the nations, this effort to make Israel jealous, should be a motivation for the universal church to unite, to proclaim the glories of Christ who is the fulfillment of the Old Testament Scriptures, and to produce the fruit of righteousness.

Phillip Ryken - in Preach the Word (Exodus)

God forbids idolatry because of his jealousy. To use a more positive and also a more accurate word, it is because of his zeal—the burning passion of his love.

Jealousy doesn't get much positive publicity these days. When people talk about it they generally mean something more like envy, the desire to get something that does not belong to you. However, when something really does belong to you, there are times when it needs to be protected. A holy jealousy is one that guards someone's rightful possession. The most obvious example is the love between a husband and wife. No husband who truly loves his wife could possibly endure seeing her in the arms of another man. It would make him intensely jealous, and rightly so!

God feels the same way about his people. His commitment to us is total. His love is exclusive, passionate, intense—in a word, jealous. As one commentator explains, “Godly jealousy is not the insecure, insane, and 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.”

If this is what jealousy means, then God has to be jealous. He loves us too much not to be! In fact, jealousy is one of his divine perfections. As Christopher Wright has written: “A God who was not jealous ... would be as contemptible as a husband who didn’t care whether or not his wife was faithful to him. Part of our problem with this profound covenantal reality is that we have come to regard religion, like everything else, as a matter of ‘consumer choice.’... We resent monopolies. But the unique and incomparable, only living God makes necessarily exclusive claims and has the right to a monopoly on our love.... Jealousy is God’s love protecting itself.”

What God so jealously protects in the second commandment is the honor of his love. God not only loves us, but he also wants us to love him in return. Among other things, this means worshiping him in a way that is worthy of his honor. God has the right to tell us how he wants to be worshiped, and he has commanded us not to spurn his love by turning him into an idol.

Adrian Rogers - God Is a Jealous God

Now a wrong kind of jealousy is a terrible thing. But look, if you will, in verse 5: “Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous god” (Exodus 20:5).

Now we think of jealousy as a green-eyed monster. And wrong jealousy is indeed that. But there is a holy jealousy—a holy jealousy, a righteous jealousy. Now you and I, in most of our jealousy, have no right to that jealousy. For example, we had two young people who stood here and sang just a few moments ago, and that was beautiful. But if you’re a singer, you have no right to be jealous of their voice, because you don’t own music. One athlete has no right to be jealous of another athlete; one preacher has no right to be jealous of another preacher—because we don’t own athletics; we don’t own preaching. But God has every right to be jealous of who He is, because there’s only one God—only one, not two. He has a monopoly on being God. He has a holy jealousy, and He is a jealous God.

Robert Neighbour - A JEALOUS GOD (Deut. 4:24-26)

God wants His people to be wholly to Himself. The word "jealous" carries with it the thought of the Divine love of God for His people. God bought us back from sin, and He brought us into His own fellowship. For this cause He wants us to be wholly His.

God saved Israel out of Egypt in order that He might bring her unto Himself. God is never jealous in the sense that He is envious. He is jealous in the sense of a sacred, hallowed longing to possess the whole heart, the whole affections of His people.

If we share our love with the world, the flesh, and the devil, God will not be satisfied. We are not our own; we are bought with a price, therefore, we must glorify God with our bodies and spirits which are His

Golden Nuggets - Is God Jealous? Ex. 34:14

INTRODUCTION:

“For thou shalt worship no other god; for the Lord, whose name is Jealous is a jealous God.” Ex. 34:14. God has many names; Jehovah, Jehovah God, The Prince of Peace, Emanuel, Lord of Lords, King of Kings, but one of His names is JEALOUS. WHAT OR WHO IS HE JEALOUS OF?

I. HE IS JEALOUS OF HIS HOLY NAME

“Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for my holy name.” Eze. 39:25. The Bible also says, “His Name alone is excellent.” It says “He humbled Himself to behold the heavens.”

II. HE IS JEALOUS FOR HIS PEOPLE

“I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with great jealousy.” Zech. 1:14. “Then will the Lord be jealous for his land and pity his people.” Joel 2:18. God started the Jewish race through Abraham and all through the Old Testament we read about the Israelites, (Jews).

III. HE IS JEALOUS FOR HIS LAND

"Fear not, O land, for the Lord will do great things for you." Joel 2:21. As recently as June 1967 God proved His great love for His people and His land when He allowed Israel with a handful of Jews to capture many Arabs, Egyptians, Jordanians, with big Russian tanks.

IV. GOD IS JEALOUS OF YOU

"I am jealous over you with Godly jealousy." He is jealous over the time and attention we give to others, other things, and we give such little time and attention to Him.

CONCLUSION:

God said "I am jealous over you with Godly jealousy." He was so jealous over Satan having us until He came to the earth in the person of His Son Jesus Christ to shed His blood to keep Satan from owning us. HE WAS GUILTY OF LOVE IN THE FIRST DEGREE, O, SO JEALOUS FOR YOU AND ME.

Norman Geisler - EXODUS 20:5a—Does God get jealous?

PROBLEM: The Bible not only says here that God is a "jealous God," but it also declares His very "name is Jealous" (Ex. 34:14). On the other hand, jealousy is a sin. But, if God is absolutely holy, then how can He be jealous?

SOLUTION: God is jealous in the good sense of the word, namely, He is jealous for the love and devotion of His people (cf. Ex. 20:5). Paul spoke of a "godly jealousy" (2 Cor. 11:2). The verses on God's jealousy are all in the context of idolatry. Like any true lover, God is jealous when anyone or anything else steals the devotion of His beloved.

Human jealousy is often coveting what does not belong to us. However, God's jealousy is protecting what does belong to Him, namely His own supremacy. It is not a sin for God to claim allegiance of His creatures because He is the Creator. And He knows that it is best for them not to make an ultimate commitment to what is less than ultimate (idols). Only an ultimate commitment to what is really Ultimate will ultimately satisfy the human heart. God is jealous to protect this. (When Critics Ask)

Gotquestions - [Why is God a jealous God?](#)

It is important to understand how the word "jealous" is used. Its use in Exodus 20:5 to describe God is different from how it is used to describe the sin of jealousy (Galatians 5:20). When we use the word "jealous," we use it in the sense of being envious of someone who has something we do not have. A person might be jealous or envious of another person because he or she has a nice car or home (possessions). Or a person might be jealous or envious of another person because of some ability or skill that other person has (such as athletic ability). Another example would be that one person might be jealous or envious of another because of his or her beauty.

In Exodus 20:5, it is not that God is jealous or envious because someone has something He wants or needs. Exodus 20:4-5 says, "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God..." Notice that God is jealous when someone gives to another something that rightly belongs to Him.

In these verses, God is speaking of people making idols and bowing down and worshiping those idols instead of giving God the worship that belongs to Him alone. God is possessive of the worship and service that belong to Him. It is a sin (as God points out in this commandment) to worship or serve anything other than God. It is a sin when we desire, or we are envious, or we are jealous of someone because he has something that we do not have. It is a different use of the word "jealous" when God says He is jealous. What He is jealous of belongs to Him; worship and service belong to Him alone, and are to be given to Him alone.

Perhaps a practical example will help us understand the difference. If a husband sees another man flirting with his wife, he is right to be jealous, for only he has the right to flirt with his wife. This type of jealousy is not sinful. Rather, it is entirely appropriate. Being jealous for something that God declares to belong to you is good and appropriate. Jealousy is a sin when it is a desire for something that does not belong to you. Worship, praise, honor, and adoration belong to God alone, for only He is truly worthy of it. Therefore, God is rightly jealous when worship, praise, honor, or adoration is given to idols. This is precisely the jealousy the apostle Paul described in 2 Corinthians 11:2, "I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy..."[GotQuestions.org](#)

H. Raikes, M. A - The jealousy of God

The assertion that such a quality as this belongs to God as one of the attributes of His moral character involves a number of deep and awful considerations; they seem to include the love as well as the holiness and justice of the Deity in one complex idea; and to form, from the union of these qualities in one attribute of jealousy, a touching, as well as a tremendous, picture of His feelings towards us. For let us remark, first, that the existence of jealousy in God implies the previous existence of love. If He had not loved us Himself He would have been indifferent to our dispositions towards Him. If He had not felt that love was due from us to Him, as a return for love already exercised towards us, He would not have resented its being withheld, nor made use of this phrase as declaratory of the state of His affections. In agreement with this idea we find that jealousy in God is never spoken of except with a reference to those whom, in one sense or other, He has called and chosen as His own; whose love therefore He has a right to claim as due to Himself, in virtue of some covenant relation; and whose love He has excited by some previous exercise of favour and benevolence. Any wandering of affections, any deviation from the truth of allegiance, however slight it may seem to the eye of indifference, carries wounds and provocation to that of jealousy, and we may therefore say that such behaviour as this, when existing in the people of God, is calculated to excite in Him a feeling of resentment analogous to that which unrequited love and infidelity excite in the heart of man. Let us also remark that this attribute is peculiar to the true God, to the Jehovah of our worship. The idols of heathenism were imagined to be ready to share their honours with another, and were never supposed to object to the devotions which were paid to deities of other names or of other lands. They felt that they had no exclusive prerogative to power. They felt, or rather their worshippers felt, that even while they were the objects of adoration, they had no absolute dominion. And what was then true with regard to them is equally true with regard to the idols and idolaters of the world at present. They have no jealousy of one another. They are only jealous of God, and exhibit no feelings of the sort except when He is the object of attraction. Again, let us remark that the natural objects of jealousy are the affections of the heart. Justice may, in some respects, be thought to fulfil the object of jealousy, but justice is a gross and inactive feeling in comparison with jealousy. The slights and wanderings which inflict anguish unspeakable on the heart cannot be put into a balance and have the extent of their criminality noted by weight. How, then, can we imagine that justice is the only attribute with which those are concerned whose duty it is to love God with all their heart, and who are directed to worship Him in spirit and in truth, if they would worship Him acceptably at all? Under faith in this attribute of God it is not merely actual sin that we are told to deprecate in ourselves, or in others, but it is the love of other things than God. Have we gone, for instance, to seek pleasure in the company of His enemies? Have we sought our bread in ways which are not His? Have we looked for comfort and peace and enjoyment in other objects than in His favour? Have we been betrayed into forgetfulness of His love in the hour of trial? Have we felt coldly in His service? Whatever our own opinions may have been on such subjects, and whatever may be the system of the world, we cannot deny, and we cannot doubt, that these, and all such wanderings of the heart, must be provocations to a jealous God. It is perhaps from considering in this manner the attribute of jealousy in God that we are best able to appreciate the danger of what is commonly called the world. The world sees the justice of God, and the world fears it, and therefore it is cautious of advising anything which may seem to provoke it. But if the words of our text be true--"If the Lord our God be a consuming fire, even a jealous God, what are the terrors of His justice compared with those of His jealousy? Compared with jealousy, justice seems a cold, deliberating principle. It comes, but its very name implies that it comes slowly and maturely. It comes, but it may be pleaded with; it may be reasoned against; it may be retarded or mollified by our reasonings. But jealousy is like fire. It comes to act, to consume; and little has the world gained for its votaries by teaching them to try not to offend the justice of God, while it encourages them daily to provoke His jealousy. For, lastly, let us remark on this subject the violence of those feelings which jealousy brings into action. Do we not see that among, ourselves it bursts at once the tenderest ties of which the heart of man is conscious? Founded on justice as its principle, but quickened by resentment in its action, it seems the most tremendous quality which we are capable of provoking against ourselves; and indeed, as it is peculiarly directed against that which is thought to be of all sins the most offensive--the sin of ingratitude--and of ingratitude, not for favours, but for love--it may well excite terror in those against whom it may be directed from our Maker. Let us close this subject with considering the degree in which we ourselves may be in danger of experiencing its exercise. If jealousy, which arises from love and proceeds only from love, is to be in proportion to that love which it proceeds from, what jealousy can be compared to that with which God is jealous now towards His people?)

Ray Pritchard - God's warning: Destroy your idols or I will do it for you!

Let's go back to the Second Commandment for a moment. Notice the warning in Exodus 20:5 — **1, the LORD your God, am a jealous God.**" The word "jealous" is very strong, having the idea of burning, passionate love. Elsewhere in the Old Testament, it is used for the love of a husband for his wife. Some of you may be put off by

the idea of a jealous God, but jealousy in the right context is a very healthy emotion. I have every right to be jealous of my wife's affection and she has every right to be jealous for my undivided attention. Jealousy in marriage can be a very positive emotion because it means, "I am fully committed to you and I expect you to be fully committed to me." In that sense we might say that if you are not jealous for your spouse's affection, you're probably not fully committed to him or her.

True love is jealous. If the love is right, then the jealousy is right. So what is it that God is jealous for? Our undivided attention, our exclusive focus on him. Seen in that light, idolatry is a terrible sin because in reality it is a form of spiritual prostitution.

In one of her books, Elisabeth Elliot comments that the Christian life is a process of God breaking our idols one by one. I have learned the hard way how true that is. God loves us too much to let anything come between us and him.

In the beginning, we come into the world with empty hands. Slowly we acquire many good things—family, friends, a career, achievements, wealth, popularity, the respect of others, and a certain share of this world's goods. Our tendency is to hold onto those things as if they constituted our reason for existence and as if they truly belonged to us. We think because we have these things that we must have earned them and that they must therefore be ours to keep forever. But the very desire to cling to the things of the earth is the very essence of idolatry because it puts us in the place of God—as if we own what we were given. Slowly God begins to pull our fingers away one by one. When he finally gets down to the thumb, we fight back but to no avail. In the end God takes back that which always belonged to him and we are left with nothing but God.

George H. Morrison - Jealousy

Jealousy is so associated with evil that we hesitate to attribute it to God. And yet the Bible, which knows our human hearts and searches out the latent evil in them, assures us of the jealousy of God.

We begin to see the solution of this difficulty when we recall the connection of jealousy with love. Jealousy is the shadow cast by love. That is the difference between jealousy and envy. We may be envious of other people although it has never been our lot to love them. Jealousy is one side of love, though often a very dark and tragic side. It is along such lines that we begin to fathom the possibility of jealousy in God. For the God of the Bible in his essential nature is revealed to us as Love. And if that love flows out on humanity in an infinite and everlasting mercy, it also, if it is deep and mighty, can scarcely lack the attribute of jealousy.

For it is God alone who has the right to the undivided devotion of the creature. That is where human jealousy is evil. That is the source of all its bitter tragedy. It is the passionate claim of one poor human creature to the undivided devotion of another. And it is always selfish and forever wrong. No human heart is large or deep enough entirely to absorb another heart. We are all finite creatures at our highest, and one such creature cannot fill another. And so our jealousy tends to become sinful because it is our assertion of a claim that is proper to the infinity of God. For only God can satisfy the heart—even the poorest and the meanest heart. Only he can absorb it without wronging it, for in him we live and move and have our being. Only he has the full right to say in the highest spiritual interest of his children, "My child, give me your heart." The jealousy of God does not differ from human jealousy in this, that both are born of love—a love that cannot tolerate a rival. But human jealousy grows dark and terrible because it makes a claim that is impossible, and the jealousy of God makes [the claim] by right.

Alan N Winkler - Jealousy.

Jealousy is used in the Scriptures in both a positive and a negative sense. When jealousy is used as an attribute of God, it is obviously used in a positive sense. Probably the most striking example of the anthropomorphic portrayal of God is in those passages where he is said to be jealous. The language is based upon the relationship of husband and wife and is frequently associated with Israel's unfaithfulness to God.

The Hebrew word *qānā'* and its cognates are the most extensively used words for jealousy in the Old Testament. In Exodus 34:14 we learn that "the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God." In Deuteronomy 4:24, God is described as "a consuming fire, a jealous God," giving the idea that he will judge because of his jealousy. In Joshua 24:19, Joshua challenges the people to serve the Lord but reminds them that serving God will be difficult because "He is a holy God; he is a jealous God." In Zechariah 1:14, when the Lord is asked why he allows Jerusalem to be down-trodden by the nations, he replies, "I am very jealous for Jerusalem and Zion." In verse 15, he continues to explain that while he intended to punish Israel for her sin, the

nations have “added to the calamity.” Because of his jealousy, God will restore Jerusalem to its rightful people and will build his temple there (v. 16). This concept is also brought out in context of the last days in Joel 2:18: “the LORD will be jealous for his land and take pity on his people.” The Hebrew noun is also used to describe a man’s jealousy for his wife (Num. 5:14–30) and God’s passionate anger against sin (1 Kings 14:22; Ps. 78:58). It is used in a negative sense in Proverbs 6:34, where a man is in a rage because of his jealousy. In Song of Solomon 8:6 jealousy is described as being as “unyielding as the grave.” Ezekiel 8:3 describes an idol that was set up in the temple mount “that provokes to jealousy.” This image, along with other idols, caused God to remove his shekinah glory from the temple. (Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology)

God Is Jealous - Chaim Beritorah (Hebrew Word Study)

“For thou shalt worship no other god: for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.” —Exodus 34:14
“O beware, my lord, of jealousy! It is the green-eyed monster which doth mock the meat it feeds on.” — Shakespeare, Othello¹

In Shakespeare’s play Othello, the protagonist’s servant, Iago, sought to destroy his master by planting a seed of jealousy in his heart. Iago placed a handkerchief belonging to Othello’s wife, Desdemona, in the room of Cassio, Othello’s lieutenant. It was just a little thing, yet Iago knew that “trifles light as air are to the jealous confirmations strong as proofs of holy writ.” Just the thought that Desdemona was having an affair with his trusted servant threw Othello into such a rage that he ended up murdering his wife.

Misdirected Passion

Actually, jealousy was generally considered a noble emotion to the Renaissance man. It showed how deeply he felt toward someone. To be jealous was a good thing because it demonstrated you were so passionate toward someone or something that, to defend your passion or honor, you would challenge someone to a duel and be willing to die over the matter. Such a passionate person was to be honored and trusted. Today, of course, we see this mind-set and behavior as misdirected passion.

In another play, Hamlet, Shakespeare challenges the notion that this type of jealousy is a noble emotion. Hamlet tells his close friend Horatio, “Give me that man that is not passion’s slave, and I will wear him in my heart’s core, ay, in my heart of heart, as I do thee.”³ Here the playwright takes a potshot at the conventions of his day. He is countering the idea that such an imprudent person is to be honored and respected by expressing that if we are to trust another person with the very center of our heart, it is best not to do so with someone who is a slave to his passion. The concept of jealousy started to lose its positive connotation about the time of Shakespeare, from which it evolved to mean something entirely negative today.

Shakespeare warned against the destructive nature of jealousy, and yet our study verse says that God’s “name is jealous,” and He “is a jealous God.” Does that somehow make Shakespeare more noble than God? The emotion of jealousy has resulted in murder and other wrongdoing known as “crimes of passion.” Movie and television dramas are filled with plotlines featuring such crimes. Jealousy also causes much pain and terror among people. For example, women find themselves being stalked by jealous lovers, constantly living in fear for their lives. The courts are filled with divorce cases of wives and husbands seeking to exact revenge through high alimony settlements and child custody rights against spouses whose behavior caused them to be jealous.

What could jealousy possibly have to do with God, who is love? My study partner told me about a famous woman on television who said that when she heard God was a jealous God, it ended her belief in the God of the Bible. She believes in a type of God, but not the deity described in the Scriptures. Actually, I don’t blame her for feeling that way based on her understanding of this verse. Much of her career was built on interviewing people whose lives were destroyed by jealousy.

A Protective Jealousy

I would have a problem believing in a jealous God, too, if His jealousy were like what is described above. One definition of the English word jealousy is “jealous resentment against a rival, a person enjoying success or advantage.” Our modern definition of jealousy is rooted in the idea of resentment. However, in our study verse, the Hebrew word translated “jealous,” *quanna* (אִנְקָה), has a very different meaning.

There are actually two Hebrew words for jealousy: *quana* (אִנְקָה) and *quanna* (אִנְקָה). Both come from the same root, but there is a big difference between them. *Quana* (אִנְקָה) is a jealousy of envy and rage. This is the type of jealousy that caused Othello to become caught between the jaws of affection and anxiety, eventually

leading to a tragic end. In contrast, quanna (קנא) is a protective jealousy. The word is sometimes translated as “zealous.” Both of these words are rooted in an expression of deep passion. The Semitic root of quanna (קנא) is used to denote someone who experiences such deep emotion that their face turns red.

Today, to translate quanna (קנא) as jealousy is archaic because we no longer see this emotion as a badge of honor. Probably the best translation would be passion, in a purely noble or admirable sense. In English, the concept of passion still has a positive association. For example, it is passion that motivates someone to perform at their best. It is passion that causes a man to lay down his life to protect his wife and children. It is passion that drives a person to sacrifice everything for a worthy cause. And it is because of God’s passion for us that He desires to give us the very best. This is the same passion that caused Jesus to sacrifice His life on our behalf.

“For thou shalt worship no other god: for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.” What do you think motivates people to worship various false gods? I don’t believe it is out of any real love or passion for their god. It is for the purpose of obtaining something for their personal and, often, selfish benefit. Presentations of offerings and expressions of praise and worship are given with the hope of winning such favor with the god that their prayer, wish, or desire will be granted.

God stands ready to grant our requests, but only if they are really a benefit to us at this time. He alone has a full perspective on our lives. And if He does grant them, it will be with no strings attached, unlike the case with false gods. God will grant the requests of His children out of love and passion, not because we “pay” Him with praise and worship.

An Everlasting Love

Thus, God’s jealousy of us is a protective jealousy, and it is a jealousy that reacts against our worshipping something that will give us less than He can give. His heart is wounded if we worship another god, just as a wife’s heart is deeply wounded and grieved if her husband adores another woman. What God has to offer is far greater than anything any other “god” has to offer. So, yes, God is a “jealous” God—not with the selfish type of jealousy, quana (קנא), but with the protective type, quanna (קנא). He says to us, “Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee” (Jeremiah 31:3).

Norman Geisler - GOD’S JEALOUSY AND PERFECTION

Two more of God’s moral attributes are jealousy and perfection. Admittedly, jealousy is a surprising attribute, yet it is one of only a few that the Bible declares is God’s “name,” a distinctive title of one of God’s essential characteristics. In fact, this raises the unique problem (discussed below) as to why what is a sin for creatures is a moral attribute of God.

THE DEFINITION OF GOD’S JEALOUSY

The root meanings of the basic Old Testament word for “jealous” (kannaw) are “to be desirous of,” “to be zealous about,” “to be excited to anger over,” and “to execute judgment because of.”

The Bible speaks of man’s jealousy (“zealous envy,” “angry fury”) in many places. It talks of being jealous of one’s brother (Gen. 37:11); of having jealousy over a wife (Num. 5:14); of jealousy leading to rage (Prov. 6:34); of jealousy being as cruel as death (Song 8:6 NKJV); of jealousy and selfish ambition (James 3:16); and of Paul’s jealous zeal for the church (2 Cor. 11:2—see below, under “An Objection to God’s Jealousy”).

As will be shown (in the texts cited below), jealousy is used of God in terms of His holy zeal and His angry wrath. God has holy zeal to protect His supremacy, and God has angry wrath on idolatry and other sins.

THE BIBLICAL BASIS FOR GOD’S JEALOUSY

God’s jealousy can be understood by looking at its nature, its subject, and its object.

The Nature of God’s Jealousy

God’s jealousy carries the connotation of anger, fury, and wrath. Anger (Deut. 29:20): “The LORD will never be willing to forgive him; his wrath and zeal will burn against that man. All the curses written in this book will fall upon him, and the Lord will blot out his name from under heaven.” Fury (Zech. 8:2): “This is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘I am very jealous for Zion; I am burning with jealousy for her.’ ” Wrath (Isa. 42:13): “The LORD will march out like a mighty man, like a warrior he will stir up his zeal; with a shout he will raise the battle cry and will triumph over his enemies.”

The Subject of God's Jealousy

God's jealousy is vented on images, idols, other gods, and other sins. Images (Ps. 78:58): "They angered him with their high places; they aroused his jealousy with their idols." Idols (1 Cor. 10:19–22): "Do I mean then that a sacrifice offered to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God.... Are we trying to arouse the Lord's jealousy?" Other gods (Deut. 32:16): "They made him jealous with their foreign gods and angered him with their detestable idols." Other sins (1 Kings 14:22): "Judah did evil in the eyes of the Lord. By the sins they committed they stirred up his jealous anger more than their fathers had done."

The Object of God's Jealousy

The object of God's jealousy is first and foremost His own nature, then His name, His people (Israel), His land (the Holy Land), and His city (Jerusalem). His own nature (Ex. 34:14): "Do not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God." His name (Ezek. 39:25): "Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will now bring Jacob back from captivity and will have compassion on all the people of Israel, and I will be zealous for my holy name." His people (Zech. 8:2): "This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'I am very jealous for Zion; I am burning with jealousy for her.' " His land (Joel 2:18): "Then the LORD will be jealous for his land and take pity on his people." His city (Zech. 1:14): "Proclaim this word: This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'I am very jealous for Jerusalem and Zion.' "

THE THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR GOD'S JEALOUSY

A combination of other attributes forms the basis for God's jealousy. Foremost among these is God's holiness; God is particularly jealous about preserving His own uniqueness. Of course, all of God's attributes are unique and comprise the one infinite, absolutely perfect, and supreme God. The theological argument for God's jealousy can be formulated as follows:

- (1) God is unique and supreme (see His metaphysical attributes—chapters 2–12).
- (2) God is holy, loving, and morally perfect (see His moral attributes—chapters 13–17).
- (3) Hence, God is uniquely and supremely holy, loving, and morally perfect.
- (4) Whatever is supremely holy, loving, and perfect is to be preserved with the utmost zeal.
- (5) God's jealousy is His zeal to preserve His own holy supremacy.
- (6) Therefore, He is eminently justified in His jealousy. Indeed, it is essential to His very nature: His name is Jealous (Ex. 34:14).

THE HISTORICAL BASIS FOR GOD'S JEALOUSY

The Early Church Fathers on God's Jealousy

Although not one of the more noted attributes of God, His jealousy did not go unnoticed by the early church Fathers. There are considerable references to God's jealousy.

Justin Martyr - They sacrificed to demons whom they knew not; new gods that came newly up, whom their fathers knew not. Thou hast forsaken God that begat thee, and forgotten God that brought thee up. And the Lord saw, and was jealous, and was provoked to anger by reason of the rage of His sons and daughters.... They have moved Me to jealousy with that which is not God, they have provoked Me to anger with their idols; and I will move them to jealousy with that which is not a nation, I will provoke them to anger with a foolish people. For a fire is kindled from Mine anger, and it shall burn to Hades. (DJ, 119 in Roberts and Donaldson, ANF, 1)

Irenaeus - It is therefore one and the same God the Father who has prepared good things with Himself for those who desire His fellowship, and who remain in subjection to Him; and who has the eternal fire for the ringleader of the apostasy, the devil, and those who revolted with him, into which [fire] the Lord has declared those men shall be sent who have been set apart by themselves on His left hand. And this is what has been spoken by the prophet, "I am a jealous God, making peace, and creating evil things"; thus making peace and friendship with those who repent and turn to Him, and bringing [them to] unity, but preparing for the impenitent, those who shun the light, eternal fire and outer darkness, which are evils indeed to those persons who fall into them. (AH, 4.40.1 in *ibid.*, I)

Tertullian - Even His severity then is good, because [it is] just: when the judge is good, that is just. Other qualities likewise are good, by means of which the good work of a good severity runs out its course, whether wrath, or jealousy, or sternness. For all these are as indispensable to severity as severity is to justice. The

shamelessness of an age, which ought to have been reverent, had to be avenged. Accordingly, qualities which pertain to the judge, when they are actually free from blame, as the judge himself is, will never be able to be charged upon him as a fault. (FBAM, 2.16 in *ibid.*, 3)

Cyprian - There is no ground, therefore, dearest brother, for thinking that we should give way to heretics so far as to contemplate the betrayal to them of that baptism, which is only granted to the one and only Church. It is a good soldier's duty to defend the camp of his general against rebels and enemies. It is the duty of an illustrious leader to keep the standards entrusted to him. It is written, "The Lord thy God is a jealous God" (EC, 72.10 in *ibid.*, 5.787, 5).

The Medieval Fathers on God's Jealousy

Augustine - For Him doth "the friend of the bridegroom" sigh, having now the first-fruits of the Spirit laid up with Him, yet still groaning within himself, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of his body; to Him he sighs, for he is a member of the Bride; for Him is he jealous, for he is the friend of the Bridegroom; for Him is he jealous, not for himself; because in the voice of Thy "waterspouts," not in his own voice, doth he call on that other deep, for whom being jealous he feareth, lest that, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so their minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in our Bridegroom, Thine only Son. (C, 13.13 in Schaff, NPNF, 1.1) Ineffable is therefore that patience, as is His jealousy, as His wrath, and whatever there is like to these. For if we conceive of these as they be in us, in Him are there none. We, namely, cancel none of these without molestation: but be it far from us to surmise that the impassible nature of God is liable to any molestation. But like as He is jealous without any darkening of spirit, wroth without any perturbation, pitiful without any pain, repenteth Him without any wrongness in Him to be set right; so is He patient without aught of passion. (OP, 1 in *ibid.*, 1:3) Because "the Lord our God is a jealous God," let us refuse, whenever we see anything of His with an alien, to allow him to consider it his own. For of a truth the jealous God Himself rebukes the woman who commits fornication against Him, as the type of an erring people, and says that she gave to her lovers what belonged to Him, and again received from them what was not theirs but His. In the hands of the adulterous woman and the adulterous lovers, God in His wrath, as a jealous God, recognizes His gifts; and do we say that baptism, consecrated in the words of the gospel, belongs to heretics? (BAD, 3.19.25 in *ibid.*, 1:4)

The Reformation Leaders on God's Jealousy

Martin Luther - "For Him Who once drowned the whole world in the Flood and sank Sodom with fire, it is a simple thing to slay or to defeat so many thousands of peasants. He is an almighty and terrible God" (WL, 4.226).

God says: "I the Lord thy God am jealous God." Now, God is jealous in two manners of ways; first, God is angry as one that is jealous of them that fall from him, and become false and treacherous, that prefer the creature before the Creator; that build upon the favors of the great; that depend upon their friends, upon their own power—riches, art, wisdom, etc.; that forsake the righteousness of faith, and condemn it, and will be justified and saved by and through their own good works. God is also vehemently angry with those that boast and brag of their power and strength; as we see in Sennacherib, king of Assyria, who boasted of his great power, and thought utterly to destroy Jerusalem....

Secondly, God is jealous for them that love him and highly esteem his word; such God loves again, defends and keeps as the apple of his eye, and resists their adversaries, beating them back that they are not able to perform what they intended. Therefore, this word jealous comprehends both hatred and love, revenge and protection; for which cause it requires both fear and faith; fear, that we provoke not God to anger, or work his displeasure; faith, that in trouble we believe he will help, nourish, and defend us in this life, and will pardon and forgive us our sins, and for Christ's sake preserve us to life everlasting. (TT, 135–36)

John Calvin - But though in every passage where the favour or anger of God is mentioned, the former comprehends eternity of life and the latter eternal destruction, the Law, at the same time, enumerates a long catalogue of present blessings and curses (Lev. 26:4; Deut. 28:1). The threatenings attest the spotless purity of God, which cannot bear iniquity, while the promises attest at once his infinite love of righteousness (which he cannot leave unrewarded), and his wondrous kindness. Being bound to do him homage with all that we have, he is perfectly entitled to demand everything which he requires of us as a debt; and as a debt, the payment is unworthy of reward. He therefore foregoes his right, when he holds forth reward for services which are not offered spontaneously, as if they were not due. (ICR, 1.8.4)

Jacob Arminius - Hatred is an affection of separation in God; whose primary object is injustice or unrighteousness; and the secondary, the misery of the creature: The former is from “the love of complacency”; the latter, from “the love of friendship.” But since God properly loves himself and the good of justice, and by the same impulse holds iniquity in detestation; and since he secondarily loves the creature and his blessedness, and in that impulse hates the misery of the creature, that is, He wills it to be taken away from the creature; hence it comes to pass, that He hates the creature who perseveres in unrighteousness, and He loves his misery. (WJA, 11.44)

The Post-Reformation Theologians on God’s Jealousy

Jonathan Edwards - Those who come to Christ need not be afraid of God’s wrath for their sins; for God’s honor will not suffer by their escaping punishment and being made happy. The wounded soul is sensible that he has affronted the majesty of God, and looks upon God as a vindicator of his honor; as a jealous God that will not be mocked, an infinitely great God that will not bear to be affronted, that will not suffer his authority and majesty to be trampled on, that will not bear that his kindness should be abused. (WJE, 376)

For we see that when men come to be under convictions, and to be made sensible that God is not as they have heretofore imagined, but that he is such a jealous, sin-hating God, and whose wrath against sin is so dreadful, they are much more apt to have sensible exercises of enmity against him than before. (ibid., 1021)

William G. T. Shedd - There is a kind of wrath in the human soul that resembles the wrath of God, and constitutes its true analogue. It is the wrath of the human conscience, which is wholly different from that of the human heart. That kind of anger is commanded in the injunction “Be ye angry and sin not” (Eph. 4:26). Were this species of moral displacency more often considered, and the Divine anger illustrated by it, there would be less of the common and unthinking opposition to the doctrine of the Divine wrath. (DT, 176)

Stephen Charnock - God is a jealous God, very sensible of any disgrace, and will be as much incensed against an inward idolatry as an outward: that command which forbade corporeal images, would not indulge carnal imaginations; since the nature of God is as much wronged by unworthy images, erected in the fancy, as by statues carved out of stone or metals. (EAG, 1.198)

J. I. Packer - God’s jealousy is not a compound of frustration, envy and spite, as human jealousy so often is, but appears instead as a [literally] praiseworthy zeal to preserve something supremely precious. Zeal to protect a love relationship or to avenge it when broken [is a good sort of jealousy]. This jealousy also operates in the sphere of sex; there, however, it appears not as the blind reaction of wounded pride but as the fruit of marital affection. As Professor Taylor has written, married persons “who felt no jealousy at the intrusion of a lover or an adulterer into their home would surely be lacking in moral perception; for the exclusiveness of marriage is the essence of marriage” [The Epistle of James, 106]. This sort of jealousy is a positive virtue, for it shows a grasp of the true meaning of the husband-wife relationship, together with a proper zeal to keep it intact... God’s jealousy is of this kind; that is, as an aspect of his covenant love for his people. The Old Testament regards God’s covenant as his marriage with Israel, carrying with it a demand for unqualified love and loyalty.

From these passages we see plainly what God meant by telling Moses that his name was “Jealous.” He meant that he demands from those whom he has loved and redeemed utter and absolute loyalty, and he will vindicate his claim by stern action against them if they betray his love by unfaithfulness. (KG, 170–71)

AN OBJECTION TO GOD’S JEALOUSY

Objection One—Based on an Alleged Inconsistency

This objection points to an apparent inconsistency: Why is jealousy right for God but wrong for us? All other moral attributes of God we are asked to emulate: God is love, and we should be loving (1 John 4:19); God is holy, and we should be holy (Lev. 11:45). Why, then, if God is jealous, should we not also be jealous?

Response to Objection One

The answer to this objection is simple: There is no inconsistency; jealousy can be right sometimes and wrong at other times. Wrong jealousy for us is about being jealous for what does not belong to us. God cannot ever be jealous of what does not belong to Him, since He owns everything. Psalm 24:1 declares: “The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.” Deuteronomy 32:21 adds, “They made me jealous by what is no god and angered me with their worthless idols. I will make them envious by those who are not a people; I will make them angry by a nation that has no understanding.”

Everything belongs to God, even the things He has entrusted to the care of others; hence, it is not right for us

to be jealous about what is not ours. Jealousy, as such, is not evil; what is evil is being jealous about what is not ours. Therefore, there is no inconsistency in it being right for God to be jealous for our affection (which belongs to Him) and it being wrong for us.

Note, however, that not all jealousy is wrong for human beings—godly jealousy is right. For example, Paul's jealousy for the church was commendable. He wrote, "I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him" (2 Cor. 11:2). Likewise, there is nothing wrong with a husband having appropriate jealousy over his wife (or vice versa), since she belongs to him (cf. Num. 5:14) and he to her.

JEALOUSY - Biblical Doctrine - John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue

God's jealousy is his zealous protectiveness of all that belongs to him (himself, his name, his glory, his people, his sole right to receive worship and ultimate obedience, his land, and his city).

The jealousy of God is visible in the following teachings from Scripture:

1. God's name is "Jealous" (Ex. 34:14).
2. God is jealous to be the only God worshiped and served (Ex. 20:5; Deut. 4:24; 5:9; 6:15; 29:18–20; 32:16, 21; 1 Kings 14:22; Pss. 78:58–59; 79:1–7; 1 Cor. 10:22).
3. God is jealous to be served as the holy God (Josh. 24:19; James 4:5).
4. God jealously chastens his sinning people (Ps. 79:1–7; Ezek. 16:42; 23:25).
5. God restores his people by his jealousy (2 Kings 19:31; Isa. 37:32; 63:15).
6. God is jealous for his holy name and glory (Ezek. 39:25).
7. God by his jealousy will establish the Messiah's Davidic kingdom (Isa. 9:6–7).
8. God jealously takes vengeance on his enemies (Isa. 42:13; 59:16–20; Ezek. 5:13; 36:5; 38:19; Nah. 1:2; Zeph. 3:8).
9. God is jealous for the land of Canaan and Jerusalem (Ezek. 36:5–38; Zech. 1:14).

Hebrew Word for Jealous

Jealous (zealous) (07065) **qanah** from **qin'ah** = zeal, ardor - from color produced in face by deep emotion) means to be jealous, to be envious, to be zealous. The picture is that of intense fervor, passion, and emotion. Zeal is an eagerness and ardent interest in pursuit of something and implies energetic and unflagging pursuit of an aim or devotion to a cause. Jealousy can be righteous or unrighteous - e.g., Genesis 37:11 records that Joseph's "brothers were jealous of him" and here we see the mindset and emotion of their fleshly jealousy led to unrighteous deeds! Contrast Phinehas godly jealousy that motivated righteous deeds! The Greek verb is **zeloo** from **zelos** = zeal in turn from **zeo** = boil; source of our English word "zeal") means to be fervent, to "boil" with envy, to be jealous. It can be used commendably to refer to a striving for something or showing zeal.

Jealous (07067) **qanna** is an adjective that combines the ideas of zeal and jealousy. It expresses a very strong emotion whereby some quality or possession of the object is desired by the subject. All 5 OT uses describe this attribute of Jehovah, His attribute which reflects zero tolerance for the worship of other so-called gods. In the 5 uses note the associated with "consuming fire," (Dt 4:24) and "anger...kindled (also pictures a fire) against" those who violate this prohibition (Dt 6:15) In other words the consequences of bowing down to false gods gives us a clear sense of His hatred of them. How foolish it is for us as finite humans to pursue false gods when we have access to the true and living God! Forgive us O LORD. Amen. **Qanna** is translated in the Septuagint of Ex 20:5 with the noun **zelotes** which depicts one stirred to action by a strong emotion. It describes one "burning with zeal" (the root of zelotes is **zeo** = to boil, be hot or glow!). Zelotes describes Yahweh as earnestly committed to defend His honor!

Qanna - 6x in 5v

Exodus 20:5 "You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am **ajealous** God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me,

Exodus 34:14 –for you shall not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is **Jealous**, is a

jealous God—

Deuteronomy 4:24 “For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a **jealous** God.

Deuteronomy 5:9 ‘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, and on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me,

Deuteronomy 6:15 for the LORD your God in the midst of you is a **jealous** God; otherwise the anger of the LORD your God will be kindled against you, and He will wipe you off the face of the earth.

Jealousy (07068) **qin'ah** means ardor, zeal, jealousy. Zephaniah 1:18 uses this same word describing the time when "all the earth will be devoured In the fire of His **jealousy**." The Lxx translates qin'ah in this verse with the noun **zelos** which strictly speaking means fervent in spirit and when used of God as in this passage speaks of the intensity of His righteous judgment.

Qin'ah - 41v - anger(1), envy(1), jealousy(24), passion(1), rivalry(1), zeal(14). - Num. 5:14; Num. 5:15; Num. 5:18; Num. 5:25; Num. 5:29; Num. 5:30; Num. 25:11; Deut. 29:20; 2 Ki. 10:16; 2 Ki. 19:31; Job 5:2; Ps. 69:9; Ps. 79:5; Ps. 119:139; Prov. 6:34; Prov. 14:30; Prov. 27:4; Eccl. 4:4; Eccl. 9:6; Song. 8:6; Isa. 9:7; Isa. 11:13; Isa. 26:11; Isa. 37:32; Isa. 42:13; Isa. 59:17; Isa. 63:15; Ezek. 5:13; Ezek. 8:3; Ezek. 8:5; Ezek. 16:38; Ezek. 16:42; Ezek. 23:25; Ezek. 35:11; Ezek. 36:5; Ezek. 36:6; Ezek. 38:19; Zeph. 1:18; Zeph. 3:8

JEALOUSY OF GOD

- God is jealous for the good of his redeemed people—but he can never be jealous of anything or anyone. John Blanchard
- The jealousy of God is one of the Christian's greatest challenges—and comforts. John Blanchard
- God, as a jealous God, is filled with a burning desire for our holiness, for our righteousness, for our goodness. Donald Grey Barnhouse
- The jealousy of God is nothing else but the vehemence and ardour of his paternal love. John Calvin
- J. I. Packer sees God's jealousy as "zeal to protect a love relationship or to avenge it when broken," thus making it "an aspect of his covenant love for his own people."

In 2014 a University of California researcher used a stuffed dog to show that animals are capable of jealousy. Professor Christine Harris asked dog owners to show affection for a stuffed animal in the presence of their pet. She found that three-fourths of the dogs responded with apparent envy. Some tried to get attention with touch or a gentle nudge. Others tried to push between their owner and the toy. A few went so far as to snap at their stuffed rival.

In a dog, jealousy seems heartwarming. In people, it can lead to less admirable results. Yet, as Moses and Paul remind us, there is also another jealousy—one that beautifully reflects the heart of God.

God made us & rescued us to know & enjoy Him forever.

When Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, he said he was “jealous for you with a godly jealousy” (2 Cor. 11:2). He didn’t want them to be “led astray from [their] sincere and pure devotion to Christ” (v. 3). Such jealousy reflects the heart of God, who told Moses in the Ten Commandments, “I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God” (Ex. 20:5).

God’s jealousy is not like our self-centered love. His heart expresses His protective zeal for those who are His by creation and salvation. He made us and rescued us to know and enjoy Him forever. How could we ask for anything more than a God who is so zealous—and jealous—for our happiness?

Father, help me shun anything that distracts me from You, so that I may always find enjoyment in who You are and in Your plan for me.

God loves every one of us as if there were but one of us to love. -- Augustine

Related Passages and Comments

Jeremiah 31:31, 32+ “Behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with

the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, 32 not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD.

Hosea 2:19-20 "I will betroth you to Me forever; Yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and in justice, In lovingkindness and in compassion, And I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness. Then you will know the LORD.

Comment by Henry Morris - Israel will indeed be restored as the **wife of Jehovah**. This promise is eternal, not conditional, though its implementation must await the national repentance and acceptance of Messiah when He returns, after His long absence and Her long affliction (Hosea 5:5; Matthew 23:37-39).

Isaiah 54:5 "For your husband is your Maker, Whose name is the LORD of hosts; And your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel, Who is called the God of all the earth.

Comment by Henry Morris - The God of all the earth is also the "Maker" of Israel, as well as her Redeemer. Note that, symbolically, Israel is sometimes pictured as the **wife of Jehovah**, just as in the New Testament the church is called the Bride of Christ.

Isaiah 62:4-5 It will no longer be said to you, "Forsaken," Nor to your land will it any longer be said, "Desolate"; But you will be called, "My delight is in her," And your land, "**Married**"; For the LORD delights in you, And to Him your land will be married. 5 For as a young man marries a virgin, So your sons will marry you; And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, So your God will rejoice over you.

John Phillips on The True Bride Seen (Revelation 19:7-10) Considerable controversy has raged over the identity of the bride. Some claim the bride is Israel, others that she is the church. It is true that in the Old Testament Israel was said to be the wife of Jehovah; but it was Hosea's great lament that she was divorced for her profligacies and repeated infidelities. Though in a coming day the divorced wife will be forgiven, cleansed, and restored, that hardly satisfies the scene now described. What we have here is the bringing together at last of Christ and His church. Paul declares that his ministry was to espouse believers to Christ so that, as the church, they might be presented to Him as a chaste virgin (2 Cor. 11:2). All believers from Pentecost to the rapture are seen collectively and symbolically as the bride of Christ. (Exploring Revelation)

Rod Mattoon - The image of Israel as the wife of Jehovah (God) is found often in the prophets. Israel was "married" to Jehovah when they accepted the covenant at Sinai (Exodus 19-20), but they violated that covenant by playing the harlot and worshiping idols. But God did not forsake His people even though they had been unfaithful to Him.....

The image in this chapter is that of Jehovah God, the faithful husband, forgiving Israel, who is the unfaithful wife, and restoring her to a place of blessing. Isaiah has used the marriage image before (Isaiah 50:1-3) and will use it again (Isa 62:4). Jeremiah also used it (Jeremiah 3:8), and it is an important theme in both Hosea 2 and Ezekiel 16 and Ezekiel 23. The nation was "married" to Jehovah at Mt. Sinai when the Ten Commandments were given to them, but she committed adultery by turning to other gods; and the Lord had to abandon her temporarily. However, the prophets promised that Israel would be restored when the Messiah came and established His kingdom. This restoration refers to the end times. (Isaiah Commentary)

Lehman Strauss - The prophet Hosea writes of Israel as being **the adulterous wife of Jehovah**. "Let her therefore put away her whoredoms out of her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts" (Hos. 2:2). We cannot interpret these words to mean merely a sexual unfaithfulness on the part of the children of Israel. The word "adulteries" here has to do with adulterous objects, and in Scripture that which is adulterous is idolatrous. When any person embraces an idolatrous or corrupt object, he is said to be adulterous. Through the prophet Jeremiah, the Lord said: "I have seen thine adulteries, and thy neighing, the lewdness of thy whoredom, and thine abominations on the hills in the fields. Woe unto thee, O Jerusalem! wilt thou not be made clean? when shall it once be?" (Jer. 13:27). Christ referred to this age as an "adulterous and sinful generation" (Mark 8:38). "The word adulterous is undoubtedly used in its broadest sense, and thus refers to the idolatry of the nation." Adultery and idolatry are expressed as synonymous terms in the Lord's message to Ezekiel—"With their idols have they committed adultery" (Ezek. 23:37); and also in the words of the risen Christ to the Apostle John when He condemned the doctrine of Balaam who taught Balac to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, "to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication" (Rev. 2:14). (The Eleven Commandments)

Lehman Strauss - The term "adulterers and adulteresses" is Scriptural language. The unfaithfulness of a believer to the Lord is compared to that of a wife toward her husband. When Israel fell into idolatry or worldliness, she was called the adulterous wife of Jehovah. Speaking of Israel, the prophet writes: "... for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the Lord" (Hosea 1:2). "My people... have gone a-whoring from under their God" (Hosea 4:12). Isaiah said: "For thy Maker is thine husband" (Isaiah 54:5). Our Lord used similar language when He referred to unbelieving Jews of His own day, saying: "A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign..." (Matt. 16:4). "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous

and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38). (James Commentary)

Herbert Lockyer - All About the Second Coming - The Marriage Supper - The marriage supper of the Lamb, as mentioned by John in Revelation 19:7-9, describes the culmination of the fellowship between Christ as the Bridegroom and the church as the bride. With C. I. Scofield, we believe that "the bride, the wife of Lamb" (Rev 21:9) is the church identified with the "heavenly Jerusalem" (Hebrews 12:22) and **to be distinguished from the adulterous and repudiated "wife" of Jehovah yet to be restored** (Isaiah 54:1-10; Hosea 2:1-17), who is identified with the earth (Hosea 2:23). A forgiven and restored wife could not be called either a "virgin" (2 Corinthians 11:2-3) or a "bride."

Herbert Lockyer - All the Divine Names and Titles of the Bible - HUSBAND—God in His Providential Role

Here we have a striking illustration of God, condescending to use a human relationship to express a further revelation of His nature, namely, His providential care. "Thy Maker is thy husband; Jehovah of hosts is his name" (Isaiah 54:5 ASV). The prophet provides us with a twofold glimpse of our Jehovah-Sabaoth. First, He is our Maker. "All things were made by Him." We often speak of "self-made men," but actually there are none for He it was who made and makes us and not we ourselves. As the Creator, He made man. Jesus said to His disciples, "Follow me, and I will make you..." and in His service there are no self-made Christians—they are all Christ-made. Would that multitudes who forget their Maker knew how to bow before Him, allowing Him to fashion them after His will!

But then Jehovah is likewise a Husband. The reference is related to Israel who is often depicted as the "wife" of Jehovah (Hosea 2). How unfaithful she proved to be, going after other lovers, becoming guilty of whoredom, but her divine Husband is shown, striving to win back His faithless wife to His side, and woo her from all her evil wanderings! (Isaiah 54:5-10). Yet there is another side, is there not, to God's husbandhood? Does He not say through Jeremiah, "Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me"? (49:11). This was the promise D. L. Moody's dear mother marked in her Bible, the day she lost her husband, and commenced a grim struggle to care for her children.

God imposed certain obligations upon Israel regarding widows, as did Paul in the early Church.

"Jehovah... relieveth the fatherless and the widow" (Psalm 146:9).

"I was a husband unto them, saith Jehovah" (Jeremiah 31:32 ASV).

Heaven alone will reveal how many godly widows proved God to be their Husband, when death robbed them of a human, loving, provident husband! Has death taken your dear partner and provider, and are heart and home vacant, and children left fatherless? Take courage, sorrowing one, for the Lord offers to fill that dear one's place with more of His own abiding presence, and be more to you than an earthly husband could ever be. May you prove Him to be as a husband in your widowhood! (See also under BRIDEGROOM, chapter 2).

Charles Feinberg comments on Hosea -

UNFAITHFULNESS OF ISRAEL - But the wife of the prophet became an adulteress. What shame, what public disgrace, what burning anguish to the sensitive heart of the prophet! Ah, but no worse than the wife of Jehovah consorting with other gods and loving cakes of raisins. These cakes of raisins are explained by Jeremiah 7:18 and 44:19 as parts of a ceremony in honor of the queen of heaven; they speak of open worship of the idols of the day. What shame and open scandal this was in the eyes of God can be gleaned only faintly from the counterpart on the human scale in the life of the prophet.

To what depths this led Gomer is clear from the price to be paid for her redemption. Fifteen pieces of silver. The price of a common slave was thirty pieces of silver according to Exodus 21:32. She had lowered herself to such a plane where she was worth but half the price of a common slave. The homer and lethech of barley speak of her utter worthlessness, for this was the food of animals. Nothing so undoes man altogether and ruins him completely as defection from the Lord. It is no less than high treason against high heaven.

GOD'S LOVE FOR ISRAEL God never enjoined upon Hosea a task of which He could not be a partaker, when He bade the prophet to love "a woman beloved of her friend." For God's love for Israel has no relationship to time; it is timeless and constant. When we read that Gomer was beloved of her friend, this does not indicate the love of a paramour. The Revised Standard Version (RSV) margin is probably correct in translating the word as "husband." The word indicates the tenderness of her treatment at his hands, leaving her all the more inexcusable in her action.

Notice that the first verse of this chapter uses the word "love" four times. The verse can almost be set out in a mathematical proportion: as the love of God has ever been toward Israel, though she has loved idols rather than God, so the love of Hosea is to be toward Gomer, though she has loved strangers rather than her lawful husband. Just as Gomer still retains the love of the

prophet, Israel is beloved of God. Israel is engraven on the hands of God (Is 49:14-16); she is the apple of His eye (Zec 2:8). And even after centuries of disobedience on the part of His people, God could rebuke accusing Satan with the all-prevailing answer that He had chosen Jerusalem (Zec 3:2).

ISRAEL'S PRESENT Neither Gomer's nor Israel's past is a thing of glory, but the end of the story is not yet. Israel's present condition is sketched for us in Hos 3:4. This has been her condition since she chose Caesar to rule over her in preference to the Christ of God. Every detail, and there is much of it here, is amazing in its accuracy until we realize it is God who is speaking, the One who knows the end from the beginning.

This verse, mark you, gives the lie squarely to all such vaporizings as the one labelled Anglo-Israelism. The conditions set forth here have not been the portion of England and cannot be twisted into such a meaning. The condition is anomalous; it defies all categories. No wonder the great German philosopher, Hegel, an ardent student of the philosophy of history, said of the history of Israel: "It is a dark, troublesome enigma to me. I am not able to understand it. It does not fit in with any of our categories. It is a riddle." Just as Gomer was placed in the position where she no longer consorted with her former paramours and yet was not in full fellowship in marriage—a truly strange condition—so Israel is throughout this age in a position where she is neither idolatrous nor enjoying the fellowship of God in a worship pleasing to Him.

WITHOUT—WITHOUT—WITHOUT - Hosea 3:4 For many days, and these many days answer to those of Gomer's, Israel is to be **without** a king, **without** a prince, **without** sacrifice, **without** pillar, **without** ephod, and **without** teraphim. What does this mean?

It signifies, first of all, that the nation will be without civil polity; they shall have neither king nor prince. After the Babylonian captivity and the death of Zedekiah, the last king of Judah, the people of Israel knew no longer a king in their midst. (The Hasmonean dynasty scarcely offers a parallel to the pre-Exilic dynasties.) But they did have princes, such as Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, as is clear from his genealogy. In this age, since the death of Israel's Messiah, who came as King of the Jews, Israel has known neither king nor prince. It has been said: "No one of their own nation has been able to gather them together or become their king."

Second, they shall be without God's appointed sacrifice. There is no Temple, for the land on which the Temple is, is not theirs; there is no high priest, for there are no genealogies extant to prove it; there is no sacrifice, for there are no duly constituted priests to perform it and the one sacrifice in Christ has been completed once for all: there is no atonement, because there is no blood of sacrifice in their religious ceremonies.

Third, and probably most remarkable of all, they shall be without idolatry. Natural inference would lead us to believe that if Israel, when she had the true worship of God, turned repeatedly to idolatry, she would most assuredly do so when without the true worship. But no, the prophet is not telling the story by human inference but through divine revelation. Says Hosea, though Israel shall be without a religious center and ritual, yet she will not turn to idolatry. Israel, through the centuries of her dispersion, will have none of idol pillar (the obelisk) nor lying teraphim. Though Israel has lost distinctive national features—king, prince, and with these the occupation of all the land as well—and religious features, such as sacrifice and ephod, yet the marvel is that Israel abides! Covetous and vacillating Balaam spoke better than he knew when he said, "Lo, it is a people that dwelleth alone, And shall not be reckoned among the nations" (Num 23:9).

ISRAEL'S FUTURE At this point there are those who would have us believe that the tale has been told. That is the end for Israel. If so, we do well to cast the Bible from us as a vile and worthless thing, not to be depended upon in any particular. If this condition is the end for Israel, then why did Hosea not close his prophecy at this point? Why does he lead us to believe there is an "afterward" for Israel? Why? Yes, he may well do so, for there is a tomorrow for Israel, an afterward for the despised, criticized, and ostracized people of God. Notice the three marks of time: "many days," "afterward," and "in the latter days," which are of vital importance here as elsewhere in prophetic Scriptures.

Here are the three elements in Israel's future: return, seek, and come with fear. Verse 1 told us that Israel turned to other gods; this verse tells us she will return to the true God. (See Deu 4:30-31; 30:1.) She will not need to be sought, but through God's grace will seek Jehovah her God. Note the important truth in Hosea 5:15. The seeking will be to her God and "David their king" in the person of His greater Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Remarkable to state, the Targum of Jonathan says, "This is the King Messiah." (Cp. Jer 30:9; Eze 34:23; 37:24.) They will come with fear (reverential awe mingled with joy; see Is 60:5 for the same verb) unto His blessing and salvation. How could God's love for Israel eventuate otherwise? God's love outlives Israel's, just as Hosea's outlived Gomer's. May God shed abroad this divine love for Israel in our hearts that she may know (The Minor Prophets)

The Wife of Jehovah

Arnold Fruchtenbaum

Any clear understanding of the Bible requires that proper distinctions be maintained. One of these key biblical distinctions is the distinction between Israel and the Church. A failure to maintain this distinction will only result in a misinterpretation of what the Scriptures teach. One of the ways this distinction is made is the distinction between the wife and the bride. In the Bible, Israel is represented as the Wife of Jehovah, whereas the Church is represented as the Bride of Christ. The relationship of Israel as the Wife of Jehovah to God her Husband undergoes six distinct stages through which this relationship develops.

(1) Stage One: The Marriage Contract

To a casual and superficial reader, the Book of Deuteronomy seems to be merely a repetition of what Moses had written earlier in the Books of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers. In fact, the very title Deuteronomy means a “second law” or a repetition of the law. Indeed almost everything found in the Book of Deuteronomy can also be found in the three preceding books of the Law of Moses. However, Deuteronomy is not merely a book of repetitions. The entire format of the Book of Deuteronomy is that of both an ancient treaty and an ancient marriage contract. In other words, what Moses did in Deuteronomy was to take various facets of the three earlier books and present them in the form of an ancient marriage contract. In this book is found the marriage contract signed between Israel and God—where Israel became the Wife of Jehovah. (**ED: I WOULD PROPOSE THAT THE ORIGINAL 'MARRIAGE COVENANT' WAS IN Exodus 24:3,7 WHEN ISRAEL SAID IN EFFECT "I DO"**). It is not feasible in this work to deal with the Book of Deuteronomy in its entirety and demonstrate how it fits into the scheme of a marriage contract. However, it is possible to concentrate on certain key passages.

The first passage is Deuteronomy 5:1–3. This passage declares that God entered into a covenant with His people Israel at Mount Sinai. It will be seen later that the Jewish prophets viewed this covenant relationship as a marriage contract. Later, in Deuteronomy 6:10–15, God announced His jealousy over His wife, Israel. In this passage, Israel is warned against adultery. Since Jehovah is Israel’s Husband, the means by which Israel can be guilty of adultery is by the worship of other gods. God warned Israel not to become an adulteress wife by playing around with other gods. The reason given is God’s burning jealousy: lest it be kindled against her and eventually cause her expulsion out of the land which God has given her. In Deuteronomy 7:6–11, Israel is again described as the one chosen by God. In verse six, God described the choosing; in verses seven and eight, He gave the reason. God did not choose Israel as His wife due to her size, because Israel was small. He had only one basic reason and that was His love for Israel. Because of His love for Israel, He entered into a covenant relationship with her. This covenant relationship is the marriage contract of Deuteronomy. Now Israel has an obligation (vv. 9–11). God implored Israel to faithfulness, to be a faithful wife to Jehovah by being obedient and subject to Him.

As was stated earlier, the prophets looked at this covenant relationship as a marriage contract. One example is found in Ezekiel 16:8:

Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord Jehovah, and thou becamest mine.

The words used by Ezekiel are words of the wedding night; the covenant at Sinai and the relationship between Israel and Jehovah is described by the prophet in the terms of the wedding night.

Thus, in the first stage of her relationship as the Wife of Jehovah, Israel entered into a marriage contract and this marriage contract is the Book of Deuteronomy.

(2) Stage Two: The Great Adultery

Although Israel was sternly admonished to remain faithful to her Husband, rather than being faithful she was guilty of a great adultery described by several Old Testament prophets. Jeremiah 3:1–5 states that Israel was not merely guilty of a one-time adultery, but she was guilty of playing the harlot with many lovers. Later, in verse 20, Jeremiah wrote that Israel was indeed like a wife who has turned away from her husband. She was a wife guilty of adultery. Because of this adultery, the original marriage contract was broken, according to Jeremiah 31:32:

Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was a husband unto them, saith Jehovah.

Adultery meant that the marriage contract was null and void. Jeremiah showed that the problem was not with the Husband, for God was a good Husband. Rather, the problem was with the wife who insisted on going after other gods and so became guilty of the great adultery.

Another prophet, Ezekiel, described this great adultery in an extended passage found in Ezekiel 16:15–34. Ezekiel declares Israel's guilt by showing that she had indeed played the part of a prostitute (Ezekiel 16:15). Although prostitutes generally receive money for their services, Israel was different because she paid her lovers (Ezekiel 16:16–19), and she paid them with the very things that her true Husband, God, had given to her as His wife. Furthermore, Israel's very children were sacrificed to these lovers, the pagan gods (Ezekiel 16:20–21). Israel indeed forgot the love of her youth when God first entered into the covenant relationship with her (v. 22). In Ezekiel 16:23–29, Ezekiel portrayed the lovers that Israel went after. These lovers were the gods of the Egyptians, the Assyrians, and the Babylonians. The absurdity of Israel's adultery is clearly spelled out here. The very nations which these foreign gods represented did the most to hurt Israel. Israel suffered terribly from the hands of the Egyptians, Assyrians, and Babylonians. Yet, rather than turning to her own husband, Jehovah, Israel went after the gods of these nations and committed adultery with those who hurt her the most. Israel's weak heart caused her to commit adultery to the point of bribing her lovers (Ezekiel 16:30–34).

Another prophet, Hosea, also described this adultery in Hosea 2:2–5. Hosea declared the charge God had against Israel: she was guilty of harlotry. She committed adultery (vv. 2–3), she produced children of adultery and hence they were illegitimate (Hos 2:4), and she played the part of a prostitute (Hos 2:5).

In spite of God's manifold blessings to Israel, Israel turned away from God in order to play the part of a prostitute and was guilty of the great adultery.

(3) Stage Three: The Separation

Because of this adultery, in the days of Isaiah a separation took place between God and Israel. This separation is described in Isaiah 50:1:

Thus saith Jehovah, Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement, wherewith I have put her away? or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities were ye sold, and for your transgressions was your mother put away.

According to Deuteronomy 24:1, if a husband wished to divorce his wife, he had to write out a bill of divorcement. After having written it out in longhand, he would give it to his wife and then the divorce was final. By the time Isaiah became a prophet, Israel's adultery was so great that it was necessary for God to withhold His many blessings from her: the blessings described in the Book of Deuteronomy, to be received if Israel remained faithful. This removal of the material provisions caused many in Israel to say that God had divorced His wife. Therefore, God spoke to Isaiah the prophet stating that He had not yet divorced His wife. If God had divorced His wife, He would have given to Israel a bill of divorcement; and since no such bill of divorcement was in hand, it meant that a divorce had not taken place. Rather than a divorce, a separation had taken place, but this separation was caused by their own sins. The sin of Israel in committing adultery created the need for the separation. In the days of Isaiah, God and Israel were not divorced, but they were separated. This separation was due to Israel's adultery and lasted approximately one hundred years.

(4) Stage Four: The Divorce

Even after the one hundred years of separation, during which time the blessings of Deuteronomy continued to be withheld, Israel still failed to return to God, her husband. Thus, God was forced to finally issue the bill of divorcement and to divorce His wife, Israel. This bill of divorcement is contained in Jeremiah 3:6–10. After once again declaring Israel guilty of adultery (Jer 3:6–8), God finally issued His bill of divorcement. To a great extent, almost all of Jeremiah can be called God's bill of divorcement of Israel, but especially the passage now under consideration. The reason this bill of divorcement was necessary was due to the adulterous pollution of the land God had given to Israel (Jer 3:9–10).

In the days of Jeremiah the prophet, Israel was divorced. One hundred years of separation failed to produce repentance in Israel, and finally God had no other choice but to issue the bill of divorcement on

the grounds of adultery.

(5) Stage Five: The Punishment

The Book of Deuteronomy, the original marriage contract, clearly declared that if Israel proved unfaithful as Jehovah's wife it would become necessary for God to punish Israel for her unfaithfulness. Following the issuance of the bill of divorcement comes a long period of the punishment of Israel for her sins.

Several Old Testament prophecies speak of the punishment of Israel for her unfaithfulness, such as Ezekiel 16:35–43. After stating the cause for the punishment, adultery (Ezekiel 16:35–36), Ezekiel described the punishment itself (Ezekiel 16:37–41). Because she worshipped the gods of the Egyptians, the Egyptians will destroy her. Because she worshipped the deities of Assyria, the Assyrians will devastate her. Because she worshipped the idols of Babylon, the Babylonians will make her desolate. The nations who worshipped the very gods Israel committed adultery with will be the ones who will invade and destroy the nation of Israel. Then the jealousy of God will finally be spent (Ezekiel 16:42) for, as the Book of Deuteronomy declared, the punishment of Israel would be a result of God's jealousy for His wife. However, all this punishment has a specific aim. The aim of this punishment is not so God can be vengeful and get His revenge upon Israel, but rather to cause her to stop sinning and to stop her adulteries (Ezekiel 16:43). Later in this chapter, Ezekiel 16:58–59, Ezekiel showed that this punishment was necessary because Israel broke the marriage contract:

Thou hast borne thy lewdness and thine abominations, saith Jehovah. For thus saith the Lord Jehovah: I will also deal with thee as thou hast done, who hast despised the oath in breaking the covenant.

The program of punishment is further described in Hosea 2:6–13. The program itself is described in verses six and seven. Israel's searching ways will be blocked by various thorns and walls which speak of God's providential dealings with Israel (v. 6) until her search for her old lovers will prove fruitless (v. 7a). The purpose of this program is to show Israel her need for her true Husband and not for her false lovers (v. 7b). Then, in verses 8–13, Hosea depicted the punishment itself. It has been shown earlier that the very things God gave to Israel she used in order to pay her lovers. Now these very things she paid her lovers with will be taken away, for they belong to her Husband (vv. 8–9). She will finally realize her shame only when she sees herself truly spiritually naked, her joy removed, her material blessings gone: all because of the worship of the Canaanite god, Baal (vv. 10–13).

Although God has a long program of punishment for Israel's sins, throughout the period of punishment there is a continual call to repentance, according to Jeremiah 3:11–18. Jeremiah described God's continual call for Israel to repent and come back to Him (vv. 11–13). This call is followed by a description of the blessings God has in store for Israel once she does return to Him (vv. 14–18). After declaring that Jehovah will again be a Husband to her (v. 14), He also promised to restore and to provide for Israel like a husband should (vv. 15–18). All these beautiful material blessings are promised to Israel and are awaiting her return to her Husband.

To this day Israel is still in the fifth stage of her historical and prophetic relationship with Jehovah, her Husband. Israel is still in the period of punishment. This is evidenced by the persecutions of the Jews around the world and by the present world-wide dispersion. There is one stage yet to come.

(6) Stage Six: The Remarriage with Restored Blessings

The Jewish prophets did not leave things hopeless. They spoke of a coming day when Israel will again become the restored Wife of Jehovah. Of course, this will require a new marriage contract, and this marriage contract is found in Jeremiah 31:31–34. What is often known as the New Covenant is in many respects a new marriage contract that God will make with the two Houses of Israel and Judah (v. 31). This new covenant of marriage will be necessary because the old marriage covenant was broken (v. 32). Although God was a good Husband, Israel strayed and by means of adultery caused the original marriage contract to be broken. With this new marriage contract Israel will again be restored to the place of blessing (vv. 33–34).

This remarriage on the basis of a new marriage contract is also described in Ezekiel 16:60–63. According to Ezekiel, God will enter into an everlasting covenant with Israel in the future. This everlasting covenant is the same as that of the New Covenant in Jeremiah 31:31–34. This new and everlasting covenant is also a new marriage contract upon which the remarriage will be based.

The restoration of Israel as Jehovah's wife is also described in Isaiah 54:1–8. Isaiah began by declaring

that the restored wife will now begin to bear legitimate children (Jeremiah 31:1–3). Israel had produced a lot more children in desolation than she produced when she was previously married to Jehovah (Jeremiah 31:1). In fact, Israel produced many illegitimate children and very few legitimate ones, and those who were legitimate were often sacrificed to the foreign gods. However, now all this is to change. Isaiah tells Israel to enlarge her house (Jeremiah 31:2–3) in order to accommodate the many legitimate children about to come. The reason for this new activity and the coming legitimate children is because of the reunion of the marriage (vv. 4–8). Israel's former adulteries will all be forgotten (Jeremiah 31:4), and Jehovah will once again be her Husband (Jeremiah 31:5). God will again court His wife as He courted her when she was a youth (Jeremiah 31:6), and all past forsakings will now be substituted by renewed blessings (Jeremiah 31:7–8).

This remarriage is further described by Isaiah 62:4–5. Israel's land that she lost because of her adultery is to be totally restored (Isaiah 62:4). Like a new husband rejoices over his virgin bride, in this same way God will rejoice over His restored wife (Isaiah 62:5).

Hosea, who had much to say about the adulteries of Israel, also spoke of Israel's reunion with her husband in Hos 2:14–23. Hosea began by describing the courtship and the wooing in the wilderness (Hos 2:14–15). Israel will again be allured into the wilderness where God will speak to her heart in courtship. When she responds, all her vineyards will be restored. The four results of this restoration are described next (Hos 2:16–23). The first result is that Israel will no longer address God as Baali, but only as Ishi (Hos 2:16–17). There is a very interesting play upon words in the Hebrew text by the usage of these two words. Both words, Baali and Ishi, are good Hebrew words meaning “my husband.” While they both mean “my husband,” there is a slight difference of emphasis in their meaning. Ishi means “my husband” in the sense of “my man.” Baali means “my husband” in the sense of “my master.” Both words are perfectly good Hebrew words for “my husband” and are used interchangeably throughout the Scriptures. Nevertheless, God said that the title of Baali will no longer be used, but only Ishi. The reason for this is the fact that the word Baali sounds very much like one of the gods with whom Israel committed adultery: the god, Baal. If Israel was to continue to call God Baali in the future, she might begin to remember her former lover, Baal. In order to avoid even the hint of remembrance of the other lover, Baal, Israel will no longer address God as Baali, but only as Ishi. The second result is peace and safety (Hos 2:18); Israel will never again be invaded by the nations whose gods she once worshipped. The third result is the betrothal (Hos 2:19–20). The word betroth is used three different times, and the three usages describe the three elements of this new betrothal: first, as to time, it will be forever; second, as to content, it will be in righteousness, justice, lovingkindness and mercy; and, third, as to quality, it will be in faithfulness. The fourth result is the new meaning to Jezreel (Hos 2:21–23). This Hebrew name can mean two things: “God scatters” and “God sows.” During the period of punishment, Israel experienced the first meaning, God scatters. Now Israel will experience the second meaning, God sows. The Valley of Jezreel, Israel's largest valley and the most productive, had often failed to produce because God removed His blessings. Now, with the new marriage having taken place, all of God's blessings will be restored in the Valley of Jezreel, and it will produce almost as soon as the field is sown. ([Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology; See also Journal Article - scroll down to page 5](#))

Related Resources:

- [Israelology: Part 1 of 6 Introduction: Definition of Terms](#)
- [Israelology: Part 2 of 6 Israel Present](#)
- [Israelology: Part 3 of 6 Israel Present \(Continued\)](#)
- [Israelology: Part 4 of 6 - Israel Future \(Part One\)](#)
- [Israelology: Part 5 of 6 - Israel Future \(Part Two\)](#)
- [Israelology: Part 6 of 6 Other Relevant Topics - Illustrations of Israel \(including marriage\)](#)

Israel Married to Jehovah

- [Anthony Garland's Discussion of Israel Married to Jehovah](#)

The nation Israel is unlikely to be the Lamb's bride because she has already been wed. God the Father is Israel's husband: [1](#)

“Return, O backsliding children,” says the Lord; “for I am married to you. I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion.” (Jer. 3:14) [emphasis added]

“They say, ‘If a man divorces his wife, and she goes from him and becomes another man’s, may he return to her again?’ Would not that land be greatly polluted? But you have played the harlot with many lovers; yet return to Me,” says the Lord. (Jer. 3:1) [emphasis added]

Then I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot also. (Jer. 3:8) [emphasis added]

Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. (Jer. 31:31-33) [emphasis added]

Even though Israel proved to be an unfaithful wife which God put away by divorce, He promises to remain faithful to her in His relationship as husband. Moreover, in order to divorce her, she had to first be married.

Bring charges against your mother, bring charges; For she is not My wife, nor am I her Husband! Let her put away her harlotries from her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts . . . (Hos. 2:2) [emphasis added]

She will chase her lovers, but not overtake them; yes, she will seek them, but not find them. Then she will say, ‘I will go and return to my first husband, for then it was better for me than now.’ (Hos. 2:7) [emphasis added]

As unfaithful as Israel has been, God promises to stand by her. Their husband-wife relationship will be reestablished:

“And it shall be, in that day,” says the Lord, “That you will call Me ‘My Husband,’ And no longer call Me ‘My Master.’” (Hos. 2:16) [emphasis added]

I will betroth you to Me forever; yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and justice, in lovingkindness and mercy; I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness, and you shall know the Lord. (Hos. 2:19-20) [emphasis added]

The LORD’s accomplished purpose in Israel’s chastening also will result in the reestablishment of her original husband-wife relationship to the LORD. [2](#)

The relationship between Israel and Jehovah is dramatically different than what the NT records concerning Christ and His bride. Perhaps the most significant difference is that the marriage of Jehovah to Israel occurred in time past, whereas the marriage of Christ with His bride has not yet taken place. This is the subject of the passage before us.

Israel in her land was the wife of Jehovah (Jer. 3:14-20; Isa. 54:1), but the wife was divorced because of her iniquity. Israel, however, is to be reinstated in Jehovah’s favour. But a divorced wife can never again be a virgin, and it is not a divorced wife but a virgin whom the Lord marries (Lev. 21:14). [3](#)

Footnotes:

1 “Israel in captivity is prefigured as a wife (Isa. 54:5; 62:5 [Jerusalem]) put away for unfaithfulness, who is childless and desolate.”—Merrill F. Unger, [Unger’s Commentary on the Old Testament](#) (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2002), Rev. 54:1.

2 Ibid., Hos. 2:15.

3 Scott, [Exposition of The Revelation](#), Rev. 19:6.

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- [The Jewish Wedding Analogy](#)
- [Roles in the Wedding Party](#)
- [Jerusalem Married to God](#)

- [Church Betrothed to Christ](#)
- [Israel, the Church, the New Jerusalem](#)