**JEALOUS GOD**

Sunday School Lesson 6

*The Attributes of God*

Exodus 34:14

7/4/2021

**Introduction:** Up to this point in our lesson series, all of the attributes of the Lord have been viewed mostly with encouragement for the believer. Certainly, we are glad that the Lord is self-existing, immutable, omnipresent, omnipotent, and self-sufficient. Each of these attributes should provide us with great comfort as we seek to serve Him. That’s because the attributes speak to what the Lord can and will do for the believer. In last week’s lesson, though, we started to get a glimpse of how some of the attributes of the Lord should cause conviction and self-examination of the Christian’s heart. We were reminded by the Lord’s self-sufficiency that His creation was not made from a position of need. We were also reminded that He does not need anything to produce joy for Himself, nor does He need mankind to serve Him. These reminders emphasized the fact that our service to Him is more helpful for us than it is for Him. He does not need us, yet He chose us. Consequently, if we are unfruitful, we should not have much expectation that the Lord will beg us to do the work. He will find another laborer to do His work. For today’s lesson, we are going to look at an attribute that should strongly convict all of this. That attribute is the jealousy of God. His jealousy is as much a part of His character as His immutability or love. Let’s consider the following thoughts regarding His jealousy.

1. **THE LORD IS A JEALOUS GOD BECAUSE OF HIS LOVE AND FAITHFULNESS.**
2. **Notice that the Lord’s love and faithfulness for His children is the reason behind His jealousy (Zechariah 1:14, 8:2; 2 Corinthians 11:2).** The Old Testament often personifies the nation of Israel as a singular person whom the Lord loved as a spouse. This is why the Bible refers to Israel as playing the role of the harlot when they turned away from God. If the Lord did not care for His people, then there would be nothing to be jealous over. We know that the Lord has a love for His people unlike any other love in all of the universe. His love is deeper and stretches farther than we could ever fathom. Imagine experiencing such immense love for someone only to have them rebuff and reject you. Additionally, the Lord is faithful in His love. He does not waver. He does not neglect those whom He loves. He does not take a break from loving them. His faithfulness produces jealousy, and it also justifies His jealousy. Could one really be rightly jealous over being rejected by a loved one if that same person had also been unfaithful to that same loved one? We would certainly consider that to be a hypocritical and unfair jealousy. The Lord has every right to be jealous over His people. He has always been there for them.
3. **Notice that the Lord has a reasonable expectation of an exclusive, mutual love (Exodus 20:5, 34:14; Numbers 5:14-30; Deuteronomy 32:16; Song of Solomon 8:6; 1 Corinthians 10:22).** Part of the reason that we do not understand the Lord’s jealousy is due to our view that jealousy is always bad. The truth is that the Old Testament reveals a specific set of circumstances where jealousy is appropriate and just. We find this in Numbers chapter five, and it deals with the relationship between a husband and wife. To summarize it, the Bible makes it clear that the husband has a reasonable expectation that the wife will express mutual and exclusive love for her husband. If she does not, then he is right in his jealousy. Likewise, the Lord expects the exclusive love of His church and His nation. If we put some little god before Him, we can expect there to be a jealous reaction. We have violated the reasonable expectation that we will love only Him and put none other before Him. I wonder if we were to be put to the test like those in the Old Testament, would we be able to say plainly that we have a mutual and exclusive love for the Lord? I believe we know the answer to this difficult question.
4. **THE LORD IS A JEALOUS GOD BECAUSE OF HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HOLY NAME.**
5. **Notice that our sins lead to the jealousy of the Lord because His righteousness desires more righteousness (1 Kings 14:22; 2 Corinthians 6:14).** The Bible speaks of the jealousy of the Lord coming as a result of the iniquities of His people. This means that His jealousy is not just limited to serving or worshipping other gods. The reason that He is jealous over sin is that His righteousness desires to dwell with more righteousness. Light cannot fellowship with darkness. Yet, this world is very dark. At the very least, the Lord can fellowship with His children through the redeeming blood of Jesus Christ. Yet, so many believers continue in the bondage of sin, and this restrains our relationship with the Lord. His righteousness desires for us to seek forgiveness and be restored to fellowship Him. His righteousness has much to be jealous about in this present world that we live in. Darkness has many friends all around this world. There is no shortage of fellowship among darkness. On the other hand, light is very scarce. Eventually, the jealousy of the righteousness of the Lord will require that relationship that has been neglected by the people of this world. At that time, the Lord will have eternal fellowship with light.
6. **Notice that the Lord’s holy name gets jealous when it is diminished in this world by His people (Ezekiel 39:25, 36:5).** In the prophecy given to Ezekiel, the Lord told Israel that He was going to restore them back as a nation. He would have mercy upon the whole house of Israel. The reason for this change was due in part to the jealousy of His name. The Lord’s name had been blasphemed by the heathen of the land. They no longer recognized how God had greatly blessed His people. They spoke only in the past tense of what the Lord had done. The Lord’s holy name was greatly jealous that it was no longer being proclaimed. The glory of the Lord needs to shine bright. His name is higher than all other names. Sadly, His name was not being recognized on the earth. Even worse, there were those who believed that He had done evil toward His own people. The captivity of Israel was being reported as the Lord turning His back on His people. The Lord despised this conversation. He was greatly jealous by His own holy name. Unfortunately, Israel still does not lift up the holy name of the Lord today.
7. **THE LORD IS A JEALOUS GOD WHO HAS GREAT FURY IN HIS JEALOUSY.**
8. **Notice that the Lord is a consuming fire, and His jealousy is often accompanied with His fury (Deuteronomy 4:24, 6:15; Psalm 78:58, 79:5; Ezekiel 16:38-42, 23:25, 36:5-6, 38:19; Zechariah 8:2).** This should cause us to take careful note of this attribute of the Lord. His jealousy is often found in Scripture with His anger or fury. The psalmist wanted to know how long the Lord’s jealousy would burn like fire. Moses told the Israelites that the Lord is a consuming fire. Some people become jealous, but they act very little upon it. Perhaps this is because they have petty jealousies, or they may even know that their jealousies are misplaced. The Lord’s jealousy is righteous, and it is thereby accompanied by His righteous anger. This is not an irrational anger, but it is a very furious and troubling anger. It’s a fury unlike any other. Consider the Lord’s responses to Moses in the wilderness. He was prepared to deal with the entire nation of Israel. They had turned their back on Him. They had provoked Him to jealousy in the wilderness, and they sadly had little idea the immense anger that they had brought upon themselves. There is little doubt that they quickly realized the fury of the Lord.
9. **Notice that the fury of the Lord’s jealousy requires a response back to the object of His jealousy (Deuteronomy 29:20; Numbers 25:11; Zephaniah 1:18, 3:8**; **Nahum 1:2; Isaiah 42:13).** This is not just a simmering anger. This is an active anger. A word that the Bible uses is vengeance. Keep in mind that the Bible uses this in reference to the people of Israel. This tells us that the fury of the Lord will not be felt just on those in the world. In fact, the majority of the examples given are specifically dealing with the people of Israel. We are thankful that we do not have to face the judgment of God, and we often talk about believers dealing with chastisement. Yet, we should understand that the Lord may have times that He deals with us in His hot displeasure. There may be times where we feel the full force of His jealous vengeance. The Bible refers to our jealous God going forth as a mighty man of war to deal with the object of His jealousy. He shall cry, yea, roar! Let us be very mindful to avoid that day of provocation like the nation of Israel had on multiple occasions.
10. **THE LORD IS A JEALOUS GOD WHO WILL EMPLOY JEALOUSY ON THOSE HE LOVES.**
11. **Notice that the Lord has moved the nation of Israel to jealousy against the church (Deuteronomy 32:21; Romans 10:18-21).** I believe that this is reserved for those who do not respond to the jealous fury of the Lord. Israel had many opportunities to respond to His fury, but they continually ignored and turned away from Him. Consequently, He told them even back in the days of Moses that He would move them to jealousy against those who aren’t even a people – a foolish nation. Could there be anything worse from the perspective of the Jews than to see God’s blessings on a people that aren’t even a people? He has not just provoked them to jealousy by a singular nation. Instead, He has provoked them to jealousy through a plethora of people of many nations who have received Jesus Christ as their Saviour. This jealousy was so strong that even Jewish members of the early church struggled greatly to accept their Gentile brothers in Christ. The book of Romans sets out to remind any Jewish Christians reading the Word of God that God promised to move them to jealousy against a foolish nation.
12. **Notice that the Lord moves to jealousy with the hopes of returning His people back to Him (Romans 11).** The reason for the Lord moving Israel to jealousy is obvious. He loves them and wants them to return back to Him. They took Him for granted. They took their Godly heritage for granted. They became sensual and unbelieving. They were not satisfied with what the Lord had and could do in their lives. Had the Lord cast them off now? The answer is still no. Likewise, the Lord may employ the same work on a believer today. Maybe there is someone who has left their first love, and they have ignored the Lord’s jealous anger. Now, they are seeing the Lord work and use others to accomplish His will, and they see the emptiness of their own lives. Take that jealousy and run to the Lord and seek His forgiveness. Don’t allow the jealousy to turn you bitter against the Lord. He loves you.