

The Attributes of God
Attribute #24 - Jealous

1. Jealous - While jealousy is not an attribute of God per se, the term is used to describe an action on the part of God toward His people relating to their protection. Because He is holy and righteous, He is “jealous” that His impeccable rules not be broken. He zealously seeks to maintain the loyalty of His redeemed and thereby reflect the worthiness and integrity of His holy nature (Ex. 20:5; 7; 34:14; Joel 2:18). God’s action on behalf of His church is described in human terms so that we may understand His actions toward us for His glory.
 - A. Scripture also witnesses to a positive application of jealousy and finds in this idea a highly relevant term to denote God’s holy zeal for the honor of his name and the good of his people who are bound to him in the marriage of the covenant. He desires fervently that His due status and honor be preserved, that the worship that belongs to Him should be given to Him
 1. Deut. 32:16, 21
 2. 2 Kings 19:31
 3. Ezek. 36:5f
 4. Zech. 1:14f
 5. John. 2:17
 - B. In this sense the jealousy of God is of the essence of his moral character, a major cause for worship and confidence on the part of his people and a ground for fear on the part of his enemies.
 - C. In certain passages God says, “I am a jealous God (Exodus 20:5; 34:14; Deuteronomy 4:24; 5:9; Joshua 24:19; Nahum 1:2).
 1. While the word is used in our language in an evil sense, it has a somewhat different meaning, especially in the Old Testament.
 - a. It is often used in connection with the marriage relation, and, in this respect, the relation between Jehovah and Israel. Just as jealousy in husband or wife is the forceful assertion of an exclusive right, so God asserts His claim, and vindicates it, on those who are His sole possession.
 - b. As to His spiritual relation to Israel, see, for example, Isaiah 54:5; 62:5; Hosea 2:19.

- 1). He thus claims that He is to Israel as husband is to wife, and accordingly idolatry and wickedness in every form are spiritual adultery.
- 2). His people in their evil ways are represented as provoking Him to jealousy
 - a). Deuteronomy 32:16,21
 - b). 1 Kings 14:22
 - c). Psalms 78:58
 - d). Zephaniah 1:18; 3:8;
 - e). Numbers 25:11
 - f). 1 Corinthians 10:22
 - g). Ezekiel 16:38,42; 23:25; 36:5, 6; 38:19; 39:25
 - h). Hosea 2:2,16
 - i). Joel 2:18
 - j). Zephaniah 1:18
 - k). Zechariah 1:14; 8:2.
- 3). God rejects every attack on His sole rights as Lord of His creation because of His intimacy with His chosen people.

D. The law of the jealousy offering is declared in Numbers 5:11—31.

1. The application to the priest constituted an appeal to God, to whom the appeal was made to decide the question of the guilt or innocence of the suspected person.
2. The word is used also to denote a man's passionate concern for the honor of God, as in the cases of:
 - a. Phinehas - Numbers 25:11, 13; Psalms 106:30.
 - b. Elijah - 1 Kings 19:10
 - c. Jehu - 2 Kings 10:16
 - d. Compare Psalms 69:9; John 2:17;
 - e. Romans 10:2
 - f. 2 Corinthians 11:2.