

# No Other Gods (2): Our God is a Jealous God

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(Exodus 34:10-17)

## I. Introduction

- A. Michael Jordan tells of visiting home of Fred Whitfield, president of a rival NBA team.
1. Jordan said to Whitfield, “*Man, it’s kind of cold. Can I borrow one of your jackets?*”
    - a. He told him “yes” and pointed him down the hall to where the coat closet was
    - b. Jordan reappeared with armload of jackets, shirts and shoes... and a butcher knife
    - c. All carried the “Puma” brand, a no-no for a team supposedly representing Nike
  2. Whitfield had been visited by his friend Ralph Sampson, a Puma rep— was wavering
    - a. Jordan quietly cut every one of those jackets and shirts into a thousand pieces  
*Hey, dude, call [my Nike representative] tomorrow and tell him to replace all of this. But don’t ever let me see you again in anything other than Nike. You can’t ride the fence.*
    - b. **Moral of Story:** Don’t let any of your friends anywhere near any of your closets?
      - 1) Doesn’t Michael Jordan sound like what God tells Israel to do (**Deut 7:5-6**)
      - 2) “Good King Hezekiah” was good because he tore down idols (**2 King 18:3-4**)
      - 3) Josiah is seen as one of the greatest of kings for same reason (**2 Chron 34:3-7**)
    - c. God’s people can’t ride the fence—Elijah’s point before taking on Baal (**1Ki 18:21**)
- B. Last week we began “*No Other Gods— the Gods of the World and the One True God*”
1. We said that the problem that Israel had in the OT was not leaving God for idol gods
    - a. They wanted to add the world of Baal and Asherah to the worship of Yahweh
    - b. Fertility gods of Canaan would make them successful, and let them fit in with world
    - c. We pursue the false gods of our culture (*money, sex, power*) for the same reasons
  2. We started last week with Ten Commandments, or really the opening two statements
    - a. “*I am the LORD your God.*” (**Ex 20:2**) Everything flows from his identity as God
    - b. “*You shall have no other gods before me.*” (**Ex 20:3**) If God is God, he is God alone
  3. Shocking statement here we skipped last week (**Exo 20:5**). *Two shocking statements.*
    - a. **First**, God punishes “*children for the sin of parents to third and fourth generation*”
      - 1) So best pick your parents carefully? *He does not!* (**Deut 24:16; Ezek 18:19-20**)
      - 2) But the ramifications of idolatry are such that it impacts further generations!
    - b. **Second**, God tells us that he is jealous God; we generally see jealousy as a bad thing
      - 1) Bible generally thinks that too; jealousy is one of works of the flesh in **Gal 5**
      - 2) Despite that, God tells Israel that He is jealous. **Reading:** **Exodus 34:10-14**

## II. Our God Is a Jealous God: Background

- A. There's a backstory to this reading—we need to take a few minutes to fill it in a bit (*I know, there's a fine line between a long sermon and a hostage situation, but bear with me*)
1. In **Exodus 32**, Israel got tired waiting for Moses to do what they asked him to do
    - a. After hearing God speak from Sinai, they wanted Moses to go and talk with God
      - 1) Our reading last week ended with Moses disappearing into smoke (**Exo 20:21**)
      - 2) He goes up on Mt Sinai to receive the Law, and he stays and says and stays
    - b. Moses is gone so long on the mountain, and the Israelites get restless (**Exo 32:1**)
      - 1) Moses represented God's presence; they think something has happened to him
      - 2) Schooled in the ways of Egypt, they think they need an idol to represent God
  2. Aaron creates a golden calf to represent God (**Exo 32:4**). *He'll change his story later*
    - a. This is a bit problematic; word “gods” here can be singular, “*this is the god that*”
      - 1) Did they worship different “gods” (plural) or use the calf to represent Yahweh?
      - 2) Golden calf really broke the first two commandments—other gods and idols
    - b. They just heard God Himself speak; they saw the smoke and the mountain shake
      - 1) Well, God will not be ignored! Holy anger is wholly in character (**Exo 32:9-10**)
      - 2) Moses steps in to plead for mercy; he argues “*What will the neighbors think?*”
      - 3) God relents and because mercy and grace are both wholly in character as well
- B. In **Exodus 33**, there is dance of reconciliation of sorts between God and Israel
1. They would go on to the Promised Land, but with one huge caveat (**Exo 33:3**)
    - a. God will give them the promised land, but He Himself won't go with them
    - b. He'll send an angel ahead of them to fight their battles, but he will stay behind
  2. Something happens by the end of **Exodus 33** that seems to change things for good
    - a. Israelites strips off ornaments (**33:6**) and worships God at Tabernacle (**33:10**)
    - b. Moses spends time in God's presence (**33:11**) and “sees” God's glory (**33:21-23**)
  3. In **Exodus 34**, there is a reconciliation; new stone tablets are given to Moses
    - a. Our Scripture reading earlier was part of this statement of reconciliation & warning
      - 1) God would now go with them to Promised Land to drive out the “*ites*” (**34:11**)
      - 2) But no idols; no repeats of the golden calf! God is a jealous God (**34:13-14**)
    - b. God is a jealous God; He is so jealous for his people that His name is “Jealous”
  4. We sang “*Our God is an Awesome God*” because is no “*Our God is a Jealous God*”

### III. Our God is a Jealous God: Meaning

A. In what sense is God jealous? What exactly does that mean?

1. In the Bible, “*jealous*” and “*zealous*” are basically the same word.
  - a. It works the same in Old Testament and the New, in Hebrew and in Greek.
  - b. It’s the word Paul uses for obvious worldly behavior we are to avoid (**Rom 13:13**)
  - c. Same word is used when Jesus gets “whipped up” and clears the Temple (**Jn 2:17**)
2. Whether jealousy is a good thing or bad thing depends on what or how it’s directed
  - a. Rachel was jealous of Leah (**Ge 30:1**). Why? Leah was having all the babies
  - b. Joseph’s brothers were jealous of him (**Ge 37:11**). Why? He got all the attention?
  - c. Their jealousy was really about themselves and what they wanted for themselves
    - 1) Rachel wanted baby like Leah and her frustration was at Leah. *That’s jealousy*
    - 2) Brothers wanted attention/love like Joseph & ended up hating. *That’s jealousy*
  - d. In this sense, being jealous **OF** someone is really wanting something **FOR** yourself
    - 1) Typical jealous husband wants to control every aspect of his wife’s life
    - 2) He wants control **FOT** himself, so conversation she has becomes a threat to that
    - 3) He’s jealous **OF** HER, but it’s not really **ABOUT** her; it’s about **HIMSELF**

B. By contrast, Elijah was jealous **FOR** God and His covenant (**1 Kings 19:10**)

1. It’s the same word (ESV/KJV have “*jealous*”), but it used in a positive sense
  - a. OK, Elijah is bummed the prophet gig isn’t working out like he had expected
  - b. He thought more people would respond; he thought his work would matter more
  - c. But his desire here, his jealous for not **OF** anything else. He was jealous for God
2. This is the same way that Paul uses the Greek word for jealous (**2 Cor 11:2**)
  - a. Paul is being overprotective of them because he wants what is best **FOR** them
  - b. He is afraid that they will be unfaithful with some other Jesus or gospel (**11:4**)
  - c. It isn’t about Paul at all; he is not jealous **OF** them; he is jealous **FOR** them
3. God is jealous God in this sense—jealous **FOR** us. He won’t share us with other gods
  - a. What happened when Israel went after Canaanite gods? *Baal, Asherah and Molech*
    - 1) They adopted temple prostitution at center of fertility worship (**Amos 2:7-8**)
    - 2) Worship of Molech, introduced by Solomon, led to infant sacrifice (**2 Ki 16:2**)
  - b. God is too loving, holy and righteous to allow his people to do such things
  - c. He will not share us with false gods that will destroy us—He is jealous **FOR** us

## IV. Conclusion

- A. The central message of the gospel is that God loves you and me more than life itself
1. Isn't that right? In Christ, God chose death on the cross to win us back to Himself
    - a. And He did that because of love, because “*God so loved the world*” (**John 3:16**)
    - b. God showed or demonstrated that love while we were yet sinner (**Rom 5:8**)
      - 1) While there's nothing good in us or about us, God gave best of heaven for us
      - 2) And he did that for no other reason than he loved us so much, so much
  2. When you love someone that much, you want two things more than any other
    - a. You want what is absolutely the very best thing in all the world for them
    - b. And you want them to love back in the same way that you love them
  3. Because God loves us like that, He will not share us with the gods of this world
- B. Let's go back to that rather strange story we saw in passing a little bit earlier (**Exo 33:2-3**)
1. **Question:** *What would you say if God offered you the same kind of deal today?*
    - a. What if God offered you the greatest desires of your heart—whatever those are
      - 1) Fame-n-fortune, health-n-wealth, popularity-n-prosperity, and new iPhone X
      - 2) Think of it like a genie and 3 wishes—get to 3 and wish for 3 more wishes
    - b. God will drive out all your enemies (mean ol' boss, cantankerous neighbor, etc.)
    - c. You get anything and everything you your heart desires PLUS heaven when you die
  2. **One Caveat:** God wouldn't be there for any of it. There'll be no Jesus or Holy Spirit.
    - a. *Is all of that enough without God?* Is all that stuff really enough without God
    - b. Would even heaven be enough without the presence of the glory of God?
    - c. The essence of idolatry is to settle for anything that is less than God Himself
      - 1) Doesn't God bless us with stuff of this world? *every good thing* (**Jam 1:17**)
      - 2) But He must be the goal of our lives. The stuff must remain just stuff
  3. Most important thing that God can give us is Himself—he did that at the cross
- C. What are putting before God today? God is a jealous God; He won't take second place