



“Green with Jealousy”

What is your favorite colour? How does it make you feel? On one side of the spectrum, the colour green has a longstanding history of being associated with feelings of sickness, greed, jealousy, and envy. On the other end of the spectrum green can be a colour that represent abundance, growth, and renewal. Our definition depends largely on context.

I was reading in Exodus chapter 34 the other day and I had to stop to better understand the words found in verse fourteen. The chapter recounts the time when Moses goes before the Lord to receive for a second time the ten commandments. The verse reads, “do not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God”.

The primary dictionary definition of jealous is a “feeling or showing envy of someone of their achievements and advantages”. If this is true, how do we deal with the understanding that our God, who is perfect, be a jealous God? What is he jealous of?

Human jealousy is most often tainted or spoiled by the influence of sin that clouds our thoughts. Human jealousy is often seeded with feelings of envy, a “painful or resentful awareness of an advantage enjoyed by another joined with a desire to possess the same advantage.”

Remove the influence of sin, the human condition from jealousy and mix it with the pure and unconditional love of God and his jealous nature becomes righteous and holy.

In the context of Exodus 34 and other places in scripture God’s warnings of jealousy is a response to the idolatry of his

chosen people. The second presentation of the ten commandments was in a sense a renewal of the covenant God made with his people to bring them out of slavery into the promise land.

The word *qanno*’ translated as jealous is used only to describe God. Behind the word is a sense of intensity and qualifies the actions and unique jealousy or zeal the Lord has for his people. Our God, our creator, cares deeply for and protects his people, those who have chosen to follow him. The motivation of his jealousy is filled with a pure and fervent love that reaches beyond anything we as finite humans can comprehend.

God does not change. He continues to be a jealous God. It is only by his grace and mercy that we can be in good standing before him. The same love and protection that brought his people to the promise land continues to lead and guide us to the promise of life with him after death. He still desires our full attention to his will for our lives, to live a life that shines his love and light in the world.

The idols of this world, the sin in our lives, constantly pull at our faithfulness to living God’s will for our lives. We are called to love the Lord with all our hearts, souls, and mind. (Matt 22:37) Knowing that he is a Jealous God, that his love for us is pure and has our best interests at heart should be the motivation to inspire our faith, hope and trust in him.

I am thankful that my God is a jealous God. This often-overlooked part of his character fits together with the whole of who he is. It is my hope and prayer that as we continue to grow in our knowledge of who our God is we learn how to reflect his character in our own lives so others can see him.