

✍ The Corinthian church was not exactly the most spiritually educated. Here, we are going to see that they were frequenting idol temples and attending the worship of some of these idols not realizing the significance of it all, 1st Corinthians 10:14-22. An interesting attribute of God is brought up here, His jealousy. Isn't jealousy a bad thing? It is certainly spoken of in the Bible mostly in a bad light. This is what it says about God with regard to jealousy, Exodus 20:5; Deuteronomy 6:15; Exodus 34:14. Jealousy is usually a negative attribute, but not when it refers to God. Why does this attribute of God receive such little attention? Probably because we have largely misunderstood it.

1. Begin with a working definition. There are two kinds of jealousy, the type we always think of when we think of jealousy, suspicious, envious, controlling, self-loving and not others-loving. Then there is God's jealousy, intolerance of unfaithfulness because of His zeal for what is best for the person He loves.

- ✓ The word "zeal" and the word "jealous" are exactly the same in Hebrew and Greek. One of Jesus' disciples was called Simon the Zealot which meant he was zealous or literally jealous for the land of Israel that it not be controlled by outsiders. Simon had a zeal or was jealousy for what was right for his people and that is the way God's jealousy is. Jesus was zealous or jealous, Matthew 21:12-13. Jesus is still jealous for the Lord's temple. Believers are now the dwelling places of His Holy Spirit.

2. Nearly every time God's jealousy is mentioned in the Bible, it is mentioned concerning how He feels about idolatry and false religion.

- ✓ 1st Corinthians 10:20-21, idol worship was not carried out only on one day of the week, nor were the temples only open on the weekends, they were frequented every day. Because the god was believed to live there, they had to go there to speak to him or her. Therefore, it was a common meeting place for most individuals in that culture. It was a place where popular and powerful people gathered: a place of weddings, parties, service clubs and city governments met there because it was usually the place with the most meeting room. In that day, to cut oneself off from the local pagan temple was to cut oneself off from the social life of the community. The argument of the less-informed Corinthian church was: "We believe in God and not in idols, so, what's the big deal if we go where the people are?"

Two quick points:

- 1) Idols are nothing, but they aren't just nothing, there really are demons behind idols and false religions. Thus, it was dangerous for the believers to be intentionally involved in places where these were worshipped.
- 2) Fellowship in an idol temple was tantamount to fellowship with demons. Fellowship = "fellows in the same ship," 1st Corinthians 10:22, they couldn't be in two ships at once. They were going to church and worshipping and observing communion, and then going to the idol/demon temples all week and having fellowship, essentially, with demons. Their lives needed to change including where they spent their time. James 4:4, we cannot have or pretend to have fellowship with God and have idols in our lives. We cannot have fellowship with God and have fellowship with our societies' idols because, at the very least, it would cause outsiders to doubt our commitment. We cannot run hard after things our world pursues all week and then expect to have fellowship with God on Sundays.

God has to be first, every day. We can't pursue what the world pursues which means we can't do some of things they do or go some of the places they go. Either God is first and so He is the main factor that determines what we say, do, places we go; or He's not first. We are either zealous for God or He's jealous for what's best for us, Revelation 3:15-16; 19.
