

# Epiphany 3, 2020

## Jealousy Unto Salvation

Isaiah 41:8-10, 17-20  
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*“But thou Israel, art my servant Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend.”*

Jealousy is a powerful emotion. It is difficult for me to think of jealousy without a negative connotation. When we consider the tenth Commandment that we *“shalt not covet thy neighbor’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s wife, nor his servant, nor his maid, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is his”* we come to understand that jealousy is nothing more than coveting, desiring, wanting that which is not ours at the moment...and quite possibly...may never be. We normally think of jealousy as a negative trait or even a sin as referred to in Paul’s letter to the Galatians (chapter 20). But Paul also writes in 2 Corinthians chapter 11, *“I am jealous for you with a Godly jealousy...”*. In Exodus chapter 20 we hear these words spoke by God in our second commandment, *“Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, nor the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down to them, nor worship them; **for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God...**”*

Is jealousy a good thing or not? Well, it can be both, but not at the same time. Just as love can be distorted so can jealousy. Jealousy can invoke envy and covetousness and jealousy can set us back on the right path opening our eyes once again to the truth that has always been right in front of us.

My wife has reminisced on the occasion of an open house during Epiphany hosted by her parents when she was a young girl of six years old. At this event her attention was preoccupied with a variety of social stimulations, none of which were about her dad’s business. Little did she know her focus was about to change. Andrea’s dad was having his attention garnered by another young girl about 4 years of age. It was the favor of this little girl toward her father that aroused in Andrea a jealousy, bringing her senses back to the reality of how much her dad

meant to her and how much she loved him. Sometimes we can take the best of things for granted. This is where we find many of the first century Jews concerning their relationship with Yahweh manifested in the flesh of Jesus Christ. Preoccupied with the events of the day, they failed to see the glory revealed in their midst, the prophetic witnesses of the past come to be.

In Isaiah 41:8 we heard these words today, *“But thou Israel, art my servant Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend.”* The nation of Israel is born in these words and the physical children of God are taken from the seed of Abraham through his grandson Jacob. The Jewish nation of Israel would survive long under its prophets and kings within the leadership of the One True God. Could they not see the writing on the wall? Were they so busy with the worldly news of the day that they had no time for their one true love? Did they not listen for that still small voice proclaiming the Lord of Salvation? Time would result in complacent attitudes. The Jewish people would live amongst foreigners and their false gods, slowly forgetting how important Yahweh, the great I Am, was in their begetting and in their future growth and development as the children of God.

In Paul’s letter to the Romans we see the results of such complacency and how God used jealousy to bring salvation to all mankind. *“For if the first fruit be holy, Paul says, and if the root be holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree, boast not against the branches...thou wilt say then, the branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in”* (Romans 11:16-19). The complacency of the Jews caused many to divert their eyes from the second Adam, Jesus Christ, opening the doors of the banquet to those of a different fold, where Jesus waits upon our faith as badges for entry. *“Because of unbelief, Paul continues, they were broken off, and thou standeth by faith.*

Jews and Gentiles are different from one another, but we are of the same root, the same spiritual foundation of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Gentiles, being grafted in to the same tree of life as the nation of Israel, receive the salvific nutrients of the Father while remaining who they are, differing from their neighboring Jewish brethren. Just as

differing fruits are processed according to their own requirements so too is the calling of the Gentiles different from that of the Jews. This is what St. Paul was speaking too when he denied the necessity of Gentile circumcision. We are not to *“boast against the (natural) branches...for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.* The New Covenant in Christ Jesus is not separate from the Old Covenant of the Jews. The Jewish nation is not a separate people from the Christian church. The Jewish people of God stand out as a vision of light warning us of the challenges of the Christian, to not become complacent in our walks. Jealousy can be as powerful as a light in a dark room.

*“Though Israel has stumbled in her refusal to believe in Christ, it is not necessarily inevitable that she should fall permanently. The jealousy she feels toward the Gentiles has the potential to lead Israel to repentance and faith. Furthermore, Israel’s fall has led to the conversion of the Gentiles, thus renewing the opportunity for Israel’s own salvation”* (Orthodox Study Bible notes on Romans 11:11-15).

Through this same symbiotic relationship between Jew and Gentile others will be inclined to know more about a life lived in the truth of the Almighty, concerned about their own eternal lives. As Christians we must live lives worthy of jealousy, righteous jealousy. When the opportunity comes to share your Christian faith, don’t turn away, speak from the heart, being confident in the truth. And as they open their hearts, truly seeking to become new creatures, giving their lives to a forgiveness only found in Jesus Christ, remember...when God chose Abraham...he chose you to.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.