

### God's jealousy arises in response to his people's sin

Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD. *They made him more jealous by their sins than their ancestors had done.* 1 KINGS 14:22

### God is also jealous for his people's well-being

*Thus says the LORD of hosts: I am jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I am jealous for her with great wrath.* <sup>3</sup>Thus says the LORD: I have returned to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem shall be called the faithful city, and the mountain of the LORD of hosts, the holy mountain. <sup>4</sup>Thus says the LORD of hosts: Old men and old women shall again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each with staff in hand because of great age. <sup>5</sup>And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets.

ZECHARIAH 8:2–5 ESV

God's jealousy for Zion (v. 2) – i.e. Jerusalem - has in view her restoration (vv. 3–5; cf. GNT) and expressing wrath towards her enemies (cf. AMP, CEV, GNT).

Remember the persecuted

## 2. God's Character

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## I. Holy Characteristics

A good understanding of God requires a balanced understanding of his character, including the fundamental attribute of holiness. To obtain such an understanding, we must “take to heart” all aspects of his character. As well as the many characteristics that we find consoling, we also need to appreciate those that inspire godly fear.

### Holiness

God’s holiness involves his moral purity. It concerns God’s separateness from and his intolerance of that which is morally impure. Holiness is fundamental to the other characteristics that follow in the first half of this chapter.

#### God is holy

And one [angelic being] called to another and said: “*Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!*” [ISAIAH 6:3](#) ESV

Note that the title “the LORD of hosts” points to God’s sovereign power over all things.

#### There is nothing bad in God . . .

[A PSALMIST:] They will say that the LORD is good. He is my Rock, and *there is no wrong in him.* [PSALMS 92:15](#) NCV™

#### . . . and God cannot tolerate evil

[HABAKKUK, TO GOD:] *You are too just to tolerate evil; you are unable to condone wrongdoing.* [HABAKKUK 1:13A](#)

#### God shows himself to be holy by what he does

The LORD All-Powerful will receive glory by judging fairly; *the holy God will show himself holy by doing what is right.* [ISAIAH 5:16](#) NCV™

#### There is no one holy like God

*No one is holy like the LORD!* There is no one other than you! There is no rock like our God! [1 SAMUEL 2:2](#)

## Goodness

### God is good

[A PSALMIST, TO GOD:] *You are good and you do good.* [PSALMS 119:68A](#)

### God exercises kindness

*How can I repay the LORD for all his acts of kindness to me?* [PSALMS 116:12](#)

### God is generous

But if anyone is deficient in wisdom, he should ask *God, who gives to all generously* and without reprimand, and it will be given to him.

[JAMES 1:5](#)

The phrase “without reprimand” may be implying that God “won’t correct you for asking” (CEV). In any case, the verse points to the fact that God gives “ungrudgingly” (AMP, NRSV; cf. NLT).

## Jealousy

The Hebrew and Greek words translated as “jealousy” convey a very forceful passion. When used of God, “jealousy” is spoken of in a positive light, as a virtuous attribute aligned with his profound commitment to and love for his people.

God’s jealousy in regard to his people is comparable to that of a husband or wife. Their jealousy is a product of their intense love for each other and evoked by anything that poses a threat to their relationship. As such God’s jealousy is expressed in action against whatever threatens his people or his relationship with them. Thus it is expressed both against hostile forces – bringing salvation to his people – and in punishing any unfaithfulness of his people, leading them back to him.

### God is a jealous God

[MOSES, TO ISRAEL:] For the LORD your God is a consuming fire; *he is a jealous God.* [DEUTERONOMY 4:24](#)

Here God’s jealousy is compared to fire devouring or destroying that which has aroused it.

## Mercy

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### God is merciful

[MOSES, TO ISRAEL:] *The LORD your God is a merciful God. He will not abandon you, destroy you, or forget the promise to your ancestors that he swore he would keep.* DEUTERONOMY 4:31 GW

[DAVID, TO GOD:] *Because of your great mercy, I come to your house, LORD ...* PSALMS 25:6A CEV

### God is also compassionate

*As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on his faithful followers.* PSALMS 103:13

### Due to his mercy and compassion, God is long-suffering

[LEVITES, PRAYING TO GOD AND MAKING REFERENCE TO THEIR ANCESTORS:] Then, when they were at rest again, they went back to doing evil before you. Then you abandoned them to their enemies, and they gained dominion over them. *When they again cried out to you, in your compassion you heard from heaven and rescued them time and again.* <sup>29</sup>And you solemnly admonished them in order to return them to your law, but they behaved presumptuously and did not obey your commandments. They sinned against your ordinances – those by which an individual, if he obeys them, will live. They boldly turned from you; they rebelled and did not obey. <sup>30</sup>*You prolonged your kindness with them for many years, and you solemnly admonished them by your Spirit through your prophets. Still they paid no attention, so you delivered them into the hands of the neighboring peoples.* <sup>31</sup>*However, due to your abundant mercy you did not do away with them altogether; you did not abandon them. For you are a merciful and compassionate God.* NEHEMIAH 9:28–31

### Due to his mercy and compassion, God is forgiving

Who is a God like you? *You forgive sin and overlook the rebellion of your faithful people. You will not be angry forever, because you would rather show mercy.* <sup>19</sup>*You will again have compassion on us. You will overcome our wrongdoing. You will throw all our sins into the deep sea.* MICAH 7:18–19 GW

## Righteousness

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### God is righteous and just

*But the LORD of hosts is exalted in justice, and the Holy God shows himself holy in righteousness.* ISAIAH 5:16 ESV

### All God does is right and just

Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, for *all his deeds are right and his ways are just.* DANIEL 4:37A

### As such, God is truthful . . .

[GOD:] *I the LORD speak the truth; I declare what is right.* ISAIAH 45:19B ESV

### . . . and God does not show favoritism

*For there is no partiality with God.* ROMANS 2:11

## Faithfulness

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### God is faithful

The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; <sup>23</sup>they are new every morning; *great is your faithfulness.* LAMENTATIONS 3:22–23 ESV

### God never forsakes nor fails

[DAVID, TO GOD:] Your loyal followers trust in you, for you, LORD, *do not abandon those who seek your help.* PSALMS 9:10

David also said to his son Solomon, “Be strong and brave, and do the work. Don’t be afraid or discouraged, because the LORD God, my God, is with you. *He will not fail you or leave you until all the work for the Temple of the LORD is finished.* 1 CHRONICLES 28:20 NCV™

### God does not lie nor change his mind – he keeps his promises

God is no mere human! *He doesn’t tell lies or change his mind. God always keeps his promises.* NUMBERS 23:19 CEV

## Anger

Although we usually view anger in a negative light, this is not how the Bible depicts God's anger, or wrath. God's anger is always justified and righteous, consistent with his holiness. Moreover, it occurs in response to that which is contrary to his holiness. Unlike human anger, God's anger is never uncontrolled, wayward or spasmodic – and is tempered by his mercy, notably where his own people are concerned.

### God expresses anger, which has awesome consequences

[A PSALMIST, TO GOD:] *Who can really fathom the intensity of your anger? Your raging fury causes people to fear you.* PSALMS 90:11

Therefore [due to their evil] *the anger of the LORD was kindled against his people, and he stretched out his hand against them and struck them, and the mountains quaked; and their corpses were as refuse in the midst of the streets. For all this his anger has not turned away, and his hand is stretched out still.* ISAIAH 5:25 ESV

### God is slow to anger and often holds it back . . .

*The LORD is slow to anger* and abounding in loyal love, forgiving iniquity and transgression, but by no means clearing the guilty ... NUMBERS 14:18A

Yet he is compassionate. He forgives sin and does not destroy. *He often holds back his anger, and does not stir up his fury.* PSALMS 78:38

### . . . and God does not stay angry

*He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights in mercy.* MICAH 7:18B NKJV

### God's anger arises in response to sin and disobedience

[GOD, TO BAASHA THE KING OF ISRAEL:] Yet you followed in Jeroboam's footsteps and encouraged my people Israel to sin; *their sins have made me angry.* 1 KINGS 16:2B

[GOD:] *I will angrily seek vengeance on the nations that do not obey me.* MICAH 5:15

## II. Loving Characteristics

God's love is one of the two primary characteristics from which his other personal characteristics emanate, the other primary one being his holiness. Comprehending and persistently being mindful of God's love and his associated characteristics provides great encouragement for believers.

## Love

### God is love – as shown in him giving his only Son, to save us

The person who does not love does not know God, because *God is love.* <sup>9</sup>*This is how God's love was revealed among us: God sent his unique Son into the world so that we might live through him.* <sup>10</sup>*This is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. ...* <sup>16</sup>*We have come to know and rely on the love that God has for us. God is love, and the person who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.*

1 JOHN 4:8–10, 16 ISV

The phrase "God is love" (vv. 8, 16) implies that God's nature is fundamentally love, rather than that love is simply a characteristic of God. It also suggests that God is the sole source of love and so that love does not exist apart from him.

### God's love is great

[DAVID, TO GOD:] *For your loyal love extends beyond the sky, and your faithfulness reaches the clouds.* PSALMS 108:4

### God's love is constant

*How precious, O God, is your constant love!* PSALMS 36:7A GNT

### God's love lasts forever

[ETHAN, TO GOD:] *I know that your love will last for all time, that your faithfulness is as permanent as the sky.* PSALMS 89:2 GNT

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for *his steadfast love endures forever.* PSALMS 136:1 ESV