

# Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

Vol. XXX

March 15, 2020

No. 11

## A Jealous God

(Jerry Fite)

When Oprah Winfrey was in her late 20's, she was sitting in a church where people had to get there early to assure a seat. The preacher was charismatic, and she was caught up in the moment hearing how great God was. He was Omniscient, Omnipresent...and then she heard, “*the Lord thy God is a jealous God.*”

In an interview, preserved on Utube, Oprah said she “*was caught up in the rapture of the moment until he said jealous...something struck me... God is all...and is also jealous? Jealous of me?*” This was a pivotal moment in the life of Oprah Winfrey for she said there was “*something about that did not feel right in my spirit.*” Oprah has found her “god” according to her own feelings, but her feelings has closed her mind to God who has revealed His character in the Bible.

What Oprah heard was a reference to Exodus 20:5. God is revealing the Ten Commandment Law to His people, Israel. He begins with commanding His people to have no other gods before Him. He then instructs them to not make images of anything of heaven above, of the earth beneath, or of the water under the earth. This second law also commands these images were not to be worshipped by bowing down before them and

servicing them. God then gives the reason for not having any other “god” before Him or any “image” to be worshipped as a god: “*for I Jehovah Thy God am a jealous God...*” (Exodus 20:5).

We are immediately led to the wrath of God to understand the jealous quality of His character. He is a jealous God, “*visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generations of them that hate Me*” (Exodus 20:5). Our “Omnipresent” God does not die or forget in three or four hundred years. The sin of idolatry introduced by the fathers of one generation and practiced by future generations will feel the consequences of their sins before the “Omnipotent” God. His wrath comes with fury, for He is “jealous.” God considers idolatry coming from a heart that “*hates Me*” (Exodus 20:5).

What turned Oprah away from the God of the Bible is revealed in the context of God’s “lovingkindness.” While promising to manifest His severity, He also promises to manifest his goodness: “*...and showing lovingkindness unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments*” (Exodus 20:6). His mercy had been manifested to the Israelites by delivering them from the

army of Pharaoh and guiding them safely through the Red Sea. God’s “*...lovingkindness hast led the people that thou hast redeemed: Thou hast guided them in thy strength to thy holy habitation*” (Exodus 15:13).

Who knows if the preacher would have skipped over the “jealous” God reference, and add to his rapturous presentation of how great God is with His merciful “lovingkindness, Oprah would have “felt right” with God? What turned her away from God is part of “His name.” In the context of condemning worshipping and serving “other gods,” Moses reveals the divine reasoning, “*...for Jehovah, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God*” (Exodus 34:14).

God’s “name” connects us with salvation. Paul appeals to a “*godly jealousy*” that Christians in Corinth would not fall away from their total commitment to Christ (2 Corinthians 11:2-3). God is jealous for He wants our whole heart and eternal salvation. “*For thy name’s sake, O Jehovah, pardon mine iniquity for it is great*” (Psalm 25:9). David did not turn away from a forgiving God because God is also a jealous God. Let us pray that Oprah and others like her wake up to the One truly Great God!