JEALOUSY
JAMES 4:5 and its Use in the Old Testament

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Submitted to Brent Aucoin
BI620 Intertextuality

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Introduction

Jealousy is as old as Cain and Abel (cf. Genesis 4). Man has often displayed jealous behavior to get what he wants, when he wants it; usually in spite of a person or situation. Jealousy is a strong response that can be used for extreme harm or extraordinary good. The letter of James (4:5) touch’s on the topic of jealousy with reference to a certain Old Testament Scripture quotation. What is jealousy? Is jealousy godly? Is the jealousy of God in the Old Testament the same or different as that seen of God when mentioned in the New Testament?

When comparing the OT to NT it must be noted that there are diverse opinions as to the origins of James 4:5 in the OT despite all its scholarly attention and theological study. The NT quotes the OT about 300 times, but this does not include the various ways the NT alludes to or echoes OT terminology.\textsuperscript{1} The lack of consensus is primarily due to the fact that the biblical authors did not use identical terminology to discuss how they used prior revelation. The number of allusions or echoes throughout the Scriptures could range from the hundreds to the thousands. While the actual statistics may vary, the fact that the NT relies heavily on the OT cannot be denied.

When NT authors quote OT texts they remain faithful to the contexts in which they were originally given, but apply those texts to new situations. In hermeneutical terms, however, OT and NT authors often use patterns to show continuity between concepts, ideas, or texts. The NT authors use OT texts to teach doctrine and demonstrate analogy by connecting the NT situation to an OT situation. The NT authors tend to do this in order to demonstrate that a particular OT prophetic utterance has been fulfilled, and to illustrate a prior OT principle in order to exhort the current audience to action. James 4:5 is such an NT text.

\textsuperscript{1} The actual number of quotations and allusions is difficult to discern. Archer and Chirichigno list 312 entries in their volume but there is not a one to one correspondence between the OT and NT passages. They do not include verbal allusions or echos. Gleason Archer & Gregory Chirichigno, Old Testament Quotations In The New Testament (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2005; reprint, Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), esp vii-xii, 104.
James 4:5 and its use of the Old Testament

James 4:5 is one of the most problematic verses in James if not the Bible. James says, “Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, “He yearns jealously over the spirit that He has made to dwell in us”?” James 4:5 specifically states he is quoting Scripture, but when scanning the OT, one observes there is no passage that it directly quotes. However, there are many OT texts that it could be alluding or echoing. In order to understand the meaning of James 4:5, it would be helpful to understand the exposition, context, exegesis, and the possible OT references quoted or alluded.

Exposition of James 4:5

James 4:5 is best understood in the light of the whole epistle. This exposition of James 4:5 will follow the context of the James 4:5, gather general exegetical observations of the epistle, define the character of God mentioned, and summarize the results to discern how James may have used or alluded to OT texts to drive application to his readers.

Context of James Epistle

There are a variety of opinions on the structure of James. Some say there is a solid theme, while others say it is a unique letter that does not have a specific theme which jumps out of the page and nails you between the eyes. James is often referred to as the Proverbs of the NT because of its practical wisdom for everyday life. It is probable that the structure of James is more sermonic. Barker, Lane, and Michaels hold that James is a series of "sermonic expansions of certain sayings of Jesus" and that in it "four brief homilies or

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4 Lenski well identifies the unifying theme of the epistle when he asserts, "This entire epistle deals with Christian faith, and shows how this faith should be genuine, true, active, living, fruitful." R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews and of the Epistle of James (Columbus, OH: Lutheran Book Concern, 1938), p. 538
messages have been merged into one: on temptation (1:2-18), on the law of love (1:19-2:26), on evil speaking (3:1-4:12), and on endurance (4:13-5:20).”

There is a subtle theme that emerges in James as a vein throughout most of his letter. James has much to say about faith—a living faith being tested. In the letter of James, the noun faith\textsuperscript{7} [πίστις] occurs sixteen times and the verb believe\textsuperscript{8} [πιστεύω] three times. James is not so concerned with developing a theological exposition of the nature of Christian faith.\textsuperscript{9} He teaches that a saving faith accepts Jesus Christ as the all-sufficient Savior (1:1; 2:1), but also builds a theology of a living faith being tested.

James' purpose in the letter is more practical than doctrinal. James was the elder and author to a primarily Hebrew audience. His letter is, in many ways, a theological bridge between the OT and NT.\textsuperscript{10} The purpose of James is to encourage his readers to recognize their need for living an active faith and to challenge them to test their own faith by the criterion “faith without works is useless” (2:20). James describes saving faith as a living faith. The proof of faith is in the pudding of action. James proclaims a series of tests whereby his readers can determine the genuineness of their faith. “The testing of your faith” (1:3) seems to be the pivotal theme of James letter, and the thrust of the context surrounding James 4:5.

**Exegetical Concerns of James 4:5**

There are multiple concerns facing the exegesis of James 4:5. When it comes to this verse there are three exegetical issues that must be decided: What is the case of πνεῦμα? What is the meaning of φθόνον? What is the meaning of the verb ἔπιποθεῖ? Following this exegetical analysis an intertextuality observation is needed to determine the the location of

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\textsuperscript{7} 1:3, 6; 2:1, 5, 14 (twice), 17, 18 (thrice), 20, 22 (twice), 24, 26; 5:15.

\textsuperscript{8} 2:19 (twice), 23

\textsuperscript{9} D. Edmond Hiebert, *The Unifying Theme of the Epistle of James*, Bibliotheca Sacra 135 (July 1978) 221-31.

\textsuperscript{10} Ortlund, *Whoredum*. 140.
the James 4:5 quotation.

The case of πνεῦμα ["the spirit"] can vary depending on translations. Some interpretations take πνεῦμα to function as as accusative, which makes it the direct object of the verb ἐπιποθεῖ ("He jealously longs for the spirit"). Another interpretation takes πνεῦμα to be in the nominative, which causes it to function as the subject of the verb ("the spirit He caused to dwell in us envies intensely" or "the spirit he caused to dwell in us jealously longs for"). Those who say πνεῦμα is nominative refer to the human spirit, and those who understand πνεῦμα in the accusative refer to the Holy Spirit. It is difficult to determine definitively the right use of πνεῦμα because nothing in the immediate context determines the definition. James' only other reference to πνεῦμα is to the spirit which alivens the body (2:26). It is suggested and most probable that the ἢ at the beginning of verse 5 is closely linked to the subject [God] of verse 4. Since God gives His spirit to man, this gives Him possession over men. And, if that spirit turned toward the world, His jealousy would be aroused. This fits the James 4:4-5 context. No matter if the verse is translated 'created human spirit' or 'Holy Spirit,' God has claim on mankind by the virtue of His work in our lives.

The meaning of φθόνον can be taken in either a negative sense to refer to human envy over the success of another or in a positive sense to God's righteous jealousy.

11 If this is the human spirit, then the text is saying that we humans (i.e., our spirits) either jealously long for God (in a positive sense) or envy intensely (in a negative sense); if "the spirit" refers to the Holy Spirit, then the text is saying that the Holy Spirit jealously longs for us, and this, of course, is akin to the first interpretation except that it specifies the Holy Spirit in particular as the one who jealously longs for us instead of simply saying that God jealously longs for us. Indeed, it is syntactically likely that God is the subject of ἐπιποθεῖ ("longs for" or "desires"), not least since God is transparently the subject of the other finite verb, κατῴκισεν ("he caused to dwell"). G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, UK: Baker Academic; Apollos, 2007), 1006.


14 Moo, *James*, 190.

15 ἐπιποθεῖ is primarily translated negatively in the Scriptures. BDAG, 857. Field allows for the possibility that is 'may provide the only example of ἐπιποθεῖ used in a good sense. D.H. Field, *Envy*. NIDNTT, ed. Colin
already uses φθόνον in the negative way (3:13–4:3), which does not reference divine jealousy. φθόνον is sometimes used by pagan Greek writers to refer to the jealousy of the Olympian gods, therefore it is possible that James uses the word to describe the nature of God’s desire for His followers.  

Noting the context, God seems be attributed righteous jealousy.

The meaning of the verb ἐπιποθεῖ is to “long for” or “desire.” ἐπιποθεῖ is linked to the preposition Πρὸς ("toward"). The verb ἐπιποθεῖ could be taken “God longs for the spirit He has caused to dwell in us,” [KJV, NIV] or “God longs jealously for the spirit.” [ESV, NASB] The phrase Πρὸς φθόνον literally means "to envy," but it is also an adverbial idiom meaning "jealously." In James 4:5, the subject of the verb ἐπιποθεῖ is the understood He, referring to God. The object of God's longing is the spirit He caused to live in us. This spirit could be either the created human spirit or the Holy Spirit given to His followers. In either case, the meaning is that God jealously desires His followers to be faithful.

In James 4:4-6, worldliness is sharply rebuked. Worldliness is referred to as spiritual adultery (4:4). James vulgarly charges his readers as being “an adulterous people,” which is followed by the reminder of God’s jealousy towards man’s self-centered betrayal. The sin of

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18 The “human envy” interpretation demands something like “tends toward”—for example, “the human spirit tends toward envy [pros phthonon epipothei],” which the NIV renders paraphrastically with “envies intensely." But although the “toward” part of “tends toward” seems to be preserved in pros, “tends” is never an obvious meaning of epipothei. Conversely, if epipothei carries its normal meaning of “desires” or “longs for,” the first interpretation is favored: God longs for the spirit He has caused to dwell in us. But then what is the force of pros phthonon? If this is an unusual adverbial construction describing the nature of the desire, we may render it “God longs jealously for the spirit....” But God's jealousy, in Scripture, is always a good thing, and, as we have already observed, phthonos is normally a bad thing. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, UK: Baker Academic; Apollos, 2007), 1006.
adultery is tantamount to apostasy.\textsuperscript{20} Although James does talk about the human sin of envy (3:14, 16; 4:2), the immediate context is illustrated with the OT depiction of God as the husband of His people. This is quickly compared to the NT teaching of Christ as the bridegroom of the church.\textsuperscript{21}

The quarrels and conflicts of believers is evidence of their worldliness (4:1-3). The worldly person is the self-centered person lacking active faith. Love for God and friendship with the world cannot coexist. Friendship with the world is acting as an enemy of God. No man who makes worldly success his aim can be also a friend of God.\textsuperscript{22} Such an attitude violates the teaching of Scripture (4:5a) and evokes God's jealousy (4:5b). He jealously longs for undivided faithfulness in His follower (4:6), or as Douglas Moo says, “a total, unreserved, unwavering allegiance” to God rather than to the world.\textsuperscript{23}

\textit{Characteristics of God Emphasized}

The God of the Bible is a jealous God. Theologically speaking, the theme of God's jealous love for His people is tied to the exclusiveness of his claims like the exclusiveness of a spouse’s claims in marriage. This claim is ratcheted up because God is not only the metaphorical husband of His people but also their God.\textsuperscript{24} He alone is God. Since He is personal, God is jealous when His followers commit adultery because of the betrayal of idolatry. God longs for His follower's faithfulness with a jealous longing.

\textit{Conclusions}

\textsuperscript{21} In the Old Testament, Israel is represented as the bride of God, so that when the Israelites turn from God to idols, they are accused of harlotry (see Exodus 34:15-16; Deuteronomy 31:16; Isaiah 54:5; Jeremiah 3:20; Hosea 9:1). Similar imagery is employed for the church in the New Testament (see Matthew 16:4; 2 Corinthians 11:1-2; Ephesians 5:24-28; Revelation 19:7; 21:9).
\textsuperscript{22} J. B. Mayor, \textit{The Epistle of St. James}. London, Macmillan, 1897. 140.
\textsuperscript{23} Douglas Moo, \textit{The Letter of James}, Pillar New Testament Commentary [Eerdmans/Apollos], pp. 188-190
James 4:5 promises to give us what the “Scripture says,” but there is no obvious OT reference and the verse is bound up with a number of interpretive difficulties. These difficulties are both narrowly syntactical and broadly contextual. The two possible readings of James 4:5 are: first, “He jealously longs for the spirit He has caused to dwell in us.” This refers to the marriage analogy (4:4) and God’s jealousy over His followers by virtue of His Spirit indwelling them. Second, “The spirit which He caused to dwell in us longs to envy (or longs jealously).” Here the reference is to our human spirit, not the Holy Spirit. The first view of divine jealousy seems to fit into the context of what James is saying. God is jealous for the faithfulness of His followers who are being tested by a wicked world anchored in self-centered pursuits and worldly living.

Types of Intertextuality based on James 4:5

Does James 4:5 allude to other texts in the OT? The following analysis breaks down the purposes of intertextuality, and shows James demonstrating continuity of doctrine and creating purposeful analogy. James 4:5 is problematic because it is cited as a Scripture quotation but we do not find any verse in Scripture that is exactly like it. One can say that this quotation captures the sense of the OT Scriptures. A jealous God is a point established not only in the Decalogue (cf. Exodus 20) but also in many passages including prophetical literature. God is frequently pictured as a jealous God, who is provoked to jealousy when His people are unfaithful (Deut. 32:6, 21; Ex. 20:5; 34:14; Zech. 8:2). Simply put, there are no OT passages that qualify as direct quotation, there are only various general allusions to James 4:5 in the OT.

Use of OT Terminology Referenced by James 4:5

From the exegesis of James the best reading of 4:5 is “He jealously longs for the spirit He has caused to dwell in us.” Since there are no direct references to this verse in the OT, it is
likely that James had in mind many references to God's jealous character. There are a number of passages that appear to use either the ideas of this passage, or enough terminology, to suggest a link between the actual texts and James 4:5, but still do not appear to be a direct quotation of the James 4:5.

It is a common to suppose that James is paraphrasing OT passages like: Genesis 6:3-5; 8:21; Exodus 20:5; 34:4; Numbers 11:29; Deuteronomy 4:24; 5:9; 32:21; Psalm 119:20; 83; Proverbs 21:10; Song of Solomon 8:6; Isaiah 63:8-16; Ezekiel 16:38, 42; 36:17; Zechariah 1:14; 8:2; and others. It is more probable that James is not citing a particular passage, but summarizing the truth of several OT passages as a whole.

When comparing OT quotations with James 4:5, we observe that they teach doctrine about the character of God and/or share an analogy of their purpose to the readers. There are several allusions to James 4:5 that reiterate the doctrine taught in this passage. This doctrine and analogy is taken and applied to the particular situation in order to serve as motivation to behave or think in a certain way. There are four primary examples in the OT which James 4:5 uses to teach about God, but each text uses that doctrine or analogy for a different reason.

Teaching God's Character from Exodus 20:5 & 34:14

From the decalogue and the Law we see teachings of a jealous God (Exodus 20). God is jealous within a concrete context of covenant infidelity (Exodus 34). James describes a jealous God who has not changed in His demand of absolute devotion to Himself by obedience to His commandments. The Hebrew word for jealous [קָנָא] is used only of God with the focus on punishing those who hate Him (Ex 20:5; 34:14; Dt. 4:24; 5:9; 6:15) and demanding exclusive service (Ex 34:14).26

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10 Jealousy James 4:5
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<td>οὐ προσκυνήσεις αὐτοῖς οὐδὲ μὴ λατρεύσῃς αὐτοῖς, ἐγὼ γὰρ εἰμὶ κύριος ὁ θεὸς σου, θεὸς ἁμαρτίας ἀποδιδόντας ἁμαρτίας πατέρων ἐπὶ τέκνα ἑως τρίτης καὶ τετάρτης γενεᾶς τοῖς μισοῦσιν με</td>
<td>ἡ δοκεῖτε ὅτι κενῶς ἡ γραφὴ λέγει, Πρὸς φθόνον ἐπιποθεῖ τὸ πνεῦμα ὃ κατῴκισεν ἐν ἡμῖν, ὃς ἐξετάζει τὸ πνεῦμα πρὸς φθόνον; οὐ γὰρ μὴ προσκυνήσῃς θεῷ ἑτέρῳ, ὁ γὰρ κύριος ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν ἀληθινός ὁ θεὸς ἔστιν.</td>
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<td>You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me,</td>
<td>You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me,</td>
<td>Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, “He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us”?</td>
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<td>(for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God),</td>
<td>(for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God),</td>
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The second Commandment expands and explains the first commandment. It deals with the heart, rather than the object of worship. This commandment becomes the gauge that measures the spiritual vitality of God's people. God desires worship above all else. Commands against idols and pagan gods appear throughout the OT. Although James is so practical in structure, the doctrine of God is vital to the teaching of the letter. Throughout James' letter there is an emphasis on a monotheistic God who is One (cf. 2:19).  

27 Within the doctrine of God is the doctrine of His character. James emphasizes His jealousy.  

28 God is jealous because He desires His people to adhere to the law and likewise abstain from being worldly. God's jealousy is seen in the Law and through James' command to His people to obey Him exclusively through their faithfulness and denial of worldly pleasures.  

27 cf. 1:5, 17; 2:11; 4:11  

28 This characteristic is mentioned in only one verse of James, 4:5, and the sense of the verse is hotly contested. But we think it very probable that James here cites the scriptural teaching about the jealousy of God for His people as substantiation for His call to them to abandon their flirtation with the world. And although James refers to this attribute of God in only this one verse, it is central to the argument of the letter. Douglas Moo, *The Letter of James, Pillar New Testament Commentary* [Eerdmans/Apollos], 29.
Analogy of Friendship from Deuteronomy 6:14-15

The character of a jealous God who desires faithfulness in His people continues throughout the OT Torah. God is jealous for His people and desires them to worship Him exclusively. In the Septuagint [LXX] the word for jealousy is ζηλωτής--where we get our English word 'zealous,' or better translated 'envy'. Within James 4:4-5, a discussion exists of worldly attitudes rooted in fights and quarrels among believers. These attitudes were from envy and selish ambition in the pursuit of worldly pleasures (cf. James 4:2a, ζηλοῦτε). These selfish motives led to worldly lifestyles (cf. James 3:14-16). Selfish living is the antithesis of a faithful relationship with God. Selfish ambition is considered rebellion and adultery against God (Deut. 6:14-15).29

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<td>οὐ πορεύεσθε ὀπίσω θεῶν έτέρων ἀπὸ τῶν θεῶν τῶν ἐθνῶν περικύκλῳ ύμῶν, ὅτι θεὸς ζηλωτής κύριος ὁ θεός σου σου ἐν σοί, μὴ ὄργισθεὶς θυμωθῇ κύριος ὁ θεός σου καὶ ἐξολεθρεύσῃ σε ἀπὸ προσώπου τῆς γῆς.</td>
<td>ἢ δοκεῖτε ὅτι κενῶς ἡ γραφὴ λέγει, Πρὸς φθόνον ἐπιποθεῖ τὸ πνεῦμα ὃ κατῴκισεν ἐν ἡμῖν, ή δοκεῖτε ὅτι κενῶς ἡ γραφὴ λέγει, Πρὸς φθόνον ἐπιποθεῖ τὸ πνεῦμα ὃ κατῴκισεν ἐν ἡμῖν, ἢ δοκεῖτε ὅτι κενῶς ἡ γραφὴ λέγει, Πρὸς φθόνον ἐπιποθεῖ τὸ πνεῦμα ὃ κατῴκισεν ἐν ἡμῖν, ἢ δοκεῖτε ὅτι κενῶς ἡ γραφὴ λέγει, Πρὸς φθόνον ἐπιποθεῖ τὸ πνεῦμα ὃ κατῴκισεν ἐν ἡμῖν, ἢ δοκεῖτε ὅτι κενῶς ἡ γραφὴ λέγει, Πρὸς φθόνον ἐπιποθεῖ τὸ πνεῦμα ὃ κατῴκισεν ἐν ἡμῖν, ἢ δοκεῖτε ὅτι κενῶς ἡ γραφὴ λέγει, Πρὸς φθόνον ἐπιποθεῖ τὸ πνεῦμα ὃ κατῴκισεν ἐν ἡμῖν, ἢ δοκεῖτε ὅτι κενῶς ἡ γραφὴ λέγει, Πρὸς φθόνον ἐπιποθεῖ τὸ πνεῦμα ὃ κατῴκισεν ἐν ἡμῖν, ἢ δοκεῖτε ὅτι κενῶς ἡ γραφὴ λέγει, Πρὸς φθόνον ἐπιποθεῖ τὸ πνεῦμα ὃ κατῴκισεν ἐν ἡμῖν, ἢ δοκεῖτε ὅτι κενῶς ἡ γραφὴ λέγει, Πρὸς φθόνον ἐπιποθεῖ τὸ πνεῦμα ὃ κατῴκισεν ἐν ἡμῖν, ἢ δοκεῖτε ὅτι κενῶς ἡ γραφὴ λέγει, Πρὸς φθόνον ἐπιποθεῖ τὸ πνεῦμα ὃ κατῴκισεν ἐν ἡμῖν, ἢ δοκεῖτε ὅτι κενῶς ἡ γραφὴ λέγει, Πρὸς φθόνον ἐπιποθεῖ τὸ πνεῦμα ὃ κατῴκισεν ἐν ἡμῖν, ἢ δοκεῖτε ὅτι κενῶς ἡ γραφὴ λέγει, Πρὸς φθόνον ἐπιποθεῖ τὸ πνεῦμα ὃ κατῴκισεν ἐν ἡμῖν, ἢ δοκεῖτε ὅτι κενῶς ἡ γραφὴ λέγει, Πρὸς φθόνον ἐπιποθεῖ τὸ πνεῦμα ὃ κατῴκισεν ἐν ἡμῖν, ἢ δοκεῖτε ὅτι κενῶς ἡ γραφὴ λέγει, Πρὸς φθόνον ἐπιποθεῖ τὸ πνεῦμα ὃ κατῴκισεν ἐν ἡμῖν, ἢ δοκεῖτε ὅτι κενῶς ἡ γραφὴ λέγει, Πρὸς φθόνον ἐπιποθεῖ τὸ πνεῦμα ὃ κατお互い, and he destroy you from off the face of the earth.</td>
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<td>You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are around you—for the L ORD your God in your midst is a jealous God—lest the anger of the L ORD your God be kindled against you, and he destroy you from off the face of the earth.</td>
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<td>Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, “He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us”?</td>
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The call to reject pagan idolatry in the OT was primarily against the cultic worship and gods of other nations like Babylon and Assyria. However, the idolatry in the NT brings friendship with the world to the level of being an enemy of God.30 Worldly living is against that

30 Ortlund, Raymond C. Jr. Whoredum: God’s Unfaithful Wife in Biblical Theology. Grand Rapids, MI. Eerdmans,
which God teaches and expects of His people. One either loves God or loves the world. Loving the world to James means not only that you don't love God, it means you are His enemy.³¹ Adamson says, “He who determines to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God, not because God hates him but because he hates God.”³²

The idea of friendship in OT and NT culture was not the shallow depiction that we see in today's culture. God intended friendship to encourage spiritual unity and accountability against idolatry and worldliness. With a deeper understanding of friendship it becomes clear that—as James says—love for God and love for the world are mutually exclusive (cf. Luke 16:13; 1 John 2:15-16; Matthew 6:24).³³ To be friends with the world is to be God's enemy. Love for the world or other gods is treason toward God. God is a jealous God and does not tolerate compromising relationships, especially with the gods and idols of this world.

Analogy of Adultery from Ezekiel 16:38, 42

Ezekiel continues the theme of the Law by echoing that God is jealous for His own honor. Ezekiel compares the rebellion of his day to that of the Exile during Moses' day (cf. 20:1-26). Ezekiel pleads for God's grace and restoration in the light of His jealous dealings throughout time (20:42-44). Ezekiel also touches on the adultery of his people and the jealousy of a God who desires their faithfulness (16:38, 42). God keeps His covenantal wedding vows and expects His bride—the nation of Israel—to uphold them too.

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>וָשְְפַטִָיךְ֙ מִשְְפְָטֵ֣י נֹאֲפ֔וֹת וְשְֹפְכֹ֖ת דָּ֑ם וָנְתַתִָ֕יךְ</td>
<td>καὶ ἐκδίκησω σε ἐκδικήσει</td>
<td>ή δοκεῖτε ὅτι κενῶς ἡ γραφὴ λέγει,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>דַָ֥ם חֵמּ֖ה</td>
<td>μοιχαλίδος καὶ ἐκχεούσης αἵμα καὶ</td>
<td>Πρὸς φθόνον ἐπιποθεῖ τὸ πνεῦμα</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>קִנְאּֽה</td>
<td>θῆσω σε ἐν αἵματι θυμοῦ καὶ</td>
<td>οἱ κατώκισεν ἐν ἡμῖν,</td>
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13 Jealousy James 4:5
Ezekiel continues in the vein of James by relating God's jealousy to that of an adulterous relationship. It is very likely James is thinking of the OT view that God—the jealous lover—is married to His people and His bride is adulterous and unfaithful. The reference to women in Ezekiel adheres to God's people being His bride. James' readers are the church, which is the Bride of Christ.34 Jesus also used this marriage analogy to call His followers to faithfulness.35

**Teaching on God's Jealous Character from Zechariah 1:14; 8:2**

Zechariah the prophet sets the stage for the ferocious wrath of God because of His people's unfaithfulness and lack of submission. God desires His people to turn from their idols and embrace Him; then He will restore them once again. In His holy jealousy, God demands the exclusive devotion of His people—a potentially fearsome and unattainable requirement. James assures his readers that the same God who makes such stringent and all-encompassing demands also gives grace (4:6).36 James passionately warns his readers to remember their jealous God who desire them to turn away from their worldly pleasures and return to their gracious God. Humble submission to God appeases His jealousy with a grace

34 cf. 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:24-28; Revelation 19:7; 21:9
35 cf. Mark 8:38; Matthew 12:39

14 Jealousy James 4:5
that is attainable from the same OT God.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zechariah 1:14; 8:2</th>
<th>Zechariah 1:14; 8:2 [LXX]</th>
<th>James 4:5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>יַאֲמֶר אֵלַי הַמַּלֵּאכָּ֨ה לֹאֵ֖ר יָדָֽיו לִמְלָֽכַתּוּ </td>
<td>καὶ ἐπὶν πρός με ὁ ἄγγελος ὁ λαλῶν ἐν ἐμοὶ Ἀνάκραγε λέγων</td>
<td>ἢ δοκεῖτε ὅτι κενῶς ἡ γραφὴ λέγει, Ἐπρὸς φθόνον ἐπιποθεῖ τὸ πνεῦμα ὃ κατῴκισεν ἐν ἡμῖν,</td>
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<td>כָֹ֤ה אָמַ֙ר יְהוּ֣ה צְבּא֔וֹת קִנֵּ֥אתִי לִירוָשְּלִ֛ם וָלְצִיָ֖וֹן</td>
<td>Τάδε λέγει κύριος παντοκράτωρ Ἐζήλωσα τὴν Ιερουσαλημ καὶ τὴν Σιων ζῆλον μέγαν</td>
<td>Ἐζήλωσα τὴν Ιερουσαλημ καὶ τὴν Σιων ζῆλον μέγαν καὶ θυμῷ μεγάλῳ ἐζήλωσα αὐτήν.</td>
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<tr>
<td>קִנְאָ֣ה גְדוֹלָ֑ה</td>
<td>Τάδε λέγει κύριος παντοκράτωρ Ἐξῆλσα τὴν Ιερουσαλημ καὶ τὴν Σιων ζῆλον μέγαν καὶ γενόμενος θυμὸς μεγάλου ἐζήλωσα αὐτήν.</td>
<td>Πρὸς φθόνον ἐπιποθεῖ τὸ πνεῦμα ὃ κατῴκισεν ἐν ἡμῖν,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So the angel who talked with me said to me, ‘Cry out, Thus says the L ORD of hosts: I am exceedingly jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion.</td>
<td>So the angel who talked with me said to me, ‘Cry out, Thus says the L ORD of hosts: I am exceedingly jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion.</td>
<td>Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, “He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us”?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Thus says the L ORD of hosts: I am jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I am jealous for her with great wrath.</td>
<td>“Thus says the L ORD of hosts: I am jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I am jealous for her with great wrath.</td>
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God is greatly jealous for the faithfulness of His people. Flirting with the world and its gods is a dangerous endeavor. It sparks the jealous wrath of God. He does not share the platform with lesser gods unworthy of allegiance. God's character demands that we choose Him or the world. God longs for wholehearted undivided love of His people with intensity and purity.³⁷ God is a jealous lover, and He will tolerate no rival in the hearts of His people.

**Summary**

James uses many passages in the OT—from the Law to the prophets—which enforce teaching doctrine related to the character and commands of God. James also uses analogies in the OT related to adultery and the jealous love of a God who desires faithfulness in His followers. The OT upholds the idea of making a choice between loving God or loving the world. James calls his readers to live in radical obedience and devotion to God. God is the same jealous God of the OT—demanding and commanding His people to chose either to love

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Him or the world. There is no middle ground with God. The Law and prophets portray a God who is Jealous for the faithfulness of His people.

Final Summary and Conclusions

James seems to be quoting Scripture, but the OT has no such verse. The best solution is probably that James is referring allusively to many of the OT references of God’s jealousy for the undivided faithfulness of His people. The OT teaches about the character of God and gives many analogies of God’s jealousy for faithfulness rather than adultery.

In a godly marriage, there is a healthy form of jealousy which a husband should have for his wife. If he found out that she was having affections for another man he would rightly be jealous of her love. If he did not, one would question the husband’s love for his bride. James and the OT reinforce this analogy. God loves His people though they have committed spiritual adultery. God is gracious to restore them if they repent and turn back to Him.

James 4:5 demonstrates in the NT that God desires total allegiance as He did in the OT. God is a righteously jealous Husband who tolerates no rivals. We cannot be friends with the world without provoking the jealousy of God. We cannot claim to be the bride of Christ and then run to the worldly “man next door” for comfort. James supports the OT texts that command His people to turn from all spiritual adultery and be exclusively devoted to God. Living for self and seeking pleasure apart from God is to commit spiritual adultery. To James, active faith is tested by the world and God expects His followers to be faithful to Him alone.
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17 Jealousy James 4:5


