



## Sermon Title: El Kanna: The Jealous God

### Text: Deuteronomy 4:23-24

*“God’s jealousy for the devotion of His people is an expression of His love that guards and protects.”*

In our journey through the “Names of God,” we encounter a title that often feels uncomfortable yet holds reflective weight: El Kanna-The Jealous God. While we often associate jealousy with human insecurity, God’s jealousy is not a flaw, but a fierce, protective love. Understanding the nature of God requires us to distinguish between two often-confused emotions:

- **Envy:** The desire for something that belongs to someone else (“I want what you have”). Since God lacks nothing and created everything, He is never envious.
- **Jealousy:** The desire to protect a relationship or property that is rightfully yours (“I will not lose what I have”).

Just as a husband has a rightful claim to the exclusive devotion of his wife, God-as the “Husband” of His people-demands our undivided worship. As we look at our text, we see Moses warning a new generation that their hearts are prone to drift toward idols. Today, we must ask ourselves: what rivals are competing for God’s place in our lives? In a world of endless distractions, we serve a God who refuses to share His glory with anyone else.

### COMPETING FORCES FOR OUR HEART’S DEVOTION (vv.15-19).

Moses delivers a sobering warning: idols are not just relics of the past; they are active competitors for our hearts. Whether it was the “carved

images” the Israelites remembered from Egypt or the “stars of heaven” they would encounter in the Promised Land, the danger remains the same, replacing the Creator with the created.

Today, an idol is rarely a statue. It is anything good or bad that matures into a master, ruling our desires and dethroning God. To remain faithful to El Kanna, we must audit our hearts using these four markers of devotion:

- The Focus of Our Minds: Where do your thoughts effortlessly drift when you have nothing else to do?
- The Flow of Our Resources: Our bank accounts are often the most accurate maps of our hearts. Money flows most freely toward what we love most.
- Our Response to “No”: How do you react to unanswered prayers or frustrated hopes? Explosive anger or deep despair often reveals that a “desire” has become a “god.”
- The Source of Our Emotions: What drives your most uncontrollable feelings? If your sense of significance or security is shattered when a specific thing is threatened, that thing may be an idol.

For the Israelites, the temptation was physical; for us, it is often internal. Yet, the call remains: we must recognize these rivals before they lead us into unfaithfulness.

### COSTLY CONSEQUENCES OF CAPTURED AFFECTION (vv. 25-28).

God’s jealousy is a response to the fact that idolatry is a thief that robs us of our future and our purpose. As Moses warned the Israelites, shifting our devotion away from God lead to utterly perishing from the blessings He intended for them.

When an idol takes the throne of your heart, the consequences are devastating:

- It Distorts Reality and Wrecks Lives: Idols redefine our definitions of success and happiness. They create a “false north,” leading us to make choices based on what we want rather than what God desires. (see: 1 Kings 11:7-8).
- It Offers False Hope: Verse 28 describes these rivals as “gods of wood and stone” that cannot see, hear, or help. Whether it is a career, a bank account, or a social media image, these “modern idols” are ultimately hollow.
- It Leaves a Generational Legacy: Idolatry is never a private sin. Solomon’s compromise led to the division of the kingdom and a pattern of rebellion for his children. Our pursuit of idols today sets the trajectory for those who follow us tomorrow.

God is jealous for us because He knows that idols can only take from us, while He is the only one who can truly give.

### **CERTAIN HOPE FOR RETURNING HEARTS (v. 29-31)**

God’s jealousy is not a petty grievance; it is a protective, holy love. He is jealous for us because He knows that any rival we choose will eventually destroy us. As Deuteronomy 4:29-31 promises, even when we have strayed into the misery of idolatry, God remains merciful. He does not abandon His covenant; instead, He waits for us to seek Him with all our heart and soul.


To transition from the grip of idols back to the heart of God, we must take intentional steps:


- Identify and Repent: We must use the markers of our thoughts, money, and emotions to name our idols. Like King Josiah (2 Kings 23:6), we cannot simply ignore our “Asherah poles”, we must


beat them to dust and remove them from the temple of our hearts.

- Set Your Sights Higher: The remedy for idolatry is a shift in perspective (Colossians 3:1-5). We are called to “set our sights on the realities of heaven.” When we realize our true life is hidden with Christ, the “earthly things lurking within”—greed, lust, and worldly ambition lose their power.
- Trust the New Covenant: We take comfort in the fact that we do not do this by our strength alone. Through Jesus Christ, God gives us a new heart and a new Spirit. He is the one who ultimately subdues our rivals and reigns supreme.

Our hearts may be prone to wander, but El Kanna is a God who pursues. He is jealous for your joy, your peace, and your eternal soul.

 **Ponder:** *“What one generation tolerates, the next will embrace.”* Your secret compromises today are not just personal distractions; they are the blueprints for your children’s spiritual struggles tomorrow. Is what you are chasing worth the heritage you are leaving?

 **Practical Application:** Identify the “prime time” you spent on hobbies, media, or personal goals versus your time spent with God. To break an idol’s grip, reschedule your first 15 minutes tomorrow to sit with the Lord before opening your phone or starting your to-do list.

 **Prayer:** Lord, thank You for being jealous for my heart. I confess that I have often looked to broken cisterns for the water only You provide. Forgive my wandering eyes and my divided devotion. By Your Spirit, dethrone the idols of my comfort and my control, and reign supreme as my only King. Amen!