

THE DIVINE MOTHER GODDESS OF MORMONISM©

June 23rd, 2010

I would like to call your attention to a short story posted at the new link, “Humorous stories,” entitled, *The Ultimate Jurassic Experience*. In contrast to other stories on this site, this one is definitely *not* intended to be spiritual. It is sheer humor—at least, I hope you will find it so. If not, perhaps nostalgic—meaning a walk down memory lane for those who have lived in hot, humid areas and have had to put up living with cockroaches. It is a hyperbolized account of when my mother came from Los Angeles to visit me in the desert of Wendover, Utah. She had never encountered these darling little creatures before—well, not so little. Hope you have a laugh or two.

I will soon have a new link entitled “Letters to God.” This idea developed from my conversations with a dear friend who explained that she writes letters to her “Father in Heaven,” every morning during her devotionals. I read a few and they were so touchingly genuine and sincere, that I asked her if she would allow me to post some of them on my site. She said yes, but that she did not want her name on them. I agreed to this. However, because my time has been so scrunched lately, it will probably be another month or so before I get them posted, and since it will be three or four months before I put up a new newsletter to announce them, it will be up to you to check back periodically to see if they are up yet.

For those new to this site, you may wish to sign up to be notified every time a new article is posted (about every 3-4 months). Just click on the “Contact” link and send me your email address. Also, be sure and check out the Newsletter Archives for past articles.

Suggested reading: New York Times Best Seller, “*23 Minutes in Hell*,” by Bill Wiese. This book was loaned to me by a friend. At first, I was hesitant to read it for two reasons: First, I expected it to be horribly gross—on a comparable level with stories and movies about vampires and ghouls, all of which I avoid. Second, I was suspicious that the story might actually not be true; that it was written by some over-zealous evangelical who made it all up just to scare people into becoming Christian. However, I do have to say I was impressed with the book. The subject was handled quite well, and by the time I finished reading it there was no doubt in my mind that the author actually experienced what he claimed. My 23 year old granddaughter read it, and she thought it was “absolutely great!” It is a must read—especially for those Christians who teeter on the brink of believing or not believing in a literal hell, claiming that God is too loving to send any individual to a place like that. I challenge you to read it.

THE DIVINE MOTHER GODDESS OF MORMONISM

“To a knowledgeable Mormon the idea [of a Heavenly Mother] is as natural as the doctrine of salvation by grace is to a Christian. It is an integral part of Mormonism.”

(*Robert McKay, The Evangel*)¹

“The stupendous truth of the existence of a Heavenly mother, as well as a Heavenly Father, [has become] established facts in Mormon theology.”

(*Milton R. Hunter, First Council of Seventy*)²

This article will cover:

1. The Mormon belief in a Mother in Heaven.
2. How the doctrine developed.
3. Details of the belief.
4. Statements of LDS leaders verifying the doctrine.

5. Polygamy in heaven: its purpose.
6. The church's present-day cover-up.
7. Mother Goddesses in antiquity.
8. Are the Biblical writers guilty of hiding the real truth about God's consort?
9. Mother Goddesses today.
10. What does the Bible have to say about Mother Goddesses?

The Mormon belief in a Mother in Heaven.

In an article entitled, "Do We Have a Mother in Heaven?" Kevin L. Barney, writing for the *Foundation for Apologetic Information & Research* (FAIR), an apologetic arm of the LDS Church, briefly defines the Mormon belief:

- "Each of us has a spirit that has an existence apart from our physical bodies.
- These spirits were not created from nothing (*creatio ex Nihilo*) at our physical birth, but preexisted our entrance into this world.
- We are the spirit children of God [*and a goddess*].*
- Just as our physical bodies were begotten and born by earthly parents, our spirits were [*literally*] begotten and born by Heavenly parents.
- As offspring, we have the potential to become like Him."³ **[Brackets mine]*

The membership truly believes they will advance to Godhood, often repeating the famous couplet: "*As man is, God once was, and as God is, man may become.*" To Mormons, the only difference between humans and the gods and goddesses is that they merely represent different levels of spiritual development.

Barney further states that the primary reason Mormons believe in a Heavenly Mother is because it was revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith and subsequent church leaders have endorsed it. At the same time, he admits that unfortunately the Bible says nothing directly about this. He then attempts to use Old Testament and archaeological evidences of the worship of Asherah, wife of Baal, to claim that from the time of Adam, Asherah, as God's *true* wife, was worshipped and that Bible writers and copyists deliberately covered this up by attributing Asherah as Baal's wife, instead of Jehovah's.

Fred C. Collier, Mormon Fundamentalist, in his article, "*The Common Origin of Ancient Hebrew/Pagan Religion and the Demise of the Hebrew Goddess,*" states that this supposed early knowledge was the reason the children of Israel were tempted so often to worship Asherah. They recognized that she had been mated in error to Baal instead of Jehovah.⁴

Collier goes on to elaborate that the true knowledge of God, including his consort, was had up until the time of Moses, then taken away because of Israel's transgressions. His basis for this is *Doctrine and Covenants* 84:16-25:

. . . contrary to both Jew and Christian, the Prophet Joseph Smith taught that the religion which was originally revealed to Adam and which passed down through the lineage of the Patriarchs was a pure form of *Anthropomorphic Polytheism*. . . the Gospel in its fullness was first given to Adam, and passed down through the lineage of the patriarchs, form[sic] Enoch to Noah to Abraham. Hense [sic] . . . the religion of the Patriarchs included Baptism, all the gifts of the Spirit, and the knowledge of Christ, as well as that of our Father and Mother in Heaven and all the coinciding ordinances of the Temple. It was not until the apostasy of Israel, during their sojourn with Moses in the wilderness, that the Fulness of this

Gospel was first taken from the Earth. In other words, it was the Prophet's view that rather than restoring the Fulness of the Gospel as it was had by the Patriarchs, the Lord at this time took the Fulness of the Melchizedek Priesthood out of their midst, and *with it the knowledge of God*, and left in the stead thereof the Aaronic Priesthood and a carnal law, commonly known as the Law of Moses. Thus, as far as the masses were concerned, the children of Israel remained in darkness, without the whole knowledge of God for thirteen centuries – from Moses to Christ.⁵

The common consensus among Mormons is that the knowledge of God's true consort was restored in the inner ritualistic circles of Solomon's temple, but was lost again, then restored through Joseph Smith.

How the doctrine developed.

The earliest account for the doctrine of a Mother in Heaven occurred in 1839. Joseph Smith, consoling Zina Diantha Huntington in the death of her mother, told her:

Not only would she know her mother again on the other side, [but] more than that, you will meet and become acquainted with your eternal Mother, the wife of your Father in Heaven.

When Zina expressed surprise that she had a Mother in Heaven, he told her:

You assuredly have. How could a Father claim His title unless there were also a Mother to share that parenthood?"⁶

Smith taught the same doctrine to one of his plural wives, Eliza R. Snow, who in 1845 wrote a poem which became the text for the hymn, "O My Father," still to be found in Mormon hymnals: In part, it reads:

*In the heavens are parents single?
No; the thought makes reason stare!
Truth is reason, truth eternal
Tells me I've a Mother there.*

*When I leave this frail existence,
When I lay this mortal by,
Father, Mother, may I meet you
In your royal courts on High?"⁷*

The fourth LDS president, Wilford Woodruff, "claimed that the hymn was a revelation from God. This was seconded by later LDS President Joseph F. Smith."⁸

However, even before Eliza penned her poem, the concept was already being promulgated. W. W. Phelps, in a hymn composed for the dedication of the Seventies Hall in Nauvoo, Illinois in Dec. 1844, wrote this couplet:

Come to me; here's the myst'ry that man hath not seen: Here's our Father in heaven, and Mother, the Queen.⁹

Mormon women are cautioned, however, that they must not pray to their Heavenly Mother, although there are those who admit to this, insisting they want to establish a relationship with their Heavenly Mother.

An example is a 1974 letter to the editor of the LDS journal, *Dialogue*. She said she prayed to her Heavenly Mother who responded by saying that, "*little was known about her because the men had never bothered to ask.*"¹⁰

As a result, President Hinckley issued what was interpreted by some Mormons as a “gag order,” and prohibited members from praying to her, adding that “*the fact that we do not pray to our Mother in heaven in no way belittles or denigrates her.*”¹¹

Details of the belief

Mormons believe that the person presently acting as our Heavenly Father was once a mortal man on a previous world who earned his godhood by faithful service in an LDS-like Church, advanced in the priesthood, and married in the temple. When the resurrection occurred for that world, he and his wife were exalted to Godhood and Goddesshood. He became a Heavenly Father, King and Priest (in keeping with the terms used in the LDS temple ceremony); his wife a Heavenly Mother, Queen and Priestess. The goal for Mormon men and women in this life is the same.

Apostle Bruce R. McConkie verifies this:

. . . man will become as the Father is now, and the woman will become as God the Mother.¹²

The sole objective for this planet’s God and his wife is to procreate and produce “spirit children.” The spirits of these children will go down to earth, and through the process of physical birth enter the bodies of human babies.

There’s one fly in the ointment of believing that God and his wives produce “spirit” children who have no physical body yet. God issued a command at creation that each should produce after its own kind, e.g., a fish can only produce a fish, chickens only chickens, humans only humans. In other words, a donkey and an elephant cannot produce a “donkeyphant.” However, in Mormon theology, God appears to violate this command. As a resurrected man of flesh and bones with wives of like makeup, how is it they can only produce “spirit” children having no flesh and bones as they do? I leave that one to the Mormon theologians to wrestle with.

Mormons thoroughly understand that God’s process of producing the spirits of these children is through sexual intercourse. He and his wife will beget millions of spirit children destined to gain bodies on planet earth. He will also have other wives to help in this process. (*Explained later.*)

This is meant to be literal, not a metaphorical concept. Ancient religions often indulged in physical enactments to express mystical concepts, so one might think this the case with Mormonism. But no, the Mormon concept of a copulating male and female God is literal. It is the only way, in their thinking, that spiritual births can take place. John Heeren, et al, in “The Mormon Concept of Mother in Heaven,” stated:

Just as male mortals need females to provide tabernacles for waiting spirits, so Heavenly Father, being of ‘body, parts, and passions,’ requires a Mother for spirit procreation.¹³

Joseph Smith’s revelation about a Mother in Heaven is the main reason for acceptance of this doctrine, but church leaders also offer the logic that since marriage between a man and woman is the pattern God set in Genesis, and He made male and female in his own image; further, because LDS theology states that members can only be exalted to Godhood as married pairs, “*then God, as an exalted man, must [also] be married.*”¹⁴

The “continuation of the seed” is the term Joseph Smith coined for having sex and children in heaven. To emphasize that sacred sex is indeed the highest practice of the gods, early LDS Church leaders taught that Mary, the mother of Jesus, became impregnated not by the Holy Ghost, but by God Himself, who came down and had relations with her, thus making Jesus literally God’s begotten son.

Bruce R. McConkie stated:

(This) is to be understood literally. *Only* means only, *Begotten* means begotten; and *Son* means son. Christ was begotten by an Immortal Father in the same way that mortal men are begotten by mortal fathers.”¹⁵

This is, of course, in direct contradiction to the scripture, Matt. 1:18, 20. “*When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost . . . for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.*”

Brigham Young said:

Now, remember from this time forth and forever, Jesus Christ was not begotten by the Holy Ghost. ¹⁶

Joseph Fielding Smith declared:

Christ was begotten of God. He was not born without the aid of Man, and that Man was God!” ¹⁷

Joseph Fielding Smith, Jr., the son of the 10th prophet of the church, said in his book, *Religious Truths Defined*:

The birth of the Savior was a natural occurrence unattended with any degree of mysticism, and the Father God was the literal parent of Jesus in the flesh as well as in the spirit.¹⁸

(The above quotes are cited in Jerald and Sandra Tanner’s *Salt Lake City Messenger*, Feb. 1991, p. 13.)

The concept of sex in heaven is also found in pagan religions; therefore, sex is the ultimate expression in their high rituals. In *The Satanic Bible*, Anton Szandor LaVey states:

The highest plateau of human development is the awareness of the flesh (p. 81) [and in the temple ritual] woman is the altar . . . because she is the natural passive receptor and represents the earth mother.”¹⁹

He also claims that the Catholic Church demoted the pagan fertility symbol of the phallus to the “holy water sprinkler.”

Many religions, ancient and modern, practice sex rituals. This was so in the Greek religions and viewed as a “state of inspired exaltation,” described in Julius Evola’s book, “The Metaphysics of Sex.” We find sexual practices in ancient Rome, particularly the Roman Bacchic Cult; in Pompeii, the Hunga empire in Japan; the Dionysian mysteries, and the Gnostic rituals during the New Testament period. The Greeks integrated it with their religious beliefs, and in Asian countries such as India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Japan and China, erotic art has a spiritual meaning within Hinduism, Buddhism, Shinto and Taoism.

Today, these rituals are not dead. WICCA also practices sexual rituals in their “Great Rite” that symbolizes creation in the union of the Maiden Goddess with the Lover God.

Since this is what false religions do, it is not surprising that it is emphasized in the Mormon concept of heaven. In early Mormon temple rituals, it was believed to have actually been practiced.

Fred Collier, a Mormon Fundamentalist and avid researcher, acquired many unauthorized copies of documents that were smuggled in and out of the LDS Church archives, particularly documents pertaining to the temple ceremony.

In a letter to me, dated July 12, 1986, he told me that the sealing altar in the Salt Lake temple was originally covered with phallic symbols, and when present day leaders discovered this (I believe in a storage room or attic), they had it removed.

Collier added that sexual activity was probably engaged in the second part of the LDS temple ordinance called the Second Anointing (or Second Endowment), where a woman makes her final covenant to be sealed to her husband forever. (See archived article, *The Mormon Temple Ceremony*.) In this ordinance, sex was considered “properly indulged in,” and “sexual intercourse in the temple was considered as an act of worship on the part of a woman for her God.” She worships him in this manner because she understands that in heaven her husband will be her God. The Second Endowment is no longer practiced by the general membership, but thought to be practiced by the General Authorities, although there is no proof.

Statements of LDS leaders verifying the doctrine of Mother in Heaven.

Leaders continue to verify this doctrine. In 2005, the First Presidency and Council of Twelve stated:

All human beings—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of *heavenly parents*, and, as such, each has a divine nature and destiny.²⁰

Apostle Erastus Snow teaching on the anthropomorphic concept said:

Now, it is not said in so many words in the Scriptures, that we have a Mother in heaven as well as a Father. It is left for us to infer this from what we see and know of all living things in the earth including man . . . Hence when it is said that God created our first parents in His likeness—it is intimated in language sufficiently plain to my understanding that the male and female principle was present with the gods as it is with men.²¹

In 1909, the First Presidency under President Joseph F. Smith, in explaining the origin of man, stated:

. . . man, as a spirit, was begotten and born of heavenly parents, and reared to maturity in the eternal mansions of the Father,” as an “offspring of celestial parentage.”²²

The late President of the Church, Gordon B. Hinckley, acknowledged this:

Logic and reason would certainly suggest that if we have a Father in Heaven, we have a Mother in Heaven. That doctrine rests well with me.²³

Bruce R. McConkie, in his book, *Mormon Doctrine*, stated:

Spirits are actually born as the offspring of a Heavenly Father, a glorified and exalted man.²⁴

Mormon, Theodore M. Burton, in a speech in Taiwan entitled, “Come, Listen to a Prophet’s Voice,” announced:

The Chinese tradition of respect for one’s father has its origin in the Fatherhood of God, who is the father of our spirits. We are spirit children of God the Eternal Father. There cannot be a father in heaven without a mother. So our spirits were created by a Heavenly Father and a Heavenly Mother. The Chinese tradition of respect for one’s earthly mother then is also based on a divine truth.²⁵

I have listed quite a few quotes since I anticipate the church will, at some point, publicly give the impression they do not embrace this doctrine. I felt you should have something under your belt to show their statement is a cover-up.

Besides the shocking concept of an anthropomorphic God the Father and a Heavenly Mother, they go a step further—God is polygamous.

Polygamy in heaven: its purpose.

There will be polygamy in heaven for the men who earn Godhood. Mark E. Petersen of the Twelve Apostles stated:

Men will become like God the Father and women will be their *wives* and be as *God the Father's wives*. That is, women will fulfill their wifely functions and eternally beget spirit children.²⁶

Because of this belief, Mormon men may, in this life, be sealed (married) in the LDS temple to more than one wife; however, not at the same time. (with the exception of Brigham Young's day). It is usually after a wife has died, or there has been a valid divorce and the man remarries.

The logic for God having more than one wife in heaven is this: If God has only one wife, it would take too long for him to produce spirit children fast enough with only one wife. Therefore, single females in God's prior earthly world who were unfortunate not to be married, were portioned out and given as plural wives to those men who became Gods. These women became Goddesses and Heavenly Mothers, to stand along side their God-husband. As part of God's harem, they will spend eternity giving birth to spirit children. (*All I can say is, whew!*)

This is why polygamy (also called Celestial Marriage) in the coming Millennium and in heaven is considered a serious commandment for members:

...the practice of celestial marriage, including plurality of wives, was commanded.²⁷

Orson Pratt stated:

We have now clearly shown that God the Father had a *plurality of wives* . . . by whom He begat our spirits."²⁸

The LDS Student Review states:

. . . male Latter-day Saints may be sealed to more than one wife." . . . "If any of these polygamous (sic) men gain exaltation with two or more wives, he will be a heavenly father with plural heavenly mothers as his companions."²⁹

Unfortunately, the first wife of Mormon men will have to put up with their God-husband having relations with hundreds of other women. While a Mormon woman today may publicly glorify this "wonderful principle," in private it is another matter. Some women bemoan the fact that he'll be so busy, he won't have any quality time to spend with them. When I was still in the LDS church, a wife of one of the Bishopric came to my home in bitter tears. She sat in my living room sobbing, telling me that she was so in love with her husband that she could not bear the thought of sharing him in eternity. I'm sure other wives struggle over this.

Knowing that women have a problem with this, speakers in the Relief Society encourage them by promoting the beauty of the doctrine. Mary Foulger of the General Board said:

We stand in awe at Mary's assignment to be the mother of the Lord, but we, too, have been called to be mother gods.³⁰

Because God and his wives are *still* busy producing spirit children, Mormon women are told to have as many babies as they can, so as to provide physical tabernacles for them. By having a large family here on earth, they are practicing the privileges of Goddesshood. It is not unusual for them to suffer considerable guilt if they do not live up to the Church's admonition to produce. The church, however, does say that a mother's health should naturally be taken into consideration.

There is another reason for the directive to have many babies in this life . . . to ensure Heavenly Father's spirit children will be born into families who belong to the "only true church" (LDS), instead of going into irreligious or Christian families, the latter being on a kindergarten level of the gospel.

Eternal pregnancy is the name of the game. Mormon women, say Rick and Carmen Branch, "*will be pregnant, giving birth to one spirit child, then another, then another, ad infinitum.*"³¹

In the Family Home Evening Resource Book, President Joseph Fielding Smith said:

There is no end to this development; it will go on forever. We will become gods and have jurisdiction over worlds, and these worlds will be peopled by our own offspring. We will have an endless eternity for this.³²

If the church ever denies the belief in the Heavenly Mother doctrine, the membership would go into a tailspin. Why? Because if there is no Mother in Heaven, that means God is not their *literal* Father. He can't be, because as a man of flesh and bones he would be unable to produce children by himself. It would also mean that members will have to deny what they have been taught—that they have "divinity flowing through their spirit veins." Further, women no longer anticipating their eternal destiny in heaven, would lose any sense of significance or self-worth. It is all they have, in a system ruled by a patriarchy. For the men, they would obviously have nothing to look forward to in a heaven with no plural wives, or ability to produce offspring to populate an earth. Further, if there is no marriage in heaven, then LDS temple marriage also has no meaning. Denial of a Mother in Heaven could topple everything.

The Church's cover-up. Today, church leaders' objective is to convince the world that they are Christian, but the concept of a Mother goddess would certainly convince the world to the contrary. (See article in the newsletter archives, "*Is the Mormon Church Turning Christian?*") Therefore, they must cover up that doctrine because the general public (potential converts) usually come from Christian backgrounds which do not allow for a Mother Goddess. While there is an acceptable counterpart for the terms of God the Father and God the Son, there isn't for a Heavenly Mother. So, when pressed in interviews, spokesmen cover up using carefully manipulated word games and selected phrases to give the impression they don't believe it, while at the same time not denying the doctrine. Tour guides on Temple Square, as well as missionaries, are instructed not to say anything about this doctrine.

Coupled with their main purpose of acquiring converts, they also want to prevent any shock to investigators or new members who attend local wards. Therefore, they carefully edit out the Mother in Heaven and other controversial doctrines from lesson manuals. The rule now for teachers in the wards is to totally stick with the manual and not deviate or offer extemporaneous comments about older doctrines. This frustrates long-time members such as Mormon, Ken Driggs:

For a long time, I taught the Gospel Principles class in my ward. One Sunday we sang a hymn in sacrament meeting that referred to our Mother in Heaven, Eliza R. Snow's *O My Father. "In heav'n are parents single? . . . No, the thought makes reason stare! . . . Truth is reason; truth eternal . . . tells me I've a mother there."* The manual touched on family that Sunday, and I mentioned the Heavenly Mother in my lesson. I did not see this belief as heretical. Rather, it was something I had been taught all my life. After class a furious missionary scolded me for bringing this up, for "not teaching from the manual." Apparently an investigator had been in class and freaked out at the reference.³³

This cover-up fits in entirely with LDS leaders, F. Burton Howard and F. Enzo Busche of the First Quorum of the Seventy's 1994 statement, as quoted in the Salt Lake Tribune:

We have an obligation to conceal our doctrines [because] we are trying to be a mainstream Christian church.³⁴

The Mother Goddess in antiquity.

Note: In this section, in all my references to the Canaanite female deity in the Old Testament that God condemned, specifically Asherah, I will use the single name of “Asherah,” as it is easier than switching back and forth to the spellings of all her other names, e.g., Astarte, Astarte, Ashtareth, Ashtaroth, etc. There are also places in the Bible where her name is translated as “grove.” These groves were always connected to Asherah because of what took place in them. One of her titles was “Mistress of Sexual Rejoicing” (explained later). Therefore, it will be much easier reading to only use “Asherah.”

#

One does not have to search hard to find evidence in all cultures of a belief in a Mother in Heaven who reigns alongside a God. As early as the Paleolithic Age, a “Mother-Goddess” belief existed, with fertility being her primary function. The Mormon’s Heavenly Mother parallels most of the images of ancient goddesses, and the LDS concept of God having a harem of plural wives is reminiscent of the Egyptian Amun, Queen of Heaven and Chief-Priestess who, as God’s wife, was head over his harem:

[Anum] “was the head of a large harem and initiation into her cult involved some rather lusty rites that reflected her association to love and sex.”³⁵

In the Bible, the Mother Goddess was worshiped among the Hittites, the Canaanites burned offerings to her, and during the Hellenistic age, Asherah and the goddess Anath (goddess of love and war, and sister and helpmate of Baal) were blended into one deity called Atargatis. In Egypt it was Isis. Germanic paganism had altars erected to the “Mothers and Matrons.” In Norse paganism it was Frigg (*or Frigga*), Sif, wife of Thor, and female deities, the Valkyries. In Rome, it was Juno. In pre-Islamic times, there were three goddesses, Uzza, al-Manat and al-Lat, each of whom had a separate shrine near Mecca. In the Greco-Roman period there was Aphrodite, Artemis and Athena, and goddess-mothers were also utilized in the Eleusinian mystery religions. Gnosticism proclaimed Sophia as their goddess embodying wisdom; Africa’s fertility goddesses eventually syncretized into Marian devotion, and there were also female deities in Chinese and Southeast Asian religions.

From the Bible, it is clear that Israel’s non-Israelite neighbors worshipped pagan goddesses, and that the Hebrews during times of apostasy also turned to them. I believe, for the gone-astray Israelites, one of the reasons (there are others) was because Jehovah had forbidden any images of himself and it was difficult for them to worship an invisible God. It was much easier to worship a god they could see, like the carved pagan images made of wood and stone.

Mormon scholars use the worship of Asherah in the Bible as a defense of their Mother in Heaven doctrine, believing Asherah was a sacred truth originally revealed by God in the beginning. What seems to be lost in Mormon thinking is, why did God have the Hebrew temples destroyed and allow the Jews, his chosen people, to be carried off into exile as punishment for their sins and worship of Asherah, if the latter was correct? According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, the Hebrew word for Asherah was “boshet,” meaning “shameful,” or “shamed person,” indicating faithful Hebrews’ contempt for her cult. Jehovah continually, through his prophets, rebuked the straying Israelites for their idolatry and spiritual adultery when it came to Asherah. When the repentant Israelites returned from their Babylonian captivity and turned back to Jehovah, they were blessed.

No one in the Mormon Church, however, claims that his or her Mother in Heaven’s name is Asherah. They do not know what her name is. This is because with God having so many wives, no one knows for sure which Divine Mother they came through.

The prevalence of goddess worship throughout the history of Israel can be seen in artifacts of house shrines kept to represent the Mother Goddess and her husband. The 2008 March/April issue of *Biblical Archaeology Review* (BAR) shows pictures of small, ancient house shrines found in Trans-Jordan, identified as Moabite or

Ammonite. They date from the ninth or eighth century BC. Most, if not all, of the house shrines bear iconographic motifs of Asherah and display either an empty chamber with no throne, or one with an empty throne-seat. (However, many terra cotta figurines [not house shrines] from Israel and Judah have been found of Asherah by herself, usually naked and voluptuously rendered because she is the goddess of fertility.)

BAR published, for the first time, a rare picture of a small house shrine called “*naoi*,” (a Greek word that means *temple or inner sanctum*) which has a double-throne (one throne with two seats) carved into it for the pagan God and his consort. An Israelite shrine from northern Israel, found after World War II, contains a two-seated throne, and it also carries iconographic motifs of the Mother Goddess Asherah.

Why are there no carved images sitting on the throne of these house shrines? The assumption by scholars is because graven images of God were prohibited.

Were the Biblical writers guilty of hiding the real truth about God’s consort?

The Mormon Archaeological Symposium, as reported in an article in the (LDS) *Church News*, claimed that the truth about Mother God has been lost from the Bible, and that “*Bible writers are in part responsible for the cover-up.*”³⁶ To wrongly accuse the writers of the Bible and copyists of covering up this so-called truth, one need only consider how these copyists viewed the texts handed down to them. To them, the scriptures were sacred, and they would not have altered anything on purpose. In fact, they had to copy the scriptural texts on to lengthy, forty-five-foot scrolls, and if found to have even made one mistake, they had to start all over with a new forty-five foot scroll!

The Mormon Symposium also insisted that the Jewish people legitimately, in God’s eyes, worshipped a Mother Goddess, Queen of Heaven, even in their *temples*. To verify this, they refer to Jeremiah 7 and 44 claiming the Queen of Heaven is mentioned “five” times—as if five occurrences are somehow significant in their favor, which it isn’t, as we will see. They believe these Biblical verses referred to legitimate the valid existence of a Mother in Heaven as God’s true consort, thus backing up their belief. However, to the contrary, the above references in Jeremiah show God’s anger over Judah’s idolatrous worship of the Queen of Heaven, and vows He will bring disaster upon them unless they repent.

Other LDS scholars, trying hard to prove their point, state that since the physical object that represents Asherah was usually a wooden pole or tree, they insist that her sacred pillars or poles stood beside Jehovah’s altar, and that both Moses and Aaron carried one of these Asherah poles as a sacred staff of power. Nothing in scripture substantiates this.

Mother Goddesses today.

Worship of Asherah is not dead. In the United States there has been a resurrection of her cult. The Goddess Temple of Orange County, California, offers this description on their website:

SHE HAS RISEN! The Goddess is alive and thriving at The Goddess Temple of Orange County! . . . We ARE a church! Did you hear that, ladies? BE ASSURED THERE IS A CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES, WHERE, EVERY SUNDAY, WE WORSHIP HER! We praise HER name! We pray to HER divine presence in our lives! We recount HER stories of miracles, power and wonder! Each Sunday and with each Holy Day Ritual, it seems the energy expands greatly inside our hearts and inside Her Great Womb, which is reflected in our beautiful Temple to HER. We feel the golden energy grow and we feel healed, powerful, loving and prosperous. We send out our "world healing prayers" every Sunday (sometimes we howl them, drum them or dance them) and we hope you feel the energy too. Please visit us soon for a sacred pilgrimage to The Goddess Temple of Orange County [California] or check out what She is creating here. (www.goddesstempleorangecounty.com)

There is also an Australian Goddess Temple at Serenity, that celebrates the “Divine Mother.” And Isis is not dead either, for there is a temple to her at Geyserville, California. (www.isisoasis.org).

Present-day WICCA also worships a prime deity Goddess known as the “Queen of Heaven,” who is similar to Isis. Her consort is the Horned God, who plays a very little part in their worship and ritual. WICCA’s goddess often goes by different names because she is considered the summation of all goddesses in all cultures.

What the Bible has to say about a divine Mother Goddess.

While ancient religions did believe in Mother Goddesses and the Israelites often succumbed to them, Moses tried to correct this by teaching Israel to believe only in Yahweh. Succeeding prophets did the same. To understand how this attraction to Asherah began, we need to go back a step.

The Israelites as nomad/shepherds, who followed Moses out of Egypt, certainly knew Jehovah as the God of their desert experience. But, when they came into the promised land of Canaan and found a totally different environment of lush fertile land like they’d never seen before, they struggled over whether they should worship Jehovah, God of the desert in this new land, or El, the fertility god of Canaan (later known as Baal). This struggle lasted for centuries. Israel was continually drawn away by the Canaanite god, especially Baal’s Goddess of fertility, and may have participated in her fertility rites. These involved a form of sympathetic magic in which the forces of nature could be influenced by the example acted out in the ritual, described as follows:

Asherah was worshiped in various ways, including through ritual sex. Although she was believed to be Baal’s mother, she was also his mistress. Pagans practiced sympathetic magic, that is, they believed they could influence the gods’ actions by performing the behavior they wished the gods to demonstrate. Believing the sexual union of Baal and Asherah produced fertility, their worshipers engaged in immoral sex to cause the gods to join together, ensuring good harvests. This practice became the basis for religious prostitution (1 Kings 14:23-24). The priest or a male member of the community represented Baal. The priestess or a female member of the community represented Asherah. In this way, God’s incredible gift of sexuality was perverted to the most obscene public prostitution. No wonder God’s anger burned against his people and their leaders. (www.fromtherabbi.com)³⁷

By sexually coming together in imitation of Asherah and Baal, participants felt assured of a harvest or some form of personal prosperity. Understandably, the Asherah fertility rite would have appealed to women in an age where childbearing was so important.

The important thing to remember is that throughout the Bible God continually forbid the Israelites to worship pagan goddesses and gods, and specifically condemned the cult of Asherah, Astarte, Astoreth, the Queen of Heaven, and all pagan female deities by whatever name they went by. That they were popular is uncontested. Asherah sanctuaries, or “high places,” were on every hill and under every green tree, and people flocked to them. Also uncontested is the fact that the Israelites occasionally left Jehovah to worship the Canaanite god and goddess. But, just because the cult was popular, even with straying Israelites, does not validate the Mother Goddess worship. The Word of God as declared by His prophets is what establishes truth. Jehovah’s prophets continually denounced all pagan gods and especially Baal’s consort, Asherah. The fact that these prophets of God condemned them ought to say something.

At this point, I had intended to list the Biblical references to Asherah to show the instances where God condemned her, but decided it would make this article too long. All you have to do is look up the scriptural references in a Bible Dictionary, or Strong’s Concordance.

Summary of what Mormons believe.

- The doctrine of a Mother in Heaven will always be believed in the LDS Church, contrary to what one may hear announced publicly.

- The Mormon God, a resurrected man from a previous world, is our present Heavenly Father. He, along with his many wives, produces the spirits of babies born on earth. They accomplish this production physically, in the same manner as husband and wives do here.
- Members believe they will one day achieve Godhood. The men will be Gods with a plurality of wives, and the women will be their Mother Goddesses.
- LDS apologists attempt to use the idolatrous worship of Asherah to validate their belief in a Divine Mother, but the scriptures only show God's condemnation of her.
- Mormon scholars claim that the true knowledge of God having a consort was originally given to Adam, and was included in the first set of Moses' stone tablets; but, in the second set of tablets, when Israel sinned by worshipping the golden calf, it was omitted. Only the Ten Commandments were given in them.
- Knowledge of God and his consort was secretly known in the inner ritualistic circles of Solomon's temple, but then was lost again. It was restored through Joseph Smith.
- The Bible's failure to show Asherah as Jehovah's true consort was due to a deliberate cover-up by Bible writers and copyists who falsely attributed God's wife to Baal instead of Jehovah in order to promote their monotheism.

The last word to any Bible-believing person should be that the scriptures contain the "Word of God" and it is reliable.

The Bible does *not* teach that:

- God has a consort
- God is a resurrected man from a previous world
- God is polygamous
- Men and women can become Gods and Goddesses
- God condoned worship of Asherah

While female deities are portrayed throughout Israel's history, the Bible shows that God continually condemned the worship of them, in particular Asherah, thus destroying any validity to the Mormon claim of a divine Mother Goddess, the consort of the God who created this earth. And no Bible writer or copyist falsely attributed her as wife of Baal, instead of Jehovah.

Since the church's objective is to convince the public they are Christian so they can draw in more converts, they will continue to cover up this unbiblical doctrine, though still believing it.

The long-held teaching that there are many Mrs. Gods will prove interesting as Mormons wait for a new encyclopedic publication that will replace the withdrawal of LDS theologian and late apostle, Bruce R. McConkie's *Mormon Doctrine*, which openly declares this doctrine. His book has been the all-time best seller among Mormons, achieving near-canonical status.

If there will be a replacement, I expect the book will omit any reference to a Mother in Heaven, or else make a brief statement, e.g., "*This is not an official doctrine of the church, although it may have been believed in earlier times*"

Until next time,
Janis

ENDNOTES

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⁴ “The Common Origin of Ancient Hebrew/Pagan Religion and the Demise of the Hebrew Goddess.” Doctrine of the Priesthood, Feb. 1991, SLC, Ut Vol. 8 No. 2. See also www.zianet.com/collier/goddess.htm.

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⁶ Susa Young Gates, “Eliza R. Snow Smith,” *History of the Young Ladies’ Mutual Improvement Association of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from November 1869 to June 1910* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1911), 15-16.

⁷ *Times and Seasons* 6, (15 November 1845), 1039.

⁸ “Prayers to Heavenly Mother Still Plague LDS Church. *The Evangel*, Aug. 1992, p. 1.

⁹ W.W. Phelps, “Come to Me,” *Times and Seasons* 6 (15 January 1845), 783.

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¹¹ “Mormons Counseled Against Praying to ‘Mother in Heaven.’” *The Evangel*, Dec. 1991, p. 10.

¹² *The Ensign*, May 1975, p. 43.

¹³ “The Mormon Concept of Mother in Heaven: A Sociological Account of Its Origins and Development, by John Heeren, Donald B. Lindsey, Marylee Mason, (*Journal for the scientific study of religion*, Vol. 23, Issue 4, Dec. 1984, p. 407.

¹⁴ See “The Mormon Concept of Mother in Heaven: A Sociological Account of Its Origins and Development, by John Heeren, Donald B. Lindsey, Marylee Mason, (*Journal for the scientific study of religion*, Vol. 23, Issue 4, Dec. 1984, p. 397.)

¹⁵ *Mormon Doctrine*, 1979, pp. 546-47; italics mine.

¹⁶ *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 1, p. 51.

¹⁷ *Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 1, p. 18.

¹⁸ *Religious Truths Defined*, p. 44.

¹⁹ Anton Szandor LaVey, *The Satanic Bible*, p. 119,131.

²⁰ Message given at the General Relief Society Meeting held September 23, 1995, in Salt Lake City, Utah. See <http://www.lds.org/library/display/0,4945,161-1-11-1,00.html>. Italics mine.

²¹ *Journal of Discourses*, 26:214.

²² First Presidency (Joseph F. Smith, John P. Winder and Anthon H. Lund), “The Origin of Man,” *Improvement Era* 13 (November 1909): 80. Cited in endnote No. 1.

²³ Gordon B. Hinckley, “Daughters of God,” *Ensign* 21 (Nov. 1991), 100. Cited in endnote No. 1.

²⁴ Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 1979 ed., p. 750.

²⁵ “Come Listen to the Prophet’s Voice,” Theodore M. Burton, speech given August 13, 1975, typed copy, p. 1. Cited in *The Evangel*, August 2004, p. 5.

²⁶ *The Ensign*, Nov. 1974, pp. 54-55. Cited in “Our Mother Which Art in Heaven?”, by Rick and Carmen Branch, *The Evangel*, August 2004, Vol. LI, No. 8. Italics mine.

²⁷ Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 52.

²⁸ “The Mormon Concept of Mother in Heaven: A Sociological Account of Its Origins and Development, by John Heeren, Donald B. Lindsey, Marylee Mason, (*Journal for the scientific study of religion*, Vol. 23, Issue 4, Dec. 1984, p. 397. Italics mine.

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³⁷ “Fertility Rites of Canaan.” [Http://www.followtherabbi.com](http://www.followtherabbi.com).