

Our Divine Parents:

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This discussion of our Divine Parents fits very comfortably inside the Father's Great Plan of Happiness.¹ Unfortunately, we have so little understanding of that Plan that this subject is left to assumptions and innuendos rather than forthright declarations. Today I will make forthright declarations.

If discussing this subject confuses you, set it aside for now and spend some time studying the scriptures; increase your understanding of the Father's Great Plan of Happiness, including *Lectures on Faith*. Those who welcome more truth eventually understand God's plan more fully and, in turn, comprehend more of the God's vast work.² Please do not offend God by rejecting any truth coming from Him.³

I want to declare that the only reason I have the audacity to address this topic candidly is because Those of whom I speak in this talk have permitted me to do so. Without Their approval, I would not presume to address this topic publicly.

This topic may seem foreign to Christians. Despite that, Christ's gospel includes things you may not yet understand. The Apostle Paul referred to hidden truths as "unspeakable" because they are not yet understood.⁴ They are true, but remain "mysteries" for those who are not shown them by God.⁵ One servant of God may know but be forbidden from revealing a matter, while another is later commanded to reveal it.⁶ Therefore, because you have a Bible you should not assume it contains all of God's words or that He has not revealed more or will not reveal more.⁷ An infinite and eternal God has spoken many things, and will yet reveal more things.⁸

Some truths are already in scripture, but hidden from view by God's decree. Christian scriptures declare "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing; but the honour of kings is to search out a matter."⁹ So we search out matters God has concealed to see more of His glory:

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Our scriptures speak carefully about the existence and importance of a Heavenly Mother: a Divine Female whose greatest attribute is to bestow wisdom upon the whole of this creation. It is possible to miss Her presence. That cultural and theological blindness is

¹ This is a term used twice by Alma the Younger in his instruction to his son Corianton, recorded in New Covenants Alma 19:13 (hereafter "NC"); Alma 42:8, 16. Joseph Smith referred to this plan as "eternal progression."

² Some people have denounced a subject because they claim it is "not consistent with the gospel of Christ." It would be more correct and meek to say a subject is "not consistent with their present, limited understanding of the gospel of Christ" rather than to reject something outright.

³ "The moment we revolt at anything that comes from God, the devil takes power." (*TPJS*, p. 181.)

⁴ NC 2 Cor. 1:41; KJV 2 Cor. 12:4.

⁵ Paul referred to those in possession of hidden knowledge as "stewards of the mysteries of God." NC 1 Cor. 1:14; KJV 1 Cor. 4:1.

⁶ For example Nephi was "forbidden that [he] should write the remainder of the things which [he] saw." But was told God had "ordained the apostle of the Lamb of God [John] that he should write them." NC 1 Ne. 3:30-31; 1 Ne. 14:25, 28.

⁷ See NC 2 Ne. 12:10; 2 Ne. 9:9-10.

⁸ See 9th Article of Faith, PofGP.

⁹ KJV Proverbs 25:2; Old Covenants Proverbs 4:1: "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing, but the honor of kings to search out a matter." (Hereafter "OC".)

not because of Her absence from the scriptures. It is not hard to detect Her, if you know what to look for. WE just don't yet understand how to look.

The Old Testament (now retitled The Old Covenants) was preserved and transmitted in the Hebrew language for generations. Some characteristics¹⁰ of that language are important to understand as part of this discussion. First, Hebrew has no neuter, only masculine and feminine. Furthermore, when there are multiple persons involved, even if only one member of a group is male, Hebrew uses **only** the masculine to refer to the group. Women and men collectively are referred to using a masculine noun or pronoun.

When a masculine noun or pronoun from the Hebrew language is translated into English, English language readers assume it means "man" or "men" and excludes "women." In English we can use neuter pronouns like "they" or "them" to refer to a group of both men and women. Hebrew would use "men" or "he" if the group included even a single male in the group.

We all know that the Hebrew word "Elohim" is used to refer to God and that it is plural.¹¹ In English it should be translated as "Gods," but because we allow theology to control translating the text, the term "Elohim" in Hebrew is therefore rendered in English as a singular "God." It should be plural; and if plural, rendered masculine in English. But that is Hebrew to English, and does not mean, as we shall see, there is no female among the Elohim.

The story of creation starts by identifying Heavenly Parents, a couple clearly described as the true and living "God." In the King James Version, the creation of mankind is told in these words: "*So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.*"¹²

The context of the words "created he (God) **him** (man)" is immediately clarified to refer to both the male and female and not just the male: "created he him; **male** and **female** created he them." The English translation follows the masculine pronoun implied in Hebrew. Therefore, looking at it in the Hebrew language, there were two persons described and only one of them was male. It could be translated: "created they (Gods) them (man and woman); male and female." In the King James Version the Gods are described using a masculine pronoun taken from the Hebrew. Moving from Hebrew into English, the translation stayed true to the Hebrew and the human couple is likewise described using a masculine pronoun. They are called "him" in English because of this.

The words "So God created man in his (God's) own image," affirm two points:

First, the plurality of God.

Second, that plurality is a couple that includes both a male and a female. Man is created in God's image, and that image is a couple: a man and a woman. This is not figurative language. It is literally describing mankind having two sexes and that is godlike, or what God's own "image" is.

I was recently listening to a podcast with my wife. Philip McLemore was being interviewed by Dan Wotherspoon. They were discussing attributes of the Divine male and female.¹³ In their discussion the dual nature of God was incorrectly regarded as figurative,

¹⁰ These are not necessarily impediments, as long as you understand a handful of basic Hebrew language rules.

¹¹ The number of those who were included in the original "Elohim" is not the focus of this paper. In this the focus is on the inescapable conclusion that both male and female companions were essential for the members of the Elohim.

¹² KJV Gen. 1:27.

¹³ Mormon Matters podcast 328: *Explorations in Depth: The Two Lost Sons and Growing in God.*

not literal. It was suggested that this dual nature was intended to be part of every individual, with all men and women having both masculine and feminine attributes. Dan Wotherspoon thought individuals would develop through successive stages of growth.¹⁴ This idea may bring comfort to some, but the scriptural account is not ambiguous. It refers to a literal male and a literal female created by the Elohim. The male is named Adam and the female is named Eve. They are made in the image of the Elohim, or the Gods of creation, whose image is a male and a female.

There is even more meaning added to the scriptures describing the creation of man in the Joseph Smith Translation. The JST renders the account in Genesis this way: “And I, God, created man in mine own image, **in the image of mine Only Begotten** created I him; male and female created I them.”¹⁵ Here, not only is the Father male and female, but so is the image of the Only Begotten, who is therefore also two separate beings (male and female). Joseph’s clarification helps us understand who the Son was and is. The Son has a female counterpart, or, like His Father, a spouse.

There are instances in which Hebrew uses the feminine directly to describe God. For example, the spirit of God (*Ruach Elohim*)¹⁶ is a feminine noun. Likewise when referring to the “presence of God” Hebrew uses the feminine.¹⁷ God’s presence includes the feminine.

If you begin with these truths, then throughout the scriptures you can find both the Father and Mother, even when English translations speak only of a male God. Keep this in mind as you read either English or Hebrew language scriptures.

Another Hebrew language characteristic involves verb tenses. Although Elohim is plural, when speaking of the God of Israel, it is almost always combined with a singular verb. In English we say “they are” and not “they is.” But when it comes to Hebrew and the plural “Gods,” the verbs are almost always singular. Even though Israel’s God is plural, the singular form of the verb has been used to support theological arguments for “monotheism” or a single being for God.

Hebrew combines the plural Elohim or Gods with a singular verb, as in this example from Genesis: “thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God [Elohim] gave [singular verb] unto Abraham.”¹⁸

The Old Testament and Christ proclaimed that the God of Israel is “one.”¹⁹ But then Christ explained that “one” is not singular in person, but in harmony of heart.²⁰ Accordingly,

¹⁴ The idea is reminiscent of Aristotle’s faulty notions of biology resulting in the erroneous conclusion that women were incomplete men, whose development made them inferior to men.

¹⁵ OC Gen. 2:7. The King James Version differs materially by omitting any reference to “mine Only Begotten” as the prototype image: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.” (Gen. 1:27.)

¹⁶ KJV Genesis 1:2.

¹⁷ The word *Shekinah* was coined as a proper noun to replace a phrase literally meaning “he caused to dwell.” That phrase is better understood to convey “the Presence of God” and therefore the word *Shekinah* was adopted. Old Testament examples are found in Exodus 13:21-22; 24:16-18; 25:22; 40:34-38; Leviticus 16:2; Numbers 9:15-23; 10:11-36; Psalm 18:7-15; 80:1; 2 Samuel 6:2; Isaiah 37:16; Ezekiel 9:3; 10:18; Haggai 2:9; and Zechariah 2:5—all KJV cites.

¹⁸ OC Gen. 7:77; see also KJV Gen. 28:4.

¹⁹ In OC Deuteronomy 2:14; also KJV Deuteronomy 6:4 it states: “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord[.]” Which Christ quotes in NC Mark 5:44; also KJV Mark 6:29: “And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord[.]”

²⁰ KJV John 17: 20-23: “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one. I in them, and thou in me, that they

using a singular verb was meant to convey that all action undertaken by the Gods is done with a singular, harmonious purpose. They act as one. They are one.

When the Gods speak to Moses on the Mount, English recounts the story in these words: “And God [Elohim-plural] spake [singular] unto Moses and said unto him, I am the Lord [Yhwh].”²¹ In Hebrew this account is very helpful. It reiterates the clarification Joseph Smith made to the Genesis account of the creation of man: The Elohim are plural. And the voice is identified as Jehovah’s [Yhwh]. Given the plurality of this God and His name is “Jehovah” [Yhwh], it means that Jehovah, like the Father, is plural and has a female companion, or wife. The Gods are never single. This is why man was made male and female, in the image of the Gods. If the Egyptians’ quest to imitate the order that came down from the beginning failed,²² they nevertheless preserved the idea of a male/father and female/mother in their pantheon of their gods.²³ Taking the language of this passage literally, Jehovah spoke with Moses as a duo, a dyad or a couple, necessarily comprised of both a male and a female—for that is God’s image.

Another example is provided by Elijah: “And call ye on the name of your **gods** [Elohim], and I will call on the name of the **Lord** [Yhwh]: and the **God** [Elohim] that answereth by fire, let him be **God** [Elohim]. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken.”²⁴ Here again Jehovah is identified as a plural.

To reflect the image of God, there are two sexes, male and female. Man was organized in this way to help us to understand who and what the Gods are. The importance of this is illustrated in a passage of the *Lectures on Faith*:

Let us here observe, that three things are necessary, in order that any rational and intelligent being may exercise faith in God unto life and salvation. First, The idea that he actually exists. Secondly, A correct idea of his **character, perfections, and attributes**. Thirdly, An actual knowledge that the course of life which he is pursuing, is according to his will. —For without an acquaintance with these three important facts, the faith of every rational being must be imperfect and unproductive; but with this understanding, it can become perfect and fruitful, abounding in righteousness unto the praise and glory of God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.²⁵

Eventually every man—and I use that word in the Hebrew sense, meaning every male and female—will be brought to stand before the Throne of God.²⁶ Then all questions about the image of the Gods will be answered by what is apparent to anyone standing in Their presence.

may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

²¹ OC Exo. 2:12; see also KJV Exo. 6:2: “And God [Elohim] spake [singular] unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the Lord [Yhwh].”

²² Abr. 1:26.

²³ In the earliest (and most reflective of the original imitation) version of their theology, Amun (male) had a female companion Hathor (female). Their son Horus (male) had a wife Isis (female). God’s son Horus became the mortal Osiris and was slain by his usurping brother Set. But even in death Osiris was able to produce a posterity.

²⁴ OC 1 Kings 4:8; KJV 1Kings 18:24.

²⁵ *Lecture Third*:3-5.

²⁶ New Covenants Revelation 2:12 (hereafter “NC Rev.”): “After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands and cried with a loud voice saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb.”

These truths are in the scriptures accepted by every Christian denomination. They are in the scriptures believed by the Jews. Yet the Heavenly Mother's existence is not acknowledged.

While a great deal more could be said to demonstrate that God the Father necessarily includes God the Mother, we want to know more than merely She exists. We want to understand her character, perfections and attributes also.

The Father and the Son are masculine and therefore personified by the word "knowledge." The Mother as well as the Son's companion are feminine, and personified by the word "wisdom." These personifications reflect an eternal truth about these two parts of the One True God.

Knowledge (masculine) initiates, Wisdom (feminine) receives, guides and tempers. Knowledge can be dangerous unless it is informed by wisdom. Wisdom provides guidance and counsel to channel what comes from knowledge. These are eternal attributes, part of what it means to be a male or a female. Creation begins with the active initiative of knowledge, but order and harmony for the creation requires wisdom. Balance between them is required for an orderly creation to exist.

A great deal can be learned about Heavenly Mother by searching for the word "wisdom" in scripture. Very often the reference to "wisdom" is to Her distinctly, and not merely an abstract attribute.²⁷ If we are blind to Her existence, we cannot see the reference to Her in those passages. Although many scriptures have the Divine Mother's words, Her presence is veiled by our ignorance and refusal to acknowledge Her. There is one extensive passage in scripture in Her voice that we look at today. It teaches us a great deal about Her.

This was once a temple text and has become somewhat corrupted. I will not make any corrections or clarifications. This is from Proverbs 8. The version we have has additional passages about the foolish woman at the beginning and again at the end. I discard those so the words attributed to the Heavenly Mother can be considered. She states:

*Hear, for I will speak of excellent things and the opening of my lips shall be right things.
For my mouth shall speak truth and wickedness is an abomination to my lips. All the words of my mouth are in righteousness, there is nothing froward or perverse in them.*

She proclaims Herself as the reliable source of truth, righteousness and plain—meaning clear—understanding. She is opposed to wickedness, frowardness—meaning stubbornness or contrariness—and perversity.

If we are "froward" we are stubborn or contrary with one another. We dispute. We find it difficult to agree. How much debate and anger are produced by frowardness!

Jacob (called James in the King James Bible) mentioned "wisdom" in his letter. In contemplating Her, Jacob suggested we should be "easy to be entreated."

Who is a wise man, and endowed with knowledge among you? Let him show out of good conduct his works with meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descends not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish; for where envying and strife are, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is **first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and**

²⁷ See, e.g., KJV Proverbs 8:1; 9:1; Psalms 136:5; Jer. 10:12; Luke 7:35; 1 Cor. 12:8; 2 Ne. 21:2; Mosiah 8:20, among many others.

without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.²⁸

Wisdom from above can endow us with the kindly demeanor of brothers and sisters who seek what is good for one another. How often are the words of our mouths froward and “perverse?” The Divine Mother refuses to speak wickedness and abominations, and Her influence brings others to depart from such failures.

Continuing:

They are all plain to him that understandeth and right to them that find knowledge. Receive my instruction and not silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold. For wisdom is better than rubies and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.

Proclaiming, “wisdom is better than rubies,” she asks us to receive Her instruction rather than seek silver and gold. Nothing else is to be compared with Her wisdom. She instructs in virtues that would make any person better. But Her instruction will also make living in peace with others possible. Nothing in this world is more desirable than acquiring wisdom: understanding and putting knowledge to wise use. Zion will require the wisdom to use pure knowledge in meekness, humility and charity. Zion will require Her influence.

Continuing:

I, wisdom, dwell with prudence and find out knowledge of witty inventions. The fear of the Lord is to hate evil, pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way and the froward mouth do I hate.

Wisdom and prudence go together as companions. “Prudence” means good judgment or common sense. It is the quality of assessing things correctly and making a sound decision in light of the circumstances and persons involved. Prudent judgment is not hasty or unfair. Arrogance is destroyed and pride overtaken by “fear of the Lord”—meaning that we do not want to disappoint our Lord by our low, vulgar and mean conduct.²⁹

She mentions a second time Her opposition to the froward. This time She declares She hates the froward mouth. We repel Her by being argumentative and contrary with one another.

Continuing:

Counsel is mine and sound wisdom, I am understanding, I have strength.

The Mother must possess great strength because She hates the forward—the contentious. She does not welcome that spirit in Herself or any of Her offspring.

Christ taught this to the Nephites, which seems to be clearly taken from the Mother’s wisdom:

And there shall be no disputations among you as there hath hitherto been, neither shall there be disputations among you concerning the points of my doctrine as there hath hitherto been. For verily, verily I say unto you, He that hath the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the Devil, who is the

²⁸ NC Jacob 1:14, emphasis added. In KJV James 3:13-17 this same passage reads: “Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.”

²⁹ As Joseph Smith cautioned: “How vain and trifling have been our spirits, our conferences, our councils, our meetings, our private as well as public conversations; too low, too mean, too vulgar, too condescending for the dignified characters of the called and chosen of God, according to the purposes of His will from before the foundation of the world!” T&C 47:18.

father of contention, and he stirreth up the hearts of men to contend with anger one with another. Behold, this is not my doctrine, to stir up the hearts of men with anger one against another, but this is my doctrine, that such things should be done away.³⁰

It requires strength to refrain from contention and disputes with froward and arrogant people. When we feel strongly that we are right, or are firmly convinced someone else is wrong, it is difficult to bridle our tongue and meekly persuade without contention. But the Heavenly Mother possesses the strength required to look with compassion on our failings. She deals with Her offspring using good judgment and common sense. She is opposed to arrogance, and when we are arrogant we offend Her.

How many religious arguments, even religious wars have been caused because mankind is too weak to patiently reason together? The history of this world is a bold testimony of what weak and deceived men do when they reject wisdom.

Mankind cannot have Zion without wisdom to guide us. Zion must be a community. Developing wisdom requires us to patiently interact with one another. This counsel from the Heavenly Mother is a gift to help us understand what we lack.

Continuing with Her words:

By me kings reign and princes decree justice. By me princes rule and nobles, even all the judges of the earth.

Never doubt this claim by the Divine Mother. She knows best the strengths and weaknesses of Her sons. She decides who will be made kings. The earliest generations knew this about Her. In the beginning it was the mothers who decided between sons. Consider a few examples from early history and how the mothers acted on this matriarchal right:

In the case of Mother Eve, it was her and not Adam who weighed and decided that Cain would be Adam's first successor to the Holy Order. She did not do this in haste, but after many years of observing how Cain was unlike his many, rebellious, older siblings. He hearkened to his parents and had interest in knowing and following God. She decided that this son was indeed from the Lord and would not be yet another one to reject His words:

And Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord, wherefore he may not reject his words. But, behold, also Cain³¹ hearkened not saying, Who is the Lord, that I should know him? And she again conceived, and bare his brother Abel. And Abel hearkened unto the voice of the Lord.

To the sorrow of both Adam and Eve, Cain changed. After his initial faithfulness, he no longer continued to follow the Lord's words.

When he felt his right to stand second only to Adam in the Holy Order was threatened, he resorted to murder to keep that position. That right cannot be handled with any degree of unrighteousness. Therefore, his ambition undid his mother's choosing, and he fell from grace.³² But note in the account that it was Eve who chose Cain. That was her right. That right came down from the Mother in Heaven as one of the roles occupied by all mothers over their offspring.

³⁰ NC 3 Ne. 5:8.

³¹ The language, "but behold, also Cain" means that time passed, and the course Cain followed changed. He, like the many children of Adam and Eve before him, "also" chose to rebel and reject his parent's teaching.

³² Like so many others have done, Cain was called but ultimately not chosen. His heart was so set upon honors that he failed to grasp that the rights belonging to his father could not be controlled by unrighteousness in the least degree.

While Rebekah was pregnant with twins, her unborn sons struggled within her. She prayed to know the cause of her difficulties and learned that the younger would rule over the elder.³³ This answer stayed with her, and when the time came she acted consistent with God's voice to her.³⁴ Even though it required her to supplant Isaac's intention to set Esau ahead of Jacob, it was Rebekah's right as the mother. Rebekah preferred Jacob because of revelation. Her preference for him is mentioned **before** Esau sold his birthright. We do not know if Esau sold his birthright because Rebekah put that idea in Jacob's mind beforehand, or if Jacob wanted the birthright separate from his mother's influence. But Rebekah's decision is mentioned before Jacob obtained it. Her involvement directly resulted in her unwary husband conferring the blessing on Jacob:

And the boys grew. And Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field, and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents. And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison, but Rebekah loved Jacob. And Jacob cooked stew, and Esau came from the field and he was faint. And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray you, with that same red stew for I am faint. Therefore was his name called Edom. And Jacob said, Sell me this day your birthright. And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point of dying and what shall this birthright profit me? And Jacob said, Swear to me this day. And he swore unto him and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils. And he did eat and drink, and rose up and went his way; thus Esau despised his birthright.³⁵

Rebekah's choice was honored by this turn of events. Jacob obtained the legal right to hold the birthright under the Holy Order because Esau abandoned it—conveyed it to Jacob. Some time later the time arrived to appoint Isaac's successor and heir.

And it came to pass that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim so that he could not see, he called Esau his eldest son and said unto him, My son. And he said unto him, Behold, here am I. And he said, Behold, now I am old, I know not the day of my death. Now therefore, take, I pray you, your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and take me some venison. And make me savory food, such as I love, and bring it to me that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die. And Rebekah heard when Isaac spoke to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt for venison and to bring it. And Rebekah spoke unto Jacob her son, saying, Behold, I heard your father speak unto Esau your brother, saying, Bring me venison and make me savory food, that I may eat and bless you before the Lord before my death. Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to

³³ See Genesis 7:61: "And Isaac entreated the Lord for his wife, that she might bare children, because she was barren. And the Lord was entreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived. And the children struggled together within her womb, and she said, If I am with child, why is it thus with me? And she went to inquire of the Lord. And the Lord said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels, and the one people shall be stronger than the other people, and **the elder shall serve the younger**. And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb. And the first came out red, all over like a hairy garment, and they called his name Esau. And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel, and his name was called Jacob, and Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them." (Emphasis added.) See also KJV Gen. 25:21-26.

³⁴ Josephus claimed God's answer was given to Isaac, not Rebecca. See, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 1:18:1. However both the JST and the KJV declare God's answer came to her, and if Joseph Smith did not correct it we should be confident it was given to her.

³⁵ OC Genesis 9:3.

that which I command you. Go now to the flock and fetch me from there two good kids of the goats, and I will make them savory food for your father such as he loves. And you shall bring it to your father that he may eat and that he may bless you before his death.³⁶

While Isaac intended to bless his older son, Esau, Rebekah, as their mother, knew the younger brother Jacob was the chosen one. Rebekah proceeded with the confidence of knowing that decision was hers to make. She took appropriate steps, as was her right, to appoint the heir. She managed her ailing husband wisely and subtly. At that time Isaac's "eyes were dim" —a symbolic description of his condition— and he was unable to see the correct choice.

Jacob realized his mother's plan involved risks. He raised his concerns with his mother:

And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man and I am a smooth man. My father perhaps will feel me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver, and I shall bring a curse upon me and not a blessing. And his mother said unto him, Upon me be your curse my son, only obey my voice and go fetch me them.

And he went and fetched and brought them to his mother. And his mother made savory food such as his father loved. And Rebekah took handsome raiment of her eldest son Esau, which was with her in the house, and put them upon Jacob her younger son. And she put the skins of the kids of the goats upon his hands, and upon the smooth of his neck³⁷

When Jacob worried about being cursed for deceiving his father, his mother reassured him and, if there was to be one, offered to take the curse. Jacob did not want to deceive his father, but his mother said it was she, not her son, who would be responsible.

Mother Rebekah then prepared the meal for Isaac. Rebekah also clothed her son with the "handsome raiment of her eldest son"—a description filled with symbolism. Then she used the skins of slain lambs to cover the hands and neck of Jacob—another description filled with symbolism and foreshadowing. Thus outfitted in the eldest son's raiment and a slain lamb covering his skin, Jacob was presented as the heir.

If you interpret this account as a type of Christ, it helps us to appreciate the unacknowledged role of Christ's Mother in preparing Him as an acceptable Son and heir to His Father.

Following his mother's guidance Jacob proceeded:

And she gave the savory food and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob. And he came unto his father and said, My father. And he said, Here am I. Who are you my son? And Jacob said unto his father, I am Esau your firstborn,³⁸ I have done according as you bade me. Arise, I pray you, sit and eat of my venison, that your soul, may bless me. And Isaac said unto his son, How is it that you have found it so quickly my son? And he said, Because the Lord your God brought it to me. And Isaac said unto Jacob, Come near, I pray you, that I may feel you my son, whether you be my very son Esau or not. And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father. And he felt him and said, The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the

³⁶ OC Genesis 9:12-13.

³⁷ OC Genesis 9:13-14.

³⁸ He had previously acquired this right and therefore could answer this way.

hands of Esau. And he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy as his brother Esau's hands, so he blessed him.³⁹

On choosing the lawful heir, Isaac was blind to the correct choice. But Rebekah was not, and it was her right to choose. To accomplish the foreordained result, Isaac's eyes were dimmed. Rebekah used that to prevent him from making the wrong choice. And so the heir chosen by Rebekah was given the blessing.

And he said, Are you my very son Esau? And he said, I am.

This answer from Jacob is not as wrong as some have claimed. Jacob purchased the birthright, and therefore on the issue Isaac raised (if he was the rightful heir), Jacob had Esau's right and could answer truthfully as to the blessing that he WAS lawfully standing in Esau's place.

And he said, Bring it near to me, and I will eat of my son's venison that my soul may bless you. And he brought it near to him and he did eat. And he brought him wine and he drank. And his father Isaac said unto him, Come near now and kiss me my son. And he came near and kissed him. And he smelled the smell of his raiment and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord has blessed. Therefore, God give you of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of grain and wine. Let people serve you and nations bow down to you. Be lord over your brethren and let your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be everyone that curses you and blessed be he that blesses you.⁴⁰

As a result of his mother's guidance, counsel and labors, Jacob inherited the birthright belonging to the Holy Order. Whatever else this may reflect on the relationship between these family members, it was through appropriate guidance and direction of his mother that Jacob was blessed to become the appointed heir, the prince and patriarch through whom the promised Messiah would descend.⁴¹ This pattern of the mother choosing the heir is not just an allegory or an event in family history. It is an eternal right belonging to the mothers. It can also be seen in the New Testament.

The mother of James and John approached Christ to request a princely position for her sons. The incident makes more sense when you realize the mother's request was consistent with her role. Her sons' position in the future kingdom was within the lawful concerns for her to seek on their behalf:

Then to him came the mother of Zebedee's children, with her sons, worshipping Jesus and desiring a certain thing of him. And he said unto her,

³⁹ OC Genesis 9:14-15.

⁴⁰ OC Genesis 9:15. These words signify a position in the Holy Order in which others will be obligated to respect the government of God. Therefore we will "bow down" to Jacob, because he will be a father over us. The "cursing" of those who curse him, and "blessing" of those who bless him are the inevitable result of Jacob occupying a position in the Holy Order.

⁴¹ In Wilford Woodruff's notes of a talk given by Joseph Smith just prior to the twelve's mission to England in 1839, Joseph explained this: "An Evangelist Is a patriarch, even the oldest man of the Blood of Joseph or the seed of Abram where ever the Church of Christ is established in the Earth there should be a Patriarch for the benefit of the posterity of the Saints, as it was with Jacob in given his patriarchal bles[s]ing unto his Sons &c." (*JSP Documents Vol. 6*, p. 526.) This is a good explanation as far as it goes, but this original order was frequently disrupted by the death or unworthiness of the oldest heir. It would be more correct to say the "oldest worthy man"—because often, as with Esau and Jacob, a younger displaces an older brother. Identifying this as a singular position held by only one man at a time is correct, although there may be others in a line of descent upon whom the same authority has been conferred. They become the single Patriarch once they are the oldest one upon whom the right has been conferred. Although Jacob was given the birthright, he would not ascend to the Patriarch's position until after the death of his father Isaac.

What do you will that I should do? And she said unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on your right hand, and the other on your left, in your kingdom. But Jesus answered and said, you know not what you ask. Are you able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They said unto him, We are able. And he said unto them, You shall drink indeed of my cup and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with. But to sit on my right hand, and on my left is for whom it is prepared of my Father, but not mine to give.⁴²

It was altogether appropriate for this request to come from their mother. It was squarely within the traditional role and right of the righteous matriarch. Christ's answer to the disciples' mother mentions His "Father" –which necessarily included His Mother.

In the Answer to the Prayer for Covenant, it is explained that establishing any throne is done through a covenant requiring a mother-companion and female counterpart to elevate a father to a throne. It is also clear that once elevated, these two sit together upon a throne. Every throne and every kingdom in eternity requires these two separate parties, the man and the woman, to be one.⁴³

And again, I say to you, Abraham and Sarah sit upon a Throne, for he could not be there if not for Sarah's covenant with him. Isaac and Rebecca sit upon a Throne, and Isaac likewise could not be there if not for Rebecca's covenant with him. And Jacob and Rachel sit upon a Throne, and Jacob could not be there if not for Rachel's covenant with him. And all these have ascended above Dominions and Principalities and Powers, to abide in my Kingdom. Therefore the marriage covenant is needed for all those who would likewise seek to obtain from me the right to continue their seed into eternity, for only through marriage can Thrones and Kingdoms be established.

Given this, any mention of the Heavenly Father is also mention of both Divine Parents, for there is neither man nor woman alone in the Divine state.⁴⁴ When first created, man and woman were joined together by God. This union happened before death entered the world. Therefore their companionship was eternal when first established, and when rescued from death would return. As Christ put it,

Have you not read that he who made man at the beginning made him male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder.⁴⁵

This union of Adam and Eve, and this plan of God for all who would thereafter be married, was to make the man and wife "one flesh." What God has joined together and made into "one" no one should "put asunder" by rejecting the eternal nature of marriage. It was always intended to last through the resurrection.⁴⁶

⁴² NC Matt. 10:2; see also KJV Matt. 20:20-23. Christ's reference to His Father must be understood to include both His Parents, and His Mother's rights as well.

⁴³ "Nevertheless, neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord." (NC 1 Cor. 1:44; see also KJV 1 Cor. 11:11-12.)

⁴⁴ *Id.*

⁴⁵ NC Matt. 9:19.

⁴⁶ In the same discussion Christ condemned Jewish divorce practice: "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it was not so."

Continuing with the Heavenly Mother's declaration in Proverbs 8:

I love them that love me and those that seek me early shall find me. Riches and honor are with me, yea, durable riches and righteousness. My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold and my revenue than choice silver.

Of all the Mother's "fruit" the most valuable to fallen man is without doubt the Redeemer, Christ Jesus. The account of how Jesus Christ came into the world begins with a virgin and an angel. There is more to this than Christians have noticed. The prophecy relied on to identify the birthplace of Christ in Bethlehem continues with a description of His Mother. It was prophesied that only when "she which travaileth hath brought forth; then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel."⁴⁷ Because of the labor and travail of His Mother, the prophesy of Israel returning to God was fulfilled. She made His entry into this world possible. The redemption of the remnant is as much the consequence of Her as of Her Son.

What was Mary's role? Who was she? Is it possible she was "the mother of God"⁴⁸ before she came into mortality? These are important questions that ought to be asked. If we can learn the answers they would indeed be glorious.

The Greek title "Mother of God" (Θεοτοκος⁴⁹) has been used in Eastern Christianity since the Third (perhaps as early as the Second) Century. The title was exclusively associated with Mary. By the Fifth Century the title became controversial and a replacement term "Mother of Christ" (Κριστοτοκος⁵⁰) was substituted.

Since the pre-earth existence of man is not universally accepted in Christianity, most Christians have never considered even the possibility of a pre-earth identity for Mary. Despite this, she, like all mankind, existed before this world.⁵¹

If God the Father obeys the same commandments He imposes upon His children, then for Him to father a child with any woman other than His Wife would violate His decrees about adultery⁵² and chastity.⁵³ Marian theology is largely absent from Mormonism

Id. There is no difference between accepting and teaching divorce and accepting and teaching marriage is intended to end at death and not survive into the resurrection.

⁴⁷ "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. Therefore will he give them up, unto the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth; then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel. And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God; and they shall abide: for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth." Micha 5:2-4.

⁴⁸ In the Original Translation text, the Printer's Manuscript, and First Edition of the Book of Mormon the phrase describing Mary was "the Mother of God after the manner of the flesh." (Sometimes "Mother" was capitalized and sometimes "God" was capitalized.) Joseph Smith changed the 1837 edition to say, "the mother of the Son of God, after the manner of the flesh." (1 Ne. 11:18.)

⁴⁹ The title in English is "Theotokos." It can be also be interpreted "bearer of God."

⁵⁰ The title in English is "Christotokos." It can also be interpreted "bearer of Christ."

⁵¹ "[T]he first shall be last and that the last shall be first, in all things whatever I have created by the Word of my Power, which is the Power of my Spirit. For by the Power of my Spirit created I them, yea, all things both spiritual and temporal, firstly spiritual, secondly temporal, which is the beginning of my work. And again, firstly temporal and secondly spiritual, which is the last of my work[.]" D&C 29:30-31. "And now, behold, I say unto you, that these are the generations of the heaven and of the earth, when they were created, in the day that I, the Lord God, made the heaven and the earth, And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew. For I, the Lord God, created all things, of which I have spoken, spiritually, before they were naturally upon the face of the earth. For I, the Lord God, had not caused it to rain upon the face of the earth. And I, the Lord God, had created all the children of men; and not yet a man to till the ground; for in heaven created I them; and there was not yet flesh upon the earth, neither in the water, neither in the air[.]" Moses 3:4-5. See also, Abraham 3:22-26.

⁵² OC Exo. 20:14; NC Matt. 3:21; KJV Matt. 5:27.

⁵³ NC Jacob 2:11.

other than to suggest that because the Father impregnated her⁵⁴ she is destined to be added to His eternal harem as an additional spouse.⁵⁵ Traditional Mormon teachings have been crudely fixated on the mechanics of Mary's conception. There is almost no interest in whether she has any pre-earth role with the Father, or whether she was the Mother in Heaven, the Divine Spouse of the Father, who condescended to come to earth to bear Their Only Begotten in the flesh. If She were to be acknowledged in that role, it would require a complete re-envisioning of Her. It would raise the issues of why or how She, an immortal and exalted God, could return from that exalted state back to mortality to bring our Redeemer and Savior into this world. It would draw a contrast between the Father's involvement with this creation⁵⁶ and the Mother's.

The Father can, and does, acknowledge others as His.⁵⁷ But, unlike the Son who has repeatedly visited this earth, walked upon it,⁵⁸ been handled by people,⁵⁹ and eaten here,⁶⁰ the Father does not come into contact with this

⁵⁴ Mormonism consistently claimed this was a literal "fathering" through conjugal relations: "President Ezra Taft Benson stated, 'The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints proclaims that Jesus Christ is the Son of God in the most literal sense. The body in which He performed His mission in the flesh was fathered by that same Holy Being we worship as God, our Eternal Father. Jesus was not the son of Joseph, nor was He begotten by the Holy Ghost. He is the Son of the Eternal Father!' ([*Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, p. 4). From Mary, a mortal woman, Jesus inherited mortality, including the capacity to die. From his exalted Father he inherited immortality, the capacity to live forever. The Savior's dual nature—man and God—enabled him to make an infinite Atonement, an accomplishment that no other person, no matter how capable or gifted, could do (cf. Alma 34:9-12)." (*Encyclopedia of Mormonism, Vol.2*, "Jesus Christ, Mortal Jesus," p. 725.) Currently Mormonism appears to be walking away from, if not altogether abandoning, this teaching. See, *Did God have sex with Mary*, fairmormon.org/archive/publications/did-god-have-sex-with-mary

⁵⁵ "The fleshly body of Jesus required a Mother as well as a Father. Therefore, the Father and Mother of Jesus, according to the flesh, must have been associated in the capacity of husband and wife; hence the Virgin Mary must have been, for the time being, the *lawful* wife of God the Father: we use the term *lawful* wife, because it would be blasphemous in the highest degree to say that He overshadowed her or begat the Saviour unlawfully. ... He had a lawful right to overshadow the Virgin Mary in the capacity of a husband, and beget a Son.. Whether God the Father gave Mary to Joseph for time only, or for time and eternity, we are not informed. Inasmuch as God was the first husband to her, it may be that He only gave her to be the wife of Joseph while in this mortal state, and that *He intended after the resurrection to again take her as one of his own wives* to raise up immortal spirits in eternity." (Orson Pratt, *The Seer*, Vol. 1, No. 10, October, 1853, p. 158, emphasis added). "[T]he Only Begotten of the Father. (Moses 5:9) These name-titles all signify that our Lord is the only Son of the Father in the flesh. Each of these words 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." (Bruce McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, (Bookcraft 1966; 12th printing 1973), p. 546-547.)

⁵⁶ As I have previously explained, in His glorified condition, man has ascended to Him, but He has not descended to contact with this creation.

⁵⁷ Ps. 2: 7: "I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou *art* my Son; this day have I begotten thee."

⁵⁸ Luke 24:15-16: "And it came to pass, that, while they communed *together* and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him."

⁵⁹ Luke 24:36-39: "And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." 3 Ne. 11: 14-15: "Arise and come forth unto me, that ye may thrust your hands into my side, and also that ye may feel the prints of the nails in my hands and in my feet, that ye may know that I am the God of Israel, and the God of the whole earth, and have been slain for the sins of the world. And it came to pass that the multitude went forth, and thrust their hands into his side, and did feel the prints of the nails in his hands and in his feet; and this they did do, going forth one by one until they had all gone forth, and did see with their eyes and did feel with their hands, and did know of a surety and did bear record, that it was he, of whom it was written by the prophets, that should come."

earth in its fallen state.⁶¹ The only time the Father had contact with this earth was before the Fall, in the Paradisiacal setting of Eden—which was a Temple at the time.⁶² Whenever there has been contact with the Father thereafter, He has been at a distance from this earth.⁶³

There is a formality with the Father that does not exist with the Son. For example, the Son has eaten with mortal man while He was immortal, both before His ministry in the flesh⁶⁴ and after.⁶⁵ As our Redeemer, He is directly responsible for us and has contact with us to perform His redemptive service. The Father, on the other hand, is different in status, responsibility, glory and dominion. The Son can appear to mortal man without showing His glory or requiring any alteration of the mortal who beholds Him.⁶⁶ To behold the Father, to endure His presence, one must be transfigured.⁶⁷ Mortal man cannot behold the Father's works while mortal, for if you comprehend them you cannot afterward remain mortal in the flesh.⁶⁸

That is taken from pages 383-387 of *Removing the Condemnation*, and includes the footnotes. Like this description of the Son, the same description should apply to His Mother.

The Father is the source of glory and likened to the sun. The Mother reflects and shares this glory, and is likened to the moon. She reflects God's glory, endures within it and is empowered by it. She can participate with Him in all that is done wielding that glory. "Knowledge" is the initiator or force, and "wisdom" is the regulator, guide, apportioner and

⁶⁰ John 21: 13: "Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise."

⁶¹ Matt. 17: 5: "While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."

JS-H 1: 17: "It no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered from the enemy which held me bound. When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*"

⁶² Gen. 3: 8: "And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden."

⁶³ See, e.g., Moses 7: 24: "And there came generation upon generation; and Enoch was high and lifted up, even in the bosom of the Father, and of the Son of Man; and behold, the power of Satan was upon all the face of the earth." 1 Ne. 1: 8: "And being thus overcome with the Spirit, he was carried away in a vision, even that he saw the heavens open, and he thought he saw God sitting upon his throne, surrounded with numberless concourses of angels in the attitude of singing and praising their God." Alma 36: 22: "Yea, methought I saw, even as our father Lehi saw, God sitting upon his throne, surrounded with numberless concourses of angels, in the attitude of singing and praising their God; yea, and my soul did long to be there."

⁶⁴ Ex. 24: 9-11: "Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: And they saw the God of Israel: and *there was* under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in *his* clearness. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink."

⁶⁵ Luke 24: 41-43: "And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took *it*, and did eat before them."

⁶⁶ John 20: 15-17: "Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and *to* my God, and your God."

⁶⁷ Moses 1: 2: "And he saw God face to face, and he talked with him, and the glory of God was upon Moses; therefore Moses could endure his presence."

⁶⁸ Moses 1: 5: "Wherefore, no man can behold all my works, except he behold all my glory; and no man can behold all my glory, and afterwards remain in the flesh on the earth."

weaver of that power. If not tempered and guided by wisdom, knowledge can be destructive. Wisdom makes the prudent adaptations required for order. The Father and Mother are One. But the Mother bridges the gulf between the Throne of the Father and fallen man. She made it possible for the Son of God to enter this fallen world for the salvation of everything in it.

A great deal of reflection and study is needed to understand all this implies.⁶⁹ This is an introduction of some basic information about the Mother of God, or “the Mother of the Son of God after the manner of the flesh.” More will be given in a temple where mankind’s understanding of things kept hidden from the world⁷⁰ will be greatly increased. When God directs one be built to His name.

There was a time when Christians recognized that the stars of heaven bore witness of the significance of Mary, Christ’s earthly mother. Few Christians now look at the constellations as “signs” set in the firmament by God as His testimony.⁷¹ The “light” that was meant to shine on earth⁷² was to illuminate both the eyes and mind of man. Man in the first generations understood this. Abraham received that same understanding, and “a knowledge of the beginning of the creation, and also of the planets,⁷³ and of the stars, as they were made known unto the fathers”⁷⁴ was written by him.

At the time of Christ’s birth, there were those who understood the testimony written in the lights of the firmament. They reported that they “saw his star in the east⁷⁵ and have come to worship him.”⁷⁶ These “wise men” watched and waited for the heavenly alignment to testify of the birth of a promised “king.” The Matthew text makes such casual mention of this that we give it little notice. Today, Christians and Mormons alike have little understanding of the lights in the firmament, and so give little heed to the signs set by God in the heaven above. Our ignorance does mean these signs are meaningless. It only means we are poorly informed of God’s full message.⁷⁷

John’s Revelation mentions two of the heavenly signs that testify of Mary. One of these is on the ecliptic and since earliest times has been identified as a virgin woman, called by us the constellation “Virgo.” The circle of heaven is divided into the north and south at the ecliptic. On the ecliptic, from the north to the south poles, there are twelve constellations that can be seen everywhere on earth. Some constellations cannot be seen

⁶⁹ For example, the term “inseparably connected” as used in D&C 93:33 (“For man is spirit. The elements are eternal, and spirit and element, inseparably connected, receive a fullness of joy”) does not prohibit such a being from voluntarily condescending. It does assure all who are resurrected that they can safely endure the presence of glorified beings without being destroyed. Likewise, Alma’s teaching that the immortal body uniting spirit and body “never to be divided” (NC Alma 8:17, also Alma 11:45) does not prohibit voluntary condescension, by choosing, as did Christ and the Mother, to enter the mortal state. For a further discussion of this see *Essays: Three Degrees*, pp. 21-52.

⁷⁰ See, e.g., NC 1 Ne. 3:31, also 1 Ne. 14:28; NC 3 Ne. 12:2, also 3 Ne. 26:16-18; NC Ether 1:15-16, also Ether 3:25-27.

⁷¹ KJV Gen. 1:14.

⁷² KJV Gen. 1:15.

⁷³ The word “planets” has been a stumbling block for many critics of Joseph Smith and the Book of Abraham. That word is considered too modern to have been known at the time of Abraham. Anciently the planets were termed “wandering stars”—the word “planet” means “wanderer.” Joseph therefore used a term commonly understood in our language. But the ancients would also have accepted “wanderer” as the appropriate name for these heavenly lights.

⁷⁴ Abr. 1:31.

⁷⁵ Because they saw it “in the east” they necessarily traveled from the west. They were, therefore, far more likely to have traveled from the Iberian Peninsula or British Isles than from Persia. But this is a topic for another day.

⁷⁶ JST Matt. 1:6; KJV Matt. 2:2.

⁷⁷ The heavenly signs in the lights of the firmament are testifying and confirming many of the events currently happening on the earth. Very few today are giving that any notice.

from one of the hemispheres, but those twelve on the ecliptic are ever-present overhead. These move in the same plane as the sun, moon and wandering planets. Most of those who discuss these twelve constellations allocate the 360 degrees of the heavenly circle into 12 equal, 30-degree segments, allocating for each constellation on the ecliptic the same distance. Today, these twelve constellations are called the Zodiac.

Unlike the equal division between the twelve constellations of the Zodiac (or Mazzaroth⁷⁸ in the old Hebrew of the Book of Job), the star fields of these twelve constellations are unequal in sizes. The two largest star fields belong to Virgo (46.79°) and Aquarius (50.86°). These two largest of the Zodiac constellations are heavenly witnesses testifying of Christ's mother Mary and the returning Christ. For Christ's first coming, the heavenly testimony focuses the greatest part of the starfield on His Mother. We should reflect on what that may mean. We ought to contemplate why Christ's first coming was symbolized on the heavenly ecliptic by the Virgin Mother. Why was She the focus?

Christ's Second Coming is the largest starfield on the ecliptic.⁷⁹ He will return to pour out judgment, blessing those who follow Him and destroying those who rebel. The destruction of the wicked is what Christ identified as "the end of the world."⁸⁰ Aquarius has two outflows from the "Waterbearer's urn." One represents water (giving life) and the other represents fire (purging).⁸¹

Traditionally we interpret the constellation Virgo as a woman holding a sheaf of wheat in her left hand. The sheaf represents her seed. The brightest star in the constellation, a magnitude 1 star, is "spica"⁸²-- "the seed of the woman." That star is placed on the ecliptic.⁸³ Most other stars in Virgo are located above the ecliptic. "The seed of the woman" represents Christ. His star on the ecliptic represents that everything in the firmament is divided in relation to Him. All of heaven is either above or below the ecliptic. The position of His star, like His role as judge, divides the heavens.

Traditionally Virgo is drawn looking down at the earth, facing us. This view places the seed of the woman in her left hand. The left hand is usually a symbol of cursing.⁸⁴ The right

⁷⁸ That passage in Job refers to other constellations when mentioning the Zodiak, or "Mazzaroth": "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons? Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth?" (Job 38:31-33.) The Pleiades was also called "the seven sisters" anciently and is a star cluster riding atop the shoulder of Taurus. Orion is a constellation just below the ecliptic and located beneath the bull, Taurus and the twins, Gemini. Arcturus is one of the brightest stars in the heavens, is located northward from the brightest star in Virgo, Spica. The name Arcturus means "a gathering together."

⁷⁹ There are other constellations testifying of Christ, but that is not the subject of this paper.

⁸⁰ "The harvest is the end of the world or the destruction of the wicked[.]" NC Matt. 7:9. "So shall it be at the end of the world, and the world is the children of the wicked." NC Matt. 7:12. His disciples understood this as evidenced by the question they posed to the Lord in NC Matt. 11:2: "And what is the sign of your coming and of the end of the world? Or the destruction of the wicked, which is the end of the world?"

⁸¹ Hence "the great and dreadful day of the Lord" (Mal. 4:1-5; NC 3 Ne. 11:4-5; 3 Ne. 25:1-5)—in which it will be "great" for those who are the Lord's and "dreadful" for the wicked, or the world.

⁸² The "signs" in the lights of heaven are meant to be seen and understood by the unaided human eye from the surface of the earth. However, an interesting discovery made using telescopic magnification reveals that the "seed of the woman" is not a single star, but binary stars so closely orbiting one another that they are reaching toward one another at their equators because of their gravitational attraction. These two are seen as one from the surface of the earth.

⁸³ The placement of the lights in the firmament is to be interpreted by the unaided human eye from the surface of the earth. Therefore, although this star is approximately 2° below, to the unaided eye it appears to be on the ecliptic.

⁸⁴ See, NC Matt. 11:24; NC Mosiah 3:3.

hand symbolizes blessing.⁸⁵ If the seed of the woman is meant to be in her right hand, then she would be drawn looking up heavenward, and her back would be facing us. Reorienting Virgo to face upward –with the seed of the woman in her right hand –is more fitting.

John described Virgo and the movement of other lights on the ecliptic as follows, “And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars[.]”⁸⁶ The sun and moon move on the ecliptic through the constellation Virgo and at times “clothe” her and at other times appear “under her feet.” This “wonder” John described is overhead in the starry firmament of “heaven” as one of the “signs” put there to testify of heavenly things.

Christ’s Mother Mary is a figure of such preeminence that testimony of Her is emblazoned upon the ecliptic in an enduring, towering figure outlined in the stars. This is not happenstance. It is God’s witness to us. We should accept it as meaningful and ponder on the meaning.

Another of the constellations John mentions is a “woman” who brought forth a son, who is then caught up to the throne of God.⁸⁷ This is also depicted in another constellation. One of the constellations immediately associated with Virgo,⁸⁸ located next to her in the northern sky, is a constellation anciently depicted as a mother seated on a throne holding a son in her hands.⁸⁹ This image of a woman seated on a throne with her son is located just to the north, above Virgo. It suggests both the mother and her son descended from a throne they once occupied in heaven, and is destined to return again there. If you can accept the witness written of them in the stars of the firmament, then She came to earth, with Her Son. And She will return again to a Throne in the north. Contemplate what this witness of Mary could mean. Taken at full value, Mary, like Her Son, condescended to come here.

The Book of Mormon gives an extended description of Mary, the Mother of God. In the original translation text the words “mother of God” were used, but was changed by Joseph Smith in 1837 to “mother of the Son of God.” Here is how it reads following that change:

And it came to pass that I looked and beheld the great city of Jerusalem, and also other cities. And I beheld the city of Nazareth; and in the city of Nazareth I beheld a virgin, and she was exceedingly fair and white. And it came to pass that I saw the heavens open; and an angel came down and stood before me; and he said unto me: Nephi, what beholdest thou? And I said unto him: A virgin, most beautiful and fair above all other virgins. And he said unto me: Knowest thou the condescension of God? And I said unto him: I know that he loveth his children; nevertheless, I do not know the meaning of all things. And he said unto me: Behold, the virgin whom thou seest is the mother of the Son of God, after the manner of the flesh. And it came to pass that I beheld that she was carried away in the Spirit; and after she had been carried away in the Spirit for the space of a time the angel spake

⁸⁵ See, NC Matt. 11:22; NC Mosiah 3:2.

⁸⁶ NC Rev. 4:1; KJV Rev. 12:1.

⁸⁷ “And she brought forth a male child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up unto God and his throne.”

⁸⁸ The earliest traditions associated three “decan” constellations for each of the twelve Zodiacal constellations, for a total of 48 constellations. The original have been forgotten, and modern interpretations have 88 constellations and figures.

⁸⁹ This constellation is named Coma, and was reinterpreted later as “Coma Bernieces” and the depiction changed to a woman’s hair. This false reinterpretation was based on Ptolemy’s wife, Bernice, who sacrificed her hair to the gods once her husband returned alive from a battle.

unto me, saying: Look! And I looked and beheld the virgin again, bearing a child in her arms. And the angel said unto me: Behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Son of the Eternal Father! Knowest thou the meaning of the tree which thy father saw? And I answered him, saying: Yea, it is the love of God, which sheddeth itself abroad in the hearts of the children of men; wherefore, it is the most desirable above all things. And he spake unto me, saying: Yea, and the most joyous to the soul.⁹⁰

Most who read this passage interpret the “condescension” reference solely as Christ’s. They view it as Christ alone who condescended by being borne of Mary here in mortality. However, when leading up to the angel’s question, “Knowest thou the condescension of God,” the text focuses exclusively on Mary. When the angel clarified the “condescension,” he again focused primarily on Mary and secondarily on Her Son. The angel explained, “Behold, **the virgin** whom thou seest is **the mother of the Son of God**, after the manner of the flesh. And it came to pass that I beheld that **she** was carried away in the Spirit; and after **she** had been carried away in the Spirit for the space of a time the angel spake unto me, saying: Look! And I looked and **beheld the virgin again**, bearing a child **in her arms**. And the angel said unto me: Behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Son of the Eternal Father!”

Who would you reasonably expect to be the woman chosen before this world was organized to become the mortal Mother of the Lord? Who would you expect Heavenly Father would want to bear His child, if not His Spouse? Together God the Father and Mary can be acknowledged as the Parents of Christ.⁹¹ The scriptures shift the focus of the “condescension” from Christ, to His Mother, and then back to Her Son, “the seed of the woman.”⁹²

Lectures on Faith identifies Christ as “the prototype of the saved man.”⁹³ Lecture 7 focuses attention on Christ as the Savior and Redeemer. But the lecture extends the requirements met by Jesus Christ to also apply for every saved man. In other words, for any man to be saved they must “attain to the resurrection,”⁹⁴ like Christ. Shifting attention for a moment from Jesus Christ as our Redeemer and Savior to His Mother, we could acknowledge Her as “the prototype of the saved woman.” In other words, could we consider what She did a Divine pattern to be followed by women?

“Attaining to the resurrection” does not mean merely being resurrected from the grave. We must conquer death:

But even when we rise from the grave, we will still not have “attained to the resurrection of the dead” nor hold the keys of resurrection. No one will until they, like Christ, have gone from exaltation to exaltation, until they can obtain the power to resurrect all that depends upon them. For us “*to attain to the resurrection of the dead*” requires us to have the power to resurrect, not only

⁹⁰ NC 1 Ne. 3:8-9; 1 Ne. 11:13-23.

⁹¹ Mary indeed “had a little lamb whose fleece was white as snow.” And in the great condescension of God, “everywhere that Mary went the lamb was sure to go.”

⁹² The text of the New Covenants does this better by the layout dividing ¶¶8 and 9. Paragraph 8 includes the angel’s question about “condescension” and Mary’s role. Paragraph 9 then continues with Mary and adds the birth of Christ.

⁹³ Christ “is the prototype or standard of salvation, or in other words, that he is a saved being.” *Lecture 7*, ¶10.

⁹⁴ “Here, then, is eternal life--to know the only wise and true God; and you have got to learn how to be Gods yourselves, and to be kings and priests to God, the same as all Gods have done before you, namely, by going from one small degree to another, and from a small capacity to a great one; from grace to grace, from exaltation to exaltation, until you attain to the resurrection of the dead...” (*TPJS* p. 348.)

ourselves, but also those who are dependent on us. This is what the prototype of the saved man did. This is Who we worship. This is who and what we must precisely and exactly become.

Remember Christ said, “The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he sees the Father do. For whatever things he does, these also does the Son likewise.”⁹⁵ The Father went before, and the Son follows after.⁹⁶ To be like Him, sit on His throne,⁹⁷ and attain to their same status, we must do precisely what the Gods have done.

For us to understand Christ we must understand the challenging path Joseph Smith explained in his final church conference in April 1844. All must progress, “*Until you attain to the resurrection of the dead and are able to dwell in everlasting burnings, and to sit in glory, as do those who sit enthroned in everlasting power.*”

Even that which we envision as the highest heaven requires those who sit enthroned in everlasting burnings to condescend to be there. D&C 130:26 reveals that a white stone is given to heirs of the celestial kingdom to reveal to them things pertaining to “a higher order of kingdoms.”⁹⁸ We must go from “exaltation to exaltation” because there is a great deal not yet revealed to man about the eternities. There are places where, in everlasting glory, the personages are embodied in “spirit, glory, and power” like The Father.⁹⁹

Did Mary also “attain to the resurrection?” Protestants dismiss the Catholic veneration of Mary. But it may just be that Catholics have preserved something of value about her that ought not be ignored.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states: “The Most Blessed Virgin Mary, when the course of her earthly life was completed, was taken up body and soul into the glory of heaven, where she already shares in the glory of her Son’s Resurrection, anticipating the resurrection of all members of His Body.”

Karl Keating of *Catholic Answers* explains:

We know that after the crucifixion Mary was cared for by the apostle John. (John. 19:26-27.) Early Christian writings say John went to live at Ephesus and that Mary accompanied him. There is some dispute about where she ended her life, perhaps there, perhaps back at Jerusalem. Neither of these cities nor any other claimed her remains, although there are claims about possessing her (temporary) tomb. Why did no city claim the bones of Mary? Apparently because there were no bones to claim, and people knew it.

Remember, in the early Christian centuries, relics of saints were jealously guarded and highly prized. The bones of those martyred in the Colosseum, for instance, were quickly gathered up and preserved; there are many accounts of this in the biographies of those who gave up their lives for

⁹⁵ NC John 5:4; see also KJV John 5:19.

⁹⁶ I have previously explained how Christ, as well as the “noble and great” were all embodied and therefore resurrected beings before this world. They were “souls.” (Abraham 3:23.) The definition of “soul” given through Joseph years prior to his translation of the Book of Abraham was the “spirit and the body” together. (D&C 88:15-17.) For more on this see *The First Three Words* in the book *Essays: Three Degrees*.

⁹⁷ NC Rev. 1:20; see also KJV Rev. 3:21.

⁹⁸ D&C 130:9-11 makes clear that the celestial kingdom, while much higher than this telestial world, is inferior to other, still higher exaltations called “higher order of kingdoms.”

⁹⁹ See *Lecture Fifth*, ¶2.

the Faith [for example, the bones of St. Peter and St. Paul were widely known to be preserved in Rome, and the sepulcher of David and the tomb of St. John the Baptist are both mentioned in Scripture]. Yet here was Mary, certainly the most privileged of all the saints ... but we have no record of her bodily remains being venerated anywhere.

A 5th Century letter from the Patriarch of Jerusalem responding to the Byzantine Empress Pulcheria's request for relics of the Holy Virgin Mary states¹⁰⁰ there was a centuries old tradition that Mary was taken into heaven when she died and therefore there were no relics. He expressed surprise that the Empress was not acquainted with this well-known tradition. This was apparently common knowledge among the early Christians.

According to the tradition the apostles assembled to bury her, but burial was unnecessary because she had already been assumed into heaven, body and spirit.¹⁰¹ This teaching was an extension of another Catholic belief regarding Mary called "Immaculate Conception." The teaching was propounded by Pope Pius IX and declared that Mary was free from the weaknesses of the Fall of Adam, and born without the sinful nature of fallen man.¹⁰² Although an estimated 1.2 billion Catholics accept these teachings about Mary today, Protestants and Mormons have not. The angel's words in 1st Nephi seem more akin to Catholic veneration of Mary than the crude, incidental and dismissive way Mormon traditions have discussed the Virgin Mary.

The Heavenly Mother was there in the Garden when man was first introduced.¹⁰³ She was with the Father when He said, "Let **us** make man"—for no man ever fathered a child without a mother to bear his seed. She was with the Father when man fell and was cast out of the Garden and made vulnerable to death. These Heavenly Parents were jointly committed to saving their offspring from death and hell.

If "the condescension of God" included the Mother of God as well as Her Son, then She was also a critical participant for providing the sacrificial lamb required for our redemption.¹⁰⁴ Since the Fall of Adam, every one who enters mortality must die to exit mortality. But unlike Adam and the rest of his posterity, Christ lived so as to be able to defy death. The wages of sin are death, but Christ did not earn those wages. Therefore, Christ could return from death because He attained to the resurrection. Joseph Smith explained,

The Scriptures inform us that Jesus said, As the Father hath power in Himself, even so hath the Son power--to do what? Why, what the Father did.

¹⁰⁰ St. John Damascene preserved a copy of the letter written by a 5th century Patriarch of Jerusalem named Juvenalius to the Empress.

¹⁰¹ St. Gregory of Tours wrote an account in the 6th Century in *Book of Miracles*, 1:4. Pope Pius XII fixed the Catholic teaching in his *Munificentissimus Deus* on November 1, 1950 in which he declared both the Immaculate Conception of Mary and her Assumption into heaven. The declaration states in ¶3: "Actually God, who from all eternity regards Mary with a most favorable and unique affection, has "when the fullness of time came" put the plan of his providence into effect in such a way that all the privileges and prerogatives he had granted to her in his sovereign generosity were to shine forth in her in a kind of perfect harmony."

¹⁰² His 1854 Papal Bull *Ineffabilis* stated: "We declare, pronounce and define that the doctrine which asserts that the Blessed Virgin Mary, from the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of almighty God, and in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, Saviour of the human race, was preserved free from every stain of original sin is a doctrine revealed by God and, for this reason, must be firmly and constantly believed by all the faithful[.]"

¹⁰³ At the end of this paper I will return to this subject and further clarify Her role and the wife of Christ's role there.

¹⁰⁴ The hymn *I Stand All Amazed* focuses on Jesus Christ as Redeemer and Savior, and rightly so. But some of the language in that hymn might be applied equally to His Mother, who condescended to bear Him into mortality: "I marvel that [they] would descend from [their] throne[s] divine, To rescue a soul so rebellious and proud as mind."

The answer is obvious--in a manner to lay down His body and take it up again. Jesus, what are you going to do? To lay down my life as my Father did, and take it up again. Do we believe it? If you do not believe it, you do not believe the Bible. The Scriptures say it, and I defy all the learning and wisdom and all the combined powers of earth and hell together to refute it. Here, then, is eternal life--to know the only wise and true God; and you have got to learn how to be Gods yourselves, and to be kings and priests to God, the same as all Gods have done before you, namely, by going from one small degree to another, and from a small capacity to a great one; from grace to grace, from exaltation to exaltation, until you attain to the resurrection of the dead..." (TPJS p. 348.)

If Christ attained to the resurrection through His progression from one small capacity to a great one, going from grace to grace and from exaltation to exaltation, did His Mother do anything less? Was Her coming into this world any less of a condescension? Reflect on the Mother of God and consider this passage of *Lecture 7* which describes Christ,

And if we should continue our interrogation, and ask how it is that he is saved, the answer would be, because he is a just and holy being. And if he were anything different from what he is he would not be saved, for his salvation depends on his being precisely what he is and nothing else. For if it were possible for Him to change in the least degree, so sure he would fail of salvation and lose all his dominion, power, authority and glory, which constitutes salvation. For salvation consists in the glory, authority, majesty, power and dominion which Jehovah possesses, and in nothing else, and no being can possess it but himself or one like him.¹⁰⁵

It requires as much to save a woman as a man. No person, male or female, can dwell where God dwells without possessing the same attributes as all those who have gone before. The pattern is unchangeable. We cannot claim to be like Them without possessing the same holiness these holy beings possess.¹⁰⁶

We have more quotes of Mary in the New Covenants book of Luke. When She was visited by the angel Gabriel and told of Her ministry to bear the Messiah, She responded: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to your word."¹⁰⁷ The term "handmaid" includes the possible meanings wife, female partner or consort. Mary was all of these to God the Father.

The account continues with Mary going to visit her cousin Elizabeth, who was at that time six-months pregnant with John the Baptist. When Mary arrived, Elizabeth addressed her with this inspired utterance, "Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: And she spoke out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why is it that this blessing is upon me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?"¹⁰⁸ Consider what it may mean to be "blessed among women?" Elizabeth addressed Her as "the mother of my Lord"—which should not be interpreted narrowly or construed merely to mean a biological vessel to accomplish a pregnancy. When read in combination with the Book of Mormon description, it can mean so much more.

¹⁰⁵ *Lecture 7*, ¶10.

¹⁰⁶ "The sacrifice required of Abraham in the offering up of Isaac, shows that if a man would attain to the keys of the kingdom of an endless life; he must sacrifice all things. When God offers a blessing or knowledge to a man, and he refuses to receive it, he will be damned." *TPJS* p. 325.

¹⁰⁷ NC Luke 1:6; see also, KJV Luke 1:38.

¹⁰⁸ NC Luke 1:7; see also, KJV Luke 1:41-43.

Mary responded with a psalm, giving us a glimpse into Her heart. What we find there is wondrous.

And Mary said, My soul does magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior. For he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden. For, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me Blessed. For he who is mighty has done to me great things; and I will magnify his holy name, for his mercy on them that fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm. He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He has put down the mighty from their high seats and exalted them of low degree. He has filled the hungry with good things, but the rich he has sent away empty. He has helped his servant Israel in remembrance of mercy, as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed for ever.¹⁰⁹

These words are worthy of the Mother of God. She clearly “magnifies” or increases Her Lord. Christ did the same thing, glorifying the Father.¹¹⁰

When Mary said the words, “he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden” the “condescension of God” seems to apply particularly for Her. She laid aside glory to be here, and the Father still held “regard” for His “handmaiden” in this “low estate.” What a great work our Heavenly Parents have undertaken for their children!

Mary declared, “from henceforth all generations shall call me Blessed.” All generations include the living, the unborn and the dead. Eventually every soul who has come to this world will recognize Her as “Blessed”—not only for what She is, but for what She did to magnify the work of our Father in Heaven.

Her description of the Heavenly Father includes these words of admiration and praise:

[H]is mercy on them that fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm. He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He has put down the mighty from their high seats and exalted them of low degree. He has filled the hungry with good things, but the rich he has sent away empty.

Clearly both the Father and Mary despise the “proud” whose overestimation of themselves is informed by “the imagination of their hearts” and not God’s regard. Both the Father and Mary want those who are “mighty” to be dispossessed from “their high seats” of power. The Parents of Christ prefer “them of low degree” whose humility and selflessness make them suitable to be exalted. The hungry are fed and the rich are sent away empty—which may not be fully realized until after this world.¹¹¹ But the Parents of Christ will be the final judges of all people and will judge mankind based exactly upon the criteria They have revealed.

Based on several verses in Matthew,¹¹² Protestants claim that Joseph fathered other children with Mary. Catholic theology venerates Mary and teaches Her perpetual virginity.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ NC Luke 1:8; see also, KJV Luke 1:46-55.

¹¹⁰ KJV John 17:4 “I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.”

¹¹¹ See, e.g., KJV Luke 16:19-31.

¹¹² NC Matt. 6:18: “And while he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and brethren stood outside, desiring to speak with him. Then one said unto him, Behold, your mother and your brethren stand outside[.]” Matt. NC Matt. 7:14; also KJV Matt. 13:55-56: “Is not this the carpenter’s son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?”

¹¹³ See, *Catholic Encyclopedia*, discussion of the topics: Immaculate Conception; Mary in the Gospels; Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. The four Marian Catholic dogmas are: Divine motherhood, Perpetual Virginity, Immaculate Conception, and The Assumption.

Catholics believe the brothers mentioned in the scriptures are sons of Joseph from a prior marriage and not other children born to Mary. The Catholic view on this point is strengthened by Christ assigning John to be Mary's son as one of His dying acts.¹¹⁴ If Mary had other sons to care for Her, that assignment of John would not have been necessary. The Catholics are much closer to the truth about Mary, but they still have an incomplete theology.

Returning to the words of the Divine Mother in Proverbs 8:

I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment. That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance and I will fill their treasures.

These treasures are not earthly, but “durable” and incapable of depreciation. What the Mother offers cannot be harmed by moth or rust, nor lost to thieves. They are in heaven.¹¹⁵ But obtaining them requires us to walk as She guides “in the way or righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment.” The great white throne is not occupied by the Father alone. Nor will that great judgment be made without the Mother's involvement, for She lives in “the paths of judgment” and wisely counsels Her children to obtain durable “riches and honor”.

The Mother explains how She was present from the beginning as part of the God we call the Father, or in Hebrew the Elohim:

The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the Earth was. When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth, while as yet he had not made the Earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens I was there, when he set a compass upon the face of the depth, when he established the clouds above, when he strengthened the fountains of the deep, when he gave to the sea his decree that the waters should not pass his commandment, when he appointed the foundations of the Earth, then I was by him, as one brought up with him, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him, rejoicing in the habitable part of his Earth and my delights were with the sons of men.

Before this creation, the Mother in Heaven was with the Father. She was beside Him when His work began. She was there when the plan was laid, the boundaries established, and the compass applied to establish order for the creation. All the Father knows, the Mother knows. All the Father established and ordered, the Mother established and ordered. They are One. She is the Father's “delight” and the potential of Her sons to be like Her Husband brings Her delight.

To be like their Father, Her sons must become one with Her daughters, for it is not good for man to be alone.¹¹⁶ The Father and Mother are “one” and Her sons and daughters must likewise become “one.” Only when the man and woman were together was the creation “good.” When men rebel, disobey, act cruelly or mistreat Her daughters, we are anything but a “delight” to the Heavenly Mother. When we offend Her we also offend Her Husband.

¹¹⁴ John 19:25-27: “Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.” See also NC John 10:13.

¹¹⁵ NC 3 Ne. 6:15.

¹¹⁶ Abraham 5:14; KJV Gen. 2:18.

Before any of us will plan, measure, set a compass, and apportion the foundations of another earth, we must grow together and become like Them. Their work is glorious. They possess love—the power that creates and organizes. Love is the power behind all They do. We cannot be like them without a loving relationship that mirrors Theirs.

The account continues:

Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children, for blessed are they that keep my ways. Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not. Blessed is the man that beareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoso findeth me findeth life and shall obtain favor of the Lord. But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul, all they that hate me love death.

These interesting words do not mean just discovering the abstract presence of “wisdom” as a characteristic attributable to the Mother in Heaven. Instead they require us to discover Her existence and acknowledge Her—otherwise we have not “found” Her. When She declares “whoso findeth me findeth life and shall obtain favor of the Lord,” it should be taken literally. This does not mean we now pray to Her, for we are commanded to pray to the Father.¹¹⁷ But it does mean when we use the word “Father” to describe God we finally regard God to be both “male and female”—the original “image of God.”¹¹⁸

There are seven stages of development through which God’s children must pass. It is not all to be done in this life.¹¹⁹ Christ is the “prototype of the saved man,”¹²⁰ and He qualified by passing through these stages of development. We should not be surprised that the Heavenly Mother was responsible for planning and creating these developmental opportunities for Her children.

Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars, she hath killed her beasts, she hath mingled her wine, she hath also furnished her table...

When any of us arrive at the end of the journey through the seven rungs of Jacob’s ladder, we will discover that the Mother was present throughout that journey. She declared: “I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment.” She is present all along the way through the seven pillars. This recognition of the Heavenly Mother requires wisdom.

When a female deity has been worshiped in past cultures, more often than not the result is a gradual degeneration into fertility cults and sexual excesses. Ritual prostitution was often practiced by ancients who believed in a divine mother. Even Israel fell into sexual deviancy as part of their worship of the female god.

At a pivotal time for ancient Israel,¹²¹ Jeremiah condemned worship of “the queen of heaven.” Because some scholars want a divine female to be authentic, Jeremiah’s condemnation is considered problematic. His words can be interpreted to denounce altogether a female god. In part because of this, in current scholarship Jeremiah has become

¹¹⁷ NC 3 Ne. 6:14.

¹¹⁸ KJV Gen. 1:27.

¹¹⁹ “When you climb up a ladder, you must begin at the bottom, and ascend step by step, until you arrive at the top; and so it is with the principles of the gospel—you must begin with the first, and go on until you learn all the principles of exaltation. But it will be a great while after you have passed through the veil before you will have learned them. It is not all to be comprehended in this world; it will be a great work to learn our salvation and exaltation even beyond the grave.” (DHC 6:306-307.)

¹²⁰ *Lecture Seventh*, ¶9.

¹²¹ He prophesied beginning just prior to the Babylonian captivity. He was there when the reforms marking the end of the First Temple Period of Israel’s history began. That was when those called the “Deuteronomists” began to alter the scriptures.

a controversial figure. Even his existence is now questioned. Margaret Barker recently wrote the following:

This assumes that a person of that name existed, since scholars cannot begin to agree if Jeremiah even existed, nor on the process by which the present texts of Jeremiah were formed. Many have resorted to other ways of dealing with the text. A recent volume on the latest trends in Jeremiah studies was introduced thus: “Jeremiah is an intractable riddle.” “Taken together, the essays in this volume press for an end to ‘innocent’ readings of Jeremiah... And the turn to Jeremiah as a social semiotic discourse presses for an end to “innocent biblical theology readings that have companioned historical-critical orthodoxy in one fashion or another.” No help there in our quest for reconstructing what happened in the time of Josiah! (Quoting A.R.P. Diamond, Introduction, pp. 15, 32, in A.R.P. Diamond, K.M. O’Connor and L. Stulman, eds, *Troubling Jeremiah*, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999.)¹²²

But we know Jeremiah was real and that he was a prophet because Nephi mentions him in his description of what had been preserved on the brass plates of Laban. The description includes the following:

And also a record of the Jews from the beginning, even down to the commencement of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah. And also the prophecies of the holy prophets, from the beginning, even down to the commencement of the reign of Zedekiah; and also many prophecies which have been spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah.¹²³

The Book of Mormon confirms Jeremiah’s existence and status as a prophet. We can accept him even if today’s scholars doubt.¹²⁴ Revelation remains more reliable than mere scholarship and opinion.¹²⁵

Jeremiah denounced the form of veneration taken by ancient Israel. He rebuked those in his day, preaching among other things this:

Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger. Do they provoke me to anger? saith the Lord: do they not provoke themselves to the confusion of their own faces?¹²⁶

¹²² *The Mother of the Lord, Volume 1: The Lady in the Temple*, (London; Bloomsbury Publishing, 2012.) That volume attempts to partially reconstruct the earliest religion of the patriarchs, but is unable to do more than raise doubts about the subject. Joseph Smith provided a great deal more, and the scholar who took Joseph as a guide, Hugh Nibley, has been able to make a far better attempt to explain antiquity. In the end, however, it will require God to restore by revelation more of what remains missing before we will have complete answers to our questions.

¹²³ NC 1 Ne. 2:22; 1 Ne. 5:12-13.

¹²⁴ Paul’s description of the last days includes mention of those who will be “[E]ver learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” NC 2 Tim. 1:8; 2 Tim. 3:7.

¹²⁵ “Salvation cannot come without revelation; it is in vain for anyone to minister without it. No man is a minister of Jesus Christ without being a prophet. No man can be a minister of Jesus Christ except he has the testimony of Jesus; and this is the spirit of prophecy. Whenever salvation has been administered, it has been by testimony.” *TPJS*, p. 160.

¹²⁶ KJV Jeremiah 7:17-19.

These words have been incorrectly used to denounce and deny the very existence of a Heavenly Mother. However, Jeremiah was not denying or denouncing Her existence, only the improper form of worshipping Her to the exclusion of Heavenly Father.

It requires wisdom to deal with the Mother. Rejection of Her has resulted in religious and social errors. Ignoring Her has produced celibacy, religious eunuchs, and a collapsing birth rate. On one end, fixation on Her has produced fertility cults, sacred prostitution and religious orgies. At the other end, the Shakers (or The United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing) were celibate and procreation was prohibited. This resulted in the gradual death of their community and as of 2017 only two surviving members. Either end of the religious-sexual spectrum that misapprehends the Divine Feminine has been plagued with degrading or calamitous imbalances.

The Sun and Moon are symbols of the Father and Mother planted overhead as a testimony from Them to Their children. From the surface of the earth¹²⁷ they occupy equal space in the firmament. Although the circumference of the sun is approximately 400 times larger than the moon, the moon is approximately 400 times closer to the earth. As a result they are visibly equal in size and occupy the same path on the ecliptic. This is why the moon is able to eclipse the sun.

The Father, represented by the Sun, is stable, unchangeable, reliable and predictable. The Sun rises every day on the horizon in the east and sets every evening on the horizon in the west. He is unvarying in His course from day-to-day and year-to-year. The Mother, represented by the Moon, changes each day. She waxes and wanes. She does not just move from east to west, but the moonrise also constantly moves in the opposite direction from west to east. Every day She reappears further to the east before beginning Her movement to the west. She moves approximately 50 minutes eastward each day.

Her complex movements overhead were part of the reason She was known anciently as "the Great Dancer." Her movements display constantly changing motions, contrasting with Her Companion Sun. This contrast between the movements of the sun and the moon reminds me of the quip by cartoonist Bob Thaves about Ginger Rogers, the dancing partner of acclaimed Fred Astair, "Sure he was great, but don't forget that Ginger Rogers did everything he did...backwards and in high heels."

We are often told that life on earth depends on the Sun. But life here is equally dependent on the Moon. Without the moon slowing the earth's rotation, we would only have 6 to 10 hour days. The shorter days would result in the earth being much colder, as the sun would have less time to warm the earth's surface. This would cause a dramatic decrease in plant and animal life. Tides would be eliminated, and weather would be more violent. The stable rotation of the earth would change, and we would no longer rotate on a constant axis. The poles and equator would no longer exist or would be constantly changing. The earth's tectonic plates, continents and mountain ranges are all formed by the effect of the moon on the earth. Without the moon, there would be less variety in the earth's habitats. Many life forms could not exist. Richard Lathe, a molecular biologist at Pieta Research in Edinburgh, UK,¹²⁸ advanced a theory in 2003 explaining that life on earth could not have happened

¹²⁷ All the lights of the firmament are to be interpreted from the surface of the earth using the unaided human eye.

¹²⁸ Lathe was the primary inventor of a vaccine to eradicate rabies, which has resulted in extensions of vaccines for cervical and breast cancers. His research led him to postulate a theory that evolutionary life on earth was dependent upon the moon's influence on tides, which he published in 2004 in the journal *Icarus*. (*Fast tidal cycling and the origin of life*, Vol. 168, Issue 1, March 2004, pp. 18-22.) While scripture affirms that God, not chance, established life in this creation, there is no

without the moon. A number of astronomers believe that life on any planet throughout the universe requires a nearby moon and, without this nighttime companion for the sun, life cannot exist.¹²⁹

While acknowledging a Divine Mother is appropriate, singling Her out for worship is not. The words of the Divine Mother's Proverb and Mary's psalm both venerate and praise the Father. The role of God the Father is critical to acknowledge and understand for our salvation. Jesus Christ is the essential Savior and Redeemer whose atoning sacrifice is the means ordained by God to now rescue us from sin and death. Our salvation depends on knowing, confessing and worshiping Christ. Anything that distracts us from that can become an impediment to salvation.

For us the Mother's greatest accomplishment has been to take the seed of God the Father and magnify it. She controls and weaves His seed into Their organized spirit offspring. From Their glory, or intelligence,¹³⁰ She produces organized intelligences, or spirits.¹³¹ One of the titles for the Heavenly Mother is "The Great Weaver" because She formed unorganized intelligence¹³² into organized spirits¹³³ becoming the Mother of All Living. All of us are intimately connected to Her, for we came from Her.

Mortal women have inherited a similar power from Her. This inheritance empowers them to become mothers here. The capacity to fashion matter into another human being belongs only to Her daughters. All human life begins inside the womb of the woman where the work of The Great Weaver is replicated for each one of us who has ever lived in this world.

There is a natural and inevitable affection children hold for their mothers. That affection is close to the hearts of all dying men. There are many battlefield accounts of how dying men call out in their last breath for their mother. Roland Bartetzko, former German Army soldier, when under fire in his first combat experience uttered "Mother" when fire struck others beside him. As he reflected on why he spoke that out loud he concluded, "Our lives begin with our mothers giving birth to us and on the day when I thought that my life was over, my mind circled back to where it all had begun." For Mother's Day 2015, Lt. Col. Zumwalt¹³⁴ wrote the following regarding soldiers crying for their mothers on the battlefield.

Typically, and understandably, the bond between mother and son is very close.

scriptural explanation of the means employed by God to develop life during the creation. Nor, for that matter, is any explanation given for the length of time involved in each "day" of creation. The work accomplished is called a "day" without any attempt to otherwise set out a reliable fixed length of time.

¹²⁹ See, e.g., Peter Ward and Donald Brownlee, *Rare Earth: Why Complex Life Is Uncommon in the Universe*, (Copernicus, 2000); John Gribbin, *The Reason Why: The Miracle of Life on Earth*, (Allen Lane, 2011).

¹³⁰ "The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth." D&C 93:36.

¹³¹ Abraham 3:22-23.

¹³² D&C 93:29: "Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created nor made, neither indeed can be[.]"

¹³³ Abraham 3:22: "Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was[.]" For a further discussion of this topic see *Beloved Enos* and the essay *The First Three Words*.

¹³⁴ 10 May 2015; Lt. Colonel James G. Zumwalt, USMC (Ret.), is a retired Marine infantry officer who served in the Vietnam war, the U.S. invasion of Panama and the first Gulf war. He is the author of *Bare Feet, Iron Will—Stories from the Other Side of Vietnam's Battlefields*, *Living the Juche Lie: North Korea's Kim Dynasty and Doomsday: Iran—The Clock is Ticking*. He frequently writes on foreign policy and defense issues.

The gift of life and nurturing comfort given to a child by a loving mother is never forgotten by a grateful son—especially one still lucid as he takes his last breath on a battlefield.

This bond is not necessarily a product of nationality or culture. Battlefield witnesses have attested to its existence in various conflicts as the last cogent thought uttered by a young dying warrior.

Mother's Day is perhaps an appropriate time to recognize this bond. While sad to do so, it is a most telling tribute to a son's love for a mother.

In her book *Year of the Comets*, Jan Deblieu shares a conversation she had with her husband, Jeff, depressed as his mother lay dying of cancer:

'I heard somewhere,' Jeff said, 'that soldiers dying on the battlefield cry out for their mothers. People walking through the carnage at Normandy heard grown men calling out 'Mommy!' He shook his head. 'Calling not for their girlfriends or wives, but for their mothers.'

Decades later, Normandy survivors attest to still hearing such cries. As emotional D-Day veteran Frank Devito noted in a 2014 interview with Tom Brokaw commemorating the 70th anniversary of the Normandy invasion, "You know there's a fallacy people think that when a man is dying. They don't ask for God. The last word they say before they die is 'Momma.'"

There is a tendency by those who have never known combat to dismiss stories of this bond as fantasy. But numerous battlefield testimonials from wars past and present tell us otherwise.

The last survivor of World War I, Harry Patch, who died in 2009 at the age of 111, bore witness to the bond.

A website dedicated to the British soldier notes:

[Patch] recalled, with a sense of guilt, crawling across no-man's land with the wounded crying out in agony all around him and just passing them by...He remembered coming across a still-living shattered bleeding wreck of a man who begged Patch to shoot him, but in the time of Patch's indecision the man uttered the cry 'Mother!' and died.

Robert Serafin—a U.S. Army corpsman assigned to a mobile field hospital—landed in France in February 1945. He supported the U.S. 1st Army's advance deep into Germany.

Serafin had vivid memories of the pain and suffering the wounded endured. He recalled one young soldier, for whom little more could be done than offering morphine, who cried out for his mother.

Serving in Vietnam as well, Serafin found there, too, "as soon as a guy would be in bad shape, he'd always ask for his mother. Whenever I heard that, it killed me inside."

A young warrior's dying battlefield cry for a mother he will never again see knows no cultural boundaries.

In 2014, Ukrainian surgeon Oleksandr Zeleniuk tended to the wounded on a Crimean battlefield. Twelve soldiers died on his operating table. "We struggled for their lives," he said, "but death won. When soldiers are dying, they all say the same thing: they call for their mother..."

An amazing testimonial to the strength of the mother-son bond is forged into the steel of the U.S. Marine Corps' Iwo Jima Memorial outside of Washington, D.C.

The inspiration for this memorial came from Joseph Rosenthal's famous photograph of six Marines raising the American flag atop Mount Suribachi on the island of Iwo Jima during World War II.

A heartfelt story about one of those Marines and his mother is told by James Bradley in *Flags of Our Fathers*.

His book shares the individual stories of each of the six Marines—of which Bradley's father was one.

When the photograph first appeared in U.S. newspapers, Bradley tells us, the six were not identified.

The mother, Belle, of one Marine, Harlon Block, took a look at the photograph and exclaimed, "That's Harlon." Harlon's younger brother chided his mother as the photograph was taken from behind the flag-raisers so faces were not visible.

A few days later the photograph was re-published, this time with names. But Harlon's was not among them. Belle remained adamant—the Marine on the far right was most definitely her son.

Only days after the photograph was taken, three of the six—including Harlon—were dead.

After the war, one of the three remaining survivors, Ira Hayes, visited Belle to inform her an identification error had been made—it was her son in the photograph. The official record was corrected to reflect what a loving mother knew all along.

When asked how she was so confident it was her son in the photograph since his face was not visible, Belle commented she had changed his backside as a baby so many times she knew Harlon's when she saw it!

With such stories attesting to the bond between mother and son and with all the battlefields of all the wars humanity has fought, one wonders how many cries of a dying warrior son for his mother have gone unheard.

While sad, it is a beautiful tribute to the mother-son bond that the last thought of the latter is for the former. In the throes of death, the son cries out for the mother who not only gave him life but nurtured and comforted him before he answered his country's call to arms.

It is beautiful, but also merciful the mother is not there to witness it.

There is something primal, unavoidable and universal in the connection between children and mothers. Life begins in her arms and at her breast. Approaching death always brings the beginning of life, and therefore motherhood, back into focus. This primal connection is one reason why acknowledging the Heavenly Mother has proven overwhelming, even a burden for some societies. As soon as they are aware of Her, they focus veneration and worship on Her alone.

The presence of the female counterpart to God the Father does not include a scriptural command or permission to single Her out and worship Her apart from the Father. Indeed, the psalm of Mary in the book of Luke and the words of the Mother in Proverbs direct our attention to the Father. She may be part of a Divine Couple, but it is clear She wants honor and worship to be on Her Husband and Her Son.

Mary's psalm focused on God the Father and His Son. Look carefully at Her adoration of God:

“My soul doth magnify the Lord, And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. ... holy is his name. And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation. He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away. He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy; As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.” (Luke 1:46-55.)

She pointed us to the Father. Remember also that the brightest star in Her constellation is in her hand – the “seed of the woman.” The stars testify of Her, but point to Her “seed” as the greatest light for us here and now.

The moon reflects the light of her sun. Just as Mary did in Her psalm, this physical example testifies to the glory of the Father and the faithful reflection of the Mother. It is the sun that provides the light, heat and gravity governing the planets of this creation under its influence. It is the moon that stabilizes and makes life possible.

As mentioned already, Jeremiah witnessed some of the corrupt practices of ancient Israel when they singled out the “queen of heaven” for uninvited, uninspired primacy in their worship. God prompted him to condemn what he saw. His condemnation has been wrongly interpreted as an outright rejection of Her existence.¹³⁵ But Jeremiah has preserved for us the fact that ancient Israel once burned incense to the “queen of heaven.” This happened in their temple. Israel incorrectly attributed prosperity to their worship and

¹³⁵ See, e.g., Jeremiah 44: 44:16-28: “As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee. But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil. But since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, we have wanted all things, and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine. And when we burned incense to the queen of heaven, and poured out drink offerings unto her, did we make her cakes to worship her, and pour out drink offerings unto her, without our men? Then Jeremiah said unto all the people, to the men, and to the women, and to all the people which had given him that answer, saying, The incense that ye burned in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, ye, and your fathers, your kings, and your princes, and the people of the land, did not the Lord remember them, and came it not into his mind? So that the Lord could no longer bear, because of the evil of your doings, and because of the abominations which ye have committed; therefore is your land a desolation, and an astonishment, and a curse, without an inhabitant, as at this day. Because ye have burned incense, and because ye have sinned against the Lord, and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord, nor walked in his law, nor in his statutes, nor in his testimonies; therefore this evil is happened unto you, as at this day. Moreover Jeremiah said unto all the people, and to all the women, Hear the word of the Lord, all Judah that are in the land of Egypt: Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, saying; Ye and your wives have both spoken with your mouths, and fulfilled with your hand, saying, We will surely perform our vows that we have vowed, to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her: ye will surely accomplish your vows, and surely perform your vows. Therefore hear ye the word of the Lord, all Judah that dwell in the land of Egypt; Behold, I have sworn by my great name, saith the Lord, that my name shall no more be named in the mouth of any man of Judah in all the land of Egypt, saying, The Lord God liveth. Behold, I will watch over them for evil, and not for good: and all the men of Judah that are in the land of Egypt shall be consumed by the sword and by the famine, until there be an end of them. Yet a small number that escape the sword shall return out of the land of Egypt into the land of Judah, and all the remnant of Judah, that are gone into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, shall know whose words shall stand, mine, or theirs.”

appeasement of the “queen of heaven.” They turned the “queen of heaven” into a magic talisman to be placated by incense, drink offerings and cakes. It was idolatry, incapable of changing the inner-man. Acknowledgment of Her devolved to degrading appeasement of a female sky-god, who could be manipulated into blessing worshipers by the offering of presents. But to put this into prospective, that condemnation by Jeremiah was comparable to Jesus Christ’s denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees. Christ did not reject God the Father. He vindicated Him. But Christ denounced their foolish, superficial idolatry associated with God the Father. Jeremiah was condemning worship of the “queen of heaven” that had strayed outside the bounds authorized by God.

History has proven that it is less problematic to ignore Heavenly Mother than to acknowledge Her. Historically speaking mankind has shown there is less of a downside to ignoring Heavenly Mother than the downside of acknowledging Her. “Faith” in God is not dependent on fully realizing the things disclosed in this talk.

Lecture Third in *Lectures on Faith* clarifies what is essential to enable us to have saving faith in God:

2 Let us here observe that three things are necessary in order that any rational and intelligent being may exercise faith in God unto life and salvation.

3 First, the idea that he actually **exists**.

4 Secondly, a correct idea of his **character, perfections, and attributes**.

5 Thirdly, an actual knowledge that **the course of life** which he is pursuing **is according to His will**. For without an acquaintance with these three important facts, the faith of every rational being must be imperfect and unproductive, but with this understanding it can become perfect and fruitful, abounding in righteousness unto the praise and glory of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The idea that a Heavenly Mother exists is implicit in the scriptures. But because it is not explicit, a person can have faith that God exists without understanding the duality of the Heavenly Parents. Likewise, the character, perfections and attributes do not require anybody to understand what is explained in this talk.

Their character, perfections and attributes are mercy, righteousness, love, compassion and truthfulness. They are without partiality, no respecter of persons, regarding all alike. They make the sun to shine and the rain to fall on both the righteous and the wicked. They regard wickedness as an abomination. They prize truth, meekness and peacemakers. They abhor the froward, prideful, evil and arrogant. They are full of grace and truth, and are more intelligent than us all. They are the Creators and will be the final judges of this cycle of existence and no one will be permitted to progress further without Their permission. There is nothing vile or perverse about Them. They are repelled by contention and seek for us all to associate with one another equally, as brothers and sisters. They are “perfect” in the sense of having completed the journey to the end of the path and entered into Eternal Lives and Exaltation. They now seek to guide Their children along that same path. If you understand and accept these things about God, that is enough. You may imagine Them as a male and female, or a Great Spirit, a bearded old man, or an incorporeal but difficult to envision being of pure glory. Whatever young Joseph Smith imagined God to be when he asked God for wisdom was unimportant because he believed God to be just, pure, holy and no respecter of persons. The answer he received cleared up a great many mysteries for Joseph, but those clarifications went beyond God’s character, perfections and attributes.

The keystone of our religion gives examples of how faith in God does not require any comprehension of the corporeal existence, or physical dimensions of God. The understanding the Brother of Jared had before he saw God was decidedly limited. Despite this he was redeemed from the fall by returning to God's presence where he gained greater knowledge of God. Beforehand he did not understand Christ had a finger, nor did he understand he would one day take upon Himself a mortal body:

And the veil was taken from off the eyes of the brother of Jared, and he saw the finger of the Lord. And it was as the finger of a man, like unto flesh and blood; and the brother of Jared fell down before the Lord for he was struck with fear. And the Lord saw that the brother of Jared had fallen to the earth and the Lord said unto him, Arise. Why hast thou fallen? And he saith unto the Lord, I saw the finger of the Lord and I feared lest he should smite me, for I knew not that the Lord had flesh and blood. And the Lord said unto him, Because of thy faith thou hast seen that I shall take upon me flesh and blood. And none of those now living have come before me with such exceeding faith as thou hast, for were it not so, ye could not have seen my finger.¹³⁶

When Ammon was teaching king Lamoni, the instruction began by only acknowledging that God was "a Great Spirit."

Believest thou that there is a God? And he answered unto him, I do not know what that meaneth. And then Ammon said, Believest thou that there is a Great Spirit? And he said, Yea. And Ammon said, This is God. And Ammon said unto him again, Believest thou that this Great Spirit who is God created all things which are in Heaven and in the Earth? And he said, Yea, I believe that he created all things which are in the earth, but I do not know the heavens. And Ammon said unto him, The heavens are a place where God dwells and all his holy angels.¹³⁷

When Aaron taught king Lamoni's father, he likewise described God vaguely as "that great Spirit,"

Behold, assuredly as thou livest O king there is a God. And the king said, Is God that great Spirit that brought our fathers out of the land of Jerusalem? And Aaron said unto him, Yea, he is that great Spirit, and he created all things both in Heaven and in earth; believest thou this? And he said, Yea, I believe that the great Spirit created all things, and I desire that ye should tell me concerning all these things and I will believe thy words.¹³⁸

These examples demonstrate that understanding there is both a Father and a Mother who jointly comprise a single "Heavenly Father" is not essential for mankind to be able to have saving faith in God. Knowing the "character, perfections and attributes" does not extend to these particulars. To be like them is to be patient, faithful, obedient, loving, charitable and pure. These are the important "character, perfections and attributes" of godliness. Their appearance, even that they are two separate beings, "male and female," and yet they are "one," is not required for faith.

First and foremost, for fallen man in this creation, salvation is dependent upon Jesus Christ. We have a revealed account that explains who we worship and how to worship:

¹³⁶ NC Ether 1:12.

¹³⁷ Alma 12:15.

¹³⁸ Alma 13:8.

And I, John, saw that he received not of the fulness at the first, but received grace for grace; And he received not of the fulness at first, but continued from grace to grace, until he received a fulness; And thus he was called the Son of God, because he received not of the fulness at the first. And I, John, bear record, and lo, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Ghost descended upon him in the form of a dove, and sat upon him, and there came a voice out of heaven saying: This is my beloved Son. And I, John, bear record that he received a fulness of the glory of the Father; And he received all power, both in heaven and on earth, and the glory of the Father was with him, for he dwelt in him. And it shall come to pass, that if you are faithful you shall receive the fulness of the record of John. I give unto you these sayings that you may understand and know how to worship, and know what you worship, that you may come unto the Father in my name, and in due time receive of his fulness. For if you keep my commandments you shall receive of his fulness, and be glorified in me as I am in the Father; therefore, I say unto you, you shall receive grace for grace. And now, verily I say unto you, I was in the beginning with the Father, and am the Firstborn; And all those who are begotten through me are partakers of the glory of the same, and are the church of the Firstborn. Ye were also in the beginning with the Father; that which is Spirit, even the Spirit of truth; And truth is knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come. And whatsoever is more or less than this is the spirit of that wicked one who was a liar from the beginning. (D&C 93:12-25.)

Like Christ, we are expected to grow from grace to grace. Those words are in a revelation that begins with this promise: “Verily, thus saith the Lord: It shall come to pass that every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am[.]”¹³⁹ This is how we are to grow from grace to grace. This is how we can receive of His fullness. There is no mention of redirecting our obedience to another. Nor is there any name provided to us to call upon other than Christ’s. Nor is there any voice we are to hearken unto other than Christ’s.

We are in a fallen state and need to be saved. Like Mary acknowledged to Elizabeth when they met, we need to be rescued by a Savior. That Savior is Jesus Christ. She pointed us to Him and if we will heed Her wise counsel, we will rely on the merits of Christ, who is mighty to save.¹⁴⁰

There are other revelations that clarify how our attention and adoration must center in Christ. It is Jesus Christ who we are to acknowledge as the great Creator and Redeemer of this creation:

God, the holiest of all, through Jesus Christ his Son—He that ascended up on high, as also he descended below all things, in that he comprehended all things, that he might be in all and through all things, the light of truth; Which truth shineth. This is the light of Christ. As also he is in the sun, and the light of the sun, and the power thereof by which it was made. As also he is in the moon, and is the light of the moon, and the power thereof by which it was made; As also the light of the stars, and the power

¹³⁹ D&C 93:1.

¹⁴⁰ Alma 7:14; 2 Ne. 31:19; D&C 133:47; Isa. 63:1.

thereof by which they were made; And the earth also, and the power thereof, even the earth upon which you stand. And the light which shineth, which giveth you light, is through him who enlighteneth your eyes, which is the same light that quickeneth your understandings; Which light proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space— The light which is in all things, which giveth life to all things, which is the law by which all things are governed, even the power of God who sitteth upon his throne, who is in the bosom of eternity, who is in the midst of all things. (D&C 88:5-13.)

There are Heavenly Parents, to be sure. They are two separate beings: a Father and a Mother. She exists and Her role is acknowledged in scripture. We are supposed to “find” Her. And in the last-days temple (should it be finally built by a humble and obedient people), Her open presence will be there.

In the temple ceremonies women veil their faces. Among other things, this symbolizes the hidden Heavenly Mother. Her presence is veiled because She is sacred and not to be regarded as accessible apart from Heavenly Father. That which is most holy is veiled from the vulgar and profane. Women should be regarded as daughters of the Divine Mother. Like Her, they carry the power to produce new life. Mothers are the physical veil between pre-earth spirits and physical bodied inhabited in mortality. They clothe children in the veil of flesh. This power is honored in the temple veiling of women. This power to give life has been regarded in almost all societies as something sacred and holy. In our coarse and vulgar society we have rejected as a matter of law the idea that women engage in a sacred and holy labor when bearing children.¹⁴¹

The Great Weaver organizes intelligence into life itself through motherhood. It is in the womb that disorganized intelligence is organized into spirits resembling the Heavenly Parents in eternity. Mothers in this creation do likewise. That power, endowed by the Divine pattern, is present in this creation to testify of She who wove our spirits before this world. She is ever providing wisdom to guide the energy of Her Divine counterpart so balance and order are maintained.

For the present, it is enough to know She is there and that She urges us to be faithful and obedient to Her Son, our Redeemer and Savior. We need to be rescued from our fallen state. Jesus Christ is our rescuer.

Finally, there is one last clarification about the Heavenly Mother that needs to be made. Brigham Young taught a confusing doctrine that has been labeled “Adam-God.” Although he gave some illuminating and true sermons during Joseph Smith’s lifetime, following Joseph’s death Brigham Young seemed to be doctrinally adrift. He made no claims to revelation.¹⁴² But his guesses about what happened in the Garden of Eden¹⁴³ have marred

¹⁴¹ Since 1973, the United States has killed 60,147,378 children. Since 1980, worldwide, there have been 1,483,069,000 abortions, many funded by US aid. These numbers are published by the Guttmacher Institute, a division of Planned Parenthood of America, the worldwide numbers are tracked and funded by the World Health Organization.

¹⁴² “I am not going to interpret dreams; for I don’t profess to be such a Prophet as were Joseph Smith and Daniel; but I am a Yankee guesser[.]” *JD* 5:77.

¹⁴³ “Adam was an immortal being when he came on this earth; He had lived on an earth similiar [sic] to ours; he had received the Priesthood and the keys thereof, And had been faithful in all things and gained his resurrection and his exaltation, and was crowned with glory, immortality and eternal lives, and was numbered with the Gods for such he became through his faithfulness. And had begotten all the spirits that was to come to this earth. (*Unpublished Revelations of the Prophets and Presidents of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, compiled by Fred C. Collier, Vol 1, pp. 116-117, Collier's Publishing Co. P.O. Box 1866, Salt Lake City, UT 84110, 2nd edition 1981) “Now hear it, O

all of the largest branches of Mormonism. To be fair, he said he “guessed” and “reckoned” about the subject. But he also called it a “revelment” to him, which led others to regard his incorrect ideas as reliable. Brigham Young’s false ideas have produced a library of material defending or disputing his teaching. There are today both fervent defenders and convicted detractors. Because of this strong partisan divide, it might be more prudent to leave what happened in Eden unexplained. Nevertheless, what follows will either help clarify events or add to the confusion and debate:

Our Heavenly Mother, the companion of Heavenly Father, was in the garden when man was created. But so were others. In addition to the man Adam and the woman Eve, the plural Elohim who were in Eden included two Divine couples who were parents of Adam and Eve. One Divine couple were the parents of Adam. The other were the parents of Eve.

The account of the creation from Moses in Genesis is a parable. The account veils identities of the role players unless the parable is explained. Christ did this when He taught publicly.¹⁴⁴ The parable written by Moses relates:

inhabitants of the earth, Jew and Gentile, Saint and sinner! When our father Adam came into the garden of Eden, he came into it with a celestial body and brought Eve, one of his wives, with him. He helped to make and organize this world. He is MICHAEL, the Archangel, the ANCIENT OF DAYS! about whom holy men have written and spoken--HE is our FATHER and our GOD, and the only God with whom WE have to do. Every man upon the earth, professing Christians or non-professing, must hear it, and will know it sooner or later... Now, let all who may hear these doctrines, pause before they make light of them, or treat them with indifference, for they will prove their salvation or damnation.” (JD 1:50-51, Brigham Young, April 9, 1852). “How much unbelief exists in the minds of Latter-day Saints in regard to one particular doctrine which I revealed to them, and which God revealed to me - namely that Adam is our father and God ..Then he said, ‘I want my children who are in the spirit world to come and live here. I once dwelt upon an earth something like this, in a mortal state. I was faithful. I received my crown and exaltation...I want my children that were born to me in the spirit world to come here and take tabernacles of flesh that their spirits may have a house, a tabernacle...’” (Brigham Young, *Deseret Weekly News*, June 18, 1873, page 308; *Deseret Evening News*, June 14, 1873) “Who was the Savior begotten by?...Who did beget him? His Father, and his father is our God, and the Father of our spirits, and he is the framer of the body, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who is he? He is Father Adam; Michael; the Ancient of Days.” (President Brigham Young, Feb. 19, 1854, *Complete Discourses of Brigham Young*, Vol. 2, p. 763.) “Some have grumbled because I believe our God to be so near to us as Father Adam. There are many who know that doctrine to be true.” (Brigham Young, October 7, 1857, JD 5:331). “Some years ago I advanced a doctrine with regard to Adam being our Father and God...It is one of the most glorious revelations of the economy of heaven...” (Brigham Young, October 8, 1861, *Complete Discourses of Brigham Young*, Vol. 3, pp. 1913-1914.) “I tell you more: Adam is the father of our spirits. He lived upon an earth, he did abide his creation and did honor to his calling and priesthood and obeyed his master or lord, and probably many of his wives did the same, and they lived and died upon an earth and then were resurrected again to immortality and eternal life. I reckon, and as the Yankees say I guess; but I will tell you what I reckon. I reckon that Father Adam was a resurrected being, with his wives and posterity, and in the Celestial Kingdom were crowned with Glory, Immortality and Eternal Lives, with Thrones, Principalities and Powers: and it was said to him, ‘It is your right to organize the elements; and to your Creations and Posterity there shall be no end, but you shall add Kingdom to Kingdom, and Throne to Throne; and still behold the vast eternity of unorganized matter.’” (Brigham Young, October 8, 1854, *Complete Discourses of Brigham Young*, Vol. 2, p. 851.)

¹⁴⁴ “Then the disciples came and said unto him, Why do you speak unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given; for whoever receives, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance. But whoever continues not to receive, from him shall be taken away even that he has. Therefore I speak to them in parables because they seeing, see not, and hearing, they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah concerning them, which says, By hearing you shall hear and shall not understand, and seeing you shall see and shall not perceive. For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their hearts, and should be converted, and I should heal them.” NC Matt. 7:2.

And I, God, said unto my Only Begotten, who was with me from the beginning, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And it was so. And I, God, said, Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the Earth. And I, God, created man in my own image. **In the image of my Only Begotten created I him.** Male and female created I them. And I, God, blessed them.¹⁴⁵

The creation of the man Adam was secondarily in the image of God the Father, but was primarily and specifically “in the image of my Only Begotten”—meaning Jesus Christ. The reason Adam was born “in the image of” God the Father’s “Only Begotten” was because the Only Begotten was the one who begat Adam. God the Father was the father of Jesus Christ in the spirit, and the biological father of Jesus Christ in the flesh. God the Father was also the Father of the spirit of the man Adam. But the biological Father of Adam in the garden was “in the image of the Only Begotten,” or Jesus Christ. Christ and His companion were the physical Parents of the man Adam.

Jesus Christ was among the “souls” who were “noble and great” before this cycle of creation.¹⁴⁶ The word “soul” as used in the 1842 publication of the Book of Abraham¹⁴⁷ had been defined in a revelation received in 1832: “Now verily I say unto you, that through the redemption which is made for you is brought to pass the resurrection from the dead, and **the spirit and the body is the soul of man**, and the resurrection from the dead is the redemption of the soul, and the redemption of the soul is through him who quickeneth all things, in whose bosom it is decreed that the poor and the meek of the Earth shall inherit it.”¹⁴⁸ Christ is identified in scripture as a “soul” before this world was created. Therefore, before this world was created Christ had both a “spirit and a body”—having gone through the necessary progression required for all who ascend to be “like unto God.”¹⁴⁹ Christ had the physical capacity to be the biological father of offspring. He did this with Adam.

The account continues and describes the creation of the woman. Here the parable distinguishes between the process of creating the man Adam and creating his spouse, the woman Eve:

And I, the Lord God, said unto mine Only Begotten, that it was not good that the man should be alone, Wherefore, **I will make an help meet** for him.¹⁵⁰

God the Father said to the Only Begotten and that He (God the Father), will be the one to make Adam’s “help meet.” It was not good for Adam to be alone because he was not complete without a suitable companion to help him progress and develop. The creation parable continues:

And I, the Lord God, caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept, and I took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in the stead thereof, and the rib, which I, the Lord God had taken from man, made I a woman, and brought her

¹⁴⁵ OC Gen. 2:7, emphasis added.

¹⁴⁶ Abraham 3:22-24.

¹⁴⁷ The first publication of the Book of Abraham was in the *Times and Seasons* during March to May 1842.

¹⁴⁸ Teachings and Commandments (hereafter “T&C”) 30:4; see also D&C 88:14-17, emphasis added.

¹⁴⁹ “[T]here stood one among them that was like unto God, and he said unto those who were with him: We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth[.]” Abr. 3:24. This is explained in greater detail in the essay *The First Three Words* and in the chapter *Christ: The Prototype of the Saved Man in Preserving the Restoration*.

¹⁵⁰ OC Gen. 2:11.

unto the man. And Adam said, This I know now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man.¹⁵¹

The parable of the creation of the woman therefore differs from the creation of the man. She was not formed from the dust of the ground. She was formed from a “rib” –from an already existing part of the man. She was born from something equal to him and able to stand beside him in all things.

But the parable about the woman Eve means a great deal more. She was at Adam’s side before the creation of this world. They were united as “one” in a prior estate when they progressed to become living “souls” with both bodies and spirits. They were sealed before this world by the Holy Spirit of Promise and proved true and faithful. They once sat upon a throne in God the Father’s Kingdom. In that state they were equal and joined eternally together. She sat beside him and was a necessary part of his enthronement. Her introduction into this world to join her companion was needed to complete Adam. It was not good for him to be alone. They were “one” and therefore Adam without Eve was not complete—or in the words of the parable “not good to be alone.”

Like the man Adam, the woman Eve was the spirit offspring of Heavenly Father and Heavenly Mother. But unlike the man Adam, who was the physical offspring of Christ, the woman Eve needed to be the physical offspring of God the Father and God the Mother. Eve was Adam’s sister in spirit. Eve was also his physical aunt. She had to be the direct descendant of the Heavenly Mother in order to endow her with her Mother’s creative abilities. That power belongs to the Mother. The fertility of Eve, and thereafter of all the daughters of Eve, came because of the power given from direct descent from the Heavenly Mother.¹⁵²

Men descend from Christ. Christ founded the family of men and is accountable for them. He was placed in that position to enable Him to atone for any failure on their part. Through Adam “sin entered the world” and death was imposed upon all mankind.¹⁵³ Jesus Christ, one greater than Adam, made Himself responsible for all mankind’s failures and transgressions. Through the obedience of Jesus Christ all mankind were justified and “made righteous.”¹⁵⁴ The Father made mankind Christ’s posterity. This was necessary to qualify Christ as “the last Adam.”¹⁵⁵ Christ was the rightful “heir of all things” because He always stood at the head.¹⁵⁶ When “all things were made by Him” it included the man Adam.¹⁵⁷ Death came upon all mankind through Adam. Before Adam there was one greater who has made it possible for mankind to inherit life through Him. Christ has the standing to answer for man’s disobedience. He could and did take upon Him the sins of all His posterity.¹⁵⁸

Women descend from mother Eve, who was born the biological daughter of Heavenly Mother. Women descend from Heavenly Mother to endow them with Her creative power of fertility to bear the souls of men. Eve was not beneath Adam, nor subject to his rule when first created. Eve was put beside him to complete him and be his helpmeet.

¹⁵¹ OC Gen. 2:12.

¹⁵² At birth, women possess an endowment of eggs that enable them to bear children: “During fetal life, there are about 6 million to 7 million eggs. From this time, no new eggs are produced. At birth, there are approximately 1 million eggs; and by the time of puberty, only about 300,000 remain. Of these, only 300 to 400 will be ovulated during a woman’s reproductive lifetime.” *The Cleveland Clinic Foundation*, 2018; using information provided in part by Planned Parenthood.

¹⁵³ NC Romans 1:23; see also, Romans 5:12.

¹⁵⁴ NC Romans 1:24; see also, Romans 5:18-19.

¹⁵⁵ NC I Cor. 1:66; see also, I Cor. 15:45.

¹⁵⁶ NC Hebrews 1:1; see also, Heb. 1:2.

¹⁵⁷ NC John 1:1; see also, John 1:3.

¹⁵⁸ Isa. 53:4-8.

There was another condition required to enable Christ to lawfully redeem the daughters of Eve as well as the sons of Adam. The parable of the creation includes this step to put Eve under Adam's responsibility. The account explains that Eve (and by extension her daughters) was put under Adam's rule. Adam was handed responsibility and accountability for Eve. These are the words in the parable:

[T]hy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall **rule over thee**.¹⁵⁹

Adam was made accountable to "rule" in the fallen world.¹⁶⁰ All the mistakes, mismanagements, failings, wars, and difficulties of mortality are the responsibility of the appointed "ruler."¹⁶¹ Adam would not have been accountable for Eve unless she was made subject to his "rule." Once under Adam's rule, the redemption of Adam became also the redemption of Eve. Therefore Adam and the sons of Adam, and Eve and the daughters of Eve, were all rescued through Christ's atonement for mankind.

The parable continues with another allusion to Heavenly Mother:

And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because **she** was the mother of all living, for thus have I, the Lord God, called the first of all women, which are many.¹⁶²

One of the names of Heavenly Mother is "Eve."¹⁶³ She was the "mother of all living" because She was the one who mothered the spirits of Adam and Eve and was therefore parent of them both. Out of respect for Her, Adam called his companion by the same name as the Heavenly Mother.

Redemption of all mankind, male and female, required Adam to descend from Jesus Christ. It also required Adam to "rule," or be responsible to teach all those in his dominion. That role assigned to Adam was in order to extend the legal effect of Christ's redemption to Adam, Eve and their posterity.

However, for women to bear the souls of men, Eve had to be a direct descendant of Heavenly Mother. Although veiled for present, women's direct descent from the Heavenly Mother is also required for men to be placed on a throne in the hereafter. The Answer to Prayer for Covenant states:

And again, I say to you, Abraham and Sarah sit upon a Throne, for **he could not be there if not for Sarah's covenant with him**. Isaac and Rebecca sit upon a Throne, and Isaac likewise **could not be there if not for Rebecca's covenant with him**. And Jacob and Rachel sit upon a Throne, and Jacob **could not be there if not for Rachel's covenant with him**. And all these have ascended above Dominions and Principalities and Powers, to abide in my Kingdom. Therefore the marriage covenant is needed for all those who would likewise seek to obtain from me the right to continue their seed into eternity, for only through marriage can Thrones and Kingdoms be established.¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁹ OC Gen. 2:15, emphasis added.

¹⁶⁰ A "ruler" is a teacher responsible for instructing others. See, e.g., NC 1 Ne. 1:9.

¹⁶¹ See NC Jacob 1:4; see also, Jacob 1:19.

¹⁶² OC Gen. 2:15, emphasis added. The "she" is the Heavenly Mother, who bore the spirits of all the souls who descend from Adam and Eve.

¹⁶³ She holds many names and titles. In this paper a few have been mentioned: The Great Weaver, The Great Dancer, Heavenly Mother and Eve. She has many others, having acquired those names by the works She has accomplished through eons of experience.

¹⁶⁴ In Facsimile 3 of the Book of Abraham, the "Figure 2" standing behind the throne of Pharaoh is clearly female (although identified in this instance as King Pharaoh himself). Hathor, the great female god who personified motherhood and joy, was often depicted with the horned sun disc, carrying the ankh symbol, as in "Figure 2." Amun was the Egyptian equivalent to God the Father. Hathor was his

The creation of woman was designed to fulfill the work and the covenants of the Father in this world and will be critical in eternity. Families come through the union of the man and woman. Women bear the souls of mankind and bring all of us into this world through childbirth. That power was inherited from the Heavenly Mother. But there are other rights belonging to women that will only be apparent in either a completed temple or the afterlife. They have been endowed with an everlasting authority required for any man to occupy a throne in the Father's Kingdom.¹⁶⁵

A fuller explanation of woman's role will require worthy people willing to be taught, and to build an acceptable house for the Elohim to return.

Let me briefly mention the Word of Wisdom. This was a revelation inspired by a woman, Emma Smith, and given to her husband. It declares it is a "greeting" and "not a commandment or constraint." But it is a "revelation and the word of Wisdom" given to show "forth the order and will of God in the temporal salvation of all saints in the last days." The revelation is charged with kindly, motherly advice. "Wine or strong drink" is "not good" apart from the sacrament. For the sacrament it should be "pure wine of the grape of the vine" that we make. We are warned that "strong drinks" are not "for the belly" because many avoidable foolish physical and emotional errors are made when under the influence of "strong drink."¹⁶⁶ Wine and strong drink tempt us into errors.¹⁶⁷ The Mother urges us to find wisdom, prudence, counsel, understanding, truth, excellent things, and nothing that is froward or perverse. "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."¹⁶⁸ Wine and strong drink remove us out from the correct pathway, cause us to err in vision, and make us stumble in judgment.¹⁶⁹ We must do better.

Any kindly advice from a caring Mother ought to be followed. Particularly when we are promised that by following it we will "receive health in their navel and marrow to their bones; and shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures; and shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint."¹⁷⁰

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If you think of yourself as a Christian and this talk offends you, or confuses your imagined picture of God's Great Plan of Happiness, then I would recommend you leave this topic alone for the present. Do not reject truth only because you find it challenging. Just leave it alone. If you think of yourself as a Mormon and this talk introduces ideas you have

female companion. Their son was called Horus in his immortal state and Osiris when he became mortal. Osiris' wife was Isis. As the mortal Horus, Osiris was slain by his usurping brother Set. In depicting male figures on thrones, there is usually a female (Hathor or Isis) standing behind and supporting the male on the throne.

¹⁶⁵ For example, prior to His death Christ had to be anointed by a woman. He said, "she has wrought a good work upon me." (NC Matt. 12:1.) This had to be done by a woman, and needed to be done before Christ's death. "She has poured this ointment on my body for my burial." (*Id.*) Whenever that original version of the religion Christ restored is preached, it must include the same rite as a memorial to her. (*Id.*)

¹⁶⁶ D&C 89.

¹⁶⁷ Christ listed drinking with the "drunk" as one of the signs of those who would be unprepared at his return. See NC Matt. 11:14

¹⁶⁸ OC Proverbs 4:298; see also KJV Prov. 20:1. In the New International Version this verse reads: "Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise."

¹⁶⁹ "But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment." KJV Isa. 28:7.

¹⁷⁰ D&C 89:18-20.

not heard before, look at the scriptures with this talk in mind and see if these teachings have not been in your scriptures all along. You just haven't noticed it. Truth deserves patient and careful consideration.

If you welcome this discussion, then take care that you do not, as ancient Israel did, "burn incense, pour out drink offerings and bake cakes" to a Being who has never invited you to do so. She has invited you to worship God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. If you would like to honor Her, then accept Her testimony and look to Jesus Christ alone for redemption and salvation from the fall of Adam. That is where we presently find ourselves, and Christ is the way our Divine Parents have provided to deliver us from our fallen plight.

In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.