

# MARY, QUEEN OF HEAVEN

## The Evidence In Scripture

The glorious mystery of Mary is not easy to discern. But when you read the Scripture the way the early Christians did -- understanding the references to the fulfillment of the old law in the new -- it is clear the sacred authors are instructing us in Mary's role as Mother of God and Queen of Heaven, the ark of the new covenant, Jesus Christ.

### Point One

Jesus has a queen who stands at his right hand. Witness Psalm 45: 6-18, a prophecy about the Messiah:

*"Your arrows are sharp; peoples are subject to you; the king's enemies lose heart. Your throne, O God, stands forever and ever; a tempered rod is your royal scepter. You love justice and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellow kings. With myrrh and aloes and cassia your robes are fragrant; from ivory palaces string music brings you joy. The daughters of kings come to meet you; the queen takes her place at your right hand in gold of Ophir. Hear, O daughter, and see; turn your ear, forget your people and your father's house. So shall the king desire your beauty; for he is your lord, and you must worship him... I will make your name memorable through all generations; therefore shall nations praise you forever and ever."*

### Point Two

The queen who stands at Jesus' right hand, whose name the Lord promises will be made "*memorable through all generations,*" must be Mary, the mother of Jesus. For, as we see in Luke 1: 48, Mary herself proclaims the prophecy of the psalm fulfilled when, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, she echoes it by saying: "*...behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed.*" By including this passage in her Magnificat, the inspired Gospel writer is clearly signaling the faithful that she will be the queen who is at the right hand of the Messiah.

Now if we follow this New Testament prophecy to call her blessed, how can it be said we are detracting from the glory of the Lord? And if we disregard this New Testament prophecy, how can we say we are doing his will?

### Point Three

In Revelation 12, we see a tableaux with a female figure bearing a child. We know the child is the Messiah by the reference, "*destined to rule all the nations with an iron rod*" -- which recalls the Messianic prophecy in Psalm 2:7 -

*"The Lord said to me, 'You are my son; this day I have begotten you. Ask of me and I will give you the nations for an inheritance and the ends of the earth for your possession. You shall rule them with an iron rod; you shall shatter them like an earthen dish.'"*

Now, if the child in Revelation 12 is Jesus, the woman from whom he issues can only be Mary. Here's why:

*We see a vision of her in the heavens, clothed in the sun, wearing a crown, a symbol of royalty: "A great sign appeared in the sky, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. She was with child and wailed aloud in pain as she labored to give birth. Then another sign appeared in the sky; it was a huge red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on its heads were seven diadems. Its tail swept away a third of the stars in the sky and hurled them down to the earth. Then the dragon stood before the woman about to give birth, to devour her child when she gave birth. She gave birth to a son, a male child, destined to rule all the nations with an iron rod. Her child was caught up to God and his throne. The woman herself fled into the desert where she had a place prepared by God, that there she might be taken care of for twelve hundred and sixty days..."*

*"When the dragon saw that it had been thrown down to the earth, it pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle, so that she could fly to her place in the desert, where, far from the serpent, she was taken care of for a year, two years, and a half-year. The serpent, however, spewed a torrent of water out of his mouth after the woman to sweep her away with the current. But the earth helped the woman and opened its mouth and swallowed the flood that the dragon spewed out of its mouth. Then the dragon became angry with the woman and went off to wage war against the rest of her offspring, those who keep God's commands and bear witness to Jesus."*

Some claim that the woman here represents the Church. This is not so. Remember that the Church is the Body of Christ, Jesus Christ in the world. Jesus is the Head of the Church, and through Baptism, we are baptised into Christ and die and rise with Him, and become members of His body. The imagery from the scripture is clear - the male child is the Messiah, the Savior, Jesus. It is only logical to keep the family of symbols the same and acknowledge that the woman is the Mother or our Lord, the virgin Mary. Notice how the scripture refers to the '*rest of her offspring*' as those who bear witness to Jesus and keep the commandments of God. Recall the instructions of Jesus to '*keep the commandments*' as being the way to follow Him? The '*offspring*' can only be the Church. This follows the teaching of St. Paul who called us '*brothers of the Lord*'. We are His brother and we are also members of His Body. The scripture says that Jesus is the new Adam, the first born of the new creation. The scripture also says that *we* are also the offspring of the woman, Mary, who is the new Eve, the mother of all the new creation. This is why Catholics refer to Mary as 'the Mother of the Church' and 'Our Mother' because she was the mother of Jesus, who is the Church, the Body of Christ, and since we are brothers of Jesus and offspring of the woman, the title 'Mother' is rightly applied to Mary in regards to us as well, since we are members of the Body of Christ. This is why the woman in the image of scripture must be Mary and cannot be the Church - If the woman represents the Church, then we're left with the obvious anomaly of the Church being the offspring of the Church . . .

This means that, granted the woman is Mary, the Apostle and evangelist John is depicting her in a glorious and compelling new light -- as the Queen of Heaven.

## **Point Four**

We see another archetype of Mary in Bathsheba, mother of Solomon, who is himself an archetype of Jesus. Bathsheba is the second most powerful personage in the kingdom -- more powerful than even the highest ministers.

1 Kings 2: 19:

*"So Bathsheba went to King Solomon to speak to him for Adonijah, and the king stood up to meet her and paid her homage. Then he sat down upon his throne, and a throne was provided for the king's mother, who sat at his right hand. 'There is one small favor I would ask of you,' she said. 'Do not refuse me.' 'Ask it, my mother,' the king said to her, 'for I will not refuse you.'*

This extreme deference paid to his mother by Solomon is not an accident; it foreshadows the deference paid to Mary by Jesus.

Does Bathsheba supplant her son on the throne? No. Does she share the throne with him? No. This is why Catholics ask for the intercession of Mary to her Son. Like King Solomon, who sat on the Throne of David, Jesus sits on the Throne in Heaven, with His mother at His right hand, and He never refuses her requests.

Does honoring her do violence to her son's position? Of course not. He is undisputed king. She, his most favored subject.

## **Point Five**

The angel Gabriel's unique pronouncement to Mary (1 Lk. 35): *"The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you,"* is echoed in the description of the Lord coming over the Dwelling Place (Ex. 34-35): *"The cloud hovered the meeting tent, and the glory of the Lord filled the Dwelling. Moses could not enter the meeting tent because the cloud settled down upon it and the glory of the Lord filled the Dwelling."* In both of these passages, the Greek word used to express this overshadowing is, 'episkiasi.'

This passage shows that the ark of the covenant, which carried and contained the most sacred objects of the Jewish faith, is an archetype for Mary, the mother of Jesus, through whom came the most awesome and incredible and salvific mystery of all creation history -- the Incarnation.

Saying that Mary was simply a "Christian woman like any other," is like saying the ark was nothing more than a 'big box like any other.' Yet we see the ark as the nexus of Yahweh's presence in the life of the Jewish people -- a more sacred object than the temple itself.

Clearly, we see a God who calls certain times, certain places and certain people to transcendent holiness, and sacredness. Was the cross simply a "piece of wood like any other?" Was His spittle simply "saliva like any other?" The tassel of His cloak simply a "tassel like any other?"

No, those times, those places, those objects and those people were all made holy by the presence of the Lord -- as was the ark. They were all transformed by the presence of the Lord. Even the paths he walked, the trees he sat beneath, the donkey upon whom he rode, the cup from which he drank -- all were made holy by the presence of the Lord. All became 'holy ground.' And if these were made holy, how much more so was his mother sanctified by her profoundly intimate bond with her Son and Savior, Jesus -- our Lord, our Brother, our Messiah, our Alpha and Omega, the All in All, the Chosen One of God, who is before all things, in whom all things hold together.

The Mother of God. I suggest the syllogism is undeniable: Jesus is God. Mary is his mother. Therefore, Mary is the Mother of God. You cannot dispute that without disputing the very nature of Jesus himself.

And imagine the relationship between these two -- the depth of which we cannot fathom -- taking place as it did at the transforming moment of all creation.

This is the essence of the sacred: That the ordinary is transformed by the Presence of the Lord. This is the crux of the Christian message in fact: God can take the utterly profane, you and I, and make them Holy by the presence of His Spirit . . .

As you probably suspect by now, this process of transformation and sanctification -- by which ordinary people, places and things are made holy through the Presence of the Lord -- is the basis for Catholics' veneration of relics.

As we see in Acts 19: 11-12, the very face cloths Paul uses cure the sick. Were they "face cloths like any other?" And in Acts 5: 15, the mere shadow of Peter passing by was enough to cure the sick. Was his "a shadow like any other?"

And yet, how much greater is Mary, the Mother of our Lord, than a face cloth or a shadow. And how much closer was she to the Almighty and living God than even Peter or Paul themselves, let alone their face cloths and shadows.

## **Point Six**

Elizabeth's prescient greeting to Mary must have been inspired by the Holy Spirit; otherwise, how could Elizabeth have known that Mary was carrying the Messiah? Elizabeth's statement, "*Who am I that the mother of my Lord should come to me?*" is so radical as to be blasphemous -- that is, if it is not true. For, by using this phrasing, the Gospel writer, inspired by the the Holy Spirit, is telling us in no uncertain terms who Mary is, and who her child is. He is recalling David's reaction to the news of the death of Uzzah, who was struck down by God for the simple offense of touching the ark as he tried to keep it from tipping off a cart.

As 2 Sam. 6: 8-9 reads:

*"David was disturbed because the Lord had vented his anger on Uzzah. (The place has been called Perez-ussah down to the present day.) David feared the Lord that day and said, 'Who am I that the ark of the Lord should come to me?' So David would not have the ark of the Lord brought to him in the City of David, but diverted it to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite."*

When we deny the role of Mary in the Incarnation mystery, we are contradicting the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit who, through the inspired evangelist Luke, clearly indicates that Mary is the ark of the new covenant. Any educated Jewish man of the first century would have understood this reference immediately and would have concluded that Mary is due far greater reverence -- and awe -- than the Old Testament archetype, the ark itself.

And all this is beside the fact that, as a much older woman, Elizabeth gives deference to Mary in a way that is so shocking it is almost scandalous. In the rigid Hebrew society of Jesus' time, the hierarchy of the family was based strictly upon age. One suspects that is why Mary traveled to Elizabeth in the first place -- as a younger relative, Mary would have been expected to go to help out her elder cousin. So for Elizabeth to address Mary in this way -- *"Who am I that the mother of my Lord should come to me?"* -- would have been unheard of.

## **Point Seven**

We see more evidence of Mary's role as the ark of the new covenant and Queen of Heaven in Rev. 11: 19, where we read: *"Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant could be seen in the temple. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings, and peals of thunder, an earthquake, and a violent hailstorm."*

The next verse -- which is separated by a chapter notation which, as you well know, wasn't added until some 800 or 1,000 years later -- reads, *"A great sign appeared in the sky, a woman clothed with the sun."*

Now, taken together, in its uninterrupted form -- as it was originally written by John -- this passage reads:

*"Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant could be seen in the temple. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings, and peals of thunder, an earthquake, and a violent hailstorm. A great sign appeared in the sky, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. She was with child..."*

The woman seen in the sky is a 'sign' that follows the revelation of the ark in the temple. The association is unmistakable.

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When you review the many verses here -- and there are more that could have been added -- think about them. Savor them. They are amazing and heartening, because of course they're not about

Mary alone. The clear message is that all of mankind has been fantastically glorified -- through the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Trinity; through his entering into our history, our bloodline, our lives. And while Mary is the vehicle -- the gateway -- for his glory, she is also our representative. She is, through the grace of the Father, Son and Spirit, what we aspire to become.

And although Protestants may claim, "We don't need Mary to be saved" -- meaning, correctly, that no salvation is possible apart from Jesus Christ -- no one can deny that God himself needed Mary to initiate the plan of salvation by fulfilling her role as the mother of our Lord. In fact, in Luke 1: 38, it's as if all of creation, having waited all those thousands of years for redemption, holds its breath with God himself, as this young and simple girl gives her careful answer to his request that he be allowed to save the world through her: "May it be done to me according to your word," she says -- on our behalf; afterall, what would have happened had she said "no?"

*"I hear, and my body trembles; at the sound, my lips quiver."*

-- Habakkuk 3: 16

Contemplating the glorious and unfathomable mystery of the Incarnation, wrought through the abiding faith and perfect obedience of one young peasant girl from Nazareth, we see the great dignity which all of us have been granted by our gentle and mysterious Creator. She is indeed our Queen, sitting at the right hand of the King. But she is also our loving mother, and we her beloved children, heirs to the Kingdom. For if she is at the right hand of the Messiah (Ps. 45), we know that we are not far away.