

Our Divine Parents

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Denver C. Snuffer, Jr.

I was up at four o'clock this morning praying about this talk and praying about you. And I think some topics are of such immense importance that no single person ought to be given the responsibility of trying to say something true and valid and holy, given the inadequacy of all of us and, in particular, the inadequacy of myself. I really don't feel that I can do the topic justice or that this is something about which I feel perfectly comfortable talking. So, pardon my inadequacy and hang with this.

I prepared this in advance, and there's about 170 footnotes that go along with this text; and I won't read any of the footnotes. But I'll get this up as a paper, probably tomorrow when I get back home. And it may help you if you look at the paper, including the footnotes, because some of this is going to go by quite quickly, and without elaboration the footnotes will help elaborate.

I want to thank those who have organized the conference, for those that have participated, for all of the work that has gone on. We don't have any fund to draw from. People that do these things volunteer; and all of the labor that's been done, all of the work in getting this out—broadcast over the internet, all of the recording—all of that is done by volunteers who are not compensated, although if someone wants to help in the process, it's always appreciated.

We are not like those who organize into hierarchical structures. Every one of us is considered equal. I'm an invited guest here. The people that organized this asked me to come, and I did the work to prepare to come at their invitation. I don't have any right other than the same right as all of you—to preach and teach and expound; and, if what I say persuades or brings light, then you're welcome, as a gift, to receive it. But no one holds authority over me, or over you, or over any of us. We associate freely because we like focusing upon the restoration of the gospel that came through the prophet Joseph Smith and recognize that work was never completed. We also recognize the ease with which having a hierarchy can be compromised. You see, as soon as you create a seat of power and authority, all that's required to overthrow the entirety of the organization is to gain control of that seat of authority. But among a group of equals, so long as anyone remains true and steadfast to the gospel, no one can tell them that they must do something other than retain that steadfast conviction and belief and practice of the gospel in its fullness.

Zion won't be composed of people who are presided over by anyone other than Christ Himself. As between one another, they're brothers, and they're sisters, and they're equals, having one heart, having one mind, and having all things in common because there is no one who can exert control or authority over one another. That's what we seek; that's what we're working for. However clumsy, however awkward, however difficult it may be for siblings to get along as they grow up through their childhood and adolescence, that's exactly how the people that will form Zion are going to begin. You can't stand back and say, "Oh, I prize the

orderly thing I see in the uniformity of lessons, uniformity of dress, uniformity of conduct that I can see in structured and organized congregations; and what I see among these people is clamoring disorder.” That’s because we’re alive. That’s because we’re equal. That’s because we respect one another, and we want to *hear* the differences; we want to *see* the differences. We want to consider an idea that isn’t correlated out into the darkness and excluded from our attention. We want to know what others have to say because we might miss something if we don’t allow them the equality of standing and saying to us something about which we may disagree. That’s what we call healthy. That’s what we call normal. That’s how humans relate to one another. In a hierarchy, it’s possible to suppress all of that, but we’re not interested in forming a Kremlin; we’re interested in forming Zion.

This discussion today of our Divine Parents fits very comfortably inside the Father’s Great Plan of Happiness. Unfortunately, we have so little understanding of that Plan that the 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 the Lectures on Faith. Those who welcome more truth eventually understand God’s plan more fully and, in turn, comprehend more of the Gods’ vast work. Please do not offend God by rejecting any truth coming from Him.

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, some true things God has shown to witnesses are called *unspeakable* by the Apostle Paul (2 Corinthians 1:41 RE). They are true but remain *mysteries* for those who are not shown them by God. One servant of God may know but be forbidden from revealing a matter while another is commanded to reveal it. 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. An infinite and eternal God has spoken many things and will yet reveal more things.

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* (Proverbs 25:2; see also Proverbs 4:1 RE). So, we search out matters God has concealed to see more of His glory.

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 not because of Her absence from the scriptures. It’s not hard to detect Her if you look. *We* just don’t look.

The Old Testament (now retitled The Old Covenants) was preserved and transmitted in the Hebrew language for generations. Some characteristics 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 the group is male, Hebrew uses *only* the masculine to refer to that 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. In English it should be translated as *Gods*; but because we allow theology to control translating the text, the word *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* (Genesis 1:27; see also Genesis 2:8 RE).

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 [the Gods] them [the man and woman], male and female*.

The words, *So God created man in his own image*, affirms 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 *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. In their discussion, the dual nature of God was incorrectly regarded as figurative, 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 we would develop through successive stages of growth. 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* (Genesis 2:8 RE). Here, not only is the Father male and female, but so is the image of the Only Begotten, who is 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) is a feminine noun. Likewise, when referring to the *presence of God*, Hebrew uses the feminine. 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* (Genesis 28:4; see also Genesis 9:18 RE).

The Old Testament and Christ proclaimed that the God of Israel is *one*. But then Christ explained that *one* is not singular in person but in harmony of heart. Accordingly, 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 [in that instance, YHWH or Jehovah]* (Exodus 6:2; see also Exodus 1:3 RE). 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. Given the plurality of this God, and His name is *Jehovah* [or YHWH], it means that Jehovah, like His Father, is plural and has a female companion or wife. The Gods are never singular. 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, they nevertheless preserved the idea of a male father and female mother in their pantheon of the gods. 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 or Jehovah]: and the **God** [Elohim, plural] that answereth by fire, let him be [Elohim] **God**. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken (1Kings 18:24; see also 1 Kings 4:14 RE). 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 from 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. (Lectures on Faith 3:2-5 RE)*

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. Then all questions about the image of the Gods will be answered by what is apparent to anyone standing in Their presence.

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. 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 will look at today. It teaches us a great deal about Her.

This was once a temple text and has become somewhat corrupted. I'll not make any corrections or clarifications. This is from Proverbs 8 in the King James Version. The version we have has additional passages about the foolish woman at the beginning and again at the end. I'm gonna discard those words attributed so that the words that are attributed to the Heavenly Mother alone can be isolated and looked at to 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. (Proverbs 8:6-8; see also Proverbs 1:35 RE)

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 without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace, of them that make peace.** (Epistle of Jacob 1:14 RE, emphasis added)*

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. (Proverbs 8:9-11; see also Proverbs 1:35 RE)

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. (Proverbs 8:12-13; see also Proverbs 1:36 RE)

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.

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. (Proverbs 8:14; see also Proverbs 1:36 RE)

The Mother must possess great strength because She hates the froward—the contentious. She does not welcome that spirit in Herself or any of Her offspring. But yet, She loves us.

Christ taught this idea 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 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 [against one] another, but this is my doctrine, that such things should be done away. (3 Nephi 5:8 RE)

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's 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. (Proverbs 8:15-16; see also Proverbs 1:36 RE)

Never doubt this claim by the Heavenly 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 Cain hearkened not, saying, Who is the Lord that I should know him? And she...conceived [again], and bare his brother Abel. And Abel [hearkened] unto the voice of the Lord. (Genesis 3:6 RE)

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 fell, 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. 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.

While Rebekah was pregnant with twins, unborn sons struggled within her. She prayed to know the cause of her difficulties and learned that the younger would rule over the elder. This answer stayed with her, and when the time came, she acted consistent with God's voice to her. 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 [skilled] 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. (Genesis 9:3 RE)

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. Sometime later, the time arrived to appoint Isaac's successor and heir.

Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim so that he could not see, he called Esau his eldest son, and said [to] 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...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 [to] Jacob her son, saying, Behold, I heard your father speak [to] 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 that which I command you. Go now to the flock and fetch me from there two good kids of [your] 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...that he may bless you before his death. (Genesis 9:12-13 RE)

While Isaac intended to bless his older son Esau, Rebekah, as the 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:

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 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 neck. (Genesis 9:13-14 RE)

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 [to] his father, I am Esau your firstborn; 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 hands of Esau. And he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy as his brother Esau's hands; so he blessed him. (Genesis 9:14-15 RE)

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. (Genesis 9:15 RE)

This answer from Jacob is not 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...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. (Genesis 9:15 RE)

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. This pattern of the mother choosing the heir is not just an allegory or an event in the 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. She had the right to seek that 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, 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,...the other on your left [hand], in your kingdom. But Jesus answered and said, you know not what you ask. Are you able to drink...the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism...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...my left [hand], is for whom it is prepared of my Father, but not mine to give. (Matthew 10:2 RE)

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 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's 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.

And again, I say [unto] 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. (T&C 157:42-43)

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. When first created, man and woman were joined together by God. This union happened before death entered into 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 [unto] 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. (Matthew 9:19 RE, emphasis added)*

This union of Adam and Eve and this plan of God for all who would thereafter be married was to make the man and the woman *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.

Continuing with the Heavenly Mother's declarations 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. (Proverbs 1:36 RE)

Of all our Mother's *fruit*, the most valuable to fallen man is, without doubt, the Redeemer, Jesus Christ. 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* (Micah 5:3; see also Micah 1:11 RE). Because of the labor and travail of His Mother, the prophecy 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 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* (Θεοτοκος) 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* (Κριστοτοκος) 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.

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 adultery and chastity. Marian theology is largely absent from Mormonism other than to suggest that because the Father impregnated Her, She is destined to be added to His eternal harem as an additional spouse. 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 creation and the Mother's.

The Father can, and does, acknowledge others as His. But, unlike the Son who has repeatedly visited this earth, walked upon it, been handled by people,...eaten here, the Father does not come into contact with this earth in its fallen state. 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. Whenever there has been contact with the Father thereafter, He has been at a distance from this earth.

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 flesh and after. 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. To behold the Father, to endure His presence, one must be transfigured. Mortal man cannot behold the Father's works while mortal, for if you comprehend them you cannot afterward remain mortal in the flesh.

That's taken from pages 383-387 in *Removing the Condemnation* (see also pp. 395-396, first edition, 2010), and there are a lot of footnotes to that which will be in the paper I put up. 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 weaver of that power. If not tempered and guided by wisdom, knowledge can be destructive. Wisdom makes the prudent adaptation 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. 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* (1 Nephi 3:8 RE). More will be given in a temple where mankind's understanding of things kept hidden from the world 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 of God as His *testimony*. The light that was meant to shine on the earth was to illuminate both the eyes and mind of man. Man in the first generations understood this, and *a knowledge of the beginning of the creation, and also of the planets and of the stars, as they were made known unto the Fathers...* (Abraham 2:4 RE) was written by Abraham, who received that same understanding.

At the time of Christ's birth, there were those who understood the testimony written in the lights of the firmament. They reported they *[saw] his star in the east and have come to worship him* (Matthew 1:6 RE). 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 heavens above. Our ignorance does not mean these signs are meaningless. It only means we are poorly informed of God's full message.

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 the 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 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 360 degrees of the heavenly circle into twelve 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, the star fields of these twelve constellations are unequal in size. The two largest star fields belong to Virgo and Aquarius. 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. 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* (Matthew 11:2 RE). Aquarius has two outflows from the "Waterbearer's urn." One represents water (giving life), and the other represents fire (or purging).

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, *the seed of the woman*. That star is placed on the ecliptic. 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. The right hand symbolizes blessing. 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...* (Revelation 12:1; see also Revelation 4:1 RE). The sun and the 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. This is also depicted in another constellation. One of the constellations immediately associated with Virgo, 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. 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 that 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...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 [a] space of...time the angel [said] unto me...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. (1 Nephi 11:13-23; see also 1 Nephi 3:8-9 RE)

Most who read this passage interpret the *condescension* reference **solely** as Christ's. They view it as Christ alone who descended 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 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. (1 Nephi 11:18-21; see also 1 Nephi 3:8-9 RE, emphasis added)*

Who would you reasonably expect to be the woman chosen before the 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. The scriptures shift the focus of the condescension from Christ to His Mother and then back to Her Son, the seed of the woman.

Lectures on Faith describe Christ as *the prototype of the saved man*. Lecture 7 focuses attention on Christ as the Savior and Redeemer. But the lecture extends the requirement 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—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, we could 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 [in] the resurrection of the dead” nor hold the keys of the 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 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* (John 5:19; see also John 5:4 RE). The Father went before, and the Son follows after. To be like Him, sit on His throne, and [to] attain to the 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.' 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. (*40 Years in Mormonism*, Talk 7, “Christ: The Prototype of the Saved Man,” pp. 18-19)

Did Mary also attain to the resurrection? Protestants dismiss the Catholic veneration of Mary; but it may just be that the 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 others 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 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 fifth-century letter from the Patriarch of Jerusalem responding to the Byzantine Empress Pulcheria's request for the relics of the Holy Virgin states 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. This teaching was an extension of another Catholic belief regarding Mary called *Immaculate Conception*. The teaching was propounded by Pope Pius the Ninth and declared that Mary was free from all the weaknesses of the Fall of Adam and born without the sinful nature of fallen man. Although an estimated 1.2 billion Catholics accept these teachings about Mary today, Protestants and Mormons have not. The angel's words in First 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. She was with the Father when He said, *Let us make man* (Genesis 2:8 RE, emphasis added)—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 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. Since the Fall of Adam, everyone 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.

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 [is it] 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 [would he] 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. (Lectures on Faith 7:9 RE)

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.

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* (Luke 1:6 RE). 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 spake out with a loud voice, [saying], 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?* (Luke 1:7 RE). 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.

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 [is] 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...his seed for ever. (Luke 1:8 RE)

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

When Mary said the words, *he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden*, the condescension of God seems to apply particularly to 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. (ibid, vs. 8)

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. But the Parents of Christ will be the final judges of all people and will judge mankind based exactly upon the criteria that They have revealed.

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

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. 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.
(Proverbs 8:20-21; see also Proverbs 1:36 RE)

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. But obtaining them requires us to walk as She guides *in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment* (ibid, vs. 20; see also vs. 36 RE). 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 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. (Proverbs 8:22-31; see also Proverbs 1:37 RE)

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. 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.

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 that They do. We cannot be like them without a loving relationship that mirrors Theirs.

Her words continue:

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 heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord. But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: [and] all they that hate me love death.
(Proverbs 8:32-36; see also Proverbs 1:38 RE)

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 to acknowledge Her—otherwise, we've 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. 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.

There are seven stages of development through which God's children must pass. It is not all to be done in this life. Christ is the prototype of the saved man, 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.
(Proverbs 9:1-2; see also Proverbs 1:39 RE)

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* (Proverbs 8:20; see also Proverbs 1:36 RE). 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 worshipped 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 a female god.

At a pivotal time for ancient Israel, 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 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 [championed] historical-critical orthodoxy in one fashion or another." No help there in our quest for reconstructing what happened in the time of Josiah! (Margaret Barker, *The Mother of the Lord: Volume 1: The Lady in the Temple*, p. 54)

But we know Jeremiah was real and that he was a prophet because Nephi mentions him in his description of what had been preserved in 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. (1 Nephi 5:12-13; see also 1 Nephi 1:22 RE)

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

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...in the streets of Jerusalem? The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle...fire, and the women knead their dough, [and] make cakes to the queen of heaven,...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? (Jeremiah 7:17-19; see also Jeremiah 4:2 RE)

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—Shakers, officially, are United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing—Shakers 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 the moon are symbols of the Father and Mother planted overhead as a testimony from Them to Their children. From the surface of the earth, 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 Astaire: “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 have only six- to ten-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; 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,

United Kingdom, advanced a theory in 2003 explaining that life on earth could not have happened 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.

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 worshipping 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, She produces organized intelligences, or spirits. One of the titles for the Heavenly Mother is *The Great Weaver* because She formed unorganized intelligence into organized intelligences or spirits, 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 first 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 my life was over, my mind circled back to where it all began."

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 focuses on God the Father and His Son. Look carefully at Her adoration of God:

*My soul doth **magnify the Lord**, ...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 [away empty]. He hath holpen his servant
Israel**, in remembrance of **his mercy; As he spake to [the] fathers**, to Abraham,
and to his seed for ever. (Luke 1:46-47, 49-55; see also Luke 1:8 RE, emphasis
added)*

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. 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 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 worshippers by the offering of presents. But to put this into perspective, 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:

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...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.** (Lectures on Faith 3:2-5, emphasis added)*

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 the same path.

If you understand and accept these things about God, that is enough. You may imagine Them as a male and a 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, perfection, 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 of the Brother of Jared 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...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? [It's hard to talk to people when they're laying on their face. It's annoying.] And he [said to] 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. [See, if I see someone who is big and powerful, and I get a look

at his hand, the usual thing that the Big Man does is slap me with that same damn hand because that's what big chiefs do.] ...*I feared lest he should smite me, for I knew not...the Lord had flesh and blood.* (Ether 1:12 RE)

I knew not. I knew not. This is the guy that has faith sufficient to get through the veil to be in the presence of Christ. I knew not *this*. But he understood the character, attributes, and perfections. He could have faith.

And the Lord said unto him, Because of thy faith, thou hast seen that I shall take upon me flesh and blood (ibid, vs. 12).

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...then Ammon said, Believest thou...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...earth? And he said, Yea, I believe...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. (Alma 12:15 RE)

This man would have the veil taken, and he would be caught up into a heavenly vision with that foundation because that was enough of the character, attributes, and perfections of God to allow him to pass through the veil.

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,... he created all things both in Heaven and in...earth. Believest thou this? And he said, Yea, I believe that...Great Spirit created all things, and I desire that ye should tell me concerning all these things, and I will believe thy words. (Alma 13:8 RE)

That's it.

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 characters, 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:

And I, John, saw that he received not of the fulness at...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...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. (D&C 93:12-17; see also T&C 93:4-6)

The account continues:

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 93:23-25; see also T&C 93:8)

Like Christ, we are 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;* (D&C 93:1; see also T&C 93:1). 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.

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 creation:

God, the holiest of all, through Jesus Christ his Son—He that [ascendeth] 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...the light of the moon, and the power thereof by which it was made; As also the light of the stars, and the power 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; see also T&C 86:1)

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 bodies 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.

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, and 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's 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. But his guesses about what happened in the Garden of Eden have marred 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.

...But fools rush in.

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 the Parents of Adam and the Parents of 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. The parable written by Moses relates:

*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,... 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 [mine] own image, **in the image of my Only Begotten** created I him. Male and female created I them. And I, God, blessed them. (Genesis 2:8 RE, emphasis added)*

The creation of the man Adam was secondarily in the image of God the Father but was primarily and specifically *in the image of [mine] 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 God the Father was 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. The word *soul*, as used in the 1842 publication of the Book of Abraham, 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. (D&C 88:14-17; see also T&C 86:2)*

Christ is identified in the 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. Christ had the physical capacity to be the biological father of offspring, and 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. (Genesis 2:13 RE)*

God the Father said to the Only Begotten 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...closed up the flesh in the stead thereof. And the rib, which I, the Lord God, had taken from man, [I made] a woman, and brought her 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. (Genesis 2:14 RE)

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 to be true and faithful. They once sat upon a throne in God the Father's Kingdom. In that state They were equal and eternally joined 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 a Heavenly Father and a 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. She was also his biological 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.

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* (Romans 1:23 RE), and death was imposed upon all mankind. Jesus Christ, One greater than Adam, made Himself responsible for all mankind's failures and transgressions. Through obedience of Jesus Christ, all mankind were justified and *made righteous* (Romans 1:24 RE). The Father made mankind Christ's posterity. This was necessary to qualify Christ as *the last Adam* (1 Corinthians 1:66 RE). Christ was the rightful *heir of all things* (Hebrews 1:1 RE) because He always stood at the head. When *all things were made by Him* (John 1:1 RE), it included the man Adam. 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 His posterity.

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 to be his helpmeet.

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:

*[Thy] desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall **rule over thee*** (Genesis 3:16; see also Genesis 2:18 RE, emphasis added).

Adam was made accountable to *rule* in a fallen world. All the mistakes, mismanagements, failings, wars, and difficulties of mortality are the responsibility of the appointed *ruler*. 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 also became 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* (Genesis 2:18 RE, emphasis added).

One of the names of Heavenly Mother is Eve. She was the *mother of all living* because She was the One who mothered the spirits of Adam and Eve and was, therefore, Parent to them both and to all of their subsequent offspring. 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 to 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 [unto] 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. (T&C 157:42-43, emphasis added)*

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 the afterlife. They have been endowed with an everlasting authority required for any man to occupy a throne in the Father's Kingdom.

A fuller explanation of women'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* (D&C 89:2, 5-7; see also T&C 89:1-3) because many avoidable, foolish, physical and emotional errors are made when under the influence of strong drink; wine and strong drink tempt us into errors. 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 a raging and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise* (Proverbs 2:299 RE).

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 [the] 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 (D&C 89:18-20; see also T&C 89:6).

If this talk offends you or confuses your picture of God's Great Plan of Happiness, then I'd 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 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.

Well, let me add one final thing, and that is: Those concluding references to the Word of Wisdom were themselves given as a reminder, by revelation, as something to be repeated here in the context of this talk to honor Her. A great deal of foolishness and distress and a lot of arguments have resulted from ignoring the Word of Wisdom; and wise counsel always tells us to be prudent and to be careful.

You know, I have been forbidden to participate in discussions that have gone on, as I understand it, yesterday. I have a studied ignorance about what has gone on because I'm deliberately avoiding any of the details.

What's contained in this talk and, in particular, the focus upon avoiding frowardness... *Frowardness* is a really old English word, so old that Microsoft Word incessantly corrects it to *forwardness* because forwardness, we use. Frowardness is old, and we don't have a good word for it, but it means exactly what's defined in the talk—being contrary, being stubborn, being difficult to get along with. Froward people are continuously nagging other people because they either think the other person is wrong, or they think themselves right; and therefore, they agitate rather than become meek and submissive and humble and patient and kindly.

I suspect that that part of the talk had something to do with the activities that have gone on, although I haven't looked to see. I've heard from a couple of people that there was some head-butting. Head-butting is not a bad thing as long as it's not done in a way so as to break hearts, create divisions, and make people hold ill will toward one another.

People are very different one from another. Not only are men and women different from one another, women are different from each other, and men are different from each other, and personalities are always going to be ill-fitted. Getting people to mesh together—that's not going to result in, somehow, this universal similarity of personality. It's important that people preserve their differences. It's important that people have the gifts that have been given to them by God preserved intact and not suppressed because someone doesn't like the way that their gift gets expressed.

I've mentioned it before—I just find the artwork that Monet does, with his version of impressionism, the highest and greatest use of the paintbrush. But I think Van Gogh's impressionism is crude and elementary; and quite frankly, I mean, his suicide stopped the outpouring of that stuff. And in some ways, you know, maybe the art world is benefited by that. When he was a realist in the early stages, some of what Van Gogh did was rather lovely, but his impressionism— I say that, and when my wife substitutes in fourth grade and she brings presents home from her kids— But there are people who love Van Gogh. “Sunflowers” sold for 44 million last time it sold. There are some who really love Van Gogh! I assume that in the resurrection, they'll figure out that they were duped; but for here and now, in this fallen world with its perverse set of priorities, that's all good and well; and if they've got the money, and they want to use it that way, that's fine.

Zion is going to have people whose artistic outpouring is going to be fabulously different from one another. You look at the totem pole artistry of the Alouettes; and you look at the carved artistry of the Hawaiian Islands; and you look at the sculpture of Michelangelo—and these are radically, radically different one from the other, so much so that you're bridging these enormous cultural divides to look at these different kinds of sculpture. Why would we ever want to have a studied school of artistic discipline that produces nothing more than some uniform product when beauty and artistry can find so many unique forms of expression. Why would we ever want that?

Why would you want to go to a fellowship meeting in Uganda, a fellowship meeting in the Philippines, and a fellowship meeting in Spain and hear the same lesson on the same Sunday everywhere throughout the world? That is managerial overkill designed to destroy the unique spirits of the sons and daughters of God.

Facial recognition technology works because no one wears your face but you. Fingerprints distinguish every one of us from one another, so much so that if you leave a print, and everyone else leaves a print, we can distinguish yours from everyone else. Every single snowflake crystal is unique. Every leaf of every tree is unique. Nature cries out that God treasures the differences that exist from one soul to the next. And when describing the gifts that are given, the gifts are very different, but how the gifts manifest themselves, even if someone possesses exactly the same gift— Read the description of the seership of Enoch and the description of the seer Joseph, and the way in which they manifest themselves were decidedly different. Even the gifts do not come out the same when put through one person and then put through another. Every one of you are unique, and when we deal with one another, the objective is not to compel you to be me. The objective is not to compel any one of us to be the same as another one of us. The objective is to rejoice and to respect and to hallow the work that God has done in making us so unique from one another. Even twins are dissimilar.

My father was a twin. There's a picture of him and his twin brother in their high school class. I think there were 12 kids in their class. The way in which my father was dressed and the way in which his twin brother was dressed in the picture foreshadowed the course that these two men's lives would take.

My father left that area in rural Appalachia, and he went into the military. He fought in World War II. He landed on Omaha Beach on the morning of D-Day. He settled in the West. He worked his life to support his children in encouraging my sister and I to go to college to receive an education that he did not receive because by the time he had an opportunity to do that, life and family and work prevented it. (My sister holds two Bachelor's degrees, a Master's degree, and I've got an Associates, Bachelor's, and Juris Doctorate degree.) Because of the priorities that my father had, he was willing to work for the *long* game, the *long* vision—to sacrifice.

His twin brother looks rather dandy. He out dressed his twin. He was somewhat showy. He wanted to get there and get there now and quickly. And so, when he finished school, he immediately went to the best-paying job he could find; and he went to work in the coal mine where the United Mine Workers Union wages paid him a great living. He never left Appalachia, developed black lung as a coal miner—which they often did. But he had gratification early on that my father did not have; but my father had satisfaction that his twin brother never had for himself. Twins are dissimilar. They were identical twins; they were not fraternal.

We're unique, and we're meant to be so. We dishonor God when we disrespect that and when we insist on uniformity. However different we may be from one another; however, we can still be kindly. We can still be patient. We can still try to uplift, to edify, and to honor the differences that exist between us.

I pray that we will take everything that has been said today, many of which, I suspect, were comments designed for a subject about which I have studied ignorance and no responsibility but, instead, a commandment not to participate. But if the words of a kindly and caring God can hold any sway in the hearts of men, then let it do so.

Let me end by bearing testimony again that the only reason I had the audacity to say any of the things that were said here today is because they were authorized, and they were approved; indeed, they were required to be said. And I don't know why some things get said at one point in history that are not said at other points. I just know that as we move along the path towards what is inevitable at this point (that is, the coming of the Lord and the establishment of a place of peace, a city of Zion, and a New Jerusalem) that more information needs to be in the possession of those that will find themselves there.

In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.