

Mary and the Bible – Part 4



Mary In Salvation History

Genesis is the first book of the Bible. In Genesis we read that God created the universe and everything in it including the first man and woman, Adam and Eve. Genesis recounts that Adam and Eve failed to obey God and hence they fell from grace and they knew Sin and Death.

In Genesis there is a stunning prophecy. God said, “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise him on the heel” (Gen. 3:15). This passage is called the Protoevangelium, meaning “first gospel.” It is here we find the first announcement of the Messiah. There is a battle between the serpent and the woman, and we find prophesied the final victory of a descendant of the woman over Satan. It is Jesus who crushed the head of Satan at the cross of Calvary. Fittingly, the site of Calvary where Jesus defeated Satan means “skull place,” reminiscent of crushing Satan’s head. Because Jesus is the seed or offspring of the woman, the woman must be the Blessed Virgin Mary. She is prefigured right here in the beginning of Genesis.

In John’s account of the crucifixion, Mary stood near the cross as Jesus said to her, “Dear woman, here is your son,” and to the disciple, “Here is your mother” (John 19:26-27). Mary was not John’s biological mother, yet John is called Mary’s son, and Mary John’s mother! The beloved disciple is a model that must be true of all disciples of Jesus, including us. The disciple whom Jesus loved took Mary into his home and became a spiritual son to her. Equally, Mary became the spiritual mother of the beloved disciple. Christians following the model discipleship of the “disciple whom Jesus loved” must ask: Am I like the beloved disciple by taking Mary into my home? When we consider how this disciple was faithful in obeying the command of Jesus to receive Mary as his mother, it becomes natural for all Christians to do likewise.

Mary In The Book Of Revelation

After the Babylonians crushed Jerusalem and destroyed Solomon’s Temple in 587 B.C., the Ark of the Covenant that held the Ten Commandments was never seen again. In 2 Macabees, it says that the place of the Ark will “remain unknown until God gathers His people together again and shows them mercy” (2 Macc 2:7). God has shown His people mercy through the Incarnation.

The apostle John is the author of the Book of Revelation. While John was exiled on the Isle of Patmos, he wrote something that would have shocked any first-century Jew. The Ark of the Old Covenant had been lost for centuries—no one had seen it for about 600 years.

In Revelation 11:19, John makes a surprising announcement: “Then God’s temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple.”

At this point chapter 11 ends and chapter 12 begins. But the Bible was not written with chapter divisions—they were added in the 12th century. When John penned these words, there was no division between chapters 11 and 12; it was a continuing narrative.

What did John say immediately after seeing the Ark of the Covenant in heaven? “And a great portent appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; she was with child” (Rv 12:1-2). The woman is Mary, the Ark of the New Covenant, revealed by God to John. She was seen bearing the child who would rule the world with a rod of iron (Rv 12:5). Mary was seen as the Ark and as a queen. The Bible begins with a real man (Adam), a real woman (Eve), and a real serpent (the devil)—and it also ends with a real man

(Jesus, the Last Adam [1 Cor 15:45]), a real woman (Mary, the New Eve [Rv 11:19-12:2]), and a real serpent (the devil of old). All of this was foretold in Genesis 3:15. Later in the same chapter we read that the devil went out to persecute the woman's other offspring—Christians. Remember that in John's Gospel, at the crucifixion, Jesus gave Mary to John as His mother and Mary became the mother of all Christians.

In Revelation, there is another exciting connection verifying Mary as the woman and spiritual mother of Christians. "Then the dragon became angry with the woman and went off to wage war against the rest of her offspring, those who keep God's commandments and bear witness to Jesus" (Rev. 12:17). The woman in Revelation has other children who keep the commandments of God and "bear testimony to Jesus." They are Christians. Recalling that Jesus calls Mary the mother of John and John now calls Mary the mother of all Christians, we can easily see the scriptural basis for the acknowledgment of Mary as our spiritual mother and mother of the Church.

John wrote about a woman and a child in Revelation: "Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant could be seen in the temple. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings, and peals of thunder, an earthquake, and a violent hailstorm. A great sign appeared in the sky, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. She was with child and wailed aloud in pain as she labored to give birth. Then another sign appeared in the sky; it was a huge red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on its heads were seven diadems. Its tail swept away a third of the stars in the sky and hurled them down to the earth. Then the dragon stood before the woman about to give birth, to devour her child when she gave birth. She gave birth to a son, a male child, destined to rule all the nations with an iron rod. Her child was caught up to God and his throne" (Rev. 11:19-12:5).

This woman clothed with the sun has a male child who is destined to rule all the nations, an obvious reference to Jesus and his kingship. Jesus was caught up to heaven, which is what apostolic Christianity calls the Ascension. Thus, the identification of the woman clothed with the sun is Mary.

Mary is prefigured in the book of Genesis, she participates with Jesus in the Gospels, and she is observed fighting Satan in the book of Revelation. From the very first pages of the Bible to its last book, Mary's role in salvation history is astonishing.