

On the Trail of the Goddess

Is the “Virgin Mary” of the events at Fatima and Medjugorje the Mary of the Bible? Let's look at some information so that you can make the decision for yourself. Worship of a woman figure has been part of the history of the world since the Babylonian Empire. Is it the same spirit or something different? God tells us to “ask, seek, and knock” and He will give us understanding.

The Mary of the Bible

There are a few things we know from the Bible account about the young girl named Mary:

- She lived in Nazareth.
- She was a teenager.
- She was a virgin before the birth of Jesus.
- She was visited by the angel Gabriel. (Luke 1:42)
- She was present at Jesus' death and in the Upper Room (Holy Spirit baptism)
- History says she died in the 5th century

Scripture gives us a basic picture of Mary and her role of obedience in bringing the Savior into the world. She was called “blessed” by Gabriel because she was chosen by God to bear the Savior through the miracle conception through the Holy Spirit. It was mentioned in the Bible that she also had other children mentioned in (Matt 13 55-56). Jesus was given a chance to speak of His mother as “blessed” (Luke 11:27).

The 1st century had no mention or “veneration” of Mary. Since then there have been many proclamations of the Catholic church concerning Mary that have been rejected by Christian Protestant believers. Many of these teachings have come from the 4th century Council. Here are the current Catholic church approved teachings concerning the Virgin Mary:

- Immaculate Conception (1894) Mary was born sinless. This also applies to the term Immaculate Heart. *Romans 3:23
- She is a Perpetual Virgin *Matthew 1:25
- Assumption (1853) She was taken in Heaven at her death. *The only people mentioned to have done this in the Bible were Enoch, Elijah, Jesus, & the Two Witnesses of Revelation.
- Mediatrix She is the go-between or mediator for people seeking God or Jesus. *1 Timothy 2:5
- Co-Redemtrix She together with Christ suffered and now redeems mankind. *John 14:6 *This is being currently pursued by the Marion Society and awaits Pope.
- Queen of Heaven Using Rev 11:18-12:17 This passage refers to Israel.
- Mother of God Jesus had a mother but God did not. *Gen 1:1

As we can see, the church has added attributes to the mother of Christ that are in direct contradiction of the Biblical account. We must then do the research for ourselves and see what scripture says about her. We can then weigh possible traditions we have been taught by family or priests and decide for ourselves who she was but more importantly, who God says she was.

Now let's take a look in the past and search some of the history of the "Queen of Heaven" title and women who might have had their mark on the current Mary of the church.

Ishtar

In ancient Egypt the goddess was worshiped as the "Queen of Heaven". Her cult involved immorality and prostitution. Women would burn incense and bake cakes with her mark imprinted into the top. God expressed His anger toward His people for joining in local customs and these practices in the book of Jeremiah 44. They directly defied God and continued in this activity even when confronted by the prophet resulting in destruction and death. (Jeremiah 44:3)

Isis

Also a goddess of Egypt, Isis was married to her brother Osiris. She was reported to have brought Osiris back to life (resurrected) to conceive her son Horus. She ruled as queen with her god-son over Egypt. She is seen in many artworks as a mother with a child in her lap and a halo of the sun above her head. These people worshiped the sun god as Ra.

Diana

In Ephesus Greece, the "Great Goddess" was worshiped as the "Mother" goddess in Paul's time. There was a huge cult and a temple dedicated to her there. Silver statues made a fortune for artisans who tried to attack Paul for his sermons against idolatry. Rome also worshiped Diana. As pagans were converted, church leaders found a replacement for this goddess in Mary as a female figure around the year 1037.

There is plenty of research you can do on your own regarding these deities. You will find some very similar images and worship customs. The paintings of the Madonna and Child are a direct copy in many cases of the goddess Isis and her child Horus. All of these deities were worshiped as "Queen" or "Mother." All demanded exclusive worship, required statues and temples (churches), and had a hatred for followers of Yahweh. Although we should honor the Biblical Mary for her obedience to God, bravery, and eventual suffering (Luke 2:35), we must not elevate her to the same level as Christ or above him as the Mother of God the Father. This is blasphemy according to the Bible.
*Psalm 81:9

Apparitions of “Mary”

Throughout the years from the 1800's until present we have a phenomenon of visitations or apparitions claiming to be Mary of the Bible. To present there have been 20,000 recorded. The majority of these “visits” have been in countries where Islam and Catholicism are the majority religions with France and Spain having the highest occurrences. France currently has 900 shrines dedicated to Mary and 1 to Christ with 16-20 million visitors per year. This is how these apparitions mainly appear:

- Messages unheard (to the heart)
- Exterior voice
- Visions (eye or thought)
- Images on the physical (windows or other)
- As “Our Lady of.....

Let's examine some of the more famous appearances and messages of this apparition and see how they match up with scripture which is our ultimate guide. The Bible says we must question “all things” and test “all spirits” to see if they are truly from God. This is very important if we are to have discernment and follow His Word in our lives. We read in 1 John 4:1 to question who comes in the name of our Lord.

Medjugorje

Since 1981 in a small village in Bosnia-Hercegovina, six young people known as “visionaries” have been receiving “messages” from the Virgin Mary. These visionaries have been promised 10 secrets that will occur in the world in the near future. One visionary named Mirjana on the 2nd of every month has received visits since 1987. Crowds gather around this woman and read what she has them write down as messages. Let's take a look at one of these messages from the “Lady of Medjugorje”.

"Dear children! Today on this great day which you have given to me, I desire to bless all of you and to say: these days while I am with you are days of grace. I desire to teach you and help you to walk the way of holiness. There are many people who do not desire to understand my messages and to accept with seriousness what I am saying. But you I therefore call and ask that by your lives and by your daily living you witness my presence. If you pray, God will help you to discover the true reason for my coming. Therefore, little children, pray and read the Sacred Scriptures so that through my coming you discover the message in Sacred Scripture for you. Thank you for having responded to my call." June 25, 1991

Now, let's apply scripture to this message. Read *John 10:9-11 *Proverbs 30: 5-6

Jesus says to us that He is the “Gate” that we must pass through. He also mentions that He “is the Way, Truth, and the Life.” We are to go to no one else to lead us to salvation as He is the Good Shepherd. We were also told in advance through the Bible account that after His ascension to heaven, the believers would receive the Holy Spirit. Would He not have told believers if we were to look for his mother Mary to lead people to him and give us instructions? Of course He would have! We are His sheep and he cares for us that not one would be lost. He gave us explicit instructions in His Word. *John 14:6

Our Lady of Fatima

In Portugal in the spring of 1917 three shepherd children reported the sighting of an “angel”. In May of 1917, the children were visited by what they called the “Lady of Fatima” or the Virgin Mary. Later in October the “Miracle of the Sun occurred. You can research this event on your own as there are many articles dedicated to it. Thousands of people witnessed something unusual. Only the children saw the “Lady”. We know from science that the sun is much larger than the earth and would not have flown down and over the crowd. Something certainly did. Witnesses report hearing a buzzing sound, increased heat, a swiftly moving cloud, falling flower petals that disappeared, dried clothing after rain, a swirling silver disk, flashing colorful lights. October 13, 2017 marked the 100th anniversary where Pope Francis canonized two of the children who passed away at ages 9 and 10 under strange circumstances. They were quoted as saying they made sacrifices or reparations of self-harm for the sin of others, these included starvation, dehydration, rubbing of nettles or stickers on limbs, tying of a knotted rope around their waists. They reported that the apparition asked them to “sacrifice for many”. *John 10:10-11 *Galations 1:4 & 1: 6-7

Let's examine some messages from the Fatima apparition:

In August of 1917 Our Lady told the children: *"Pray much and make sacrifices for sinners, for many souls go to hell because there is no one to make sacrifices for them."*

Only one sacrifice was mentioned in the Bible that covered all the sins, past and present of mankind. *Romans 5:8 *Romans 4:25 This statement is not Biblical because we are not asked to do what Jesus has already done, much less small children. *Matthew 18:6. Humans chose the penalty of going into hell for rejecting Christ. *Psalm 9:17

It was in this same spirit that the “Angel” spoke to the children in 1916: *"Offer up everything in your power as a sacrifice to the Lord in reparation for the sins by which He is offended, and in supplication for the conversion of sinners . . . More than all else, accept and bear with resignation the sufferings that God may send you."*

We must ask ourselves after reading the above scriptures, who is asking these innocent children to “suffer” with whatever they are sent? Why would conversion of adults require the suffering of little children?

June 13, 1917 Our lady spoke to Lucia: *“Jesus wants to use you to make me known and loved. He wants to establish the devotion to my Immaculate Heart in the world. I promise salvation to those who embrace it, and their souls will be loved by God as flowers placed by me before His throne.”*

In this statement she is saying that Jesus wants to establish worship of her sinless or “Immaculate Heart”. This to is not biblical and she cannot promise salvation. *Matthew 1:21. In Luke 1:47 Mary calls God her Savior.

Pope John Paul II

In 1981 the Pope was riding through St. Peter's Square in Vatican City. He saw a girl holding a framed picture of the Virgin Mary of Fatima. He bent down to kiss it and was struck 4 times by gunshots coming from a Turkish born assassin. He later stated that he believed "The Lady of Fatima" saved his life. He also claimed she was the only way to save Europe as one of her messages was "Give Russia to my Heart." The Pope believed it was his personal mission to carry the mission of Fatima. His motto that he had embroidered on his robe was "Completely Yours" in reference to her. In 1982 he gave the world to "The Immaculate Heart of Mary" as she requested. He was known to all as "Mary's Pope". He also believed she would bring "all religions" together and make him the leader. Let's read 2 Corinthians 6: 14-17. What does God say about praying with other faiths who do not believe in God and Jesus? What does "yoked together" mean?

In conclusion, we need to make sure to study scripture for ourselves. We must weight all claims to see if it measures up to the Word of God and not simply accept what some one else tells us to believe. *2 Timothy 3: 14-17 tells us to read scripture and be trained by it. There is a promise for us that the Holy Spirit of God will help us understand what we are reading. *1 Corinthians 2: 12-14. We are also given a warning that all will give an account to God for what we have learned and what we have done with Jesus in our own lives. *2 Corinthians 5:10 God had some very serious words for anyone saying things that are not in the Bible. *Galations 1: 6-9 He also saved for us some very important instructions in the last book of the Bible for those who would add to or take away from what has been written. *Revelation 22: 17-19

When making the decision as to the authenticity of an apparition of Mary we need to ask a few questions in light of scripture:

- Would Mary of the Bible allow herself to be worshiped above God or Jesus?
- Would the Mary of the Bible ask children to sacrifice themselves?
- In light of what we know of Jesus death, do we need to harm ourselves for our own or others salvation? *Isaiah 53:5
- Would the Mary of the Bible claim to be perfect or sinless?
- Would the Mary of the Bible ask to have people given to her and not Jesus?

There is much more information on these apparitions for you to research. These are only a few examples of many. I challenge you as our Lord would to "ask, seek, and knock" and He will lead you to the truth. May the God of all peace be with you in your journey.

Resources

The Messages of Fatima

www.vatican.va

Are Apparitions of Mary, Such As Lady Fatima, True Messages From God?

www.Gotquestions.org

Fatima 100th Anniversary

www.ewtn.com

Overview of Medjugorje

www.medjugorje.org

Bible Resources

www.biblehub.com

www.biblegateway.com

*Other sources used as search engines:

Google
Wikipedia