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Plain and Precious Things Restored, Part 5: The Queen of Heaven  
By Kevin Christensen

The past several years have seen a resurgence in studies of the Divine Feminine, several of which concern Ancient Near Eastern Goddess figures, even a specifically Hebrew Goddess. For example, Raphael Patai's pioneering literary approach to the topic (*The Hebrew Goddess*) has recently been supplemented by William Dever, an archeologist with his *Did God Have A Wife? Archaeology and Folk Religion In Ancient Israel*. Such studies have been informed both by the emergence of archeological and textual discoveries (pillar figurines from Jerusalem whose use stopped at Josiah's time, inscriptions, the Ras Shamah finds, the Christian and Jewish scrolls, Philo, etc.), and re-reading older Jewish and Christian texts in light of the new information. A number of important studies by LDS scholars have used this new information to explore the idea of a Mother in Heaven. Some of the most impressively mind-expanding of these studies have been produced by conservative LDS scholars, rather than by the liberal LDS scholars. For example, John W. Welch of BYU wrote a FARMS Preliminary Report comparing Eliza R. Snow's LDS Hymn, 'Oh My Father' with the Early Christian 'Hymn of the Pearl' that is preserved in a non-canonical Gospel of Thomas. Kevin Barney produced an excellent paper for FAIR titled "Do We Have a Mother in Heaven?"<sup>1</sup>, which surveys the both origins of the LDS teaching and the new evidences for the idea in Israel in antiquity (for example, ancient inscriptions that refer to 'Yahweh and his Asherah.') Daniel Peterson produced a brilliant essay titled "Nephi and His Asherah", which offers a fascinating interpretation of Nephi's dream in light of the new evidences.<sup>2</sup> I had read their essays (and others) before I encountered Margaret Barker's work on this topic, and found their work helped me appreciate her contributions. Such works have changed the way I now read the Book of Mormon.

Since the Nauvoo period, the LDS tradition acknowledged our belief in a Mother in Heaven.<sup>3</sup> But, lacking additional revelation on the subject, for most of our history we have been unable to do much more than speculate. Such speculative approaches create our own image in the heavens, placing a mirror where we need a window. The new discoveries of ancient beliefs check on our tendency to project our own cultural and social agendas. Nephi explained that "there is none other people who understand the

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<sup>1</sup> Kevin Barney, "Do We Have a Mother in Heaven?" <http://www.fairlds.org/pubs/MotherInHeaven.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Daniel Peterson, "Nephi and His Asherah: A Note on 1 Nephi 8:11-23" in David Bitton, ed., *Mormons, Scripture, and the Ancient World: Studies in Honor of John L. Sorenson* (Provo: FARMS, 1998), 191-244. A shorter version appeared in *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, 9/2 (2000) 16-25.

<sup>3</sup> Linda P. Wilcox, "The Mormon Concept of a Mother in Heaven" in Maureen Ursenbach Beecher and Lavina Fielding Anderson, eds., *Sisters in Spirit: Mormon Women in Historical and Cultural Perspective* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992) 64-77.

things which were spoken unto the Jews like unto them, save it be that they are taught after the manner of the things of the Jews.” (2 Nephi 25:5). The new evidences help us better understand the things of the Jews and the early Christians on this topic, and this includes several significant passages about the Heavenly Mother in the Book of Mormon.

As we have seen in previous parts of this series, a major theme in Margaret Barker’s work has been the effects of Josiah’s purge and the influence on the tradition texts and interpretation of an editorial school that school.

After Jerusalem had been destroyed by the Babylonians in 586BCE, refugees fled south. The prophet Jeremiah went with them, and told them that the disaster had been due to their sins, and that even in Egypt, the punishment would continue. The refugees in Pathros confronted Jeremiah and would not accept what he said. *The disaster had been caused, they said, by neglecting the Queen of Heaven. Jeremiah 44 then offers us a glimpse of the religion of seventh century Judah - burning incense to the Queen of Heaven, pouring out libations to her and making loaves to represent her: ‘For then we had plenty of food and we prospered and saw no evil’ (Jer.44.17).*<sup>4</sup>

This memory of the Queen of Heaven can be compared to the passages in 1<sup>st</sup> Enoch that Barker often cites:

[I]n the sixth week, ‘All who lived in the temple lost their vision, and *the hearts of all of them godlessly forsook Wisdom*, and the house of the kingdom was burned and the whole chosen people was scattered (1 Enoch 93). This history ... says that Jerusalem was destroyed after the people in the temple had forsaken Wisdom. There is even a poem about the rejected Wisdom:

*Wisdom went forth to make her dwelling among the children of men, and found no dwelling place  
Wisdom returned to her place, and took her seat among the angels (1 Enoch 42)*

Both passages point to the changes in Josiah’s reform. However, Jeremiah 44 does raise the question of Jeremiah’s attitude toward the Wisdom/the Queen of Heaven.<sup>5</sup> This is one of those questions that must be asked, but not answered too quickly. Read carefully the explanation of the recent disaster that Jeremiah hears from a group of the survivors:

But since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, we have wanted all things, and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine.

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<sup>4</sup> Margaret Barker, “Where Shall Wisdom be Found?” at <http://orthodoxeurope.org/page/11/1/7.aspx>

<sup>5</sup> Terrence Szinc, “Jerusalem in Lehi’s Day” in *FARMS Review* 16:2, p 155 comments: “It seems to me that Jeremiah supported the changes Josiah had made. Should we follow Jeremiah’s view on this matter, or that of the exiles.” Szinc is reviewing Barker’s essay “What King Josiah Reformed” in John W. Welch, David Rolph Seely, and Jo Ann H. Seely, eds., *Glimpses of Lehi’s Jerusalem* (Provo: FARMS, 2004), 522, 542. My own essay in *FARMS Review* 16:2, “The Deuteronomist De-christianizing of the Old Testament in *FARMS Review* 16:2, offers arguments in support of Barker’s reading, as do this series of essays.

And when we burned incense to the queen of heaven, and poured out drink offerings unto her, did we make her cakes to worship her, and pour out drink offerings unto her, without our men. (Jer. 44:18-19)

Jeremiah forcefully rejects this explanation:

So that the LORD could no longer bear, because of the evil of your doings, and because of the abominations which ye have committed; therefore is your land a desolation, and an astonishment, and a curse, without an inhabitant, as at this day. Because ye have burned incense, and because ye have sinned against the LORD, and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD, nor walked in his law, nor in his statutes, nor in his testimonies; therefore this evil is happened unto you, as at this day. (Jer. 44:22-23)

Does this mean then, that Jeremiah rejects the Queen of Heaven? I don't think so. Notice that Jeremiah had previously made *the same criticisms of those who placed their faith in the presence of the Jerusalem temple*:

Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, [are] these.  
For if ye throughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye throughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbour;  
If ye oppress not the fatherless and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt; then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land I gave to your fathers. (Jer. 7:4-6)

Jeremiah continues his Temple discourse to identify the real problem:

Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense to other gods... and come and stand before me in this house, which is called in my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations? (Jer. 7:9-10)

Jeremiah is not anti-temple. He speaks favorably of temple sacrifice in Jer. 33:11 and his writings are full of 1<sup>st</sup> Temple imagery. I have previously presented evidence that Jeremiah disagrees with the Deuteronomist reformers on their key issues. His complaints against the temple and the worship of the Queen were both directed against the failure to repent, to offer rituals without repentance. The ritual forms mean nothing without personal reform. So we should not jump to conclusions about Jeremiah's attitudes about the Queen of Heaven without thoroughly examining his writings.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> In doing so, we should recognize that the biblical Jeremiah text has been edited by the reformers. The most obvious evidence of this is in Jeremiah 15:4, which blames the destruction of Jerusalem on Manaseh, restating an argument inserted at a later revision of 2 Kings 23:26. Such an explanation contradicts everything that Jeremiah says about the immediate wickedness in Jerusalem as being the cause of the crisis, and of the potential for Jerusalem to repent. Indeed, since Maneseh died before Jeremiah was born, if Maneseh's acts truly caused the destruction, then Jeremiah's ministry of warning and prophesy would be utterly pointless.

What else does Jeremiah say about the Queen of Heaven? There is a passage in Jer. 7:18, about baking cakes to Queen of Heaven in the streets and cities, but this is done in connection with “drink offerings to other gods, that they may provoke me to anger.” It also has commercial connotations. The temple tradition was that the bread offerings were exclusively for the temple high priests. The invitation to feast at Wisdom’s table (Proverbs 9:5-6) had a temple context.<sup>7</sup> At least, it seems odd to have this being done in the streets, perhaps in a commercial imitation of temple ordinances. However, there are other significant passages to consider when exploring Jeremiah’s views:

For I have heard a voice as of a woman in travail, and the anguish of her that bringeth forth her first child, the voice of the daughter of Zion, that bewaileth herself, that spreadeth her hands, saying, Woe is me now! For my soul is wearied because of murders.” (Jer 4:31)

The same image of the woman laboring with her child also appears in Revelation.

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 12 stars: and she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. (Revelation 12:1)

Barker also makes the important observation that ties this section of Revelation back to the changes made by the reformers at the time of Jeremiah:

Even a brief survey shows that there had been a Lady in Jerusalem who had been rejected and had returned to her place among the angels. She had been worshiped with wine and incense, and bread to represent her. She had protected the city and given prosperity, and she had given vision to the priests. She had been evicted from the temple by Josiah, and her cult probably involved items removed in the purge or remembered as missing from the second temple: the item named the Asherah (probably the menorah), the host of heaven, the horses for the sun, the oil, the mana, the high priest’s staff that bore almond blossoms<sup>8</sup>, the ark, the fire and the spirit. A long list, but these things were not forgotten.

In the Book of Revelation John saw the ark restored to the holy of holies (Rev. 11.19), he saw four horses ride out from the temple (Rev. 6.1-8), he saw the Man in the midst of the seven lamps, the menorah, he heard the Spirit promising the faithful they would receive the hidden manna (Rev. 2.17). John was describing the restoration of the first temple. He also saw the Queen of Heaven, even though she is not named as Queen. ‘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’ (Rev. 12.1)...She gave birth to a son who was destined to fulfill Psalm 2 – to rule the nations with a rod of iron – and presumably the rest of the psalm as

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<sup>7</sup> Margaret Barker, *The Great High Priest*, (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 87-92.

<sup>8</sup> Notice that Jeremiah’s cryptic call vision involved “a rod of an almond tree.” (Jer. 1:11).

well: 'You are my son. Today I have begotten you.' The woman's son was taken up to the throne of God.

These few verses in the Book of Revelation show the important of the Lost Lady and the cult of the first temple for understanding Christian origins.<sup>9</sup>

Jeremiah speaks of the Tree of Life (Jer. 17:8), and even compares an attempt on his life with the destruction of the tree (Jer. 11:19). If Jeremiah approved of the destruction of the Asherah (2 Kings 23:6), would he liken an attempt on his life to that action? He refers to Israel's changing their gods, by forsaking the fountain of living waters (Jer. 2:11, 13). Both the tree and fountain are associated with Wisdom/Heavenly Mother. Another name for the Goddess was the Virgin, and this name too appears in Jeremiah's prophesy:

Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel: thou shalt again be adorned with thy tabrets, and shalt go forth in the dances of them that make merry. (Jer. 31:4)

Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old together: for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow. (Jer. 31:13)

Jesus refers to Wisdom's dance in Matthew 11:17,19. The very early *Infancy Gospel of James* depicts Mary as a "little girl in the temple, dancing before the high priest,... exactly how Wisdom is described in Proverbs 8, playing and dancing before the creator."<sup>10</sup> Jeremiah 10:12 refers to wisdom being with God at the creation a detail missing from Genesis, but present in Proverbs 8.

Margaret Barker discusses these kinds of details, and many more, in her essays on Wisdom, the Queen of Heaven. That background led to the observations that she made when she spoke at the Library of Congress about the Book of Mormon.

The tree of life made one happy, according to the Book of Proverbs (Prov 3.18), but for detailed descriptions of the tree we have to rely on the non-canonical texts: Enoch described it as perfumed, with fruit like grapes (1 En.32.5), and a text discovered in Egypt in 1945 described the tree as beautiful, fiery, and with fruit like white grapes<sup>11</sup> I do not know of any other source which describes the fruit as *white* grapes. Imagine my surprise when I read the account of Lehi's vision of the tree whose *white fruit* made one happy, and the interpretation, that the Virgin in Nazareth was the mother of the Son of God after the manner of the flesh<sup>12</sup>. This is the Heavenly Mother, represented by the tree of life, and then Mary and her

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<sup>9</sup> Margaret Barker, *Temple Theology: An Introduction* (London: SPCK, 2004), 77-78.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>11</sup> *On the Origin of the World*, CG II.5.110

<sup>12</sup> Discussed by Daniel C Peterson 'Nephi and his Asherah' in *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 9.2. (2000), pp.16-25

Son on earth. This revelation to Joseph Smith was the ancient Wisdom symbolism, intact, and almost certainly as it was known in 600BCE.<sup>13</sup>

Barker directly refers to Daniel Peterson's study of Nephi's vision of the tree of life, which in turn had been informed by the newer discoveries and thinking of the Asherah/Tree of Life associations. While I don't have space to discuss it here, Barker's study on Ezekiel's visions turn out to knit in surprising ways to Lehi's vision of the Tree of Life in the desert.<sup>14</sup> Enlightened by the new views, we should be able to see new significance in other Book of Mormon texts. For example, in Mosiah 8, King Limhi exclaims:

Oh how marvelous are the works of the Lord, and how long he doth suffer his people; yea how blind and impenetrable are the understandings of the children of men; for they will not seek wisdom, neither do they desire that she should rule over them.

The Book of Mormon contains three occurrences of "mother earth" (2 Nephi 9:7; Mosiah 2:26; Mormon 6:15). What is the religious context behind the use of that language in the Book of Mormon? Northop Frye explains:

No principle is without many exceptions in mythology, but one very frequent mythical formulation of this attitude to nature is an earth-mother, from whom everything is born and to whom everything returns at death. Such an earth-mother is the most easily understood image of *natura naturans*, and she acquires its moral ambivalence. As the womb of all forms of life, she has a cherishing and nourishing aspect; as the tomb of all forms of life, she has a menacing and sinister aspect; as the manifestation of an unending cycle of life and death, she has an inscrutable and elusive aspect. Hence, she is often a *dive triformis*, a goddess of a threefold form of some kind, usually birth, death, and renewal in time; or heaven, earth, and hell in space.<sup>15</sup>

The references to "mother earth" in the Book of Mormon are subtle but neatly spread across the entire history, arguing for a long-standing tradition. Also, it is clear that these references, in connection with other archetypal feminine imagery, contain the essentials of the mythic formulation. The presence of these essential elements of the picture in the text invites our further exploration of the Old and New World contexts. Some have expressed concern that the three passages cited refer to mother earth in the context of death. While this is strictly correct in the ancient mythological formulation, it might be

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<sup>13</sup> Margaret Barker, "Response to Professor Terryl Givens" May 6, 2006. Copy in my possession. This is scheduled to be published in the Conference Proceedings.

<sup>14</sup> See The Great High Priest, 250-253, 260. The Ikon of Wisdom that she compares to Ezekiel's living one is provided in Margaret Barker, *An Extraordinary Gathering of Angels* (London: MQ Publications Lts, 2004) 190. Compare the Ikon and the associated imagery in Ezekiel with 1 Nephi 11:8-22. The "love of God" can be as "who" as well as a "what."

<sup>15</sup> Northrop Frye, *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981), 68.

beneficial to see some of the other manifestations of the image. Accordingly, other passages in the Book of Mormon suggest the life-giving aspects of mother earth:

O Lord, wilt thou hearken unto me, and cause that it may be done according to my words, and send forth rain upon the face of the earth, that she may bring forth her fruit, and her grain in the season of grain. . . . And it came to pass that in the seventy and sixth year the Lord did turn away his anger from the people, and caused that rain should fall upon the earth, insomuch that it did bring forth her fruit in the season of her fruit. And it came to pass that it did bring forth her grain in the season of her grain. (Helaman 11:13, 17)

In 2 Nephi 6:1, Jacob, a Nephite temple priest quotes Isaiah 50:

For thus saith the LORD, Where is the bill of thy mother's divorcement?... Behold, for you iniquities ye have sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away."

Whether this passage was written at the time of Hezekiah by the original Isaiah, or whether it was written by a disciple of Isaiah in Josiah's time, (writing as a Second Isaiah), the context and the meaning would be the same. Like Josiah, Hezekiah had also removed the Asherah from the Temple. Later, when Jesus speaks to the Nephites at the temple, he quotes from Isaiah 54.

For thy maker, thy husband, the Lord of Hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, the God of the whole earth shall he be called. For the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God. For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer. (3 Nephi 22:5-8, and compare Isaiah 54)<sup>16</sup>

Certainly, not all manifestations of the Divine Feminine are positive. This partially because of human apostasy and disobedience, but also because Lady Wisdom has a rival, the "strange woman" of Proverbs, the Great Whore of 1 Nephi 13-14 and Revelation. Both the "strange woman" Proverbs and the Isabel of Alma 39 turn out to be far more than ordinary temptresses. One should refer to Barker's discussion of the "foreign woman" and Hugh Nibley's fascinating discussion of Isabel as a priestess.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> See Cynthia Hallen, "Redeeming the Desolate Woman: The Message of Isaiah 54 and 3 Nephi 22" in *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* v 7 n1 (1998), 40-47.

<sup>17</sup> See Margaret Barker, *The Great Angel: A Study of Israel's Second God* (London: SPCK, 1992), 60. Also see Hugh Nibley, *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley Volume 8: The Prophetic Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989), 542. If Nibley's suggestions about Isabel are correct, (and I think they are), we should also see Alma's advice to Corianton in Alma 39-42 as implicitly correcting the beliefs of Isabel's followers. This turns out to be directly relevant to some New Age versions of the Goddess worship.

The single most detailed account of individual women's words and actions in the entire Book of Mormon is the account of Lamoni's Queen and the Servant Abish. This is the story of Ammon's preaching to the Lamanite king, the king's conversion and lapse into apparent death, the testing and conversion of the queen, her fall into a deathlike state, the appearance of Abish, and her role in the resolution of the crisis. Given that the editor, Mormon, so often neglects the female perspective, why does he give space to Alma's detailed story of these women's actions and words unless he sees them as particularly significant? If Mormon has anything specific to say about women, he must be saying it here.

Significantly, the story of Abish and the Lamanite queen qualifies as a "type-scene,"<sup>18</sup> a prophetic prefiguring not only of the resurrection of Christ, but also of the role of women in that event. As Robert Alter remarks, "The type-scene is not merely a way of formally recognizing a particular kind of narrative moment; it is also a means of attaching that moment to a larger pattern of historical and theological meaning."<sup>19</sup> Compare the general features of this account in Alma with a conspicuous pattern in ancient Near Eastern religion:

One of the most striking features of the ancient Sacred Marriage cult was that the goddess had an important part to play in the resurrection of her husband. . . . We will recall how Anath made possible Baal-Hadad's resurrection by attacking and destroying his enemy, Mot, the god of death. In Mesopotamian myth it was Inanna-Ishtar who descended into the realm of death to destroy Erishkigal's power so that dead Dumuzi-Tammuz could be restored to life. Aristide's Apology describes how Aphrodite descended into Hades in order to ransom Adonis from Persephone. Cybele likewise made possible the resurrection of Attis on the third day, while in Egypt it was Isis who made possible the restoration of her husband, Osiris. . . . But no matter what the details of these ubiquitous Near Eastern death-and-resurrection legends, the underlying theme is the same: the god is helpless without the ministrations of his consort. . . . The reunion of Jesus and Mary Magdalene at the tomb on Resurrection Morning therefore clearly fits within this well-known tradition.<sup>20</sup>

The same motif also appears in the Mesoamerican Popol Vuh in the story of One Hunahpu's death and the maiden daughter of the underworld lords, through whose courageous actions life was renewed.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> For details and sources on the importance of archetypes in the Book of Mormon, see Alan Goff, "Boats, Beginnings, and Repetitions," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 1/1 (1992): 67-84. For an introduction to the notion of type-scenes, see Goff, "Uncritical Theory and Thin Description: The Resistance to History," *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 7/1 (1995): 187-207.

<sup>19</sup> Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 60.

<sup>20</sup> Eugene Seaich, *A Great Mystery: The Sacred Marriage and Bridal Chamber in Early Christianity and Judaism*, (Salt Lake City, unpublished MS, 1979), 198-99.

<sup>21</sup> See Allen J. Christenson, "The Sacred Tree of the Ancient Maya," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 6/1 (1997): 2-4.



The stories of Abish and the Lamanite kings and queens resonate with these traditions.<sup>22</sup> Given the growing recognition that Book of Mormon authors consciously selected stories that present archetypal patterns, it is likely that these stories attracted the attention of Mormon as significant type-scenes, and as such, they receive due attention and prominence in the text. Notice King Lamoni's prophesy as he is raised from his near-death state and reaches out to the Queen"

I have seen my Redeemer; and he shall come forth and be born of a woman, and he shall redeem all mankind who believe on his name. (Alma 19:13)

It is clear that after the coming of Jesus in the Old World, a great deal of imagery and temple lore that had been associated with the Queen of Heaven, Lady Wisdom, was attached to Mary, particularly in the Catholic and Orthodox traditions.<sup>23</sup> This is not something to object to,<sup>24</sup> but to understand.

Any ritual whatever . . . unfolds not only in a consecrated space . . . but also in a "sacred time," "once upon a time" (*in illo tempore, ab origine*), that is, when the ritual was performed for the first time by a god, an ancestor, or a hero. Every ritual has a divine model, an archetype. . . . Not only do rituals have their mythical model but any human act whatever acquires effectiveness to the extent to which it exactly repeats an act performed at the beginning of time by a god, a hero, or an ancestor. . . . Insofar as he *repeats* the archetypal sacrifice, the sacrificer, in full ceremonial action, abandons the profane world of mortals and introduces himself into the divine world of the immortals.<sup>25</sup>

By repeating the actions of a divine archetype, Mary then becomes a representative of that archetype, of Wisdom, the Mother of God, just as temple-going Latter-day Saints 'become' in a sense the characters in our temple drama. I think that this kind of becoming may have had an effect on the translation of the Book of Mormon. When we read passages in the Book of Mormon about Mary, we ought to imagine how such verses may have been expressed to be meaningful to the original audience. Besides the connections to the old traditions that Peterson and Barker have discussed, we should consider similar possibilities for Mosiah 3:8 and Alma 7:10. We should also be more aware of references to wisdom, that besides the passage in Mosiah 8:20, other passages, such as Mosiah 2:20 and Helaman 12:5, have the same implications. Finally, as we consider depictions of the Wisdom/the Queen of Heaven in Apocryphal writings such as Bin Sira, the Wisdom of Solomon, and Philo, and early Christian sources.<sup>26</sup> Caution is appropriate in dealing with such texts certainly (D&C 91), but we should not assume that those who may have sought

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<sup>22</sup> See a full discussion in Kevin and Shauna Christensen, "Nephite Feminism Revisited" in *FARMS Review of Books* 10:2 (1998) 14-19.

<sup>23</sup> See discussion in Barker, *The Great High Priest*, 256-261.

<sup>24</sup> See Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church*, vol 6, 478. "The Old Catholic church traditions are worth more than all you have said. . . The character of the old churches have always been slandered by all apostates since the world began."

<sup>25</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return* (New York: Harper & Row, 1959), 21-22, 36.

<sup>26</sup> See Barker's discussion in "Wisdom, the Queen of Heaven" in *The Great High Priest*, 236-238.

wisdom more earnestly that we have, might not have found wisdom that we yet lack (see D&C 1:26). A first requirement for gaining wisdom, is opening our eyes.

Next time, I'll discuss the cosmic covenant in Barker's studies, and its relevance to LDS scripture.