

# Mother's Day 2017

## The Story of Mother's Day

Mother's Day, in one form or another, has been around a long time.

In ancient Greece, a celebration honoring mothers occurred every Spring.

In the Middle Ages, a custom called Mothering Sunday began when children, who often left home early to learn a trade or become apprentices, would be released from work every year on the fourth Sunday of Lent to attend church with their families. As they returned home, they often took cakes or little gifts to their mothers. This was termed "going a-mothering."

England during the 1600's, celebrated a day called "*Mothering Sunday*". Celebrated on the 4th Sunday of Lent (the 40 day period leading up to Easter\*), "*Mothering Sunday*" honored the mothers of England.

During this time many of the England's poor worked as servants for the wealthy. As most jobs were located far from their homes, the servants would live at the houses of their employers. On Mothering Sunday the servants would have the day off and were encouraged to return home and spend the day with their mothers. A special cake, called the *mothering cake*, was often brought along to provide a festive touch.

In the United States Mother's Day was first suggested in 1872 by Julia Ward Howe (who wrote the words to the Battle hymn of the Republic) suggested the idea of Mother's Day in the United States.

The cause was taken up by Anna Jarvis, daughter of a Methodist pastor. Jarvis felt the scars of the Civil War could be healed by mothers—and by honoring mothers. She died in 1905 before her dream of establishing a holiday could be fulfilled.

Ms. Jarvis and her supporters began to write to ministers, businessmen, and politicians in their quest to establish a national Mother's Day. It was successful as by 1911 Mother's Day was celebrated in almost every state. President Woodrow Wilson, in 1914, made the official announcement proclaiming Mother's Day as a national holiday that was to be held each year on the 2nd Sunday of May.

## God has feminine descriptions

Some expressions attribute feminine qualities to God, relating especially to motherhood.

### God created man (male and female) in His own image

Gen 1:26-28 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; ...

27 God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. ...

### The image of God is both male and female!

The Bible emphasizes the fatherhood of God, but there is also a "motherhood" side to God's nature that we must not forget.

#### 1. El Shaddai

El = comes from the root meaning might and strength

Shad = is the Hebrew word for breast or many breasted one.

It shows tenderness and the desire to nurture us and make us fruitful.

#### 2. Descriptions of God relating to motherhood

God comforts his people (Isa 40:11; 66:12-13)

God as a protective mother bird (Dt 32:10-11; Ru 2:12; Ps 17:8; 91:4; Mt 23:37; Lk 13:34)

God nurtures and tenderly cares (1Thes 2:7-8; Ps 131:2  
God's care like that of a mother bird (Dt 32:11; Mt 23:37; Lk 13:34)

God never forgets his children (Isa 49:15)  
The high priest bore the names of the tribes of Israel on his shoulders and over his heart (Ex. 28:6-9), engraved on jewels; but God has engraved His children's names on His hands. The word "engraved" means "to cut into," signifying its permanence. God can never forget Zion or Zion's children.

Israel pictured as a mother to describe the relationship between God and His people.  
(Ezk 16:3, 44-45; 19:2,10; Isa 50:1; 54:1; 66:7-13; Hos 2:2-13)

Mothers used as symbols to explain the difference between two covenants (Gal 4:21-28).

### **3. Descriptions of God relating to childbirth**

God gives birth to his people Isa 44:2  
God giving birth to Israel at the exodus. (Nu 11:12; Dt 32:18; Isa 44:24)  
God gives birth to individuals (Ps 139:13; Gen 29:31; 30:22; Eccl 11:5; Isa 49:5; Jer 1:5)  
God nurses his people (Isa 49:15)  
God as a midwife (Ps 22:9; Job 10:18; Ps 71:6; Isa 66:9)  
Becoming a Christian is like birth (Jn 3:5-6)  
The believer trusts God as a weaned child trusts his or her mother (Ps 131:1-2; Isa 66:13).

## **The Bible on Motherhood:**

**Eve**, figuratively is the mother of all living beings (though she was also a literal mother).  
Gen 3:20 Now the man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all the living.

### **Motherhood is to have a high standing in a redeemed society.**

#### **Obligations on the positive side of what her children owe her:**

obedience (Gen 28:7; Dt 21:18)  
blessings (Prov 30:11)  
honor (Ex 20:12; Dt 5:16)  
respect (Lev 19:3)  
mourning (when she dies) (Ps 35:14)

#### **Obligations of what her children owe her on the negative side, her children must not:**

strike her (Ex 21:15)  
curse her (Ex 21:17; Lev 20:9; Prov 20:20)  
dishonor her (Dt 27:16)  
rob her (Prov 28:24)  
chase her away (Prov 19:26)  
bring her to shame (Prov 29:15; Lev 18:7)  
ridicule her (Deut 27:16)  
nor forsake her law (Prov 1:8)

**In marriage** a mother is to lose her place of primary influence in her adult son's life, the mother's role was clearly subordinate to that of his wife. His duties to his mother could not supplant or take precedence over his duties to his wife.

Gen 2:24 For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife;

### **A mother's job description**

**In the East**, all that a mother could contribute to her family was motherhood.  
But many women gave much more than this. They were not a cipher in the home; but rather were intelligent, active, shared in the thought and history of her country and her time.

**She is to be a source of comfort**

Isa 66:13 As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you;  
Ps 131:2 Surely I have composed and quieted my soul; like a weaned child rests against his mother, my soul is like a weaned child within me.

**She is to be a teacher**

The mother's early influence prepares a child for the future. (Dt 21:18; Prov 1:8; 31:1)

2Ti 1:5 For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well.

Eunice and her mother Lois had a profound effect on Timothy; upon the early foundation laid by his mother.

**She is to be a discipliner**

Dt 21:18 If any man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey his father or his mother, and when they chastise him, ... (Prov 13:24; 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; 29:17)

**She is to be a prayer/ warrior**

A mother's prayers are as guardian angels about the life of her child; and the godly son possesses the happy harvest of a mother's tears.

**Biblical Models** - We have many examples of devout mothers in the Old and New Testaments.

**Hannah**, the mother of Samuel;

**Jecoliah** the mother of Azariah, (2Ki 15:1-3)

Jecoliah, same as Jechiliah = Made strong of the LORD; Jehovah is strong; (root = to be able; to be strong). Is powerful (from The Exhaustive Dictionary of Bible Names).

**Jechiliah** the mother of Uzziah (2 Ch 26:1-5)

It is likely that Uzziah owed as much to his mother as to his father in the way of godly training and good home influence.

**Mary**, the mother of Jesus;

Jesus Christ owed much to her truer appreciation, and to her more faithful ministry.

**Salome**, the mother of Zebedee's children;

**Eunice**, the mother of Timothy.

Example in history: **Monica**, the mother of Augustine.

A very considerable number of the great and good men who have rendered conspicuous services to their race became what they were because they grew up in the atmosphere of a mother's gentle and beautiful life. "No mother knows who or what she has in her cradle," or can tell how great a share she may have, by the training of the little child that is slumbering there, in the enrichment or the reformation of the world.

**Note:****From Nelson's illustrated Manners and Customs of the Bible**

In marriage, the woman was expected to take a place of submission to her mate. The wife's responsibility was to be the husband's "helper" (Gen. 2:18), one who "does him good, and not harm, all the days of her life" (Prov. 31:12). Her main responsibilities were the home and the children, but sometimes it extended to the marketplace and other areas that affected the family's welfare (Prov. 31:16, 24).

A wife's primary goal in life was to bear children for her husband. Rebekah's family spokesman said to her, "May you, our sister, become thousands of ten thousands, and may your descendants possess the gate of those who hate them." (Gen. 24:60). An Israelite family hoped that the wife would become like a fruitful vine, filling the house with many children (Ps. 128:3). So a mother greeted the first child with much happiness and relief.

As children began to arrive, the mother was tied closer to the home. She nursed each child until the age of two or three, besides clothing and feeding the rest of the family. She spent hours

each day preparing meals and making clothes. When necessary, the wife helped her husband in the fields, planting or harvesting the crops.

A mother shared the responsibility for training the children. Children spent the early formative years close to their mothers. Eventually, the sons were old enough to go with their fathers into the fields or some other place of employment. The mother then turned her attention more fully to her daughters, teaching them how to become successful wives and mothers.

A woman's performance of her tasks determined the failure or success of the family. The sages said, "An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, But she who shames him is like rottenness in his bones." (Prov. 12:4). If the wife worked hard at the task laid before her, it greatly benefited her husband. Israelites believed that a man could rise to a place among the leaders of Israel only if his wife were wise and talented (Prov. 31:23).

### **From The "Be" Commentary Series; "Be Obedient"; by WW Wiersbe**

Motherhood should be highly esteemed, and the birth of a baby welcomed with joy. While God does not call all women to marry, or all married women to bear children, He does have a special concern for both mothers and children (Ps 113:9; 127:3-5; Mt 19:14).

In a selfish society, too many people see motherhood as a barrier and children as a burden. In fact, some people consider children such a burden that they destroy them before they have an opportunity to become a blessing. The womb of the mother is a holy of holies where God is at work (Ps 139:13-18). How tragic that we turn that womb into a tomb, that holy of holies into a holocaust.

### **Promise to women without children**

**God makes the barren woman abide in the house as a joyful mother of children**

Ps 113:7-9 He raises the poor from the dust And lifts the needy from the ash heap, 8 To make them sit with princes, With the princes of His people. 9 He makes the barren woman abide in the house As a joyful mother of children. Praise the LORD!

Zion seems like a forsaken and barren mother, but she will be so blessed of God that there will be no room for her children! They will be like beautiful bridal ornaments, not decrepit refugees from Captivity.