

## Mary: The Bible & the Mother of God – Class 4

I. "The Lord God will give to him the throne of David his father" (Luke 1:31-32)

A. Many important implications for who Mary is in a first-century Jewish context

B. If Jesus is king, then we would expect there to be a queen

II. Old Testament Davidic queen

A. Davidic queen was the mother of the king

B. Bathsheba, queen mother of King Solomon—Solomon bows to her, and she sits on the throne at the king's right hand (1 Kings 2)

C. Queen mother reigns with the king (Jeremiah 13:18; Psalm 45)

D. Queen mother as royal intercessor (1 Kings 2)

III. New Testament queenship of Mary

A. Visitation—Elizabeth, the older relative, greets Mary with deference and refers to Mary as "mother of my lord" (Luke 1:39-45)

B. Mary's Magnificat—Mary exalted to a throne (Luke 1:46-55)

C. Woman with a crown of twelve stars, whose son rules all the nations (Revelation 12:1-6)

IV. Honor/veneration versus worship

A. The key difference is sacrifice

B. CCC, 971



### Mary the Davidic Queen

Scripture leaves no doubt that Jesus is king. From the Angel Gabriel's words to Mary that her Son would inherit "the throne of his father David" and "reign over the house of Jacob forever" (Luke 1:32-33) to John's vision of the victorious Christ seated on a white horse, crowned with many diadems, with the name "King of kings and Lord of lords" inscribed on his robe (Revelation 19:11-16), there is no question that Jesus is king.

Although the Bible repeats this theme over and over, it can be easy to focus so much on the idea that Jesus's "kingship is not of this world" (John 18:36) that we forget his kingship is also the fulfillment of God's promise to King David that his kingdom and throne would be established forever (see 2 Samuel 7:1-17). Christ's kingship surpasses any earthly reign, but the details of the Davidic kingdom reveal a great deal about the Kingdom of Heaven.

One of those crucial details is that the king does not reign alone—his queen reigns with him.

Throughout the Ancient Near East, it was often customary for the mother of the king to rule alongside her son as queen. One very practical reason for this was that kings usually had many wives, thus making it difficult to decide which wife to crown as queen. But since the king had only one mother, crowning the king's mother as queen made for a clear choice. Sadly, the kings of Israel, like the pagan kings around them, often took multiple wives, despite God's command in Deuteronomy 17:17 that kings were not to "multiply wives." For example, Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines—imagine the difficulty of picking one of them to be queen!

If you read through the history of the Davidic kingdom in 1 and 2 Kings, you will find the name of the queen mother included with the summary of each king's reign. For example, "Now Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah.... His mother's name was Naamah the Ammonitess" (1 Kings 14:21), followed by "Abijam began to reign over Judah. He reigned for three years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Maacah the daughter of Abishalom" (1 Kings 15:1-2). Including the name of the queen mother was an important detail in identifying the new king.

Bathsheba is the earliest and clearest example in the Old Testament of the queen mother, who was called the *gebirah* in Hebrew (literally "great lady"). Compare how Bathsheba interacts with her husband, King David, in 1 Kings 1:15-21 with how she interacts with her son, King Solomon, in 1 Kings 2:19-21. How does she approach David? How is she received by him? How does Solomon treat Bathsheba when she approaches him?

Solomon's reception of Bathsheba reveals the dignity and authority of the queen mother. He not only shows deference in rising to greet her, but he also indicates her authority by having a throne for her placed at his right hand. The queen mother in the Davidic kingdom occupied an official role in the kingdom—a role with its own honor, responsibility, and authority. One particular, unique function of the office of queen mother was to speak to the king on behalf of the people as their intercessor and advocate.

We see Adonijah appealing to Bathsheba for exactly this purpose in 1 Kings 2:13-18. He knows he doesn't have much chance of Solomon granting his request for David's concubine, so he puts his request in the strongest way possible—through the intercession of the queen mother.

As we continue reading in 1 Kings 2:19-25, we find that Solomon not only denies Adonijah's request but actually has him executed for having asked in the first place. But this isn't Bathsheba's fault. Adonijah's request was essentially treasonous (a son taking his father's concubine was a status symbol), and it comes soon after an attempt to usurp Solomon's role (see 1 Kings 1:1-10, 41-53). Solomon spared Adonijah the first time upon the condition that he cause no more trouble. Adonijah violated that condition with his request for the concubine and ended up paying the price. While Bathsheba's request to Solomon was denied, we will see that Mary's request to Jesus at the Wedding Feast at Cana is not only granted, but Jesus responds to Mary's request with an abundance of the best wine.

Understanding the difference between Bathsheba's role as the wife of David and her role as the mother of Solomon illustrates both the authority of the queen mother and the honor due to her office. This role wasn't unique to Bathsheba. It was an office to be filled in each new generation—from the beginning of the Davidic kingdom all the way through to the time of the messiah.

*No one has access to the Almighty as his mother has—none has merit such as hers. Her Son will deny her nothing that she asks and herein lies her power. While she defends the Church, neither height nor depth, neither men nor evil spirits, neither great monarchs, nor craft of man, nor popular violence, can avail to harm us—for human life is short but Mary reigns above, a Queen forever. —St. John Henry Newman*