

Episode #51 - The Cosmic Wall: The Holy Barge & The Water Bolt

<https://theancienttradition.com/51-the-cosmic-wall-part-i/>

00:00

Music

00:10

Listening to the Ancient Tradition. A Wonk Media Production. Music provided by Joseph McDade. Here's your host, Dr. Jack Logan.

00:25

Welcome to the Ancient Tradition. I'm your host, Jack Logan.

00:32

Welcome to the program. I hope you're all having a wonderful week. The sun is shining outside my window. It's a beautiful, gorgeous day. God's creations are beautiful. I hope you're out there enjoying them. I'm going to just get right to it today. In our last episode, we learned from the ancients that everything God created and everything God continues to create every star, every nebula, every galaxy, every planet, our planet.

00:59

Every waterfall and lily and dove is sanctified or holy because they were brought about by God's ordering power, which was given to him because he perfectly upheld the cosmic law of righteousness. All of God's creations are sacred because he was the one who transformed them, the elements

01:29

into beautiful, ordered, fertile, life-full creations. We learned that the power to order is the power to sanctify. To order something is to transform it from its awful profane state into a sanctified, holy state.

01:56

To this point, we've been talking about this transformative process in terms of the creation of the cosmos. But don't miss the deeper esoteric symbolism of the creation here. If God has the power to transform the profane elements into a beautiful, sacred creation, doesn't He also have the power to do the same for us? To transform the profane sides of our nature?

02:25

into fully ordered, sanctified, holy people like him. I don't wanna get too far ahead of myself, but that's precisely what the ancients are gonna tell us takes place inside the sacred temples they

built. The precise process by which this transformative sanctification or personal creation process takes place.

02:55

It's gonna be a little bit before we cover that process on the podcast, but one of the things that you're gonna see is that the ancients taught that this sanctification process involved seven steps, just like the creation of the world seen in the Hebrew Bible, or just like we're going to see on the Sumerian Gudea cylinders today, where the creation is directly associated

03:23

with the number seven. It was the culmination of those seven steps that brought about the full ordering or sanctification of what was originally profane. I bring this up here to illustrate to you the symbolic depth of the ancient mind. See, when the ancients give us an account of the creation of the world, they aren't just giving us an account of the creation.

03:53

of the world. They're using the creation of the world to symbolize God's ordering power, to symbolize the process by which he brought about the sanctification of all of his creations, including me and you. The sanctification of his entire cosmic kingdom, which precisely because of that sanctification process made

04:21

and makes God's entire cosmic kingdom an unimaginably grand, holy cosmic temple. The ancients then built miniature replicas of God's sacred temple on earth as a tent or a brick and mortar earthly temple, a microcosmos if you will, of God's macro cosmic temple

04:49

And then the ancients taught that it was within this earthly temple that human beings could, like we see in the ordering process of the world, become fully sanctified. There are so many layers here that you really do have to take time to ponder the symbolism, to capture the depth of how the ancients associate the sanctifying, ordering process of the creation with the cosmos.

05:18

with the cosmic temple, with the earthly temple, with the earth, and with the sanctification process of human beings. And don't forget that the ancients taught that all of this was directly tied to kingship. You really do have to see how all of these concepts are symbolically tied together to truly grasp the magnitude of the theology the ancients taught in their texts and in their

05:49

In episode number 11, we talked about how God, by necessity, has to use symbols to teach us about the reality of the spiritual realm. Because there aren't one-for-one word equivalents here on earth that can convey the reality of what that spiritual realm is really like. So God uses symbols to point us in the right direction. But we have to ponder them and let God teach us.

06:17

their spiritual meaning. The nifty thing about symbols, like a parable, is that it allows God to teach on at least two levels, the exoteric level and the esoteric level. So whereas some people see the creation account, like in the Hebrew Bible, as an exoteric account of the geological creation of the earth, others who ponder it are gonna note that the creation account there

06:47

holds important esoteric wisdom about the process that God uses to bring about the transformation and sanctification of everything in his kingdom, including me and you. You know, the same thing can be said of ancient myths. On the exoteric level, the myth of Jason and the Argonauts is this really fun story about

07:15

who slays a dragon guarding a sacred tree on which hangs a beautiful golden fleece. But if you're a long-time listener to the program, you know that this fun myth conceals all kinds of really important esoteric truths. I like how Thomas Roussell, he's a scholar of Old English and Icelandic medieval studies, says it. Listen to what he says about the esoteric nature of Norris' myth.

07:46

In particular, Chapter 42 of the Prose Edda, the Gilfonganing, which we talked about in our last episode.

07:55

unless you understand that the myths are symbolic of truths, of actual truths. So the function of the myth is to impart wisdom from the Divine to the mortal realm. And that's how you should regard it. What is the wisdom within this myth? There is an esoteric dimension and there's an exoteric one. The exoteric one is not hard to understand, as despite people deliberately trying to misrepresent

08:25

what's in there. But I think the esoteric ones in this one are not particularly difficult to approach either. It's about order versus chaos.

08:37

I like how Rausl says that the function of myth, and I would add the function of symbol, is to quote, impart wisdom from the divine to the mortal realm, which is something that we've clearly seen and we're going to continue to see on the program. And I especially like how he says that we should ask ourselves, you know, what esoteric truths are these myths teaching me? And I would add symbols too.

09:06

What are these symbols trying to teach me? Because that's where the full theology is being taught.

09:14

With that in mind, I want to continue where we left off in our last episode. In that episode, we learned that in the heavens, in the cosmos, that not all space is the same. The ancients tell us that in order to preserve the sanctified, holy, sacred nature of his creations, God created a cosmic boundary around his creations, around his cosmic kingdom, which separates it and protects it from the profane waters.

09:42

where dwell chaos and the awful sea dragon and his followers. The ancients tell us that in the heavens, there is a clear demarcation, a cosmic demarcation between holy and profane space. And it's this demarcation that establishes the borders around God's cosmic temple. Everything within the border

10:09

is holy a temple and everything outside the border is unholy or profane. I've mentioned this on the program before but it's worth noting here again. The English word profane actually comes from the Latin word profanus where pro means beyond or outside of and fanus means temple. So the English word profane literally means to be

10:39

quote, outside the temple. To be outside of, to be outside of clearly implies there is some sort of demarcation or boundary between the two. So today in today's episode, I want to take a closer look at this cosmic boundary, especially what the ancients have to say about it in their ancient records.

11:06

So with that, I want to start by going straight to the world's oldest known religious text, the Keshe Temple Hymn. This text was found on a cuneiform tablet in the ruins of the Mesopotamian city of Nippur, which is located today in Iraq. Archaeologists date the tablet to around 2600 BC. So to reiterate,

11:35

this planet there is no known earlier religious text than this one. So it's incredibly significant that this text gives us a description of the cosmic boundary that separates God's cosmic temple precinct from the profane waters that surround it. And the description actually shows up very early in the text. So all of this indicates that

12:03

knowledge of a cosmic boundary between sacred and profane space was known very, very early in world history. And not only that, but that this knowledge was foundational to the entire theology that we see taught, not only in this text, but throughout the ancient Near East, and then ultimately across the whole world. So let's jump into the text. While I read

12:33

Remember, the text is talking in symbols. So see if you can figure out what the ancients are using in the text to symbolize the boundary between the two. Between lines 22 and 30 of the Keshe Temple Hymn, the text reads. And this comes from the English translation provided by Oxford University in their electronic text corpus of Sumerian literature. Quote.

13:02

Good house built in a good location. House cash built in a good location, floating in the heavens like a princely barge, like a holy barge furnished with a gate like the boat of heaven.

13:17

Did you figure it out? Did you figure out what symbolizes the cosmic boundary between the sacred and profane? Now, it's not easy if we don't understand the symbols that the ancients used. It's just a mystery to us if we don't know. But on this program, we're learning, so let's break it down. The text begins, quote, good house. So what do you think good house refers to?

13:47

The text is called the Keshe Temple Hymn because this text is about the building of a sacred temple in Keshe, an ancient city in Sumer. And the next line refers to this house as House Keshe. So we know that the good house or house Keshe here refers to the Keshe temple. The text then goes on to compare this sacred earthly temple to something else. Do you remember what it was?

14:16

Well, it was a quote, princely barge. The text reads quote, good house built in a good location. House Keshe built in a good location, floating in the heavens like a princely barge. Take note that the text compares the earthly brick and mortar temple in Keshe to a princely barge, to a boat.

14:44

that is floating in the heavens. Note that this boat is quote, a princely barge, a princely boat. So think of all of the royal kingship theology that princely connotes. You can think of Ra in ancient Egypt on his celestial bark, seated on his royal throne. Take note that the object in the heaven is a boat. Boats float on water.

15:13

So we know that when the ancients talk about a boat in or on the waters in heaven, they're talking about this boat floating in or on the profane primordial waters. And note that this boat is floating in the heavens, not on earth. So the author here is comparing the earthly Keshe temple to a celestial princely boat that floats atop the profane primordial waters of chaos.

15:43

So you see where we're going here. The author is telling us that the Keshe Temple is a replica of God's cosmic temple, which he's symbolizing by a princely barge, which floats atop the profane primordial waters. And not only that, the author goes on to stress that this barge is sacred. It's not profane like the waters that surround it. The text reads, quote,

16:11

floating in the heavens like a princely barge, like a holy barge furnished with a gate, like the boat of heaven. Note how this holy barge has a gate, like a temple would have, which suggests guarded, protected space. Like we discussed in our last episode, the gate allows the sacred in and shuts the profane out. Okay.

16:41

So back to my original question. What is the author of this text using to symbolize the boundary between God's sacred precinct or temple and the profane waters? Did you guess the whole of the boat? Because the whole of the boat, the shell of the vessel is what keeps the water out. The whole is what gives the vessel structural integrity.

17:09

It's what keeps the boat buoyant on the water. It's what protects the vessel from being submerged in the water. The hull is what separates and protects what's in the boat from what's outside the boat. The hull of the boat is the boundary that separates the sacred from the profane. I don't know if any of you've ever been on a cruise ship, but a couple of months back, I was on a cruise ship.

17:38

and I was headed to Panama. And I was seated on the promenade deck where I love to hang out the most because I can sit there and read. And I was thinking about this very thing, how the ancients used a boat to symbolize God's cosmic kingdom or temple. And I was seated on one of those deck chairs, so I stood up and I moseyed over to the railing and I just looked out. And all I saw for as far as my eyes could see in every direction

18:08

endless ocean of water. And I thought to myself, the only thing saving me from these waters, from sure death, is this boat. Literally. Below me is shark-infested waters. So the only thing

saving me from the sharks is this boat. Literally. And I thought to myself, man, the ancients picked a great symbol.

18:37

for God's cosmic temple. The boat is what is protecting me. There's nothing but death and destruction and disorder outside of this boat. God's cosmic kingdom or temple is the boat.

18:56

The Keshe Temple Hymn is pretty clear. The text attests that in the spiritual realm, in the real real, there's a clear separation between profane and sacred cosmic space. God's cosmic temple is protected from the profane like a boat protects one from the waters. Like an air bubble or cavity or a floating gourd is protected from the waters. Or a peach pit is protected

19:25

from the flesh of the peach, or the nucleus of an atom is protected from the cloud of negative electrons that surround it.

19:34

If you'd like to hear a full audio recording of the Keshe Temple Hymn, you can find it on our sister podcast, the Ancient Tradition Audio Rit.

19:45

The symbolic representation of God's cosmic temple as a boat is quite intriguing, especially when we read the account of Utnapishtim, the Mesopotamian Noah in Tablet 11 of the Epic of Gilgamesh. In Tablet 11, Utnapishtim tells Gilgamesh that the gods have warned him that a great flood is coming.

20:13

In the section that I'm going to read, Utnapishtim recounts to Gilgamesh what the gods commanded him to do. The text reads, and this is the Stephanie Dalley translation, quote, Man of Shuru Pak, son of Ubaratutu. Those are epitaphs that the gods have given Utnapishtim. Dismantle your house. Build a boat. Leave possessions.

20:43

Put aboard the seed of all living things into the boat. The boat that you are to build shall have her dimensions in proportion. Her width and length shall be in harmony. Roof her like the Apsu. Here we see that Utnapishtim is given very specific instructions about how to build the boat or arc that's to save his life. Now, considering that we just saw in the Keshe temple hymn that in the ancient world,

21:11

God's cosmic temple was symbolized by a heavenly boat, then we would surmise that when the gods give Utnap Pishtim specific instructions about how to build a boat, that what the gods are really asking him to do is build a temple, a temple boat, one that's a miniature replica of God's heavenly temple boat. And this interpretation is actually

21:40

by the text itself. When we read the following a couple of lines later, the text reads, quote, the carpenter brought his axe, the reed worker brought his stone, children carried the bitumen. If you're not familiar with what bitumen is, bitumen is kind of like tar. It's a naturally forming petroleum based substance that naturally bubbles up out of the earth.

22:09

One acre was her circumference, 10 poles each the height of her walls. I laid down her structure, and this is Utnapishtim speaking, drew it out. So this sounds like the gods gave him very specific plans for this boat, plans which he drew out, kind of like a blueprint, gave her six decks, divided her into seven. All right, everything in here is so interesting.

22:38

In this section of the text, we can see some interesting connections between the building of this boat and the creation account given in Genesis in the Hebrew Bible. The text tells us very intriguingly that this boat was to have a circumference. A circumference. A circumference the size of an acre. Which implies that this boat was to be formed in the shape

23:08

a circle. Now that's interesting. The text also tells us that the width and the length of the boat were to be quote in harmony, which seems to suggest that the boat was to have either a cylindrical shape or a spherical shape. It sounds to me like the boat was to take on the same form as the earth itself.

23:38

And the text gets even more intriguing when Utnapishtim tells us that this boat was to have six decks. Six decks which would divide the boat into seven sections. That should stick out to you. Because almost all of us know that in the Genesis account in the Hebrew Bible that the creation of the earth was divided into seven periods of creation and rest. But here's the thing.

24:06

We don't just find the connection between the number seven, the creation of the earth and temple building in the Hebrew Bible. It's found all over the ancient world. For example, in this Sumerian Gudea cylinders, which I mentioned earlier, dated to 2125 BC, we read of seven stones that surrounded the temple, a seven day temple dedication,

24:34

And then between lines 562 to 577 of cylinder A, we read about the laying of the foundation of the temple by the stretching of the line or the stretching of the cord, which we've talked about on the program. And the marking out of seven squares. The text reads, and this translation comes from Oxford's electronic text corpus of Sumerian literature. Cylinder A reads,

25:05

And note the kingship reference in here too. Quote, Gudea. Now Gudea is the king, so this is King Udea. In charge of building the house, the temple. Well, of course he is, we already learned this in the program, it's the king who builds the temple. Placed on his head the carrying basket for the house as if it were a holy crown. He laid the foundation.

25:33

set the walls on the ground. He marked out a square, aligned the bricks with a string. He marked out a second square on the side of the temple. And then the text goes through the third and the fourth and the fifth and the sixth squares, and then it ends with quote, he marked out a seventh square on the site of the temple. The fact that the number seven is associated here in this Mesopotamian Gudea cylinder

26:02

with the building of an earthly temple, and in the Genesis account with the days of creation, the building of a cosmic temple, and in the architecture of Utnapishtim's boat or ark in the Epic of Gilgamesh, which I argue is also a temple, is striking because it tells us that there is something

very, very important about the connection between the number seven and God's temple, which we are definitely gonna unravel down the line.

26:33

I also want to point out that after Utnap Pishtham and his workers finished building the boat, the cylinder tells us, quote, they made a feast like the New Year's Day Festival. This is significant because the New Year's Day Festival was the day in the ancient world when the ancients celebrated the creation of the world. All of this points to Utnap Pishtham's boat or arc.

27:03

as yet another symbolic representation of God's sacred creations, his cosmic temple, which the ancients also symbolized as we just saw in the Keshe temple hymn as a holy barge floating on the primordial waters. I bring this up in reference to our discussion of the cosmic boundary between sacred and

27:31

The ancient Mesopotamians smeared bitumen, that natural tar-like substance found in natural deposits, all over the exterior and interior of their reed boats as a sealant to prevent water from seeping through the hull. They coated every inch of their boats, filled every seam with bitumen so that not a single drop of water could penetrate the hull.

28:01

If they missed a spot or they didn't apply the bitumen thick enough, then water would seep in and sink the boat, drowning everyone on board. So the ancients did everything they could to keep the water out. See, it's the bitumen that creates the barrier between the boat and the water in which it's submerged. It was the bitumen that made Utnap Pishdem's great circular arc watertight.

28:31

and preserved it and humanity from the flood. Bitumen is the wall. The exoteric message here is pretty easy to follow, but consider the deeper esoteric wisdom. The story of Utnapishtim in the Ark invites us to ponder. Now, there are likely many, many layers of wisdom in the Ark account, but one message that's clear to me,

28:59

especially when we recognize that Utnapishtim's boat represents God's cosmic temple, is the message that we need to be inside God's holy barge, inside God's temple if we don't want to spiritually perish. The flood waters represent all that is evil and profane. So we must symbolically coat our homes and ourselves

29:29

bitumen so that not a single drop of profane water can seep into our homes or into our souls. Now Pishnam is teaching us that in our own lives we must clearly demarcate the sacred from the profane. I don't have time to develop this here but there are even greater esoteric messages being conveyed here. One of which is the symbolic

29:58

parallel between the smearing of bitumen over the boat as a protective wall against the profane and the smearing of holy anointing oil over the whole body as a protective covering against the profane. The holy anointing oil is the wall.

30:23

So there's so much to ponder there.

30:27

Before I leave this section, I want to talk a little bit more about Utnapishtim's boat. From what's written in the Epic of Gilgamesh, it seems pretty clear that the ark Utnapishtim constructed looked nothing like how modern artists portray it. You know, today the ark, we imagine it as a large kind of oval or rectangular boat with the bow and stern rising high above the midsection.

30:57

This interpretation does not align with what we find in the Epic of Gilgamesh. The text clearly indicates that the gods asked Utnapishtim to construct a large circle shaped boat. And I argue that that's because this boat was supposed to symbolically represent a miniature replica of the earth, God's creations.

31:27

Assyriologist Stephanie Dally, who translated this text into English, says the following of Utnapishtim's boat on page 133 of her book, *Myths from Mesopotamia*, published by Oxford University Press. Quote, the ancient Mesopotamians were builders of rafts and reed boats for use on rivers, not builders of timber frame vessels. The ark is described here seems to be a tub of Kufa type.

31:57

which consists mainly of a framework of reed matting, liberally coated with bitumen and oil to make it waterproof, fitted inside with benches and supporting poles.

32:12

Dali tells us here that Utnapishtim's boat was indeed a round boat known as a kufa, which is the Arabic word for a basket woven from reeds. The Greek historian Herodotus, who visited Babylon in 450 BC, actually saw these circle boats navigating up and down the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. He was in awe of them.

32:42

In section 194 of book one of the histories, Herodotus wrote, and this is the G.C. Macaulay translation, quote, the greatest marvel of all the things in the land, and he's talking about Babylon, after the city itself to my mind is this which I'm about to tell, their boats. Those I mean which go down the river to Babylon are round.

33:11

These vessels are made both a very large size and also smaller. Such are their boats. When Herodotus writes, such are their boats, we gather that the circle boats were the norm, the traditional way the Mesopotamians traveled down the river. Now, as you can imagine, a circle boat would not be easy to navigate.

33:38

These boats didn't have a sail, so they didn't have the ability to sail against the current. They pretty much just drifted wherever the current took them. And as you can imagine, these circle boats had the tendency to spin, so they had to carry these really long poles to try and steer them. And I tell you that because it makes you wonder why they chose a circle shape if it was so impractical in so many ways. Of course, I can't prove this.

34:08

but I offer up the possibility from what we've read in the Epic of Gilgamesh that they chose the circle shape because of its cosmic significance. If you'd like to see a couple of pictures of these circle boats, you can find them on the webpage for this episode.

34:30

Interestingly, the Epic of Gilgamesh is not the only place we learn that Utnap Pishdem's Ark was constructed in the shape of a circle or a sphere. Just 15 years ago, just 15 in 2009, a man by the name of Douglas Simmons, he was the son of an RAF officer, loaned the British Museum a cuneiform tablet that his father had obtained years earlier in the Middle East.

34:57

The tablet was then translated into English by the famed and I think adorably quirky, British museum curator Irving Finkel. Now I can't remember if I've talked about Dr. Finkel on the program, but if I haven't, you have got to see video of this gentleman. He is quite a character. And sometimes I think someone needs to write a film series that's based off of him, kind of like they did with Indiana Jones, because I think it would be amazing.

35:26

In 2015, Dr. Finkel published the first translation of this tablet. It's now known as the Ark tablet, and he published it in his book, *The Ark Before Noah*. What Dr. Finkel found was that this tablet, which he dates between 1900 and 1700 BC, contains detailed specifications for building Noah's Ark, who was known as Atrahasis.

35:55

among the Akkadians and as we've pointed out as Utnap Pishtim among the Babylonians. Let's read some of what the tablet says. You'll note that this tablet sounds a whole lot like what was written in the Epic of Gilgamesh but with a lot more detail. This tablet predates the Epic of Gilgamesh by about 500 years. The tablet reads, and this is the god Enki speaking to Atrahasis,

36:25

giving him detailed instructions of how to build the boat. And I'm gonna skip over some of the parts because there's a lot of details. Quote, destroy your house, build a boat, spurn property and save life. Draw out the boat that you will make on a circular plan. Let her length and breadth be equal, let her floor area be one field. Dr. Finkel says that

36:54

This field is about the size of a soccer pitch. So this is a very big boat. Let her sides be one ninden high. I set up 3,600 stanchions within her. I constructed her cabins above and below. I apportioned one finger of bitumen for her outsides. I apportioned one finger of bitumen for her interior. Dr. Finkel notes that one finger here refers

37:25

the length of the last section of your finger, so about almost two centimeters. So the bitumen would be decently thick. Listen to what Dr. Finkel, in his very characteristic way, thought the very first time he read what was written on this tablet. Quote, reading lines six and seven, and that's where it says that the boat's gonna be circular.

37:51

for the first time was certainly an adrenaline stirring moment. And my first reaction, as anybody's would have been, can this be right? A circular plan? But then thinking it over, staring into space with the tablet precariously poised over the desk, the idea began to make sense. A truly round boat would be a coracle, which is a kaffa. And they certainly had coracles

38:21

in ancient Mesopotamia. Now I find the fact that this boat is circular, of course intriguing because of its cosmological significance, but it's the last two lines of the tablet, lines 59 and 60

that really fascinate me in terms of this episode. Listen to how the tablet ends. This is what it says after the Mesopotamian Noah has completely finished the boat and filled it with animals.

38:52

The tablet ends with these lines, quote, when I shall have gone into the boat, caulk the frame of her door.

39:05

Now that's interesting. The Mesopotamian Noah goes inside the circular boat and then commands that the seams of that door be caulked or sealed off with bitumen. He literally seals himself, all of the animals, everything else inside the boat so that there is absolutely no way for the water to seep in. I hope you see where I'm going with this.

39:34

The Mesopotamian Noah has sealed himself inside what is now effectively a protective bubble or gourd.

39:44

to seal oneself inside the boat doesn't seem to make a whole lot of practical sense. I mean, sealed in, what's he gonna do for air and light? But it does make a whole heck of a lot of sense cosmologically. Symbolically, from what we've learned, the esoteric message here is that the Mesopotamian Noah, by sealing himself inside the ark,

40:14

is effectively sealing himself inside God's sacred temple precinct, where he's protected from the evil, profane floodwaters. I find the symbolic parody here amazing. As above, so below. I was so intrigued by this, I wanted to know what Dr. Finkel had to say about it, about the Mesopotamian Noah sealing himself inside the boat, because it's definitely odd. So,

40:43

I scoured all 445 pages of the Ark before Noah and I couldn't find anywhere where he commented or made a statement about this, which is kind of surprising because the book's quite thorough. It covers nearly every imaginable aspect of the Ark tablet. I'd really love to hear Dr. Finkel's thoughts on this because after all, he is one of, if not the, world's leading astereologists.

41:12

He does mention in a lecture he gave in Vienna, Austria at the Origins Conference that the Babylonian version of the coracle had a roof on top, which would make it very much like a giant gourd floating on the ocean. After Dr. Finkel finished translating the ARC tablet, you are never gonna believe what he did next. He actually went out and tried to build the boat.

41:42

Yes, he did. He got the financial backing of several wealthy Americans and he traveled to India and he constructed a one-third scale replica of the boat based off of that blueprint that's in the tablet. And it cost him, you're never going to believe how much it cost him, it cost him 10 million dollars to build this boat. Listen to Dr. Finkel describe the boat and how it was built and listen very closely to how he describes the boat.

42:11

towards the very end of the clip.

42:15

What you do when you build one of these things is you lay the rope, you have to twist the rope firstly, and this is all covered in the cuneiform inscription. You get the pith of a palm tree and you twist it into rope and it's laid out in the great circle of the right size which is 3600 square meters.

42:35

And then when you've done that, as it comes around to the beginning point, you lay it on top all over again and then on top each time. And as it's done, the various strands of the wall are lashed together north to south. So you end up with a giant floppy basket made of this material. And the next step in the tablet is that ribs are cut, which go from the top on the inside, follow the profile down, and these great ribs interlock the base to make a kind of gap

43:05

done that, the thing is bitumen from floor to ceiling, or rather, as it were, from floor, or inside and out, thickly with bitumen, which dries hard and waterproofs it, and there you have your boat. And the tablet tells you moreover that there was a deck, there had to be a deck. Obviously the animals were underneath, there was a little house on the top, and there was a roof, the profile of which matched the base of the thing. So that when the ark in the

43:35

walnut floating in the sea with this kernel of life inside.

43:43

Did you know how he said that the roof of the boat matched the profile of the base of the boat? That indicates that the boat was shaped like a sphere. And how did he describe it? It looked a bit like a walnut floating on the sea with its kernel of life inside. Dr. Finkel's description here of the Mesopotamian Noah's Ark as a

44:13

walnut floating on the sea is perfectly, perfectly in keeping with the cosmological and theological notion that God's cosmic temple floats in the cosmos like a holy barge or gourd or air bubble and contains the kernel of life like the stone pit of a peach. And don't forget that this so-called

44:43

was completely slathered in bitumen so that not a single drop of profane water could permeate the hole. If you're interested in seeing a video of the coracle arc that Dr. Finkel built, I've posted a link on the webpage for this episode to a documentary that PBS produced on the subject. And if you're in London,

45:11

and you'd like to lay your eyes on the actual ARC tablet, you can find it at the British Museum.

45:21

If you're familiar with the Hebrew Bible and you're an acute listener, you may have caught some similarities between the Mesopotamian Noah's basket-shaped reed boat and the story of the infant Moses in Exodus chapter 2. In this account, Moses' mother bears a son, Moses, and notes that he's a goodly child.

45:47

And when she can no longer hide him from Pharaoh, who wants to kill all of the sons born to Hebrew women, she places him in a basket and sets him afloat in the waters of the Nile. The New Living Translation of Exodus chapter two, verse three reads, but when she, and this is Moses' mother, could no longer hide him, she got a basket made of papyrus reeds and water

46:16

and proofed it with tar and pitch. She put the baby in the basket and laid it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile River.

46:27

Did you know how we're told in this verse that Moses's mother coated the basket with tar, which is bitumen? The King James version of this same verse actually refers to the basket in which Moses was laid as an arc. The King James version reads, quote,

46:57

and daubed it with slime. And the slime here is the bitumen and pitch and put the child there in and she laid it in the flags by the rivers brink. This is quite interesting because the Hebrew word that the King James translators translated as arc is tabat, T-E-B-A-T, a word that actually comes from Egypt and which literally means a chest. And we all know that a chest has a lid

47:27

So this means that Moses's mother placed him in a basket that completely surrounded him like a little capsule or walnut or air bubble. And she waterproofed that capsule with bitumen and she placed it with her precious child inside in the Nile waters. And what's more, the King James translators called that little capsule an ark.

47:55

Moses' mother, by placing him in a bitumen-slathered capsule, was symbolically placing her son inside sacred space, symbolically placing him inside a temple where he was completely sealed off from the waters. I hope you can see that the ark the infant Moses was placed in was a microcosm of the macrocosm. It was a miniature replica of God's cosmic temple. We're getting the same

48:24

symbolic image of God's kingdom as an air bubble of protected sacred space here in the infant Moses account. In these accounts, again, the bitumen is the wall. Stuff like this absolutely blows me away. And don't miss that it was this little ark or reed capsule that saved the infant Moses from assured death.

48:51

just like the wall around God's cosmic temple saves us from assured death. There is so much more being conveyed in these ancient texts than most of us could ever imagine. We can see this same idea illustrated on the oldest known map of the world, the Mapa Mundi. It's also known as the Babylonian map of the world.

49:21

or tablet BM 92687, which scholars date to sometime between the 9th and 7th centuries BC. This map was discovered in the ancient Mesopotamian city of Sippar in what is now modern-day Iraq. On this map, the known world is depicted as a circular island or sphere of land. The cuneiform captions that accompany the map

49:50

give names to individual locations on the map like Assyria or the city of Babylon. But for our purposes what's remarkable about this map is that the ancient Mesopotamians depicted the world as being entirely encircled by a ring of water. A ring which is identified four times on the map itself as the Maratu which translated into English means bitter sea

50:20

salt sea. The obverse side of the tablet tells us that in this vast sea are found quote the ruined gods which he Marduk settled inside the sea. Here we learn that the quote ruined gods live
50:47

in the bitter waters that surround God's creations. The quote ruined gods here refer to the god or god's Marduk battled and victoriously defeated before the earth was created. We find a similar thing written on an inscription of King Sennacherib, second ruler of the Sargonid dynasty, known as OIP2142b2. In this inscription,

51:15

The creatures of Tiamat are said to be the quote, ruined gods that Marduk cast into the bitter waters. On the backside of the Babylonian map of the world, the text gives us a description of who these ruined gods are. The text reads, quote, the ruined gods which he, Marduk, settled inside the sea are present the viper, sea serpent.

51:44

great dragon, Ansoobird and scorpion man. Clearly, this water is bitter due to more than just salt. Remember that Marduk cast these creatures, or as the text says, settled these ruined gods inside the sea because they rebelled against the high god and the cosmic law. Had they been allowed to remain in God's presence, they would have polluted and profaned the sanctity of his kingdom.

52:15

precisely because they rejected the law, the cosmic law that brought about the sanctity of all things, including the sanctity of God and his kingdom. The only way for God to preserve the sanctity of his kingdom is to establish a clear barrier between those who are willing to keep the cosmic law and those who are not. Those who are not are quote, settled

52:44

inside the sea. For our purposes today, the Babylonian map is important because it visually demarcates the division between the ruined gods in the profane sea and God's sacred creations by a circle. Everything within the circle is sacred, a temple. Everything outside of it is profane, bitter waters.

53:14

On this map, the circle is the wall. If you'd like to see a picture of the Babylonian map of the world, you can find it on the webpage for this episode. If you'd like to lay your eyes on the real thing, it's on display at the British Museum. Yet one more reason to visit the British Museum.

53:41

The cosmic boundary between sacred and profane is especially pronounced in tablet four of the Enuma Elish. In our last episode, I mentioned that I was gonna save two important lines from the tablet for this episode. And that's because they have to do with this boundary. In this tablet, we're told that Marduk used Tiamat's dead carcass to create the earth. In the very next line, the text reads,

54:10

This is the Stephanie Dalley translation. Quote, he, speaking of Marduk, drew a bolt across and made a guard hold it. Now this is interesting. The text tells us that after Marduk created the heavens and earth, his cosmic temple, he quote, drew a bolt across it. Well, what does that mean? What's this bolt?

54:40

Well, in parts of the ancient world, the ancients would slide a bolt across the door to lock it in place. In this passage, keep in mind that the bolt is symbolic. It's not talking about Marduk using an actual physical lock to protect his creations. The bolt symbolizes something that God did to seal off or lock the cosmic waters out. This is clear in the next line, which reads, quote,

55:09

He, speaking again of Marduk, drew a bolt across and made a guard hold it. Her, and this is speaking of Tiamat, her waters he arranged so that they could not escape.

55:25

By drawing the bolt across his creations, the text is symbolizing that Marduk did something to set a firm boundary between his newly formed kingdom and the profane waters where dwelt the ruined gods. The bolt acted as a barrier, which prevented the waters from polluting his sacred creations or cosmic temple. Listen to what a serologist Wayne Horowitz says in his quite important book, Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography.

55:54

about this bolt. On pages 326 and 327, he writes, quote, "A cigarro is a bolt on a door. "In the context of the sea, "the cigarro may be a bolt on a water lock "that holds the waters of the sea in place. "In this passage, the function of the bar "and doors of the sea is to keep the waters "of the sea within their bounds." I think it's quite interesting.

56:22

This text also tells us that Marduk placed a guard or a sentinel of some type in charge of making sure that the bolt stayed securely locked. The text reads, quote, he, speaking of Marduk, drew a bolt across and made a guard hold it. This is very intriguing and as you're going to see as the podcast continues, the notion that God assigns guards

56:50

to protect the precincts of his cosmic temple is yet another very important stubborn bit. I've got to leave it there. There's a lot to ponder in this episode, which I hope you'll do. In our next episode, we'll pick up right here. So with that, I'll leave you with the words of William Shakespeare, knowledge is the wing we're with, we fly to heaven. I'm Jack Logan.

57:23

You've been listening to the Ancient Tradition. A Wonk Media Production.

Episode #52 - The Cosmic Wall: The Ouroboros & The Shen Ring

<https://theancienttradition.com/52-the-cosmic-wall-the-ouroboros-the-shen-ring/>

00:00

Music

00:09

You're listening to The Ancient Tradition. A Wonk Media Production. Music provided by Joseph McDade. He is your host, Dr. Jack Logan.

00:25

Welcome to the ancient tradition. I'm your host, Jack Logan.

00:31

Great to have you listening in. Have you ever wondered if God, upon the creation of the world, revealed to human beings a pure, true religious tradition? Because on this podcast, we explore the surprising and what I consider to be mind boggling evidence that's found in the oldest religious writings and cosmologies, theologies, symbols, sacred architecture, rituals, and myths.

01:01

pointing to a distinct primordial tradition, which we refer to on this program as the ancient tradition. On this podcast, we delve into the evidence. We look at all of the patterns. We talk about the theology. And we contemplate the spiritual implications of that theology. It's not always in line what we think things are going to be. So it's a podcast that's going to spark some discussion.

01:31

It may even provoke a lot of questions. And ultimately, I hope that it inspires the pursuit of the divine. Be sure and check out our companion website, thea because you can find pictures and transcripts and links to each of our past episodes, which are pretty darn important to getting a comprehensive view of the theology inherent in the ancient tradition. In today's episode,

02:00

We're going to dig into the texts that were left by the ancient Egyptians to see if they, like the ancient Mesopotamians, attest that God imposed a divine wall or barrier of some type in the cosmos to separate sacred and profane space. So let's start by looking at an ancient Egyptian document translated by the famed Egyptologist, Kurt Sete.

02:29

dated to the 19th dynasty, which spanned from 1550 to 1292 BC, which speaks of the gods giving the earthly Egyptian pharaoh dominion over everything under the heavens until it reaches the dark primordial waters. The text reads, quote, "'Cause your boundaries to extend beneath the whole reach of the sky to the limits.'

02:59

the eternal darkness. So this text clearly indicates that ancient Egyptians understood that there was a boundary to the King's dominion and that that boundary was distinguished by the quote limits of the eternal darkness. The earliest known ancient Egyptian iconographic depiction of the cosmic boundary between the sacred and the profane was actually found in the tomb of King Tut.

03:28

He ruled from 1332 to 1323 BC. And in this image, an ancient Egyptian god is depicted encircled by a snake. And that snake's devouring its own tail. This image is known as the Arabaros. The name Arabaros comes from Greek, where aro means tail and baros means eating. So when you put them together, it's the tail eating or the tail devourer.

03:56

And sometimes it's called the dragon, which is Greek for dragon or snake, arabaros, or the snake or dragon tail eater. Which incidentally, I think I've mentioned this on the program before,

is why Draco Malfoy in the Harry Potter series is named Draco. Rowling wanted his name to mean snake, like the Slytherin house that he was part of, and to associate him with Voldemort, who was the serpent.

04:23

If you would like to see a picture of the King Tut Arabaros, you can find it on the webpage for this episode. Okay, so how does this image of a snake eating its own tail symbolize the cosmic division between sacred and profane space? Well, for the answer to that, we need to look at another ancient Egyptian text. This one's found in the Khafin texts, in Khafin text four, spell 321.

04:53

In this text you'll see that the image of the snake is directly connected to the cosmogony, the creation of the universe or earth, and to the creator Atum. As I read, see if you can decode the symbol. The text reads, quote, I, and I here refers to Atum, am the outflow of the primeval flood, he who emerged from the waters.

05:24

So here, Atum is telling us that he's the one who emerged in the midst of the dark chaotic profane waters. The text continues, quote, I am the provider of attributes serpent with its many coils. I extend everywhere in accordance with what was to come into existence. He, the indwelling soul.

05:52

So, Atum's referring to himself here. It was who made the universe. I bent right around myself. I was encircled in my coils. And by coils, Atum is referring to the coils of a snake. So, Atum is referring to himself here in this text, symbolically as a snake. In this text, Atum's telling us that when he emerged in the midst of the profane waters, at the time of creation,

06:22

that he extended his presence out over the waters, over all the chaotic elements that were to quote, come into existence, which tells us that he didn't extend his presence over all the chaotic waters, just over the waters that he wanted to come into existence. Then he tells us that those elements that took on an ordered form became the universe. Then he tells us that as part of this creative process, he bent himself

06:52

into a circle like a snake. Now that's interesting. To understand the symbolism behind what Atum is telling us here, we have to understand why real snakes do this. Circle themselves in their coils. Because in the natural world, snakes coil themselves as a defense mechanism against threats. By curling up, they shield their vulnerable areas, create a more intimidating appearance,

07:22

poise themselves to strike if a predator ventures too close. And this coiling behavior is mainly a way for snakes to protect and defend themselves against predators. So when Atum tells us that like a snake, he coiled himself around the universe he just created, we get the impression that he did this to protect the sacred space he just created. Protect it from what? Well, from the predators.

07:51

that lurk in the profane waters, the ruined gods, like we learned in our previous episode. Now, listen to the last thing he says. The text reads, quote, "I bent right around myself. "I was encircled in my coils, "one who made a place for himself "in the midst of his coils."

08:18

This is kind of an amazing little text. The last part of the text is pretty important. He tells us that he made a place for himself in the midst of his coils, the midst. The midst is the very center. So Atum's telling us that he created the universe, his cosmic kingdom, his cosmic temple, and he made a place, a home for himself in the very center, in the sacred center of the cosmic temple he just created.

08:48

Take a second and picture the symbol of a coiled snake in your mind, where the head of the snake is in the center and the snake coils around itself again and again and again, making concentric circles around the center. Does this make you think of anything we've talked about on the program? Because it should, it should conjure up in your mind the image of a circum-pump.

09:15

because that's the same image Atum is creating here when he says, quote, I bent right around myself. I was encircled in my coils, one who made a place for himself in the midst of his coils. What we glean from the symbolism Atum is using here is that he resides in the sacred center of his creations. The serpent's spiraling coils

09:44

extend outward and symbolize that God's power and influence permeates every inch of his kingdom. The outer coil symbolizes the farthest boundary of his realm and represents the threshold that separates God's kingdom from, quote, the limits of the eternal darkness. Note how the coiled snake symbol that Atum uses here is a miniature

10:14

replica of his cosmic kingdom. Amazingly, the coiled snake symbol is a microcosm of the macrocosm. The coiled snake symbolizes how the cosmos, God's heavenly kingdom, is actually structured. We get this same structural diagram of God's kingdom in the even more simplified symbol, the circum-punct, where the point, the punct, is the point of the

10:41

in the center of the circle represents the sacred center of God's kingdom, the location of God's personal residence, and the outer circle, the circum represents the cosmic boundary or wall around his kingdom. For today's discussion, our primary focus is on this outer circle, Atum's outer coil. Note how it is Atum's outer coil that completely encircles his kingdom.

11:12

This matters because this indicates that it's Atum's power and authority that serves as the protective barrier or wall that safeguards his kingdom. It indicates that Atum is the wall. This notion is further substantiated in ancient Mesopotamian texts like the Epic of Gilgamesh, where Gilgamesh and Enki must journey to the paradyceical cedar forest, which Tablet Five calls the quote

11:41

dwelling place of gods. So keep in mind that this forest is not a regular earthly forest. This forest is located in the divine realm. If you're a longtime listener, you'll recall that Gilgamesh and Enki had to defeat the awful monster Humbaba before they could enter this sacred cedar forest where dwelt the glorious god Shamash, who like the Egyptian Atum-re

12:09

was symbolized by the sun. And let me remind you, like we discussed many times on the program, that in the ancient world, God was symbolized by a sacred tree. Keep all of this in your mind when you listen to what Gilgamesh and Enki do. So let's start with this question. Why did Gilgamesh and Enki want to gain entrance to the Cedar Forest, the dwelling place of the gods? Well, they wanted to gain access to the forest,

12:38

so that they could gain access to the trees. And why did they want to gain access to the trees? They wanted to gain access to the trees so that they could cut the trees down and use the trees to build the sacred city of Uruk, the temple, the gate, and the wall that was to surround the city. Keep in mind that although the epic refers

13:03

to a cedar forest, to cedar trees, to the felling of those trees, to the wood of those trees, and to the use of those trees for building the sacred city of Uruk. They're being used in the epic as religious symbols to conceal greater esoteric or spiritual truths. When Gilgamesh and Anki speak of using the timber from the sacred trees, which were found in the divine forest, to build

13:33

say a magnificent gate for a temple, which the texts say they did, you Areodite listeners will see that this text conceals the teaching that God is the wood. It's teaching that God is the actual gate by which one enters the temple. And if the temple itself is made from the wood of the sacred tree,

14:01

then again, it symbolizes that God is the temple. And if the protective wall that is built around the temple is built from the wood of the sacred tree, then just like is suggested in ancient Egypt by the outer coil of the snake, it indicates that God is the wall that separates the sacred from the profane.

14:29

And if God is the wall that protects us from the profane, then like I suggested in the last episode, it makes perfect sense ritually speaking that the anointing oil, which is the gift of the sacred tree, is what protects one personally from all that is profane. I hope you're starting to see how profound symbols are and how if you ponder them,

14:58

you'll gain great insight into the spiritual realm. And when this happens, you will have acquired what the ancients referred to as wisdom. Wisdom is spiritual knowledge and spiritual understanding. For those willing to ponder them, the ancient texts and ancient symbols are literally dripping in wisdom. I consider them a global treasure.

15:27

One of the building projects for which Gilgamesh was known was, you guessed it, building a real, a literal, massive protective wall around the sacred city of Uruk. In fact, the Epic of Gilgamesh begins by heaping praise on Gilgamesh for accomplishing this exact architectural feat. Listen to what the prologue to the Epic of Gilgamesh says about

15:56

Gilgamesh built around Uruk. And this is the Stephanie Dalley translation. He, and this refers to Gilgamesh, journeyed far and wide, weary and at last resigned. He had the wall of Uruk built,

the sheepfold. See its wall, which is like a copper band. Survey its battlements, which nobody else can match. Go up on the wall of Uruk and walk around.

16:28

I love how this text refers to the protective wall as a quote, sheepfold, a place where sheep are kept safe and as a quote, copper band, which suggests both strength and beauty. And the text clearly indicates that this wall was used to defend the city against enemies when the text invites us to quote, survey the battlements.

16:56

You might be wondering to yourself, have archaeologists found evidence that a wall was built around the ancient Mesopotamian city of Uruk? Well, yes. Yes they have. They estimate that it was built sometime around 3000 BC. And the wall was massive. Archaeologists estimate that it stood between 40 and 50 feet tall.

17:25

which encompassed the entire city, measured more than five and a half miles long. A 50-foot tall wall is enormous. To construct a 50-foot tall wall five and a half miles long in 3000 BC was an architectural feat if there ever was one. But we all know that Gilgamesh didn't literally build this wall.

17:51

out of the cedar trees in the sacred cedar forest. Cause remember that forest was in the spiritual realm where dwelt the gods. But we do know that the ancient Mesopotamians built a wall around their sacred city of Uruk made out of brick.

18:10

So why did the ancient Mesopotamians build a 40 to 50 foot tall wall around the city of Uruk? According to Jill C. Katz in an article published in the fourth edition of the 2017 volume of Near Eastern Archaeology, titled, Building a City Wall, Speaking of the building of walls in the ancient world did not build them to thwart large scale military threats.

18:40

because there weren't any. She writes the following on page 282, quote, the lack of evidence for large scale military threats and the equipment to counter them forces us to reconsider the meaning behind these monumental walls. Katz goes on to argue that cities in the Southern Levant and cities like the Neolithic Jericho were walled to quote,

19:10

symbolically demarcate sacred space. Within the walls was the world of the sacred and outside the walls, that of the profane. We learned the same thing in Dina Ragavan's book, Temple's Ritual and Cosmic Symbolism in the Ancient World. The ancients built these walls to replicate the structure of the heavens on earth. Or as Ragavan says on page one, as,

19:40

reflection or embodiment of the cosmos. As above, so below. The earthly wall that Gilgamesh built around the sacred city of Uruk served as a replica of the cosmic boundary that separated sacred from profane space in the heavens. Just as the cosmic boundary or wall found in the heavens served to keep the awful profane sea monsters out of God's kingdom,

20:09

So too did the wall Gilgamesh erected around the sacred city of Uruk serve to keep the profane enemies of Uruk out. See, the entire sacred city of Uruk with its sacred temple in the center of the city was built to mirror the way God's cosmic kingdom was structured.

20:32

Back to the ancient Egyptians and the symbol of God's kingdom as a coiled snake or as an araboros, a snake biting its own tail. In both cases the image used to symbolize the sacred boundary around God's kingdom is a circle. Now this is where the ancient Egyptians get into some significant what I call symbolism stacking, where they stack multiple meanings into the same symbol

21:02

point. And the Araboros is a great example of this. In Coffin Text 714, Atum is actually referred to as a circle. The text reads, quote, I, speaking of Atum, was in the primeval waters. I was he who came into existence as a circle.

21:29

Because the text opens in reference to the primeval waters, we know the context of this text is the cosmogony. So the text is talking about Atum appearing in the beginning in the primeval waters as a circle. Okay, so what does this circle symbolize? Well, more than one thing, which is where we get into symbolism stacking. On one level, the circle symbolizes the sun. It symbolizes that Atum on the day of creation,

21:58

appeared in the primordial waters as a glorious being of light, which the ancient Egyptians symbolized by the sun. The sun and its rays also symbolize the extent or the outer limits of Atum's kingdom, as well as the extent of the living pharaoh's dominion. They're parallel.

22:27

Occasionally, this was symbolized iconographically prior to the Amarna period, which dated to between 1348 and 1320 BC as a solar disk with outstretched rays. But more often than not, this idea was depicted as a solar disk with outstretched wings, the winged disk, which is one of the most prominent ancient Egyptian symbols. One of the things that the wings represented, because there are several,

22:56

was the sun's rays or vice versa. They represented the same idea. They represented the reach of God's power and authority, the reach of his kingdom, like the loving care of a brooding bird. The outstretched wings represented, now listen to this, divine protection, like a wall, protection against evil.

23:22

Which is why the ancient Egyptians placed these winged disks on the walls of temples and on tombs and above doorways and on stele. They served as symbols of protection.

23:37

You can find images of the solar disc with outstretched rays and the solar disc with outstretched wings on the webpage for this episode. In the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, in Gallery 111, you can find this beautiful necklace that was found among the jewelry of the Princess Sahathar unit. It was found in her underground tomb, which was found beside the pyramid of King Senesaret II.

24:06

who reigned between 1897 and 1878 BC. Let me read the Met's description of this item. They write, this cloisonné pectoral is inlaid with 372 cut pieces of semi-precious stones. The heraldic design is replete with symbolism. Zigzag lines on the base bar

24:32

represent the primordial waters out of which the primeval hill emerged. Each of the falcons, symbols of the sun god, clasps a circular hieroglyph, meaning encircled, thus declaring the solar deity's supreme power over the universe. Now listen very closely to what the hieroglyphs on this necklace say, because it's what they say that's so important to our discussion.

25:01

The Met writes, quote, hieroglyphic signs make up the design and the whole may be read, quote, the God of the rising sun grants life and dominion over all the sun in circles of 1,000,000 on 100,000 years to King Sennachereth II. Did you catch what it said? This necklace says that God gives the king

25:31

In this case, King Sennuseret II, life and dominion overall that quote, the sun encircles, all that the sun encircles. In other words, the bounds of King Sennuseret II's dominion, which is symbolic of the bounds of Atum's dominion, the totality of creation is symbolized by the sun and everything that the sun can encircle.

26:01

which is also what the winged sun symbolizes. The outstretched wings of which represent all that the sun or God in circles. Everything within the circle of those outstretched wings is divinely protected. Life can only be found inside that circle. And this is where the symbolism gets kind of amazing. See, the ancient Egyptian hieroglyph for quote,

26:30

all the sun in circles, is known as the Egyptian Shen Ring. The word Shen actually means two in circle. This ring is actually very, very similar to the ring held centuries later by the Zoroastrian god Ahura Mazda that we talked about in episodes number 48 and 50. If you recall, the ring that Ahura Mazda holds isn't a ring like one would wear on their finger. It's actually a ring made of rope.

26:58

and it represents the rope that Ahura Mazda used or gave to the king, the Shah on Shah, to measure out the ground plan for or mark the boundaries of a temple before he began construction. The rope and the rod were Ahura Mazda and the Shah on Shah's temple building tools. Now, just guess what the ancient Egyptian hieroglyph for the Shen Ring looks like.

27:24

Yep, a rod and a ring. The hieroglyph is a circle with a short perpendicular rod at the base. So it's just like the Zoroastrian ring and rod that a Hora Mazda holds out, but you gotta kind of turn it 45 degrees to the right. So the circle sits atop the rod or bar. This hieroglyph actually represents a coil of rope bound to a straight rod. And yes,

27:53

This rod and rope represent the same rod and rope that were used by ancient Egyptian temple builders to define the boundaries of ancient Egyptian temples. Yes, the boundaries or the limits of the temple. We know that the earthly temple that the ancient Egyptians built was a replica of God's heavenly temple. So the Shen Ring symbol, which represented the tools,

28:20

The ancient Egyptians used to map out the boundaries of the earthly temple also served as a symbol of the boundaries of God's cosmic temple. Are you following all of this? Because it's pretty amazing. I hope you can see how the Shen Ring itself is a replica of God's heavenly kingdom and the protective circle or wall that surrounds his kingdom. And this isn't just me making this argument.

28:49

It's widely concluded by Egyptologists that the circular form of the Shen Ring represented eternal protection in ancient Egypt. It's amazing because this small but prominent Egyptian symbol served as a microcosm of the macrocosm too. And there's even more to this. The Shen symbol was directly connected to kingship and the new royal name the king adopted at coronation.

29:19

known as the prenomen or throne name. See, the ancient Egyptians inscribed the new king's prenomen or throne name and sometimes his nomen, his birth name, right in the center of the Shenring, symbolizing that the king and his dominion were encircled by divine protection, by a divine protective wall, which we know represents the boundary around God's sacred cosmic temple.

29:48

More often than not, Egyptian scribes needed to elongate the chen ring so that it could hold the total length of the king's new royal name. Today, most of us know this elongated rope ring as a cartouche, which is the name the French gave it because they thought it resembled the paper gun cartridges that they used. The ancient Egyptians actually called it chenu.

30:11

The ancient Egyptians inscribed the king's name inside the chen ring to symbolize that the king was surrounded by a circle of divine protection.

30:23

Right after I put this section of today's program together, I came across an article titled The Encircling Protection of Horus, published in the Proceedings of the 12th Annual Symposium of Current Research in Egyptology, where to my surprise, the author David Ian Lightbody argued in 2011 what I've just argued here, that the Shen Ring symbolized a boundary or enclosure wall.

30:54

pages 134 and 135 he demonstrates that the word family that's associated with the ancient Egyptian word Shen is directly related to the notion of the protection of a sacred enclosure. On page 134 he writes, quote, the form-based word family of the word Shen, S-H-E-N,

31:19

directly relates to the circumferences of buildings and tombs and their protection. And then referring to this word family, significant meanings include the words protection, encircle, enclose, surround, circumference, and perimeter.

31:40

On page 135 where he lists the words found in the Shenward family, one of the words SNW literally means enclosure wall. And another word that begins with SNWT literally means quote, the pyramid and temple are encircled. This last one sort of stopped me in my tracks because

32:07

That was exactly what I had concluded in my own research, that the Shen Ring represented the protective ring or wall around God's sacred temple precinct, and here it was on page 135, written right on the page in ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs, the temple is encircled.

32:29

This is incredibly significant because as I mentioned, the Shen Ring was a prominent ancient Egyptian symbol. So for the ancient Egyptians to create a stylized version of a divinely protected enclosure in the Shen Ring, it indicates that the ancient Egyptians were not only aware that God's cosmic temple, of which their temples was a microcosm, was encircled by a protective wall of some sort. It also indicates that this doctrine

32:58

constituted a very important component of the ancient Egyptian religion. Lightbody, like I argued, argues that the Shen was directly associated with the laying of temple foundations and the stretching of the cord ritual. On page 134 and 135, Lightbody writes, quote, the ritual setting out of building plans through the stretching of the cord ceremony

33:28

is attested from the Old Kingdom. And it seems plausible that the Shen ropes are related to those used in these foundation rituals. The establishment of temples seems to have included the stretching of the cord ceremony, which set the orientation and involved an encircling of the building, perhaps while setting out the boundary. Lightbody goes on to illustrate that

33:58

protection and dominion symbolized by the Shen Ring was not only incorporated in ancient Egyptian architecture, it also played an important role in ancient Egyptian ritual. Lightbody writes the following on page 134, quote, the symbolism of pharaonic protection and dominion encompassed the architecture to designate, delineate, and protect.

34:26

enclosed royal spaces. Just as the pyramids, temples, and tombs were protected by encircling rituals and spells. And we learned many many many episodes ago that spells in ancient Egypt were a form of divine utterance. This encirclement was depicted and embodied in the art and artifacts contained within these sacred spaces.

34:56

And what was the Pharaoh hoping to protect himself and his dominion from by way of these encircling rituals? Well, we know, his enemies, which were theologically associated with the awful sea serpent of Pophos, who lurked in the primeval waters of Nune. On page 138, Lightbody writes, texts referring to the mythical origins of the Egyptian temple refer

35:24

to these early palisade enclosures and rituals of protection for warding off snakes and enemies. Now listen to this. Often the rituals included in circling processions where the Pharaoh and his entourage would seem to have verified the integrity of the enclosure and bestowed sacred blessings to ensure its strength. What Lightbody says here is really interesting.

35:52

It had me thinking about episode number seven, the King of the Four Corners. If you recall in that episode, we talked about an ancient Egyptian kingship ritual known as running the circuit as part of the Royal Sed Festival, which renewed the strength and the vitality of the reigning king.

The king would run a circuit around the perimeter of a field, which symbolized the entirety of his dominion.

36:21

a dominion which he had inherited from his father.

36:26

Ancient Egyptians performed many encircling type ceremonies and rituals to ensure the divine protection of a particular space. In light of these rituals, Lightbody writes, quote, “I believe circumambulation ceremonies, such as the Sokar Festival, are descended from these early rituals of encircling protection.” We’ve certainly touched on circumambulation rights on this program.

36:56

But what Lightbody says here also had me thinking about the possible association between rituals of encircling protection and the ring dance. I don’t have time to develop this here, but it’s definitely something worth pondering. Note how everything about the Shen Ring symbol teaches and reinforces the theology taught within the ancient tradition. The Shen Circle.

37:25

represents many things. It represents the sun, which represents the glorious nature of Atum’s being, a being of ineffable light. The circle also represents the rope used by divine architects to lay out the boundaries of Atum’s sacred temple precinct. And the circle also represents the boundary or wall itself that encircles Atum’s sacred cosmic temple precinct.

37:54

And note as well how this symbol directly associates kingship with temple building, which you should be starting to gather by now represents two core theological elements taught within the ancient tradition. It’s the king’s new royal name that’s placed directly inside the protective shin ring, the rope and rod. The tools used

38:23

to build a sacred temple. And take note how this symbol was used to house the king’s new name, the name that reflected the new nature, the king’s rebirth that he acquired upon coronation. A name that you’re gonna see down the line reflects the king’s full sanctification. Shen Ring symbolism is symbolism stacking in its finest form.

38:53

See again, God is the circle. God is the protective wall that safeguards or encircles his sacred cosmic precinct and everything that’s lucky enough to be inside that sacred space. In Pyramid Text 366, God is actually referred to as the Great Circle. The text reads, quote, the Great Circle, in your name of

39:23

great surround, an enveloping ring in the ring that encircles the outermost lands.

39:34

Note how this text refers to God as a quote, enveloping ring, and the quote, ring that encircles the outermost lands. Keep in mind that this text is very, very, very old. It was written on the walls of King Tete’s pyramid by Egyptian scribes, sometime around 2290 BC.

40:02

What great circle is this text referring to? Again, the meaning is layered, but great circle is unquestionably connected to Atum, or ray. It was symbolized by the sun disc, the sun disc that

encircles the outermost lands like an enveloping ring. With this in mind, I wanna return to the ancient Egyptian symbol, the araboros, the snake devouring its own tail.

40:30

I argued at the beginning of today's program that the aroboros is a symbol of the protective boundary around God's cosmic kingdom. But how so? From the text that we read earlier, where Atum made a place for himself in the midst of his coils, we learned that Atum was sometimes symbolized by a snake. In the aroboros, the snake that is biting its tail represents Atum.

41:00

captures the notion of Atum's glorious nature as the sun, as well as the cyclical nature of the sun itself, where it rises each morning, circles the earth, and then it dies in the evening, which represents birth, death, and rebirth. That process, it's symbolized by the snake eating its own tail. It's Atum that encircles his creation,

41:29

which is symbolized by the sun circling the earth. It's Atum that protects his creation from the awful Apophis and the eternal darkness. The Arabaros symbolizes that Atum is the protective wall. I'd argue that at least one of the reasons why the ancient Egyptians depicted the snake eating its own tail, of which rebirth was one,

41:56

was to convey the notion that the border around God's creation is completely sealed. It is completely sealed off from the primordial waters, like the bitumen. There's no gap or opening by which the profane waters can pollute the sacred space inside. And I argue this because this is what is conveyed by the Shenring and what was also conveyed in ancient Egyptian protection rituals. On the micro level,

42:26

The goal of those rituals was to create a sealed protective barrier around a particular sacred space, effectively stopping demons or enemies from entering that space. On the macro level, the image of the Auroboros depicted a closed system model of the universe, which I've noted earlier in the podcast is a view that many contemporary astrophysicists are beginning to embrace.

42:57

Now, lest you think that I might be taking my interpretation of this symbol a bit too far, listen to how Marinus Vandersleuths in Volume 1 of Traditional Cosmology connects the Araboros to exactly what we discussed in our last episode, episode number 51, the Cosmic Wall, to the Gourd and to the Seed, or as Irving Finkel referred to Atrahasis or Noah's Ark, as a Walnut.

43:25

with its kernel of life inside. On page 105, speaking of the ordered space, which was surrounded by the waters of unorganized chaos, van der Sluis writes, quote, in a large number of traditions varying from archaic, unpolished myth to the elevated astronomical understanding, and he's talking about astrophysicists there, this receptacle

43:55

was conceived to be shaped like a hollow, enclosing or surrounding perimeter or shell, for which the generic term enclosure could be used. The domain encompassed by the enclosing ball or circle was primarily characterized as the first organized cosmos, land or earth, as opposed to the unorganized.

44:25

state of chaos that continued to exist outside it. Note how van der Sluis argues here that the distinguishing characteristic between the enclosure and the waters is organized, cosmo-sized, or sanctified space, and unorganized, uncospo-sized, profane space. He continues, quote,

44:54

five biological metaphors, and I would say symbols, based on the procreation of offspring in the natural world were most prominently employed in the mythical descriptions of this enclosure. A shell, a gourd, or nut, a seed, and likewise, an egg. Now listen to this. A sixth common symbol to describe the perimeter of the enclosure

45:24

is that of an encompassing serpent. An encompassing serpent is the Ara Baros or some rendition of it. Baner Sluss is telling us here that from his research, he found that the ancients symbolized the perimeter of the outer boundary of this special cosmo-sized enclosure, which we know represents God's cosmic temple as an encompassing serpent.

45:52

So we were right on track in our interpretation. Very interestingly, R.T. Rundle Clark associates God as the great circle, the boundary that surrounds his kingdom to the ancient Egyptian Ka, K-A. I don't have time to get into this too much here, but the hieroglyph for the Ka is what looks like two vertical or upraised arms, except that that's not what it is at all.

46:22

The hieroglyph is actually an image of a horizontal embrace. Clark notes that another version of pyramid text 366 exclaims of God, quote, "You encircle everything within your arms." So another way one could imagine or symbolize the cosmic barrier between sacred and profane space would be with an image of God

46:50

encircling his kingdom in a loving, protective embrace.

46:58

On page 232, Clark writes, quote, an embrace is protective. The high God put his arms around his progeny to shield them from the disintegrating powers of the primeval waters. And then on page 240, he continues, the world has to be protected against the disintegrating forces of the surrounding chaos. All the people's

47:27

of antiquity felt that light and life were constantly threatened by very real cosmic enemies. Hence the need to put a guard around the earth or its symbolic alternative, the primeval mound.

47:45

I also want to point out that many of these same ideas are present on the Pharaoh's crown. If you've ever looked at a Pharaoh's crown, you'll notice that there's a cobra right in the center of the crown, poised, ready to strike. It's called a uraeus, which is the Greek word for a kind of snake. This cobra was believed to protect the Pharaoh from his enemies, who were understood to be the incarnation of the evil forces of chaos.

48:14

It's the serpent that protects the king and his kingdom.

48:19

Over time, the ancient Egyptians began to interpret the snake in the Arobaro symbol, which was once considered a tomb as the profane water serpent or dragon who'd been relegated to the waters for his rebellion. Instead of the serpent being interpreted as guarding or protecting the sacred space God created when he created the universe, now he was seen as a threat to the order and the stability of the realm.

48:48

The serpent came to represent the primordial waters themselves. But despite this, despite these varied interpretations, they all reinforce the central belief that in the cosmos, sacred and profane space is divided. Whether the snake is conceived as protecting God's cosmic temple or is conceived as threatening it, the snake marks the boundary.

49:15

between where God's cosmic temple ends and the profane waters begin.

49:21

If ancient Egyptian temples were meant to be a microcosm of the macrocosm, then we would expect the boundary or barrier between cosmic, sacred and profane space to be visible in ancient Egyptian temple architecture. And guess what? That's exactly what we find. Do you remember the ancient Egyptian city of Heliopolis? We talked about it quite a bit in episode number 34, the Ebenezer.

49:49

If you don't remember, the ancient Egyptians believed that Heliopolis was the actual location where the primordial hillock rose out of the primordial waters on the day of creation. There was no more sacred place in all of ancient Egypt. Unfortunately, the temple that was built there is no longer standing, but archaeologists have found evidence of a massive wall that surrounded the city.

50:15

Andrew Curry, writer for Archaeology Magazine notes in the March-April 2019 edition, the following dimensions of the wall. Listen to the unbelievable width of the wall that surrounded Heliopolis. Quote, based on their width, some sections revealed by recent excavations are 55 feet across in some spots. Can you imagine that?

50:45

Walls that are 55 feet wide. That's just crazy. Kari goes on. Roe, now Roe was a German Egyptologist who worked on the site, estimates that Heliopolis might have been guarded by walls up to 60 feet high. 60 feet high, can you imagine that? Roe states, quote, "In a flat landscape, it must have looked more "like a fortress than a city."

51:16

So that's a massive wall. But how do archeologists know that this isn't just a plain old wall rather than a microcosmic depiction of the boundary dividing sacred and profane space? Well, that's where the excavation gets really interesting because guess what archeologists found? In the spring of 2014, archeologists unearthed about 150 foot section of the southern portion of the wall.

51:46

and they found that the wall was undulated. Okay, so what in the heck does that mean? A scholar by the name of Max Johann Biersendorf in an article titled, Undulating Mud Brick Walls in Ancient Pharaonic Egypt, explains the wall that surrounds the ancient Egyptian city of

Heliopolis like this. Quote, the most striking feature of this wall is the undulating construction. It's composed of mud bricks placed in curves that are ascending and descending.

52:15

and not organized in a plain horizontal fashion. The undulating appearance yields a regular pattern of concave segments alternating with convex ones. To put it simply, the wall that encircled Heliopolis was constructed to look like a wave. It was constructed to look like water, like the profane chaotic primordial waters that surrounded God's cosmic.

52:45

temple. Now if I would have told you at the beginning of today's episode that the ancient Egyptians constructed walls around their temples that looked like waves, this would have made no sense to you. But now that you know ancient Egyptian temples were constructed to be microcosms of the macrocosm, then you know precisely why the ancient Egyptians built a wall that looked like water around the sacred temple city of Heliopolis. They did it!

53:13

represent the wall, the membrane, the shell, the tough rind that divided the sacred temple precinct inside from the profane chaotic waters outside. And from the colossal height and thickness of the wall they obviously didn't want the profane world to have any chance of penetrating the sacred temple precinct inside.

53:37

If you'd like to see an artist's rendering of Heliopolis's undulating walls, along with pictures of undulating walls, at other archeological sites in Egypt, you can find them on the webpage for this episode. Each of the ancient Egyptian symbols we've discussed in this episode, the Shenring symbol and the Arabaros symbol, attest that in the heavens, there is a strict division between sacred and profane space.

54:07

Over time, many of the theological ideas we've discussed in today's episode have been altered or corrupted and even usurped by various groups. One example of this is the practice of ritual magic, where practitioners use salt or chalk or flour to draw a magic circle that they believe will offer them magical protection. Among the Wicca, a modern day pagan religion that was developed during the mid-

54:37

20th century AD, so not that long ago, the casting of a magic circle is widely practiced. Entomologically, the word wicca comes from the Old English word, P-I-C-C-A, which is pronounced witta, which is a masculine noun meaning sorcerer or male witch. Whether these modern day witches or wiccans recognize it, when they ritually cast a magic circle,

55:05

They're drawing heavily from the rich religious legacy handed down by the ancients and the theology the ancients taught within the ancient tradition. While Wiccan rituals are most likely significantly altered versions of the original teachings, they provide further evidence that an ancient religious tradition was imparted to humanity in the beginning.

55:36

one that ultimately gave rise to the vast majority of religious traditions we see today. On this program we refer to that original religious tradition as the ancient tradition. I'm going to have to leave it there. I hope I've given you a lot to think about. Until next time, I'll leave you with the

words of William Shakespeare, "Knowledge is the wing wherewith we fly to heaven." I'm Jack Logan.

56:10

You've been listening to the Ancient Tradition. A Wonk Media Production.

Episode #53 - The Cosmic Wall: The Compass & The Firmament

<https://theancienttradition.com/53-the-cosmic-wall-the-compass-the-firmament/>

00:00

Music

00:09

You're listening to The Ancient Tradition. A Wonk Media Production. Music provided by Joseph McDade. He is your host, Dr. Jack Logan.

00:25

Welcome to the Ancient Tradition. I'm your host, Jack Logan.

00:32

Glad to have you with me and welcome to all of our new listeners. Glad to have you along with us today too. Today's episode is titled, The Cosmic Wall, The Compass and the Firmament. So let's just jump right in. For the past two episodes, we've been discussing another very important stubborn bit. And by stubborn bit, I'm referring to those theological tenants that stubbornly persist across the world.

01:00

in different time periods and in different hemispheres that we can trace all the way back to the dawn of human history. I want to start by taking a brief second to set up for our new listeners where today's stubborn bit fits in the overarching theology that the ancients taught, which we've been reconstructing piece by piece on the program. If you're new to the program, know that this theology is

01:27

fully supported by an incredible amount of textual evidence found in the world's oldest written records. And the back catalog of the podcast is loaded with that evidence. So if you're interested in learning more about the theology the ancients taught, which we refer to on this program as the ancient tradition, then be sure to check out the back catalog because that's

where you're going to find all of that textual evidence. And I guarantee that you're going to learn something new.

01:55

and you may even learn something that will truly enrich your life. To briefly recount where we are in the theology, the ancients tell us that upon conquering the dragon, the beloved son of the high god, be he called Marduk, Ninurta, Osiris, Baal, Christ, or by some other name, was crowned a heavenly king and he was given the power and the authority to create a cosmic kingdom.

02:24

The ancients tell us that one of the first things that he did when he began building his cosmic kingdom was to build a cosmic wall of some sort around his kingdom, the cosmos, the space that he just cosmo-sized or sanctified to protect it, to protect all of his creations from the onslaught of the dragon and chaos. This cosmo-sized sacred sanctified space

02:53

is referred to as a temple or in this case, a cosmic temple. We saw in episode number 51, the holy barge and the water bolt that the ancient Mesopotamians and other peoples in the ancient Near East symbolized this sanctified, cosmicized space as a holy barge or an arc. The arc itself

03:21

defined the boundary between the sacred space that was within the boat from the profane waters of chaos outside of it. And we see this theology. The slaying of the dragon, the hero's son, kingship, and the special boat come together very nicely in the epic poem, Jason and the Argonauts, which was written in the third century BC by Apollonius of Rhodes.

03:48

He was for a time the head librarian of the Library of Alexandria. The poem is actually titled *The Argonautica*, which refers to Jason's boat, the Argo. And we're told that this vessel was constructed by a man named Argus, who, we're not surprised to learn, constructed it with the help of the gods. According to Apollodorus,

04:16

who was a renowned Greek engineer, the Argo was favored by the gods and it was considered the first ship to sail the seas. So you should see in this some cosmological significance. It's what Jason's boat was made out of that I want to emphasize here. See, Jason's boat was considered special because the whole itself was made from the wood of a very sacred oak tree.

04:44

And which oak tree was this? It was the sacred oak tree, which was the oracle found in the temple of Dadoena, which is the oldest oracle in Greece. And it was dedicated to the god Zeus, the king of Mount Olympus. A special plank of this wood was placed in the prow of the boat. And we're told in book one that this plank spoke.

05:13

to the Argonauts and guided them through the seas. Book one, lines 519 to 531 tell us this, quote, and yes, the ship itself, the Argo, called to them also, since its hull contained a talking plank. Athena had herself cut it from the Dédonan Oak to serve beneath them as the keel.

05:42

And we learn later in the poem in book two, line 1267, that the golden fleece, which Jason is pursuing to affirm his kingship is actually hanging in a sacred grove on an oak tree. The text

reads, quote, the plane of acres and the God's sacred grove where the snake kept watch and ward over the fleece spread on the leafy branches

06:12

of an oak. If you're a long time listener, you should clearly see here that the poem of Jason and the Argo conceals significant esoteric truths. I'm not going to spell them out for you here, but note how just as Gilgamesh used wood from the sacred cedar forest, where dwelt the gods, to build his sacred city, so too Jason uses the wood of the sacred tree to build his special boat.

06:42

the Argo. And likewise in the Old Testament in first Kings chapter five, we see that King Solomon requests that Hiram, the king of Tyre cut down cedar trees for the building of a temple to Yahweh. Verses five and six read quote, and behold, I propose to build an house and a house is a temple.

07:11

And to the name of the Lord my God, now therefore command thou that they hew me cedar trees out of Lebanon." Hiram does this and then in 1 Kings chapter 6 verses 9 and 15, we read that Solomon used the cedar to build the temple. The text reads, quote, so he built the house and finished it and covered the house with beams and boards of cedar.

07:41

And he built the walls of the house within with boards of cedar, both the floor of the house and the walls of the ceiling. We get the picture from this verse that the entire temple that Solomon built, both inside and out, was constructed out of this special cedar. And then listen to what it says in verse 16, quote, and he built 20 cubits on the sides of the house, both the floor

08:10

and the walls with the boards of cedar. He even built them for it within, even for the oracle, even for the most holy place. And the most holy place here refers to the innermost sanctum, the Holy of Holies. According to this verse, King Solomon used precious cedar trees for the floor and the walls of the Holy of Holies. And this makes absolutely perfect

08:39

theological sense that he did so. But you have to understand what the cedar trees represent symbolically to understand that and understand why. Many different types of precious materials were used to build King Solomon's temple to Yahweh. But it should be pretty easy for you to see the parallel here between King Solomon's use of cedar to build the temple, in particular the Holy of Holies.

09:08

Jason's use of the sacred oak tree to build the whole of the Argo and Gilgamesh's use of cedar trees from the sacred cedar forest to build a magnificent gate for Anlil's temple. The esoteric message is the same. In all three of these instances, and there's more, which we're going to talk about in a future episode, the wood of the sacred tree is the material that master builders use

09:38

to build a temple. As I mentioned a couple of minutes ago, one of the first things the hero's son did when he commenced building his cosmic kingdom was establish a clear barrier or enclosure of some type around his creations to protect them from the dragon and to hold back the waters of chaos. This barrier clearly established the boundary between sacred and profane space.

10:06

In the ancient world, this boundary was conceived of as a wall. As we saw in our last episode, episode number 52, the Arab Aros and the Shenring. The ancient Sumerians built a massive wall around the world's oldest true city, the city of Uruk founded according to the Sumerian King list by King Enmerkar around 4500 BC to reflect

10:32

the barrier in the cosmos that separated sacred from profane space. The Sumerians built their cities to be mirror images of God's kingdom in the cosmos. As above, so below. The wall around the Sumerian city of Uruk was not unique. The practice of building these walls, despite the lack of evidence of large scale threat,

10:56

was widespread in ancient Mesopotamia and across the entire ancient Near East. The city of Babylon was surrounded by an impressive double wall that was built by Nebuchadnezzar II and it stretched five miles. The ancient city of Nineveh was also protected by a massive wall, some eight to nine miles long. And in some cases, it was an astounding 70 to 80 feet high. If you'd like to see a picture of the footprint,

11:25

of the wall around the city of Nineveh, can find it on the webpage for this episode. And we saw a similar thing in ancient Egypt where the city of Heliopolis was surrounded by a massive wall, as was the temple of Karnak. And both of these walls were constructed in that undulating manner to convey that outside that protective wall, the city or temple was encircled by the waters of chaos. These enclosure walls are a

11:53

ubiquitous feature of ancient Egyptian communities and towns and temples. When we look across the entire ancient Near East, we see that walls are a major architectural feature of most temples in the ancient world. Scholars refer to these walls as temenos walls. The root here is temen, which should ring a bell for a lot of you, which is a Greek word for to cut or to cut off.

12:22

If you recall, we talked about this a long time ago on the podcast. The Temin usually marked where the Carto, the north-south line of a city and the Decumanos, the east-west line of a city, cut across each other. Where those lines crossed marked the sacred center of all space, which marked the site where the temple was to be built, which is why it's used in English as the root for our word temple.

12:51

which is why the wall that surrounds sacred space is called a temenos wall, because it cuts profane space off from sacred space, separating the two, thereby creating the boundary around the temple. Wikipedia defines a temenos wall like this, quote, a piece of land marked off from common uses and dedicated to a God such as a sanctuary, holy grove,

13:21

or holy precinct.

13:24

I mentioned this to emphasize that the walls that the ancients built around their cities, you know, even though they were really useful for protecting what was within from these physical threats or enemies, they were first and foremost built to serve as mirror images or miniature replicas of the

wall that surrounds God's home and all of his sacred creations. His temple. Don't miss what the ancients by

13:54

building these walls are attesting to. What they're attesting is that the cosmos are structured. I don't know if you've ever even thought about this before, but what the ancients are teaching here is quite fascinating. The ancients are attesting that there is an actual real physical or spiritual structure to the cosmos. And they're testing that part of that structure consists of a real

14:22

physical or spiritual barrier of some sort around God's cosmic kingdom, which we refer to as a cosmic temple because everything within God's cosmic kingdom is sacred. Now, this is a structure that I can't see, that none of us can presently see, but it's a structure, a wall of some sort that the ancients tell us exists

14:51

in the cosmos and is real. Now that's pretty fascinating. Canaanite cities like Jericho and Dan, they were also famously surrounded by impressive walls, as was the city of Jerusalem. Many of you know this, it was walled and some of that wall still exists today. Like all of the other ancient Near Eastern civilizations, the Israelites designed the city of Jerusalem to reflect

15:19

the structure of the cosmos. Jerusalem was built to be a microcosm of the macrocosm. I can easily see that there's a wall around Jerusalem, but I was wondering if there was anything in the Old Testament that specifically attests to this theology, that there's a structure to the heavens, in particular that a real barrier or wall of some sort completely encircles God's kingdom. And yes,

15:49

There definitely is. It is a strong, stubborn bit. So to see what I'm talking about, let's jump into the Old Testament. Let's start in the book of Job, chapter 26, verses eight, 10 and 12. In these verses, Job is teaching a man by the name of Bildad about Yahweh's power and strength. And this is what he says about Yahweh's power. Verse eight reads, and this is the King James Version, quote,

16:19

He, and He here is speaking of Yahweh, bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds. Right here is a clear reference that Yahweh has the power to quote bind the waters. Verse 10 continues, quote, He, again speaking of Yahweh, hath compassed the waters with bounds.

16:48

I really like this verse because here Job tells us that Yahweh, quote, have compassed the waters with bounds. And by using the word compass, we should get the picture of a compass in our mind. And I'm not talking about the directional compass. I'm talking about the compass that you used in geometry class, where you place the pointed end of the compass on a specific point, and then you adjust the width between the arms.

17:16

to your desired radius. And then you rotate the compass around that point, keeping the pointed end fixed. And when you do this, the pencil end will trace out a perfect circle. So when Job tells us that Yahweh compassed the waters with bounds, imagine Yahweh using a compass to draw a circle around his kingdom, which binds the waters. The waters are

17:44

prohibited from going beyond the bounds that Yahweh has drawn. The English Standard Version translation of this verse actually reads, quote, he, Yahweh, has inscribed a circle on the face of the waters at the boundary between light and darkness. The Amplified Bible translates it this way, quote, he has inscribed a circular limit

18:15

on the face of the waters at the boundary between light and darkness. The imagery of Yahweh inscribing a circle on the face of the waters using a compass is highly symbolic because the compass is a builder's tool. It's one of a couple of very important tools that a carpenter uses to build a building. But the ancients aren't talking about building any old building here. They're talking about Yahweh building a

18:44

cosmic temple. Temple building is a metaphor for God creating the universe, his cosmic temple. This is worth repeating. Temple building is a metaphor for creating the universe, God's cosmic temple. And if you give that just a little bit of thought, you'll probably catch that

19:13

The compass is akin to the rope and the rod that we've talked about in the past couple of episodes. The rope and the rod that the ancient kings are depicted holding in their hands. Cause all you gotta do to draw a circle with a rope and a rod is to tie the rope to the rod, stick the rod in the ground, and then stretch out the rope and then walk around the rod. And then, voila, you have a circle.

19:40

We've produced a circle in nearly the exact same way that you would with a compass that you use in a geometry class. So for Job to tell us that Yahweh, quote, compassed the waters, we should glean two important things. Number one, that Yahweh by holding the compass in his hand had to have been a king.

20:06

Because as we've learned from the ancient tradition, kings were the only ones who were given the compass or the rope and the rod, which signified the right to build a sacred temple. And the only reason that they were given the right to build a sacred temple was because they had conquered the dragon. And as I just pointed out, temple building is a metaphor for creating the universe. So when a king is depicted holding a compass or a rope and a rod,

20:36

temple building tools, it really conveys that he's been given the right to create a universe, a sacred cosmic temple. And number two, because of this, we glean that Yahweh is the creator and that his use of the compass here to inscribe a limit on the waters, the building of a boundary or wall to protect his cosmic creations,

21:05

constituted a very important part of the creation process, the cosmic temple building process. The notion that the establishment of this wall took place as part of the creation process is actually fully supported by the account of the creation that's given in the Old Testament in the book of Genesis.

21:33

I want to walk you through the first couple of verses of this account in detail, because I've never read or heard anyone offer up the interpretation that I'm going to offer up. Now that's not to say

that someone hasn't made the argument that I'm going to make. It's just that I have never come across it. So I'm guessing that you probably haven't either. I think you're going to find that the creation account given in Genesis, when we examine it intertextually with what is written in Job, reveals

22:02

a clear picture of what God did in the beginning stages of the creation process. There are some notoriously difficult passages in the Genesis account which are cleared up almost instantly when we draw on the knowledge we have of ancient Near Eastern cosmology. I think you're going to find that it sheds a whole lot of light on what's written in the Genesis account.

22:29

In Genesis chapter one, verse one, we read that quote, the beginning, God created the heaven and earth. In verse two, we're told that the earth hasn't been formed yet and that darkness covered quote, the face of the deep. And the deep here refers to the primordial waters. These verses tell us like the rest of the ancient world tells us that God

22:59

looked out over the pre-creative state of the universe and he saw nothing but this endless sea of dark, profane, uncreated chaotic matter, which the ancients symbolically conceived of as water. In verse two, we're told that something of God's essence permeated some of the chaotic matter, something which initiated the cosmicizing or creation process.

23:28

something that initiated the sanctification process of that matter. We talked about this aspect of the creation quite a bit in episode number 13, the incomprehensible brooding wind. So if this interests you, be sure and check that episode out. It's worth listening to. After this in verse three, we're told that God commanded via divine utterance, light to appear in the midst of the newly cosmicized matter.

23:57

And verse four tells us that when God saw the light, he saw that it was good. Now listen to what God does next. Remember, all of this is happening on the first day. Verse four reads, and this is the King James version, quote, and God saw the light that it was good and God divided the light from the darkness. Okay. The light here referred to in this verse,

24:27

does not refer to the sun. According to the text, the sun wasn't created until day four. So if the light that's referred to here is not the sun, then what is it? And what is the darkness? If we look at the clues given in the two verses that precede verse four, we see that in verse two, darkness is the descriptor that's used to describe the profane chaotic elements, the primordial waters.

24:57

It says, quote, darkness was upon the face of the deep. And then in the latter half of verse two, and then in verse three, we see that light is what appears after God cosmicizes or sanctifies a portion of the chaotic elements. As we discussed in episode number 29, who is God, a glorious being of ineffable light. We see that

25:24

One of the fundamental principles taught within the ancient tradition is that sanctification is always associated with light. The greater the sanctification, the greater the light. So it comes as

no surprise that after God cosmicized or sanctified a portion of the profane waters, that God then commanded that light appear.

25:53

Note that light in this passage is made directly in reference to the waters that God had just sanctified after he'd imbued those waters or chaotic matter with something of his essence. The point I'm trying to make is that darkness and light in these verses is directly associated with un-cosmicized and cosmo-sized matter. Un-cosmicized matter is associated with darkness and cosmo-sized matter is associated with light.

26:24

There's a lot of authors that I've read, in particular John Walton, who have made the argument that the Genesis account is not at all about the actual physical creation. And I respectfully disagree. In the ancient world, the waters are matter, physical matter, albeit matter in an inert, chaotic form. So when the text tells us that something of God's essence, quote, moved upon the waters,

26:53

It's telling us that something of God's essence moved upon the matter, physical matter, which transformed it and sanctified it. If we don't understand the ancient Near Eastern conception of the waters, then we're going to completely miss that this text is actually teaching us something very important about how the physical creation was brought about. In particular, how God has complete power over physical matter.

27:21

right down to the ordering of subatomic particles, as we've discussed numerous times on the program. If you're interested in this, again, there's a whole episode on this, episode number 30, the grand primordial singularity. You can check that out. So when verse four tells us that God, quote, divided the light from the darkness, I'm arguing that the text is telling us

27:48

that God began his creative process by first separating the sacred, cosmicized matter from the profane, chaotic matter. He separated the sacred from the profane. And as you're going to see in just a second, this interpretation is corroborated by what is actually written in verses six and seven. Now, of course, we know on this program that the ancients used symbols, which light and darkness can be.

28:18

precisely because they have the ability to teach us many things about the reality of the spiritual realm. So there are probably layers of meaning that we can and probably should cull from the statement that God divided the light from the darkness. But still the same, I contend that because this statement was made within the context of the cosmogony, the physical creation,

28:44

And from the verses that we just read that link darkness with the primordial waters and light with the cosmicized waters, that the primary interpretation of this passage should be that on the first day of creation, God separated cosmicized sacred space from un-cosmicized profane space.

This interpretation is highly significant because

29:12

What this means is that on the first day of creation, God began building a temple. To divide or separate sacred space from profane space is to build a temple. That's the definition of a temple.

Remember the word profane literally means to be outside of the temple. What this means is that the Genesis creation account is really

29:40

account of how God built his cosmic temple. The process of creation is temple building and temple building is the process of creation. After I put this part of today's episode together, I reread the English Standard Translation of Job, chapter 26 verse 10, which I read to you a couple of minutes ago, and I was like, oh my goodness.

30:07

Job chapter 26 verse 10 says exactly what I'm trying to argue. Listen again to Job chapter 26 verse 10. The text reads, quote, he, Yahweh, has inscribed a circle on the face of the waters at the boundary between light and darkness. According to this verse, where did God inscribe the circle?

30:37

text tells us that he inscribed the circle on the waters. So we're talking about the waters, the unorganized matter. And where on the waters did he inscribe the circle? The text tells us that he inscribed the circle on the waters at quote the boundary between light and darkness, which we just saw our descriptors for cosmicized and uncosmicized matter.

31:07

Job tells us that God inscribed a circle right where he divided the light, the cosmicized matter, from the darkness, the uncosmicized matter. The contemporary English translation makes us even more clear. It reads, quote, on the surface of the ocean, God has drawn a boundary line between light and darkness. Why is this verse so important?

31:37

It's important because this tells us that God began the creation of his kingdom, his cosmic kingdom, heaven and earth, by first separating the matter. The implications of this are unimaginably profound because this means that heaven itself, the spiritual realm where God dwells, is also made of matter, physical matter.

32:07

If you're a Gnostic, you're probably screaming at the podcast right now, but that is what the text is telling us. Now, of course, the physical matter in the heavenly realm would be sanctified beyond anything that we're familiar with here in the fallen world. But irregardless, the text attests that God's cosmic kingdom is composed of sanctified matter. This text is also incredibly important because it tells us

32:37

If we were able to peer into the farthest realm of God's cosmic kingdom, to the end of the universe, so to say, we would find a boundary there, the divided God's kingdom from un-cosmicized matter. On the cosmic level, this text tells us that there is a fixed structure to God's cosmic kingdom, or the universe, so to say, that astrophysicists have yet to discover, which is

33:06

pretty awesome. All right, let's return to the Genesis account and keep reading. What does the text tell us that God did on day two? Well, this is where things get interesting and kind of confusing. The text tells us that on day two, God made a quote, firmament, a firmament. Well, what is that?

33:34

Well, a lot of biblical scholars don't really know. A biblical scholar by the name of Gaines Johnson says this of the firmament. He says, quote, the term firmament and its identity has been one of the greatest puzzles concerning the creation account. One of the greatest puzzles. Nobody seems to be quite sure what this firmament thing is.

34:03

If you're familiar with the Genesis creation account and the Judeo-Christian tradition, take a minute and think about this. If somebody asks you to explain to them what the firmament is, what would you say? It's not so easy. A lot of people say it's the atmosphere, but that's actually quite problematic, which you're going to see in just a second. You know, like most people, when I read about the firmament many, many years ago,

34:31

the text just didn't seem to make sense. I found the whole thing really confusing. Now that I'm familiar with the ancient world and I understand a lot more about ancient cosmology, what's written in Genesis about the firmament makes complete sense. Let's read Genesis chapter one, verses six and seven and see if we can figure out what this perplexing firmament thing is. God created it so it must be important.

35:01

And it's mentioned in the creation account, so it must be really important. Starting in verse six, the text reads, and keep in mind that this happens on day two. Quote, and God said, let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters. Let's break this down. First, note that God made this firmament via divine utterance. The text says, quote, and God said,

35:30

let there be a firmament in the midst. Second, note where God placed this firmament. Quote, in the waters. Well, what waters? Seems kind of odd. Well, not if you're a long time listener to the program. If you are, you know exactly what water this is referring to. See, without an understanding of ancient Near Eastern cosmology,

35:59

we would be completely lost, which several early theologians were, like Scotus Aragina. Listen to what he says about these verses. And this is found in Aragina's work, De Genesi Ad Literum, dated to the mid-19th century AD. Aragina says, quote, only God knows how and why the waters are there.

36:26

but we cannot deny the authority of Holy Scripture, which is greater than our understanding.

36:34

makes me chuckle a little bit, but only because I know that the waters in this verse are symbolic. From Arijina's statement, it sounds like he thought that the waters referred to in this verse referred to literal water, that the heavens were filled with literal water and that God built a firmament in those literal waters. So no harsh judgment on Arijina. He likely wasn't privy to so much of what we know now about ancient cosmology and symbolism.

37:05

Those of you who are longtime listeners of the program who have been exposed to a measure of ancient cosmology know, as we've discussed on today's program, that the waters refer to

un-cosmized, profane matter, not literal water. Let's continue reading to find out why God placed a firmament in the waters. Verse six continues, quote, and let it

37:35

the firmament divide the waters from the waters. So why did God place a firmament in the waters? He placed a firmament in the waters to divide the waters. When we understand what the waters are, this makes perfect sense. Are you following? This means that God placed a divider in the primordial waters and why would God do that? Well, we know why.

38:01

because as we just saw in the verses that preceded this one, God separated the sacred from the profane on day one. Once he'd done that on day two, he placed what can only be understood as a permanent barrier of some type between them to separate the two, a barrier that the text calls a firmament. I hope you're following all of this because what you're reading right here in the Bible

38:30

is textual evidence that God created a cosmic wall of some sort around his sacred creations, protecting them from the profane waters. This is remarkable because this means that all three ancient civilizations, the Mesopotamians, Egyptians, and Hebrews, attest to the exact same thing, to the exact same structure of the cosmos, a structure

38:59

that's not only fascinating to consider, but undeniably a temple-based structure. It's worth pausing here for a minute to look at the word firmament itself. It can teach us a little more about this divider. The word firmament is the English translation of the Hebrew word rakia, R-A-Q-I-A. The Brown driver Briggs Hebrew and English lexicon defines rakia as

39:29

quote, an extended surface, a solid expanse as if beaten out. This is interesting. The definition of the Hebrew word rakiah means an extended solid expanse. As if beaten out refers to the pounding out or the beating out of a piece of metal, which again indicates that we're talking about something solid.

39:57

It's telling us that there's some type of solidity to the barrier God established in the waters. Listen to what Wikipedia says about the translation of the Hebrew word rakia into the English word firmament. Quote, in English, the word firmament is recorded as early as 1250 AD in the Middle English story of Genesis and Exodus. It later appeared in the King James Bible.

40:23

The same word is found in French and German Bible translations, all from Latin firmamentum. And guess what firmamentum means? It means a firm object, which was used in the Vulgate. This in turn is a calque. Now calque is a word that's borrowed from another language of the Greek sterama.

40:52

also meaning a solid or firm structure. And the Greek means rigid. So we can see the Hebrew word rikia indicates that the divider that God placed in the waters is a solid or firm object of some type, which is precisely why the English translators translated the Hebrew word rikia as firmament. And this goes without saying, but

41:21

This definition doesn't mesh very well with the suggestion by many that the firmament is the atmosphere. I'd argue that the firmament itself is not the atmosphere. Instead, I'd argue that it's the firmament's enclosure of sanctified space that makes an atmosphere possible. Let's continue reading in Genesis and see what else it tells us about this firmament.

41:50

Genesis chapter one, verse seven reads, and this is the King James version, quote, and God made the firmament and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament. And it was so. Anyone that's not familiar with ancient cosmology and symbolism are going to find this verse utterly perplexing. Whoever heard of waters above the earth and waters underneath the earth.

42:18

If the verse is talking about literal water, then it's just crazy talk to say that the earth is surrounded by literal water. Anybody can see that this is not the case. This verse perplexed many early church fathers. St. Ambrose, a theologian who served as a bishop in Milan, Italy from 374 to 397 AD said this, speaking of the waters above and below the earth.

42:48

quote, wise men of the world say that water cannot be over the heavens. Well, if you interpret Genesis chapter one, verse seven as literal water, then yeah, it's not surprising at all that the wise men of the world would say, yeah, no, there's no water up there over the heavens. See the problem with the verse is not the verse itself.

43:14

It's the reader's lack of familiarity with ancient cosmology and the reader's lack of symbolism literacy that's obscuring the verses true meaning. So what is the true meaning of the verse? I'm guessing that most of you long time listeners have figured it out. At this point in the creation account, the earth hasn't been created yet.

43:40

So the text is not talking about the earth being surrounded by water. It's talking about cosmicized matter being surrounded by water. And the author, by telling us that there are waters above the barrier and waters below the barrier, is trying to help us grasp that the barrier is three-dimensional, that waters completely surround this barrier.

44:08

So the image that you should be getting in your mind is the image of an air bubble, or as the Chinese old yellow one was taught, a peach pit. Or like we saw in episode number 51, the Holy Barge, as a spherical, coracle boat. In fact, the English translators of the new international version actually translate *rakia* as vault, like the vault of heaven, which connotes a dome or vaulted domed ceiling.

44:37

which is actually a really great translation. They translate Genesis chapter one verse seven as, quote, so God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so. The firmament you should clearly be able to see is the wall. The firmament is the firm, solid, rigid, cosmic wall.

45:06

wall that God built around his cosmic kingdom on day two of the Genesis account to keep everything that is profane from entering the cosmic kingdom. Again, this is cosmic temple

building. I hope that you can see now that the firmament spoken of in the Genesis account is not in the slightest perplexing.

45:30

It makes complete sense and it's completely in conformity with what the ancient Mesopotamians and ancient Egyptians taught. Let's return to the Genesis account and take a look at the last thing that the text tells us about the firmament. It's found in verse eight. Verse eight reads, and this is the King James version, quote, and God called the firmament heaven.

45:57

So this verse, just like verse seven, confuses a lot of people. Does this mean that heaven is the firmament or that the firmament is heaven? Well, not exactly. When we interpret this verse in terms of everything else that we've learned about the firmament, in particular, that the firmament serves to wall off cosmicized, sanctified space, then we deduce that everything inside the firmament

46:27

because it's sacred and because God resides there is heaven. So for God to call the firmament heaven is apropos because the firmament is what establishes the boundaries of heaven. And don't forget, this is the same thing that is signified by the walls that the ancients built around Uruk and Babylon and Heliopolis and Jericho and Jerusalem. Everything sacred is inside the wall.

46:54

and everything profane is outside the wall. In Psalm 104 verses six to nine, we get a little more vivid picture of how this firmament was established. The text reads, and this is speaking of the creation, quote, the waters stood above the mountains. At thy rebuke, they fled. At the voice of thy thunder, they hasted away.

47:25

This verse clearly has reference to divine utterance. Here we see that God commands the waters to flee and we see that the waters do just that. The text says that they, quote, hasted away. This indicates that the profane elements obeyed God's command. And it could also mean, because we know that these waters are filled with the ruined gods, that this could also refer to the ruined gods fleeing God's presence.

47:54

They aren't allowed access to his kingdom. Verse nine continues, quote, that has set a bound that they may not pass over. So here we clearly see that the profane elements and the ruined gods that have been relegated to those waters are forbidden to pass over the boundary. They cannot penetrate the firmament.

48:22

We see the same thing in Jeremiah chapter five, verse 22. The text reads, and this is the King James Version, quote, I think it's interesting here that the text tells us that God's decree

48:50

that the sea cannot pass this boundary is perpetual. It's an eternal decree. The rest of the verse tells us that no matter how much the seas desire to cross the boundary and throw themselves into a tizzy to do so, they still won't be able to pass over the boundary. The text reads, quote, and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail though they roar.

49:20

yet can they not pass over it. I find the statement, though they roar, really interesting because if you remember, one of the most notable characteristics that's ascribed to the dragon is his screaming and wailing. One of the texts said that he continues on in his own shouting. This text tells us that no matter how much the dragon kicks and wails and all of the other ruined gods, 49:48

that they will never be able to pass over this boundary. They are perpetually locked out of God's cosmic kingdom. Job also confirms that the seas will not be able to penetrate this boundary. In Job chapter 38, verse eight and 11, it reads, quote, who shut up the sea with doors? know, doors obviously symbolize that the seas shut out. Hitherto shalt thou come, 50:18

but no further. And here shall thy proud waves be stayed." It's interesting that Job refers to the sea's quote, proud waves. Pride, especially in the biblical canon, is also one of the characteristics of the sea serpent, Rahab. If you remember, the Hebrew word Rahab actually means pride or arrogance. And here, like we see in the other books, 50:47

Job tells us that the sea is shut out or stayed. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, all of these biblical passages attest that God began the creation of his cosmic kingdom by first dividing the waters, dividing the sacred from the profane, and second by erecting a cosmic wall, a firmament in the midst of the waters to permanently separate them from his kingdom. 51:18

both of these things happened before any dry land was ever called forth or could ever be called forth. When we understand this, then it's quite easy to see that the creation account in Genesis is an account of Yahweh building a temple, a temple on an unbelievably cosmic scale. Before I close out this episode, I wanna make two more observations. 51:45

First, I want to note how closely the account of Moses parting the Red Sea parallels the account of Yahweh parting the waters in Genesis. In Moses' account, the Israelites are trapped. To their east is the Red Sea and to their west, in hot pursuit, are 600 Egyptian chariots racing to bring death and destruction to the Israelites. Starting in verse 14, this is what we're told happened. 52:15

While I read, see if you can't pick up the parallels to the creation account. Verse 14 starts with Moses addressing the frightened Israelites. Moses tells them, quote, the Lord shall fight for you and ye shall hold your peace. And the Lord said unto Moses, wherefore cryest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward. 52:43

And forward here refers to them going forward into the Red Sea. But lift thou up thy rod. Now, remember, the rod that Moses holds is a branch of the sacred tree, and it represents in part God's power. And stretch out thine hand over the sea and divide it. And the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. 53:14

And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground, and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left.

53:42

The parallels are pretty obvious and I'm not going to go through them, but I do want to note how the divided waters created a safe, protective space for the Israelites. And also note how the text describes the parted waters as a wall. The text says, quote, the waters were a wall. Of course, if you're familiar with this text, the only reason why the Israelites were able to escape from their Egyptian enemies was

54:12

because God parted the waters, created a dry space. Otherwise, they would have been drowned in the sea. There are so many creation parallels and esoteric temple messages in this account. The second observation I want to make is found in the New Testament in the Gospel of St. Mark, chapter six, verse three, which reads, speaking of

54:42

Jesus. Quote, is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary? I want to draw your attention to the description of Christ as a carpenter. Carpenter is the English translation of the Greek word tecton, which according to Strong's lexicon refers to a craftsman or builder, specifically a carpenter. Now, of course, it's entirely possible that Christ worked as a carpenter.

55:11

while on earth. But there's no missing the greater esoteric message taught in the Judeo-Christian tradition that Christ, the Yahweh of the Old Testament, isn't the craftsman of any old building. He's the master carpenter of an unimaginably grand, magnificent, and glorious cosmic temple. He is

55:41

the cosmic Christ.

55:46

That wraps up our discussion of the cosmic wall. We'll pick up right here in the next edition of the ancient tradition. With that, I'll leave you with the words of William Shakespeare, knowledge is the wing wherewith we fly to heaven. I'm Jack Logan.

56:08

You've been listening to the Ancient Tradition. A Wonk Media Production.

Episode #54 - Who is God? - A Sexed Being, Part I

<https://theancienttradition.com/54-who-is-god-a-sexed-being/>

00:00

Music

00:10

Listening to the Ancient Tradition. A Wonk Media Production. Music provided by Joseph McDade. Here's your host, Dr. Jack Logan.

00:26

Welcome to the Ancient Tradition. I'm your host, Jack Logan.

00:32

Great to have everybody listening in today. Today's episode is titled, Who is God, a Sexed Being? I know that the title sounds a little bit provocative, but it's not meant to be. See, the question, is God a sexed being? Does God have a sex? Has unimaginably profound theological implications. We've got to get this question right from the very start.

00:59

or else we're going to get the entire theology of celestial kingship wrong. A sexless God leads to a very, very, very different theology than a sexed God, which makes God's sex or sexlessness an absolutely critical piece of the theological puzzle. And what makes this program different is that we dive into the world's oldest written records for the answers to these questions. We let the ancients teach us

01:29

who God is. And the reason that we do this is because the ancients tell us that God revealed a pure religious tradition in the very beginning, a tradition which we refer to on this program as the ancient tradition. So today we're going to dive into the ancient texts and see what the ancients taught about the sex or sexless nature of God. Before I do that though, I want to let our new listeners know about our sister podcast.

01:56

the ancient tradition audio writ, which you can find anywhere that you get your podcasts. On that podcast, you're going to find full audio recordings of a lot of the different ancient texts that we talk about on the program. And this includes things like the book of the holy secrets of Enoch, the ancient Egyptian Shabaka stone and the Mesopotamian epic of Gilgamesh. I want to let our longtime listeners know that

02:25

A little over a week ago, we released a complete audio recording of the Mesopotamian Ark tablet, which we talked about not too long ago in episode number 51, the Holy Barge and the Water Bolt. That tablet features the account of Atra-Hossus, the Mesopotamian Noah, who received instructions from the god Enki, the son of the high god An in the temple of Enki.

02:51

which you long time listeners will remember was called the Eopsu or the house or temple that was built on the primordial waters. In this temple, the god Enki appears to Atrahasis and instructs him to build a circle shaped arc so that he and his family can escape the destructive flood waters. I also want to let our new listeners know that this podcast has a companion website.

03:20

the ancienttradition.com. In the menu bar, you can click on about and you'll learn all about the premise of the podcast. Under podcast, you can find links to all of the past episodes. Under audio writ, you can find links to the full audio recordings that I just mentioned. And under scholars, you can find a list of the most important and influential scholars in the field.

03:47

along with some of the books that they've written that we think are very important on this program. It's a treasure trove for anyone that wants to learn more. One of the most powerful

things on the website is found on the menu under show notes. In the pull down, you'll find a link to a webpage dedicated to every single episode. And you can find the full audio transcript for that episode. You can find links to resources to learn more, and you can find pictures.

04:17

pictures of the symbols, texts, artifacts, locations, and iconography, anything that we talk about in that episode. So for example, in our last episode number 53, the compass and the firmament, we talked about how the ancients built walls around the old cities, like the wall the ancient Mesopotamians built around the city of Uruk, or the wall the ancient Egyptians built around the ancient city of Heliopolis, or the wall that the ancient Canaanites built around the city of Jericho.

04:47

replicate the cosmic wall that the ancients taught surrounds and protects God's sacred creations in the cosmos. On the webpage dedicated to episode number 53, you can find actual pictures of these walls for Jericho and Uruk and Heliopolis or an archaeological representation of them. And I always like looking at the pictures because I find that looking at the actual symbols or artifacts or architecture really

05:15

kind of brings home the theology, brings it to life. The pictures too, just for your information, are posted chronologically. They're posted in the order in which they're discussed in that episode. Sometimes I even put together a visual that I think will be helpful to illustrate or to clarify something that we've talked about on the program, which is what I did for our last episode, number 53. Because in that episode, I argued that Genesis chapter one verses seven to eight needed to be interpreted

05:43

first and foremost in reference to ancient Near Eastern cosmology, in reference to how the ancients themselves attested the cosmos were structured, not in reference to what we think that they're saying or in reference to what we hope they're saying, but into what they're actually saying. In post-production, when I listened to episode number 53, I thought that the explanation that I gave of ancient Near Eastern cosmology in Genesis chapter one was a little bit wanting and I think actually could have been a little bit confusing.

06:13

So I put together a couple of visuals to try and clarify the theological points I was trying to make. So if you were a bit confused in episode number 53, be sure and check out the visuals that you can find for that episode. think that they will help. If you're busy and you don't have time to check out the visuals that I created for episode number 53,

06:37

Let me do something that I probably should have done. Let me take a couple of seconds here and go through something which I should have done, which is to substitute the symbolic word waters in Genesis chapter one, verses six and seven with the ancient Near Eastern meaning of waters, which is *materia prima* or preexisting eternal, unordered and unformed matter. A scholar by the name of David Nieman.

07:06

wrote on page 247 of his article titled, The Supersalient Sea, published in volume 28, number four of the Journal of Near Eastern Studies, this of the ancient Near Eastern conception of the

primordial waters. Quote, in Babylonian, in Hebrew, and in Canaanite, this primeval sea represents chaos, the disordered illogical

07:34

uncontrolled agglomeration of elements, matter, making up the physical universe.

07:43

The Roman poet Ovid, I don't know if you've heard of Ovid, many have, he was born in 43 BC and he said the same thing in his famous work, The Metamorphoses, written around the eighth century AD. Ovid says this of the primordial waters, quote, before the ocean was or earth or heaven, nature was all alike, a shapelessness, chaos, so-called all rude and lumpy,

08:12

matter, nothing but bulk, inert in whose confusion discordant atoms ward." Ovid calls the Primordial Waters, quote, rude, lumpy matter or discordant atoms. So in light of what we learn the waters mean to the ancients, Genesis chapter one verses six and seven could be translated, quote, and God said,

08:42

Let there be a firm divider placed in the midst of the disordered matter, and let it divide the disordered matter from the disordered matter. And God made the firm divider and divided the disordered matter, which was under the firm divider, from the disordered matter, which was above the firm divider, and it was so." We know from Job chapter 26 verse 10 that

09:11

this firm divider was circle shaped. So when we consider this, the firmament or the firm divider, because this is disordered matter above it and then disordered matter below it, creates a three dimensional spherical protective cavity or enclosure in the midst of the disordered matter, kind of like a bubble. Where cosmicized sanctified matter is inside the firm enclosure and it's protected,

09:39

and then outside is the disordered profane matter. The firm enclosure creates a spherical vault or a ceiling or a roof around the entirety of God's creations, His kingdom. I hope that clarifies a little bit better what I was arguing in the previous episode. If not, I tried, be sure and check out the illustrations on the webpage for episode number 53. On page 248, Neiman concludes with this.

10:09

quote, for the universe to come into being, that is for creation to take place, there must be an imposition of order, the crushing of unbridled chaos and the limitation of its elemental power. Chaos is not destroyed. It must be bridled, restrained and modified. Its elements or parts must be used to create the ordered universe. For without it,

10:39

the universe cannot come into being. I think that's a really great summary of what the peoples of the ancient Near East have been teaching us all along. All right, with that, let's jump into today's topic. If we're to understand the theology of what happened during what the ancients referred to as the first time, the time right after the earth was created, the time when the earth was quote,

11:05

in heaven's embrace when the earth resided very, very, very close to heaven, we've got to have a more complete understanding of who God is. If we don't, we won't understand what's

happening during the first time and we won't understand the theology and the importance of that theology. Up to this point in the program, the ancients have taught us a lot of things about who God is.

11:30

And I'd like to briefly summarize these here to set the stage for today's episode. So first and foremost, the ancients taught us that God is a Lord of Maat or a King of Setek. God is one who perfectly upholds the cosmic law of righteousness, the law that governs every single thing in the cosmos. And the second thing that we've learned from them is that they taught us that God, because he fully upholds the cosmic law,

12:00

that there isn't a drop of profanity or darkness in him. He's perfectly holy. He is a perfectly sanctified being. We haven't gotten into this too much in the program yet, but the ancients taught that the more sanctified one became, the greater and greater light that that person would take on. So God, cause he upholds ma'at perfectly, is thereby an

12:28

unimaginably glorious being of light, which is why the ancients always symbolized him with the sun. The third thing that they teach us is that God has a form, that he is corporeal. He's a corporeal being. He has a body with arms and legs and hands and feet. That he has a face with eyes and ears and a mouth. And the ancients teach us that we human beings are

12:58

Theomorphic. Theo means God and morphic means form. So by the ancients teaching us that we are theomorphic, they're teaching us that we human beings are created to look like God. And the fourth thing that the ancients have taught us is that God as a corporeal being of light reigns on a throne as the chief civil authority over his cosmic kingdom as a king.

13:28

If you're new to the program and this is the first time that you've ever heard about these characteristics of God, or if you've heard about these characteristics of God, but they happen to differ markedly from what you've been taught about who God is, I invite you to listen to episodes number 28, 29, 44, and 45, which make up the Who is God series. Cause those episodes are loaded with textual and iconographic evidence for these claims.

13:58

evidence which comes from the world's oldest written records and iconography. Those records attest that God is a Lord of Maat, He's a being of glorious light, a being who has a body, and a being who reigns as a king over His heavenly kingdom. But don't take our word for it here on the podcast. Just go and study the ancient documents and the iconography for yourself.

There's literally so much evidence that you don't

14:27

actually have to read that much before you start to see it. It's just everywhere. But if you're like, hey, I don't have time to go read those ancient documents or to study all this stuff, but I do have time to read one book, I'd recommend that you read E.T. Mullen's book, The Divine Council in Canaanite and Early Hebrew Literature. It's published by Brill. I know it's a hairy title, but it's fabulous.

14:54

And it's an excellent example of the copious evidence that there is for these claims in the Canaanite and the early Hebrew literature. On this program, we cover a whole lot more literature than just the Ugaritic literature, but it'll give you an excellent example of the evidence that's out there. You can find info on ET Mullen and this book on our companion website, theancienttradition.com, under Scholars.

15:23

And just for the record, I don't get any kickbacks for recommending this book. I don't know Mullen and I don't have any ties to Brill Publishing. I just love the book. Mullen wrote it for his dissertation while he was studying at Harvard.

15:39

Because it's critical to what happens in the first time, we're going to continue our examination of who the ancients tell us God is and ask the question, is God a sexed being? Did the ancients teach that God has a sex, male or female? Now the answer to the question is yes. Yes, they absolutely did. The ancients

16:06

unabashedly proclaimed in their texts and in their iconography, their statues and sculptures, bas-reliefs, engravings and frescoes and mosaics and even jewelry that God is a sexed being. In the ancient world, nearly all deities are presented with either male reproductive anatomy symbolizing a god or female reproductive anatomy symbolizing a goddess.

16:34

This is a very, very curious fact because sex is a characteristic of a physical body. One is male because one has the physical reproductive organs, the chromosomes and androgens of a male. And one's female because one has the physical reproductive organs and chromosomes and hormones of a female.

16:57

the entire ancient world, the ancients attest that God has a sex. It's one of the strongest distinguishing features we find in the ancient world of God. It's another incredibly strong stubborn bit. So why would God need this reproductive capacity? Why would God need a sex?

17:23

To answer that question, the first thing that we're going to do is we're going to dive into the ancient texts and we're going to take a look at the evidence, see what the ancients have to say about God's sex. And once we've done that, we're going to consider the theological implications, which you're going to see are quite profound and indisputably part and parcel to the theology of celestial kingship. So let's start in ancient Mesopotamia.

17:49

Before I jump into the ancient text, I want to read to you what Wikipedia says about the gods in ancient Mesopotamia and listen closely to how it aligns with the Who is God series and what we've been arguing about who God is. Quote, deities in ancient Mesopotamia were almost exclusively anthropomorphic. Anthro here means human and morphic means form. So the ancient Mesopotamians taught that God had a body.

18:19

that was shaped like human beings. They were thought to possess extraordinary powers. The deities typically wore melum, M-E-L-A-M, an ambiguous substance which covered them in quote, terrifying splendor. This is that glorious light that we're talking about.

18:45

With that in mind, let's take a look at what the ancient Mesopotamians have to say about God as a sexed being. If you're a long time listener, you'll remember that the Mesopotamian assembly of the gods was made of the high god On's children. The cuneiform tablets that speak of these gods make unambiguous familial and linguistic references that indicate that a particular god was understood to be male or female. For example, when we examine what is written about On,

19:15

the king of the Mesopotamian gods. The texts tell us that he is the quote, father of the gods, which indicates male paternity. The texts also tell us that he is the quote, king of the gods. The word for king in Sumerian is lugal, L-U-G-A-L. Loo is the word for man, gal is the word for great or big. So when you put them together,

19:44

You get Lugol, which literally means big man or great man. In the ancient Mesopotamian texts, Lugol is exclusively used to refer to male leaders. In an 18th century BC text known as the Old Babylonian version of Atrahasis, and we talked about this earlier, Atrahasis is the Mesopotamian Noah, the Mesopotamians tell us this about the high god On.

20:13

in tablet one lines five to seven. This is the Stephanie Dalley translation. Quote, the great Anunnaki. Now you remember the Anunnaki are the children of An and Ki. Made the Igigi. The Igigi are actually the younger children of An and his wife Ki. Carry the workload sevenfold. Anu, their father, was king.

20:42

Later in tablet three, it reads, quote, what was Anu's intention as decision maker? It was his command that the gods, his sons obeyed. So these two texts clearly describe the high god Anu as male. The text describes him as a father, the father of the gods, whom the text describes as his sons, also a male descriptor.

21:09

What we glean is that sex is a salient characteristic of those who inhabit the heavens. We also learn from this text a little bit later that the heavens are not entirely inhabited by males. Some of the gods are described as female. For example, in the Old Babylonian version, the text refers to Belet-Ili, a female god who's charged with creating human beings.

21:39

The text reads, Bellat Illy, the womb goddess is present. Let the womb goddess create offspring. They called up the goddess, asked the midwife of the gods, why is Mammy? Now Mammy here is Bellat Illy. You are the womb goddess to be the creator of mankind. Create primeval man.

22:06

This text is amazing. This passage not only reveals that the heavens are inhabited by females, but it also tells us that a female god in heaven was entrusted with the sacred task of creating the first humans to inhabit this earth. Or as the text says it, to quote, create primeval man. Now the word create could be interpreted in a number of different ways, but the text itself guides us

22:35

towards one specific interpretation when it says, let the womb goddess create offspring. The text emphasizes Bella Ille's womb and her womb's ability to produce offspring, which are progeny or

children. This text is remarkable because it attests that we human beings are the literal offspring of a female god who resides in heaven.

23:02

Bellat-Illi is also known in some cuneiform tablets as Nintu, which literally means lady of birth. You can clearly see how this text refers to her as a female god, a womb goddess, a womb goddess, whom the text tells us has the ability to beget children, human beings, you and me. Take note how incredibly theologically significant this is.

23:31

and how critical Bellat-Illi's sex as a female god is in the divine procreative process.

23:40

What I've done here with the text known as Atrahasis can be done with any of the ancient Mesopotamian texts that speak of the gods, because all these texts speak of the gods as sexed beings. I haven't come across a single Mesopotamian text that doesn't either explicitly refer to the gods' sex or contextually or linguistically imply a particular god's sex. If we look at the texts that speak of the major Mesopotamian gods, they tell us that

24:08

The god Enlil is male, the son of the high god An and his wife Ki. If we look at the god Enki, the text tells us that he's male, also the son of the high god An and his wife Ki. They tell us that Marduk is male, Ashur male, Nabu male, Nana male, Utu male, Ninurta male, and I could go on and on. And they tell us that Enana is female, Ninhursag female,

24:37

Erishkigal female, Gula female, Baal female, of the 25 major Mesopotamian deities that are listed in Black and Green's Dictionary of the Gods in Ancient Mesopotamia, published by the British Museum Press, all 25 gods are identified as having a sex, either male or female. The ancient Mesopotamian texts are loaded with references to the gods as gods or goddesses, kings or queens, fathers,

25:07

or mothers, sons or daughters, brothers and sisters. When we look at the iconography, like statues or cylinder cells, we see the same thing. Enlil, Enki, Marju, Kanitu are all depicted with beards. They're kind of fancy beards. And they got these really muscular upper arms. But the goddesses like Inana, Gula, Oreshkigal and Baal, they're depicted beardless.

25:35

and they are often depicted with these really pretty feminine locks and wearing layered dresses and sometimes like Erishkigal without clothing which reveal her female breasts. If you'd like to see pictures of these Mesopotamian gods you can find them on the web page for this episode and if you do be sure to check out the clay relief panel of Erishkigal. It's dated to between the 19th and 18th century BC

26:04

but it is theologically astounding. You're never gonna believe what the Mesopotamian goddess, Oreshkigal, is holding in her hands. And not in just one hand, but in both hands. And what is she, a female god, holding? The rope and the ring. Again, in each hand. Now, think on that. Really ponder that. Unfortunately for you new listeners, we just don't have time in this episode to spell out the

26:31

profound theological significance of what's being conveyed in this relief. So you're just going to have to go back and listen to some of the past episodes and really ponder on it to grasp the full significance. But know that this relief is astounding, primarily because Arishgagal is female. A female god holding the ring and the rod. It's astounding. When I first saw this relief, my jaw did literally drop.

27:01

And why? Because of what the theology conveyed in this relief tells me personally about my potential as a female. It's powerful. In this relief, Arishkigal is also depicted wearing a four-horned crown. In the ancient world, horns symbolized power. So the image literally depicts Arishkigal as an incredibly powerful being.

27:30

and the crown signifies her royalty. Interestingly, this relief is known as the Queen of the Night, the Queen. If you'd like to see this relief in person, it's housed in the British Museum.

27:46

All right, let's move to ancient Egypt. In ancient Egypt, we find the same thing. All of the major gods in ancient Egypt are sexed beings. When we dive into the texts, like the ancient Egyptian pyramid text dated to as early as 2400 BC, we see that the gods are identified in sexed terms. For example, in pyramid text 213 to 217, we've talked about this a little bit before on the program, the deceased King Unus is told that

28:16

he's not dead but that he's to climb to heaven where he'll embrace his father Atum after which he'll reign on Osiris's throne as a heavenly king in a glorified body that looks like his father Atum's body. The texts read speaking to the deceased King Unus and this is the James P Allen translation quote climb to the place where your father is

28:45

Note that the high god Atum is referred to here in sexed terms as a male, as King Unus's father. So we're getting that male paternity. Ho Unus, your envoys have gone, your heralds have run to your father to Atum. We're told here that an envoy has already gone to heaven to find Atum, Unus's heavenly father, so that Atum will be ready to greet King Unus with an embrace when he gets to heaven.

29:15

Ho, Eunice, your envoys have gone, your heralds have run to your father, to Atum, to say to you, Atum, bring me up to you, encircle me inside your arms. We see that one of the primary things that's going to happen when Eunice ascends to heaven is that he's going to be embraced by his father. This is known as the sacred embrace, which obviously requires a body to do. Eunice ascends to heaven and the text reads,

29:45

quote, sun, atum, sun here is S-U-N. Here atum is associated with the sun, which is symbolic of atum's glorious nature. This unis has come to you. Your son has come to you. This unis has come to you. Note here how unis is referred to as the high god atum's son. In this passage, the son, the deceased king unis, is a human being.

30:14

who upon his death ascends to heaven where he's going to be greeted by his celestial father, the god Atum. So note here how we're reading about a family-based theology. King Unus is the

son of the high god, which is very similar to the theology that we just saw in ancient Mesopotamia where human beings are the sons and daughters of the goddess Belet-Ili. I continue, quote, he, King Unus,

30:44

has become Auk. Auk here refers to the process of being transformed to getting a resurrected, glorified body of light.

30:56

I continue, he, King Unus, has become Auk, inside the arms of his father, inside the arms of Atum. Note how the Akification process, the process of being transformed into a resurrected, glorified being, happens when Atum embraces his son. Donald Redford in his book, *The Ancient Gods Speak*,

31:24

published by Oxford University Press, notes on pages seven and eight, quote, In virtually all of the periods of ancient Egypt's religion and secular texts, the concept of Akh operated in a reciprocal relationship between God and King, between father and son. In the pyramid texts, the king as Horus became Akh through his father Osiris. Just as Osiris became Akh,

31:53

through his son. In the Book of the Dead, each embraces the other that he might be an awk thereby. Theologically, this sacred embrace is pretty fascinating because what Redford is telling us is that not only is it through Atum, the father, that the son, in this case King Unus, is occupied, it also indicates that the father himself gains greater glory when one of his sons is occupied. And as you're going to see right now,

32:23

is made a heavenly king. That son adds greater glory to his father. It's a quote, reciprocal relationship. You should also note that this occultification process is family based. It's the father that occupies the son. And don't miss the fact that the son that's being occupied, which is akin to deification, is

32:49

human being, a human being who lived here on earth, the deceased King Unus. Note how the father and the son in this text are clearly distinct individuals. One is the high god Atum and the other is his earthly son King Unus. King Unus and Atum are bound to each other by virtue of their family relationship. This is a family-based theology.

33:18

After King Unus embraces his father and the occultification process takes place, the text tells us that King Unus is given the right to reign as a heavenly king on Osiris' throne in an occupied, resurrected, glorified body that's just like his father Atum's body, with eyes and ears and hands and feet. Listen to the text. Quote, Ho, Unus, you have not gone away dead.

33:47

You have gone away alive. Sit on Osiris's chair, which is Osiris's throne. So he's being invited to sit on a heavenly throne with your baton in your arm and govern the living with your lotus scepter in your arm and govern those of the remote places. Your lower arms are of Atum. Your upper arms are of Atum. Your belly of Atum. Your back of Atum. Your rear of Atum.

34:16

your legs of Atum. So you're getting this full picture here of this glorified being that resembles his father, Atum.

34:27

Pyramid Text 217 ends with this amazing line. Listen to how it is Atum's body, Atum's male body that ties this entire theology together. The text reads, quote, son Atum, so son again here is S-U-N, your son has come to you. This unis has come to you. Elevate him to you and circle him within your arms. He is your bodily son.

34:57

This entire text is remarkable, but the last line is really remarkable. Speaking of the god Atum, the text states, he, speaking of King Unus, is your bodily son forever. In the clearest fashion possible, the text is telling us that Unus is Atum's, quote, bodily son. The theology in this text is remarkable.

35:26

because it's telling us that Atum is the literal father of King Unus's physical body. What this means theologically is that Atum's maleness, Atum's male body, Atum's male sex organs are anything but inconsequential. They're absolutely imperative to the theology, because what the ancient Egyptians are teaching us here is that the theology of celestial kingship is again a family-based theology.

35:56

I'm getting a bit ahead of myself here, but what this text attests to is that God is genetically the literal father of our physical bodies and that we're literally, not figuratively, but literally physically God's children. And because God reigns as a heavenly king, this literally means that royal DNA makes up every single cell of our physical body. We're literally

36:25

princes and princesses incarnate because the high god, the king of the gods is our father. Which is what every single princess movie teaches that inside every little girl is a princess. No wonder those films resonate so much with audiences. It's like we already know this, like we already know this deep down inside.

36:53

What this text implies is that God had to have fathered the first man and woman who inhabited this planet. Which if you're a long time listener, you'll recall is what it says in the ancient Egyptian text known as the instruction for Merikari, where we're told that human beings came from God's flesh.

37:13

This theology also demands the existence of and the indispensable involvement of a female god because as we know procreation requires both a male and a female. And since as the ancients have taught us, God has a sex, then we can safely presume that no god can independently produce children on his or her own. I too must have

37:41

a female partner for King Unus to be his quote, bodily son. One of the things that rings true to me about this theology is that not only does it make logical sense, I mean, this would explain why there are two sexes on the earth and why we're organized and arranged into families here on earth. But it just makes sense to me that our strongest, most loving bonds

38:10

would be patterned after loving parents and a loving family in heaven. The whole as above, so below idea. One of the things that I find most compelling about this theology is that it completely validates the value, necessity, and potential of every single woman on planet Earth. And not only that, that we need each other. You there's no going it alone.

38:40

This is a family theology. What I'm trying to illustrate by walking you through the theology that was taught in Pyramid Text 213 to 217 is that God's sex, his male body, is intimately tied to every single aspect of the theology. What the ancient Egyptians are teaching us is that the God of heaven, by way of his male sex, fathered children, children that now inhabit this earth,

39:11

children that the instruction for Merakari refers to as the sacred herd, who through a process the ancient Egyptians called aquification, which is akin to sanctification, can after this life obtain resurrected glorified bodies and reign themselves. That's the theology. That's what all of the ancient pyramid texts attest to.

39:40

It's a family theology in all of it. Every single bit of it is dependent on God having male sex organs. And every single bit of it is dependent on God having a partner with female sex organs. It's a bit indelicate to talk about God's reproductive organs, but we aren't being true to the theology if we don't.

40:03

Such a theology not only validates the importance of the family, it also validates the deeply religious importance of sex, the procreative act, as well as validates maleness and femaleness. And note how all of this is tied to kingship, to the kingship theology. And if this theology is true, this would demand that there is no God

40:32

without a goddess, no heavenly king without a heavenly queen, because without the two, there is no family unit. There is no family, no children, there's no sacred herd. Now, you might be thinking to yourself, God is God, God can make whatever God wants to make. God doesn't need to have a partner to make as many people as God wants to. God doesn't need to be male and God doesn't need a female God to do any of it.

40:59

A bodiless, sexless God can create whatever it wants. That's definitely a view that many people have. But what I'm trying to illustrate on this podcast is that the entire ancient world refutes the description of God as formless and sexless. The entire ancient world attests that God has a body and that that body is sexed and that that body is very, very important.

41:29

If the ancients are correct, what this means on a deep theological level is that sex, male and female, is built right into the structure, right into the fabric of the cosmos itself and how it operates, which would suggest that sex is an eternal feature of who God is and subsequently of who we are.

41:53

This would also mean that no so-called God or divine being could be fully realized by him or herself. God's sex would paradoxically place limits on his or her abilities. Alone, he or she

would not have the power to produce children. But simultaneously, God's sexed nature would give him or her the power to forge deep physical bonds.

42:22

through the procreative act, and the power to forge lasting bonds through the formation of a family. Both of these things tie people together in deep, meaningful, lasting ways, and in ways which a bodiless god could never do. All right, back to Egypt. All of the major deities in ancient Egypt are depicted in the text and in the iconography as male or female. Amun is male.

42:51

Othen male, Atum male, Horus male, Osiris male, Ptah male, Thoth male, and could go on and on. And Hathor? Female. Isis? Female. Nephtys? Female. Nephthys? Female. Bastet? Female. In fact, the Egyptologist Richard A. Wilkinson, who we've quoted several times on the podcast, even titled his encyclopedic tome on the deities in ancient Egypt, *The Complete Gods*.

43:20

and goddesses of ancient Egypt, which clearly indicates that sex was one of the most important distinguishing features of the gods. Archaeologists have found a really beautiful, elegant diorite statue of the goddess Hathor. You can find a picture of it on the webpage for this episode. She was a goddess in ancient Egypt known to be the consort of Ra. And she was directly connected to kingship as the mother of the pharaohs.

43:50

And on the statues, she's depicted wearing a form-fitting dress. She looks beautiful. And on top of her head, she wears a headdress, and that headdress hangs on each side of her face, and her face has these really delicate features, and it hangs down just above her breasts. And then perched atop her headdress, she's wearing a sun disc that's set between some cow horns. And those point to her zoomorphic form as a cow.

44:17

which the ancient Egyptians used to symbolize her role as the consort of Ra, the bull, and her ability to give suck and nourishment to her offspring. Again, it's emphasizing the offspring. So all of these features speak to her female sex.

44:36

If we turn to Canaan and we open up E.T. Mullen's book, *The Divine Council in Canaanite and early Hebrew literature*, which I mentioned earlier, which is loaded with ancient Ugaritic texts, we see the same thing. In these texts, the high god El, the king of the gods who reigns over his children, is clearly identified in the text as male. For example, in Canaanite foreign tablet 4.4, lines 23 to 26,

45:06

We read of a goddess who enters El's temple. It's referred to in the text as a domed tent. She finds him in the tabernacle and when she finds him, she falls to the ground and she worships him. The text reads, quote, she, this is the goddess, opened the dome tent of El and entered the tabernacle of King, father of years. Note how El is referred to as both a father and a king.

45:35

both male designations like we see all over the ancient world. She bowed and fell at the feet of L. Note how L has feet here.

45:48

did obeisance and honored him.” This text clearly speaks to both male and female gods inhabiting heaven. In another text, Ugaritic 5.2.2, lines 6 to 8, we see just like we saw in ancient Egypt that El’s reign is a family affair. And take note in this text how El is called Malku Olami, which means the eternal king.

46:18

So L isn’t just a king, which is a male designation, but he’s a king that reigns eternally. The text reads, let Rappapoo, and that refers to L, the eternal king, rule by his might. Let the eternal king judge in his strength, yea, let him rule his offspring in his grace. This text clearly states that L reigns as a king.

46:48

He doesn’t reign over just anyone. He reigns as a king over his family, his offspring, his children. In fact, one of El’s chief epitaphs in the Ugaritic literature is toru, T-O-R-U, which means the bull, which is very similar to toro in Spanish, which means bull. Mullen writes, quote, the epitaph toru, bull,

47:15

which is applied only to the god El in the three passages which display El as the father of Baal. Bull El is in parallel with King El, connecting the epitaphs of Malku, king, and Toru, bull. The most dominant imagery invoked by the title Toru is that of the creator god, since the bull was employed as the common image of fertility in Near Eastern mythology.

47:44

In the Ugaritic text, the procreative aspects of the epitaph bull are easily seen in two common formulaic variants of the title bull, El your father and bull your father El. They depict El as the fertile bull who fathered the various gods. I want to make a couple of points about what Mullen says here in terms of El’s male sex. The first is

48:13

Note how the Ugaritic texts directly connect El’s eternal kingship to his procreative powers as a bull. See, if El didn’t have offspring, he would not be, quote, an eternal king. Why? Because without offspring, El wouldn’t have anyone over whom to reign. And you can’t have offspring if you don’t have reproductive organs.

48:42

Do you see how El’s male procreative powers are completely tied up in the notion of kingship itself and eternal kingship? The only way El can reign as a king is over his own children. So if he doesn’t have any children, he isn’t an eternal king and he doesn’t have an eternal kingdom. Do you see how this entire theology is dependent on El as a bull, on El’s reproductive capacity as a male, his ability to father?

49:12

That’s what these texts are telling us. And the second thing is that El only contains within himself half of the reproductive capacity to produce offspring. So we surmise that he must have a female consort, a queen. And that’s exactly what the Ugaritic texts tell us. In Ugaritic text 5.2.1.2, we read the following, quote,

49:41

El is enthroned with a tart. This is an absolutely amazing text. Here we’re told that El has a throne and he sits on that throne with someone named a tart. Well, who is a tart? Well, a tart is

a female god, a goddess, who we presume because she sits enthroned with El, who is the king of the gods, that she is the queen of the gods.

50:11

In Canaaniform tablet 4.4 around lines 32 and 33, it tells us this about Attart. Quote, why have you come, old lady, Adirrot of the sea? And Adirrot here is Attart. Why have you come here, oh, progenitress of the gods? We see that Attart is the quote progenitress of the gods. She reigns with El on a throne.

50:40

as an eternal queen, precisely because she is the female progenitor or mother of the gods. See, this entire theology is dependent on Etart's reproductive capacity as a female too, not just El's. Neither can reign as an eternal king or queen without each other, else there would be no children and thereby no one to reign over and their titles

51:09

King and Queen would be absolutely meaningless. The line that's above this is actually really interesting. The line that says, Atart is called Adorot of the sea. Adorot again is the name for Atart. In much of the Ugaritic literature, El's principal consort is known to be Asherah. And you're never gonna guess what Asherah's principal epitaph is. It's quote, she who walks on the sea.

51:39

And I find this epitaph way interesting, especially considering all of the insights we've gained on this program about the symbolic nature of the sea and the act of symbolically walking on the sea or on the water or the subjugating of the sea beneath one's feet. To me, Asherah's epitaph has the same symbolic connotation as the iconographic depiction of the Mesopotamian Arishkigal holding a rope and a rod in each hand. If you're a longtime listener,

52:09

and you can't see the connection between the two, ponder it a little bit because you'll see it. If you'd like to see an engraving of Asherah found near Ugarit, dated to between 1330 and 1500 BC, you can find it on the webpage for this episode. The female form of her body is unmistakable. The artifact is currently housed in the Louvre.

52:37

And I don't know if this is what the artist intended, but on this engraving, Asherah actually looks like she's walking on water. No matter how you slice it, to say that Asherah had the ability to quote, walk on the sea, is a striking testament to her power and authority. I've only barely scratched the surface here, but take note in the Ugaritic literature how

53:02

Again, the entire theology is dependent on El's capacity to father children. As I mentioned earlier, Ugaritic 5.2.2.8 says, speaking of El, quote, yea, let him rule his offspring in his grace. This passage makes it pretty clear that El only reigns over his offspring. Mullen says this of this passage, quote,

53:32

This passage makes it clear that El sits at the head of the pantheon ruling over his offspring. I hope you can see how El's male sex and a tart or Asherah's female sex is directly tied to the concepts of kingship and queenship and subsequently to cosmic kingdom building. Again, the theology that we're seeing here is a family-based theology.

54:00

where fatherhood and motherhood is absolutely essential. Remember in El's Cosmic Kingdom, he sits enthroned with a tart. Together they reign as king and queen over their offspring.

54:19

That's the theology.

54:24

Unfortunately, I've got to leave it there. There's plenty to chew on here in our next episode. We'll pick it up right here. With that, I'll leave you with the words of William Shakespeare. Knowledge is the wing wherewith we fly to heaven. I'm Jack Logan.

54:46

You've been listening to the Ancient Tradition. A Wonk Media Production.

Episode #55 - Who is God? - A Sexed Being, Part II

<https://theancienttradition.com/55-who-is-god-a-sexed-being-part-ii/>

00:00

Music

00:09

You're listening to The Ancient Tradition. A Wonk Media Production. Music provided by Joseph McDade. Here's your host, Dr. Jack Logan.

00:25

Welcome to The Ancient Tradition. I'm your host, Jack Logan. Great to have you listening in. If you're a new listener, we welcome you to the program. If you're a long time listener, we welcome you back. It's great to have you. Today I'm gonna just jump right in. We're gonna pick up right where we left off in our last episode, in episode number 54.

00:49

we found that across the ancient Near East and ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt and Canaan that God is universally described in the text, universally depicted in the iconography as a sexed being, as a being who has either a male or a female body. This is a very important discovery because it indicates that in the ancient world there was a remarkably consistent belief that divine beings possessed

01:19

both a body and a defined sex. On today's program, I'm gonna demonstrate that across the world, thousands and thousands of miles away from the ancient Near East and thousands of years later, we find that God as a sexed being stubbornly persists. It's yet another powerfully

strong stubborn bit. One so persistent that we can trace its roots all the way back to the dawn of civilization.

01:48

And because we can do this, we argue that the belief that God possesses a defined sex emerged from a single source in deep antiquity, a source we call in this program, the ancient tradition, where it constituted a central tenant of who God is. Now, you might be thinking to yourself, wait,

02:10

The vast majority of Jews and Christians today don't believe this. They don't believe that God has a physical body or a defined sex. And you're correct. The vast majority of Jews and Christians today reject outright the notion that God is a sexed being. I think it's really, really important before we move on in the podcast to explain why this is. So today we're going to start the podcast by diving into the biblical canon to first see how the text itself

02:40

describes God. And then we'll examine why and when the notion of a sexless God developed among Jews and Christians. I think you may be a bit surprised by what you learn. This is why it's always important that we don't abdicate our personal responsibility to acquire knowledge, be it book knowledge or spiritual knowledge to anyone else. If we do, we just might end up believing things we otherwise wouldn't if we just done our homework.

03:10

After that, we're gonna take a look at a couple of the deep theological tensions the shift from a sexed God to a sexless God has caused in Judaism and Christianity. From there, we'll explore just how deeply rooted the belief in a sexed God is across various parts of the world, in ancient Greece, among the Hindu, Norse, and Pacific Islanders, in South America, Japan, and China.

03:39

So let's start with the biblical canon. What does the Bible say about the notion of a sexed God? When we examine the textual descriptions of God in the Bible, we find, as astounding as this sounds, that God is described almost identically to the way in which God is described across the ancient Near East, in ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Canaan.

04:08

As number one, a being who upholds the cosmic law. We've talked about this quite a bit on the program. In Hebrew, it's referred to as tzedek. And as a glorious being of light, which we've discussed in episode number 29. And as a being who has a distinct corporeal form, a body. I've given numerous biblical examples of this throughout the podcast. If this subject really interests you, I've got to tell you about a book published three years ago.

04:37

written by Dr. Francesca Stavrakopoulou. She received her doctorate in theology from Oxford University and today she teaches at the University of Exeter. She's there as a professor of Hebrew, Bible and ancient religion. The book's titled God and Anatomy. In this book, Dr. Stavrakopoulou shows that

05:02

contrary to the contemporary descriptions of God in Judaism and Christianity as bodiless and sexless that the God actually described in the biblical canon is described as having a tangible male body. The book's pretty big. It's like 420 some pages of written text, but then there's like

an additional 200 pages of like a glossary and a bibliography and sources and notes. It's quite large.

05:29

that's because she's meticulously cataloged biblical reference after biblical reference that speaks of God's body parts, His feet and hands and face and for today's episode very importantly His loins. She finds just like I'm arguing that the God described in the Bible is described in much the same way in which God is described across the ancient Near East which of course

05:58

indicates to me that this was the original way in which the ancient heroes understood God. The book blurb that's posted on Amazon calls the book, quote, an astonishing and revelatory history that re-presents God as he was originally envisioned by ancient worshipers with a distinctly male body.

06:28

Before I get into her research, I want to point out that I don't agree with all of the conclusions that she makes in this book. She's an acknowledged atheist who believes that the God depicted in the Bible is a social construct, is manmade, where I do not. I firmly believe based on what the ancients themselves tell us, along with the jaw-dropping cosmic depth, symbolic depth and...

06:56

sophisticated nature of the theology that the ancients taught that the God described in the ancient world and in the Bible was revealed to human beings by God or by God's emissaries in the very beginning so that we human beings would have the correct understanding from the very start of who God is. The difference between Dr. Stabarakopoulou and myself of course is a matter of faith.

07:23

Still the same, I think her book is really important and it's worth reading because she establishes that the Bible from cover to cover unequivocally describes God as having a male body. What's even more, especially in relation to this program, is that so much of what she writes is tied to so many of the things that we've discussed on the podcast, like kingship and conquering the sea dragon, the temple abode.

07:51

subjugating one's enemies under one's feet and what she calls quote, God's heavenly household. And that's just to name a few. So it's worth the read if just for that. I think Dr. Stavro Coppola would find so much of this podcast intriguing because we've independently been arguing so many of the same things that she argues in her book.

08:17

But this podcast clearly differs in that we argue like we did in the last episode that God's male body has to be understood in reference to the entire theology. God's male body plays a very, very important role in the grand kingship theology that was taught across the ancient world. It's a cosmic theology, the full extent of which doesn't appear to be very well known or very well understood by contemporary scholars.

08:48

Contemporary scholars seem to be really well versed in individual aspects of the theology, like Forsythe's great book, you remember that? The Old Enemy, which established the importance of

slaying the sea monster. But I don't know of any scholar who's systematically laid out the entire cosmic kingship and temple building theology as it's found in the ancient world. Along with its astounding implications, it's a grand theology.

09:18

which is precisely why we've put this podcast together so that anyone from scholar to layman who's interested can gain a much greater understanding of the theology the ancients actually taught. See, without the full theological backdrop, which Dr. Stavro Kapulou is missing on some level, it's pretty easy to dismiss the corporeal nature of God as man-made or the social construct.

09:47

But when we consider the full theological backdrop and the absolutely vital role God's male body plays in that theology, it's not so easy to dismiss the corporeal nature of God as just some social construct. The theology matters. God's male body must be understood in terms of the full theology. Now, of course, whether or not one believes the theology, again, that's a matter of faith. But I'm arguing

10:17

that one cannot understand God's male body independent of a full understanding of the theology. Because the ancients themselves never saw God's male body outside of or tangential to the cosmic kingship theology they taught. The two are inseparable. All right, so let's take a look at the Bible. When we look at the text itself,

10:46

we find that there are literally thousands upon thousands of pronouns. He, his, him, masculine verb forms, like the Hebrew word bara, which means he created. And loads of titles like God, Lord, Master, Father, King, which describe God as male. And even titles like Savior.

11:13

which is found in Isaiah chapter 43 verse three, or Judge, which is found in Genesis chapter 18 verse 25, are masculine titles in Hebrew. When we examine the biblical text itself, the God described there is unequivocally a sexed being, a male God. So let's take a look at two of the titles, Father and King. These are two of the most common titles outside of God and Lord.

11:43

Which is interesting because these are the same two titles that show up time and time again in the ancient Mesopotamian, Egyptian, and Ugaritic literature to describe God. For example, in the book of Malachi, chapter two, verse 10, it's towards the very end of the Hebrew Bible, it says, speaking of God, and this is the King James Version, quote,

12:12

Have we not all one Father? Have not one God created us? The New Living Translation reads, are we not all children of the same Father? Are we not all created by the same God? This verse clearly stresses God's male paternity as a Father. And who does this text tell us God is the paternal Father of? Us.

12:42

all of us on the earth, you and me. Now where have we heard this before? On page 20 of God and Anatomy, Dr. Stavro Kapulou notes, quote, a fragment of ancient poetry in the book of Deuteronomy. So we're talking about the Torah here. Not only locates Yahweh with a pantheon, and a pantheon is more than one God, but also reveals exactly who his

13:11

and his here is Yahweh's father was. She's referring to Deuteronomy chapter 32 verse eight. And the translation she provides reads, when Elion, now Elion here is the Hebrew name for God, which means God most high. Don't miss the adjective most high here because that suggests that there are lower gods. Elion is the most high of the gods.

13:41

apportioned the nations. When he divided humankind, he fixed the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of the divine sons, his sons. So here we're told that the most high God, Elion, had fathered divine sons, which is exactly the same thing we read in the ancient Mesopotamian, Egyptian, and Ugaritic texts. Now listen to what this biblical text tells us about who one of his sons was. Quote, he

14:12

speaking of the most high God, fixed the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of the divine sons. For Yahweh's portion was his people. Jacob, who is Israel, his allotted share. Right here, this biblical text tells us that Yahweh is one of the high God, Elion's many divine sons.

14:37

This text is telling us that Yahweh, the God of the Old Testament, who's the Christ of the New Testament, is the son of the most high God, Elion. Now know there are many out there who can't fathom the notion that there could be any God higher than Christ of the New Testament, but that's exactly what this text is telling us. It's telling us that Yahweh, or Christ, is the male son of Elion, the most high, his father.

15:05

who's given the epitaph most high because in the heavens he is ranked higher than his sons. This passage stresses the most high God's male paternity. So just like we saw in our last episode, we see here that the theology that is contained in the biblical canon is a family-based theology, a divine family theology. In reference to this text, Dr. Stavro Kapulou writes,

15:36

Here, Yahweh appears as just one among El's many divine children. When we turn to the Psalms, to Psalm 29 verse 10, which was written by King David, we're told that God, like we see in ancient Egypt and in the Ugaritic literature, reigns as an eternal king. Verse 10 reads, and this is the NET Bible translation, quote, the Lord, which refers to Yahweh,

16:06

sits enthroned over the engulfing waters. The Lord sits enthroned as the eternal King. In this verse, the Hebrew for eternal King is melek olam. According to Strom's lexicon, olam conveys, quote, the concept of eternity or an indefinite unending duration, something that's everlasting or perpetual. And melek, as we've learned on this program, is a masculine noun.

16:36

that denotes a male king or ruler. And this is all in reference to Yahweh. This biblical text clearly affirms that God is a male being who reigns as an eternal king, a male ruler. Now, this verse should cause you pause because what King David is telling us here is not a uniquely Jewish doctrine.

17:04

King Dave is telling us the same thing about God that the rest of the ancient Near East has been telling us all along, that God is male, that he sits and that his throne sits on the waters. The Mesopotamian Apsu, the Egyptian waters of noon, the Primordial waters, and then it's from that seat that he reigns as an eternal king. What it says right here in Psalm 26 is exactly the same thing that the Egyptians tell us in

17:33

Pyramid Text 600, which we covered in depth in episode number 31. So what are we to make of this? This isn't a minor controversial prophet or Jew writing this. This is King David teaching these things. Right here, King David writes, quote, the Lord sits enthroned over the engulfing waters.

18:02

the Lord sits enthroned as the eternal King. What King David writes here is actually the exact image that's portrayed on the top of nearly every ancient Egyptian obelisk. A tomb seated on a throne on the Ben Ben stone that sits atop the primordial waters. Or as King David says it, over

18:31

the engulfing waters. Now I bring this up because it's widely believed among Jews and Christians today, like I pointed out, that God is without body or sex. But this is not what the ancient Mesopotamians, Egyptians and Canaanites taught about the God who sat on a throne over the primordial waters. They indisputably attested that he was male and had a male body.

So

19:00

When King David tells us right here in verse 10 of Psalm 26, the same thing that the rest of the ancient world has been telling us about God, I believe that King David's words are yet another witness to that truth, as is every reference to God's maleness in the biblical canon. I've only briefly hit on some of the passages in the Bible that attest to God's male sex, but know that

19:29

These passages are not anomalies. Nearly every single page of the Bible refers to God as a male being. So when we consider this, then we have to ask why so many Jews and Christians today believe the opposite, that God is disembodied and without sex. Did Jews always believe this or is this a more recent belief?

19:56

So to answer these questions, we need to dive into the Jewish writings and find out, number one, when historically was this argument first made? Does it show up really early in the Jewish writings, in the middle writings, or in the later writings? And number two, we need to look into who made the argument. What was their background? And number three, we need to look into why that individual or those individuals

20:25

made this argument? Did they claim that God revealed it to them? Did they come up with it by themselves? Were they heavily influenced by groups outside of Judaism? The answers to all of these questions matter when we're trying to establish the true nature of God. Because if we don't get the true nature of God correct, we won't get the theology correct. A sexless God

20:55

leads to a very, very different theology than a sexed God. So let's dive into the Jewish writings to see if we can find where Jews first argued that God was sexless. Let's start with the Bible. So

the first thing that we find as Dr. Stavro Kapulou puts it on page 16 is that quote, God's body, which we've established as male is

21:25

nowhere denied in the Bible. In fact, get this, seeing God's body was one of the greatest privileges given to mortal beings in the Bible. Dr. Stavro Kapulou writes on pages 16 and 18, quote, in Genesis, Abraham walks alongside him and Jacob has a wrestling match with him.

21:53

In the books bearing their names, the prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel each see God sitting on his throne, while Amos sees him standing in one of the temples. A talkative young man called Stephen in the book of Acts, and the enraptured, if terrified, writer of Revelation known as John of Patmos, both of whom see God sitting enthroned in the heavens with Christ seated or standing next to him.

22:21

in all these biblical stories and many more besides, it was simply a given that God had a body. The sensational aspect in their telling was that God had allowed people to see it. Such a rare privilege that during the second temple period between 515 BC to 70 CE, God was increasingly understood to have long hidden his body.

22:51

from the world, rendering it unseeable. Okay, let's stop here for a second. Here we learn that during the second temple period between 515 BC and 70 AD, God, quote, hid his body from the people. Now, why would he do that? Well, I imagine from what we've read previously on the program in the Moses Sinai account, must have been because the people weren't worthy to see his body.

23:21

Listen to Dr. Stavro Kapulou explain how the people's inability to see God's body during this time period actually contributed to the belief in a bodiless God. She writes, during the second temple period between 515 BC to 70 CE, God was increasingly understood to have long hidden his body from the world, rendering it unseeable, but an unseen body

23:50

is not the same as a non-existent body. This emerging theological emphasis on the hiddenness of God would eventually give rise to the abstract, incorporeal deity of Judaism and Christianity. A deity no longer shrouded by fire and clouds, but only wondrous, inscrutable mystery. But Judaism and Christianity are post-biblical religions, and their disembodied deity

24:20

is a later reimagining of a God who was far from enigmatic. For the God of the Bible was a deity who not only had a body, but a personal name, a family, and a host of companions in the heavens. So note here how she argues that God's hiddenness during the Second Temple Period led to the quote, reimagining of God.

24:50

as a disembodied deity. She wrote, quote, this emerging theological emphasis on the hiddenness of God would eventually give rise to what would become the abstract, incorporeal deity of Judaism and Christianity. Eventually is the key word here, because although there's hints here and there in the Hebrew Bible that the Deuteronomists, the group of writers that were responsible for composing and

25:19

shaping significant portions of the Hebrew Bible during the sixth century BC, which was a time of considerable political and religious upheaval in ancient Israel and Judah, reimagined what was meant by God's hidden nature. You know, wasn't until some 400 to 600 years after the Deuteronomus, around the turn of the millennium, around the first century AD, that we find the first written statement.

25:48

by a Jew explicitly asserting that God is bodiless and by implication, sexless. So who was the first known Jewish writer to declare God to be bodiless? It was a man by the name of Philo of Alexandria. If you aren't familiar with Philo of Alexandria, Philo was a Hellenistic Jewish philosopher who lived in Alexandria, Egypt.

26:16

sometime between 20 BC and 50 AD. If you're familiar with this time period, Alexandria was actually a major center of Hellenistic culture, where you had Jews and Greeks and Egyptians interacting with each other. Now, we don't know if Philo was formally schooled in Greek philosophy. It's very likely that he was, but we know from his works, and he had an extensive number of works,

26:44

They estimate at least 70, 50 of them survived today. They're full of direct references and concepts and terms directly from Greek philosophy. This indicates that he was deeply immersed in Greek philosophy, especially in the works of Plato. He seems to have had a very deep admiration for Plato. Philo was so persuaded

27:13

by Greek philosophy, especially Plato's philosophical ideas about the nature of God, that he tried to harmonize them with Jewish theology. This is a practice that's known as philosophical syncretism. A scholar by the name of Marija Todorovska notes that Philo's writings, quote,

27:43

mythical and theological Hebraic thought and the philosophical concepts of the Greeks. So he merges them together. And this is a really, really important aspect of Philo's writings for us to understand. Because as you're gonna see in just a second, the notion of a bodiless God came directly from Plato, from Platonic philosophy. See,

28:12

Philo was profoundly influenced by the Platonic view that ultimate reality is immaterial, perfect and unchanging. Ultimate reality. In Plato's thought, anything material is by nature imperfect and subject to decay. So a truly divine being would have to be incorporeal and beyond physical limitation. Therefore God could not

28:40

have a body or a sex. So Philo applied Plato's framework to his interpretation of Hebrew scripture, arguing that biblical references to God's body or emotions had to be read allegorically and not literally. Philo portrayed God as abstract, infinite, and completely beyond the physical world, which was in complete alignment

29:10

with the Greek philosophical ideal of a transcendent, formless deity. This marked a significant departure from earlier Jewish traditions, which often accepted the anthropomorphic language of

the Bible at face value. As Rabbi Joshua Amaru insightfully asks, quote, why was no one bothered by corporeal imagery of God?

29:37

until Judaism came into contact with Greek philosophy? Well, that is indeed a very excellent question. Philo's conception of a bodiless, and again by implication a sexless god, was absolutely shaped by Greek metaphysics. And it may have also been shaped by

30:02

Second Temple Jewish thought, which we mentioned earlier, which was still trying to grapple with the notion of a hidden God. Ultimately though, Philo reimagined the Hebrew God as bodiless. Not because scripture declared it, but because Greek philosophy demanded it. And I wonder how many Jews and Christians today are aware of this, that the belief in a bodiless God comes

30:30

primarily from Plato, not from one of the Hebrew prophets. As Dr. Stavrokapoulou outlined earlier, the Hebrew prophets, the ones who were privileged to see God and wrote about it in the Bible, universally declared that God had a body and that he was male. This is especially apparent in the Hebrew prophet Ezekiel's account.

30:59

which is found in Ezekiel chapter one. We've talked about this before in the program, but I've got to bring it up again here because this account, more than any other account found in the Bible, attests to God's male body. In this account, the prophet Ezekiel is given the rare privilege of seeing God. And in verses 26 and 27, he describes for us what he saw. The King James Version reads, quote,

31:27

upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it. And I saw as the color of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, for the appearance of his loins even upward and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire.

31:53

The Hebrew prophet Ezekiel tells us here that when he was given the privilege of laying eyes on God, he saw that God had the body of a man, but it was different. His body had the appearance of fire. It took on the color of amber. It actually shined. And Ezekiel tells us that it wasn't just his face that was shining. His body above his loins had the appearance of fire and his body below his loins had the appearance of fire.

32:23

which is just another way of telling us that God's entire body shined like fire. The Hebrew word, the King James translator is translated as loins here, is the Hebrew word *mot-ni-am*, which I'm gonna talk about in just a second. Loins refers to God's reproductive organs. If we take a look at the same verses in the New Living Translation, we see that they chose to translate *mot-ni-am* as waste.

32:53

And this is their translation quote, from what appeared to be his waist up, he looked like gleaming amber flickering like a fire. And from his waist down, he looked like a burning flame shining with splendor. So the New Living Translators preserve Ezekiel's witness that God has a bodily form. But when they translate the Hebrew word *mot naim* as waste,

33:21

They're essentially sanitizing Ezekiel's more explicit claim that God had male reproductive anatomy. Motinayem or variations of it show up 47 times in the Hebrew Bible and 42 out of 47 times the King James translators translate it in its reproductive sense as loins. Listen to what Dr. Stavro Kapulou says about the Hebrew word motinayem.

33:51

and this is on page 103. Quote, mot naim, a Hebrew term traditionally and politely rendered loins or waste, but which more accurately refers to the groin and its genitals. He, Ezekiel, openly acknowledges God's genitals. Ezekiel's account is a stunning display of the graphic corporeality of God.

34:22

Ezekiel's witness of God is indeed stunning. One would have to employ a considerable amount of mental gymnastics to interpret Ezekiel's witness of God's body and God's reproductive organs as metaphorical. Why would a God who does not have a sex show himself to the prophet Ezekiel metaphorically as a male having a body with reproductive anatomy?

34:53

What could this possibly convey to Ezekiel metaphorically? Well, luckily, we don't have to depend on mental gymnastics because it's Philo's admiration of Plato, not Ezekiel, that demands a metaphorical interpretation. With this in mind, we need to take a minute here and talk about Plato's reasoning in light of the theology taught within the ancient tradition. See,

35:22

Plato argued that God could not be made of matter, possess a material body, because matter was subject to decay and eventual dissolution. Take for example a tree, as the tree ages, it eventually rots and it decays and it ultimately dies. So if God were made of matter, Plato reasoned, he too would be susceptible to decay and death, qualities that are fundamentally incompatible with the notion

35:51

of God. So Plato concludes that God cannot possibly be made of matter, so he must need be immaterial, bodiless, and again by implication, sexless. In terms of logic, this seems very persuasive. And it was. Dr. Stavro Kapulou notes on page nine that

36:18

Plato's ideas were so persuasive that they ultimately shaped the conception of God across the entire Western world. She writes, quote, these erudite philosophical ideas would gradually come to shape the thinking of certain Jewish and Christian intellectuals. So they began to reimagine their deity in increasingly incorporeal, immaterial terms.

36:47

It is the broadly Platonic notion of the otherness and unlikeness of the divine that has shaped the more formal theological constructions of God in the Western religious imagination. And yet, these constructions are built on a conceptual framework very much at odds with the Bible itself. For in these ancient texts, God is presented

37:16

in startlingly anthropomorphic ways. This is a deity with a body. Nearly everything that Plato taught about the nature of God contradicted what the ancients taught. The ancients taught that

God was not constrained by the corruptibility inherent in matter. The ancients taught that God had the power to reverse the second law of thermodynamics.

37:45

We've talked about this quite a bit on the program. The second law of thermodynamics states that in a closed system, entropy or disorder tends to increase over time, meaning that all material things naturally move toward decay and disintegration and chaos, just like Plato argues. But the ancients taught that God was not subject to this law. They taught that he had the power to halt or reverse or even transcend entropy itself. Nearly all ancient cultures affirmed

38:15

this very idea. From Mesopotamia to Egypt to Hebrew tradition, one of the fundamental characteristics attributed to God was his ability to transform chaotic matter into ordered matter, to reverse the second law of thermodynamics. The creation stories that we find across the ancient world and frankly around the world depict God transforming a formless and tropic void

38:44

into a harmonious structured cosmos. The biblical account of the first day of creation is a great example of this. God brings light into darkness and he separates and defines the elements and he establishes the boundaries, acts that are at their core a direct reversal of entropy. So God, far from being bound by the laws of physics as we know them, had the power to impose order on chaos.

39:14

to restore what decayed and to renew what died, which is precisely why Christ in the Christian tradition was able to rise from the dead in a resurrected perfect material body as recorded in Luke chapter 24 verse 39. In this verse, the resurrected Christ appears before his apostles and tells them, quote, behold my hands and my feet.

39:42

that it is I myself handle me and see for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have. If God has the power to reverse the second law of thermodynamics, which the ancients taught and which they argued was one of the most important characteristics of God, then God by necessity need not be immaterial as Plato claims.

40:12

And matter itself need not be innately inferior or inherently flawed, corrupt, or evil, as the later Gnostics argued. Gnostics, who we learned from the Platonic terms they used in their writings, were also heavily, heavily influenced by Platonism and Plato. From what we can glean from the ancients, matter appears to be a substance that can be acted upon. When the awful sea monsters given reign over matter,

40:42

That matter is subject to the second law of thermodynamics and it moves in the direction of corruptibility, deterioration and decay. But when God reigns over matter, his authoritative power transforms and sanctifies it and it moves it in the direction of incorruptibility, order, perfection in life. All of the ancients attest to this. The ancients taught that matter is only corruptible

41:11

in the absence of divine power. And I'm just not quite sure how Plato missed the theological inconsistency in his argument. He clearly argues that God is sovereign, yet he imagines a God

that doesn't have sovereignty over matter. And this is really perplexing to me, especially considering how God's sovereignty over matter, his imposition of order,

41:41

on chaotic matter. His ability to subdue chaos and bring about order is one of the most enduring literary themes in the ancient world. We've talked about this quite a bit on the program about God's power to reverse the second law of thermodynamics. If you're new to the program and you want to learn more about this, it's pretty fascinating. Be sure and check out episode number 14, the terrifying second law of thermodynamics.

42:11

You'll get a lot out of that episode as a standalone, but if you want to see how it fits into the larger theological landscape in the ancient world, I recommend listening to several of the episodes before and after it.

42:25

All right, back to Philo of Alexandria. So Philo was so persuaded by Plato's conception of God as an immaterial abstraction that now he had a problem. What was he to do with all of the verses in the Hebrew Bible and all of the Hebrew prophets that insisted God had a body and a sex? What was he to do with this incongruity? Well, there weren't a lot of options.

42:55

The only way to make Plato's immaterial God compatible with what was actually written in the Hebrew Bible was to redefine it, to redefine the references to God's body and sex as merely allegorical or metaphorical, which is the position that persists to this day. After Philo, another 1200 years go by before we find another Jewish writer systematically argue the immateriality

43:25

disembodied and by implication sexless nature of God. And who was this? Many of you should know if you've been listening to the program. This was the medieval rabbi and Jewish philosopher, Maimonides, who we've talked about quite a bit on the program, who lived from 1138 to 1204 AD. In his work, The Guide for the Perplexed, he argued that God was formless.

43:52

and beyond human attributes. And just like Philo before him, that position led him to interpret all of the sex-based language used to describe God found in the Bible as metaphorical. All right, that kind of gives you a historical background. We don't have time to get into this too much today, but in a book titled God's Phallus and Other Problems for Men in Monotheism, the author, who is Howard Elberg Schwartz,

44:22

He's a trained rabbi and at the time he published this book, he was actually a professor of religious studies at Stanford. He notes that the notion of an immaterial sexless God has caused serious theological tensions in Judaism for men. In a chapter that he titled, quote, a sexless father, referring to God and his procreating sons,

44:51

Schwartz asks the following on page 199, quote, the symbol of a male god is not simply a legitimization of masculinity. It is also an image against which men must measure themselves and by whose standard they fall short. So how can men who are expected to procreate and reproduce the lineage of their fathers be made

45:20

in the image of a sexless God. As a symbol to be emulated, a sexless father God naturally provides an ideal of male asceticism. To be really like God then, a man should have no sexuality. One can see how the theological tension here is considerable. The Torah commands men to multiply and replenish the earth, yet a sexless God

45:49

whom they're expected to emulate, demands that they should have no sexuality or reproductive capacity at all. How are Jewish men expected to reconcile this? It doesn't compute. On page 200 Schwartz notes, quote, an aesthetic male god, of course, would have posed much less of a problem for human masculinity had reproduction been less central to what ancient Israel understood by manhood.

46:19

Israelite men were caught to be most like God. They had to renounce their sexuality, but they could not be truly men unless they fulfilled their obligations to continue the generations. Schwartz notes then that this theological tension becomes especially pronounced when the blessing of fertility is directly tied

46:45

to the covenant that God makes with Abraham and his male descendants. In Genesis chapter 17 verses four to six, God tells the Israelites, quote, as for me, this is my covenant with you. You shall be the father of a multitude of nations and you shall no longer be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I will make you the father of a multitude of nations.

47:15

I will make you exceedingly fertile and make nations of you and kings shall come forth from you." As a quick aside, did you know how Abraham is told that he will not only be fertile if he keeps the covenant, but that quote, kings shall come forth from him. So note how the covenant fertility and kingship are all theologically tied together.

47:43

This is why the male sex of God really matters, theologically. The association between the covenant and fertility was really driven home when it was symbolized by removing the foreskin from the male phallus via circumcision. Schwartz writes, quote, the intertwining of masculinity and procreation are no more more evident

48:11

than in the priestly understanding of circumcision. In the priestly writings, circumcision is treated as a symbol of male fertility, of God's promise to make Abraham a father of multitudes. It is no accident that the symbol of the covenant is impressed on the male organ of generation. By exposing the male organ, the rite of circumcision makes concrete the symbolic link

48:40

between masculinity, genealogy, and reproduction. And I would add the covenant and the entire theology. The close association of masculinity with genealogical proliferation, however, conflicts with the image of a sexless God.

49:03

Again, one can see how this would cause considerable theological tension among Jewish men. And these tensions are further exacerbated by the scriptural mandate in the Hebrew Bible to marry, the order of patrilineal descent, the perpetuation and expansion of Abraham's descendants through procreation, the conference of priestly status from father to son, and

49:32

the express declaration in the Torah that human beings are made in God's image and likeness. It's incredibly difficult to reconcile a sexless God with a theology that is entirely dependent on male sexuality. It doesn't make sense. On page 222, Schwartz writes,

50:02

Views that deviate from Jewish tradition require explanation. Well, the explanation is Plato in Greek philosophy. Plato's conception of the nature of God is a great example of how the theology that was originally taught in the ancient tradition can become transformed and distorted and corrupted over time. Plato's

50:31

philosophical conception of the nature of God, of how he thought God needed to be, has led to quite a bit of confusion. What you should glean from this is that the doctrine of an immaterial sexless God in Judaism came largely from Plato and Hellenistic philosophy, which was then advocated and perpetuated by Jewish philosophers like Philo and Maimonides.

51:01

And you should also glean that this philosophical movement occurred quite late. Most of Philo's writings were written in the early part of the first century AD, which is nearly 2000 years after the prophet Abraham is believed to have lived. And the vast majority of this new doctrine developed only in the last 800 years after Maimonides wrote the Guide for the Perplexed.

51:28

The ancient Mesopotamians, Egyptians, Canaanites, and Hebrews had all been attesting for literally millennia in their ancient texts and iconography that God had a material body and was a sexed So these ideas came rather late. Despite Philo's powerful influence over Jewish philosophers and later Christian theologians, the notion that God had a material body and a sex

51:57
persisted and it continues to persist throughout the world. It constitutes yet another robust stubborn bit. In ancient Greece, biological sex served as a fundamental marker of divine identity. In the ancient Greek texts and iconography, the gods Zeus, Poseidon, Hades, Apollo, Hermes, Asclepius and Oceanus are consistently described as male.

52:24

whereas Hera, Aphrodite, Persephone, Artemis, and Gaia are consistently described as female. For example, in the Homeric hymn 27, a hymn to the goddess Artemis, we read, and this is the Hugh G. Evelyn White translation, quote, I sing of Artemis with golden spindle. This refers to an arrow. Loud calling the pure maiden.

52:53

Note how Artemis is referred to here as the pure maiden. The Greek word that's translated as maiden here is parthenos, which means virgin, maiden, or girl. Parthenos is actually where the word parthenon comes from. The word parthenon literally means the temple of the virgin goddess. The sex of the god is clear. The hymn continues, quote, the pure maiden shooter of stags.

53:22

poorer of Eros own sister of Apollo. Here we see reference to the goddess Artemis in familial terms as the female sibling, the sister of the god Apollo. Iconographically Artemis is consistently

represented across all forms of media like invasives and statues and coins and bas reliefs with a very distinctly female body.

53:47

She's depicted with delicate facial features. She's usually got her hair pulled up or it's flowing and curls. She's wearing flowing robes and she has a visibly female body, including breast. If you'd like to see depictions of Artemis as a female God, you can find them on the webpage for this episode. If we turn to the oldest Hindu scripture, the Rig Veda dated to the second millennium BC,

54:15

And we read the very first line. We read of a deity named Agni, whom the text describes as male. The text reads, and this is the H.H. Wilson translation, quote, I glorify Agni, the high priest of the sacrifice, the divine ministrant. In this text, Agni is clearly described as a high priest. The Sanskrit word that's translated as high priest here

54:45

is Ruteviz which refers historically to a male priest who officiated or participated in Vedic sacrifices in the holy place of Kanakala. The text says, I glorify Agni, the high priest of the sacrifice, the divine ministrant. In this text, the Sanskrit word that's translated as divine is devam or deva.

55:13

which is the Sanskrit word for a male god, one who interestingly shines, one who glows, who's bright, who's radiant. The word comes from the root div, D-I-V, which means to shine. The female equivalent to deva is devi, D-E-V-I, which specifically denotes a female god. So in Sanskrit, devas are male gods and devis are female gods.

55:43

In this text, Agni is described as a deva, a male god. So here we have the very first line of the oldest known Vedic scripture attesting the divine beings have a sex, male or female. Now that's something. In the Rig Veda, the gods Indra, Agni, Mitra, Varuna and Vishnu, along with a lot of others are described as male. Iconographically, the god Agni is depicted with a male body.

56:10

Sometimes he's depicted with a beard, but most of the time he's depicted shirtless with a clearly male upper body. If you'd like to see iconographic images of Agni, you can find them on the webpage for this episode. In other Vedic traditions, Ushas, Lakshmi, Parvati and Suti are identified as female gods. For example, Lakshmi, one of the chief goddesses in Hinduism is sometimes referred to as

56:39

Shri, S-H-R-I, which in Sanskrit means noble or one of glory or high rank, which gets this is often associated with kingship. In a late body of hymns known as the Sri Kumula Stotram, dated to sometime between the 9th and 12th century AD, all women are described as being the embodiment of the goddess Lakshmi.

57:10

The song reads, speaking of the goddess Lakshmi, every woman is an embodiment of you. You exist as little girls in their childhood, as young women in their youth, and as elderly women in their old age. The connection in this song between Lakshmi and the female body, all female bodies is unmistakable. It seems to suggest like we've seen elsewhere,

57:36

that women on earth are patterned after the likeness or image of a female god in heaven. All right, iconographically, Lakshmi is commonly portrayed as a beautiful woman. She's usually draped in an elegant red sari, standing or sitting on a lotus flower. If we turn to the Norse pantheon in Scandinavia, we see the same thing.

58:01

All of the deities mentioned in the Poetic and Prose Edas are identified as either male or female. For example, Baldr, Freyr, Thor, Dillinger, and the high god Odin, along with several others, are identified as male. For example, in the Prose Edda in the Gelfangening, the god Baldr is described like this. Listen for the male descriptors. This is the Broder translation. Quote,

58:31

The second son of Odin is Balder, and good things are to be said of him. He is best, and all praise him. He is fair of feature and so bright that light shines from him. The masculine descriptors are pretty apparent. The second son of Odin is Balder, and good things are to be said of him. He is best, and all praise him. He is fair of feature and so bright

59:00

that light shines from him. Balder is clearly described as male. As a quick aside, did you also catch that the god Balder is described as having a glorious light? The text says that he is quote, so bright that light shines from him. Some 15 female goddesses are mentioned in the Gelfangening just alone, including Frigg, Saga, Fula and Freya.

59:27

The Gelfangenin says this of the goddess Frigg, quote, his, and his here refers to the high god Odin, wife was called Frigg, daughter of Fjorgen. And of their blood has come that kindred, which we all call the races of the Assyr that have people the elder Asgard and those kingdoms which pertain to it. And that is a divine race. So we learned quite a bit about Frigg in this passage. We learned that she's female.

59:57

passage tells us that she is the wife of the high god Odin. It tells us that she's the daughter of Fjordun, who's a male god. And the passage tells us that Frigg is the mother of the Assyr. Now the Assyr are those gods who make up the principal pantheon of gods in Norse mythology. The passage stresses Frigg's female sex as a wife, a daughter, and a mother.

01:00:28

all familial relations. If we turn to the South Pacific to Polynesia, we find a similar pattern. We find that Kane, Kanaloa, Ku, Lono, Tangaloa, and Tane Mahuta are described as male gods, and Papatuanuku, Hikuleo, Pele, and Nuakea are described as female goddesses. The goddess Hikuleo

01:00:58

is the Tongan goddess who stands guard at the entrance to Pulohtu, the realm of the ancestors. A statue of her is housed in the Met in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, and it depicts her with very voluptuous breasts, legs, and buttocks. The Met says, quote, that belie her tremendous vigor. If you'd like to see pictures of the Tongan goddess, Ikoleo, you can find them on the webpage for this episode.

01:01:29

If we turn to South America to the Aztecs, we find the same thing. Nearly every single one of the numerous gods found there is defined as either male or female. Tesla Kapoka, Quetzalcoatl, Huetzalopochtli, Etzpapalotl Totec, and Etz Tetli are all described as male. For example, Huetzalopochtli, the patron god of the Mexica tribe, is

01:01:57

depicted in the Codex Barbonicus anthropomorphically as a male with black and yellow facial markings, wearing battle gear, holding a serpent-shaped scepter. Whereas, Myktikatsiwadal, Taltecutli, Shochi Ketsal, and Tonantzin are described as female. Myktikatsiwadal, for example, is depicted in the Codex Borgia, shirtless,

01:02:25

exposing female breasts. In Japan, Amaterasu, Itsunami, Inari, Kanan, Tsukuyumi are all defined as female goddesses. And Fujin, Fukurokuchu, Hotoi, and Izunagi are all described as male gods. Paintings and statues of the goddess Kanan

01:02:51

depict her in full female form dressed in flowing robes and she's decked in lace and jewelry and then there's a crown on top of her head. Pukorokujo on the other hand, a male god is depicted as balding. He's depicted as an elderly man with a white beard and this really protruding forehead. And finally, if we turn to China, we find the same thing. The gods are understood to be sexed beings. Bixia,

01:03:21

Chang'un, Chang'chi, Matsu, and Doumu are described as female goddesses, and Fu Xi, Lei Gong, Lu Ban, Ying Wang, and Yu Lao are described as male gods. In the iconography, the male gods are often portrayed with stately goatees, you've seen these, in elaborate robes, in a crown, or an imperial headdress of some type.

01:03:48

whereas the female gods tend to be depicted with delicate female features, very white faces, and often with these elegant updos. As we've seen in this episode and in the last episode, the vast majority of religious traditions in the world attest that God is a sexed being. It's quite a robust, stubborn bit. And for those religious adherents in Judaism and Christianity who no longer believe that God is sexed,

01:04:18

We learned in this episode that this is largely due to Plato and the influence of Plato's philosophical ideas had on Philo of Alexandria during the first century AD and on Maimonides in the 12th century AD. A theological shift that occurs very, late in Jewish history, some 2000 years after the Hebrew prophet Abraham and hundreds and hundreds of years after the Hebrew prophets.

01:04:46

Jacob, Moses, Isaiah, and Ezekiel, mortal beings who had the rare privilege of seeing God with their own eyes and who unequivocally testified in the Bible that God was male and had a male body. God's embodied sexed nature matters. It matters theologically. I hope you've seen that in this episode, especially in Judaism, how it's intimately tied to the theology.

01:05:15

As the podcast unfolds, you're going to discover that it's intricately tied to nearly every single aspect of the ancient tradition. As I close out this episode, I'd like to leave you with something to

ponder. If as the Hebrew prophets, I just mentioned a test, God is male and maleness constitutes only one half of the reproductive whole, then

01:05:43

Doesn't this imply that there has to be a female God? Doesn't God's maleness make him by definition incomplete? If so, what happened to her in the Hebrew Bible? Where did she go? Those are some things to think about. I've got to leave it there. With that, I'll leave you with the words of William Shakespeare. Knowledge is the wing wherewith we fly to heaven.

01:06:13

I'm Jack Logan.

01:06:18

You've been listening to the Ancient Tradition. A Wonk Media Production.

Episode #56 - Who is God? - A Married Being, Part I

<https://theancienttradition.com/56-who-is-god-a-married-being/>

00:00

Music

00:09

You're listening to The Ancient Tradition. A Wonk Media Production. Music provided by Joseph McDade. He is your host, Dr. Jack Logan.

00:25

Welcome to The Ancient Tradition. I'm your host, Jack Logan. Great to have you listening in today. Today's episode is super long. I thought about splitting it into two, but since I've been gone for so long with the end of the semester grading, I thought I'd just leave it, make it kind of a bonus episode. There's a lot in here, so you may not want to listen to it all in one sitting. You may want to split it up, but it's of course up to you.

00:53

If you're a new listener, just want to let you know that the podcast has a companion website, theancienttradition.com, where you can find important resources linked to today's episodes. Just click on show notes and you'll find this episode. With that, let's jump in. One of the really interesting things that I noticed when I began studying religious traditions around the world and something that was quite honestly surprising was

01:21

that the high god, especially the high gods in deep antiquity, be they Mesopotamian, Egyptian or Canaanite, and even the early Hebrews didn't reign alone. The high god was married. He reigned over the cosmos as a king with his spouse, the queen of heaven, and together they

reigned over the heavens as a divine royal couple. It's one of those details that's quite striking considering

01:49

You know, how many today envision God as a solitary, aloof, invisible, immaterial, transcendent entity? A notion that we learned in our last episode was largely shaped by Plato's philosophical ideas. As Dr. Stavro Kapulu writes, quite poignantly on page 415 of her book, *God and Anatomy*, that the God that's found in the Hebrew Bible is very, very different from the God envisioned

02:19

by Plato and many modern day believers. She writes, quote, the modern God of the West and the ancient God of the Bible are very different beings. Prominent Western intellectuals have not only rendered the biblical God lifeless, but reduced him to a mere phantom. The modern deity is a post biblical hybrid being, a disembodied science free artificial intelligence.

02:48

assembled over the course of 2,000 years from selected scraps of Greek philosophy. Dr. Stavros Kapoulou says it in kind of a charged way, but she makes a really important point. And that's that there is a divide between what Plato taught about the nature of God and what the peoples of the ancient world taught about the nature of God. So who are we to believe? Which of these two are attesting to the true nature of God?

03:16

Plato and Western intellectuals or the ancients? Well, on this podcast, we believe the ancients and that's because the ancients themselves tell us they attest that in the very beginning when the earth was still in heaven's embrace, God reigned on earth and that during that time, God walked and talked with human beings. They're often referred to as the ancestors.

03:45

and he revealed to them the truth about who he is, his true nature. For example, among the ancient Egyptians, this time was actually referred to as the reign of Re. The reign of Re. Re here being the high god, Atum Re. The time when the high god Atum Re reigned on earth as a divine king. And we're actually gonna talk about this very, very soon.

04:12

Believe it or not, we're only an episode or two away from diving into those accounts, finally. So you don't have to wait much longer. And it's something to look forward to because there's some pretty, pretty great stuff. When we dive into what the ancients teach about the nature of God, like we're going to do in this episode, we absolutely see contrary to what Plato and Western intellectuals taught that God has a material body made of immortal

04:42

flesh and bone, a body which the ancients tell us emits a glorious radiant light, which they likened under fire. If you're new to the program and you'd like to learn more about the textual evidence for these claims, be sure and give episode number 29, who is God, a glorious being of ineffable light, and episode number 44, who is God, a corporeal being, a lesson, because we cover the textual evidence.

05:11

for these claims in detail. All right, in our last episode, we learned that the ancients also attested that God's body is sexed, male or female, which speaks to a very important theological point. It

indicates that God contains within himself only half of the reproductive anatomy necessary for divine procreation, which

05:38

clearly implies that God is only whole with a reproductive partner of the opposite sex. Now, theologically, this is very intriguing because this indicates just like the ancients taught about the cosmic law known among the ancients as Ma'at, Tzedek, Asha, Rita, the Tao, that God is not omnipotent. He doesn't contain within himself all

06:07

power in the sense that many today believe. Rather, we learned in episode number 28, who was God, Lord of Maat, King of Zedek, that the ancients taught that God is bound by a cosmic law, which demands truth, righteousness, and justice. They just taught that God didn't have the power to circumvent or alter or change this law.

06:33

In fact, we learned that it was only by abiding by this law that one could become a God in the first place. The ancients taught that this law was permanently embedded in the fabric of the cosmos itself. If God did not conform to this law, he would cease to be God, which of course means as unsettling as this may sound to a lot of people today, that while God's power is immense, the ancients taught that it was not

07:03

absolute. They taught that it was constrained by his submission to the cosmic law. When the ancients tell us that God is a sexed being, we get a similar theological picture. If God contains within himself only one half of the reproductive anatomy necessary for divine procreation, then God would not be able to divinely procreate without a reproductive partner

07:30

of the opposite sex. He would not be able to produce offspring by himself. He would be constrained by the limitations of his sexual anatomy. This is theologically profound, because this means that God's immense power is, again, limited. It's not absolute. His divine procreative powers are relationally dependent. Theologically, again,

07:58

This is incredibly significant because it suggests that the full capacity of Godship, the full power of Godship can only be realized by a divine couple, which is exactly what the ancients attest in the ancient record. Across the ancient world, the ancients taught that God, most notably the high God, reigned in the heavens or on the peak of the holy mountain,

08:27

with his wife as a married couple, not as a solitary being. This divine couple reigned together as the king and queen of the cosmos. I don't know that I've heard a single theologian talk about the prevalence of this stubborn bit in the ancient world, especially not in an academic, theologically rigorous way, but it is prevalent indeed, which I'm gonna demonstrate.

08:57

Like always, we're gonna start by jumping into the ancient texts to see what the ancients themselves have to say about God's marital status. We're gonna be looking primarily at what the texts have to say about the high God's marital status. Texts also mention the marital status of other gods, so we'll consider a few of those, but our primary focus today will be on the marital status of the high God. We're gonna start

09:25

with the earliest known civilization in the world, the region known as Sumer, which was located in southern Mesopotamia between the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers in what is now modern-day Iraq. Scholars believe Sumer was first settled sometime between 5500 and 3300 BC. The early dynastic period dates to 2900 BC and the first dynasty

09:55

It's known as the dynasty of Lagash. It's well attested to in the historical record. It's dated to about 2500 BC. And I mentioned this just so you get a picture of the timeframe that we're talking about. In ancient Mesopotamia, the high god, the king of the gods was known among the Sumerians as An, A-N. Among the Akkadians, the same high god was known as Anu, A-N-U.

10:25

We've discussed the High Sumerian God, several times on the podcast, so you long-time listeners should have a really good feel for who I'm talking about. On is widely mentioned in the Mesopotamian literature. For example, he's mentioned in the text known as Atrahasis. In tablet one, we learned that he reigned as the king of the gods over the assembly of the gods made up of his divine children, which he divinely procreated.

10:55

In the Epic of Gilgamesh in the beginning of tablet one, in the Maureen Kovacs translation, we learned that the high god Anu granted Gilgamesh, quote, the totality of knowledge of all. Or in the text known as Adapa, we learned that the high god Anu sends for the man Adapa and instructs him to ascend to heaven. The tablet reads,

11:25

And this is the high God Anu speaking, quote, send for him Adapa to be brought here. And here is Anu's throne in the heavens. Then Ea, Ea is a God and he is one of Anu's divine sons, tells Adapa, quote, Adapa, you are to go before King Anu, you will go up to heaven. And when you go up to heaven, when you reach the gate of Anu,

11:55

Demusie and Gezida will be standing in the gate of Anu. We'll see you, we'll keep asking you questions. We'll talk about this text a whole lot more when we talk about the Judeo-Christian first man Adam in a couple of months, but for today's purposes, I wanna point out that this text indicates that the king of the gods, Anu, is described here as residing in heaven in a sacred area that's guarded by a gate.

12:25

and gatekeepers. And one of the gatekeepers mentioned here is the god Demusie. I point this out because we're gonna talk about Demusie in a couple of minutes. In this text, the god Ea tells Adapa that when he gets to the gate to the high god Anu's throne, he'll be expected to answer some questions. Ea says to Adapa, quote, when you approach the gate of Anu, Demusie and Gazeta will be standing in the gate of Anu

12:55

They will see you and will keep asking you questions. Keep all of this in your back pocket kids. It's going to be very, very important as the podcast progresses, especially when we get into ritual. All right. Those are just a few examples of what we know about the high Mesopotamian God On from the Mesopotamian literature. In terms of the high God On's marital status, we know he was married because

13:23

multiple ancient texts, lists of gods known as god lists, and inscriptions explicitly identify his spouse. Sometimes you'll hear scholars refer to Ann's spouse as a consort. The word consort is generally used to refer to a husband or wife of a reigning monarch, which is important because it speaks to Ann's status as the king of heaven.

13:53

in his wife's status as the Queen of Heaven. In one of the God lists that I just mentioned, on a tablet known as the Great God List, or sometimes it's referred to as An equals Anum, or An is the equivalent of Anu. This tablet is dated by scholars to between 1300 and 1100 BC. But it's on it that we find an explicit reference to the high god An's wife.

14:23

Some scholars have given the tablet the name On equals Onum because the tablet's divided into two columns. And on line one, on the left-hand column, is written On, which like I mentioned is the Sumerian name for the high god. And on the right-hand column is written Onum, which is the Akkadian name for the same high god. So you get the title On is equivalent to Onum or On equals Onum. It's on line

14:52

three of this tablet that we find mention of Ahn's wife. In the left-hand column is written Ahn period Ki, A-N period Ki, which is the same thing as saying Ahn and Ki. So here we learn that Ahn's wife is Ki. In the right-hand column in Akkadian it reads Ahnum, Yu, Antum, which means Ahnum and

15:22

Atum which are their Akkadian names and sometimes they drop the M at the end So with this would be on to or on tomb is the Akkadian name for on's wife on to or on tomb If you'd like to see a scholar's depiction of this you can find it on the web page for this episode It's really important to point out that the on equals on you great. God list is not just a list

15:48

of the Sumerian gods and then their Akkadian equivalents. The chief purpose the ancient compilers of Anikles Anu had was to chart the family tree of the Sumerian gods so that Mesopotamians could grasp the family relationships between gods. So each entry in this god list included the gods' titles, the name of their spouse, the name of their divine children, and then any known attendance.

16:18

So the text An equals Anum is not a list of solitary gods. It's a detailed portrayal of An's celestial family. Or as Dr. Stavrikapulu calls it, his heavenly household and its divine members. It's a family document. Or in scholar speak, it's known as a theogony, a genealogy of the gods.

16:45

And as I mentioned earlier, it's in this document that we find that the Sumerian high god An was married and his wife's name was Khi. And as we've already discussed on this program, their royal offspring in the Mesopotamian literature are called the Anunnaki, which literally means the princely offspring of An and Khi. An and Khi reign together as the king and queen of heaven from their royal palace temple on high.

17:16

If you'd like to see the layout of the High God An's family tree, you can find it on the webpage for this episode. Now, the High God Anu was not the only member of the Mesopotamian pantheon who was married. The Sumerian literature frequently describes the gods as having consorts. For example, Enlil, he was one of the High God An and his wife, Kees' divine sons, is married to Ninlil.

17:46

and his consort is Ningal. Their union is celebrated in a lot of Sumerian love poetry. Enki's wife was Damkina, Utu's wife was Sharita, Ninurta's wife was Gula, also known as Ba, the goddess Inshikgal, now we've talked about her, her husband was Gugalana. And do you remember Demusi? He was also known as the shepherd god.

18:15

the god who we just learned in the Mesopotamian text of Dappa stands as a gatekeeper outside the gate to Anu's throne in the heavens. Well, he was married to, he was married to the goddess Inanna and their marriage was incredibly important in the ancient world. The story of D'umuzi and Inanna's courtship and marriage is captured in a text scholars have given the name, Inanna prefers the farmer.

18:45

I love how the scholars give these texts very interesting names, but sometimes it detracts from the serious nature of the content that it has. In this text, which we're gonna discuss in detail when we get to ritual, reveals that Demusi and Inanna's marriage was so important that it was ritually performed. And you're never gonna guess when. It was celebrated as the culminating rite in the Mesopotamian

19:13

New Year celebration, the New Year celebration known as the Akitu Festival. Do you remember what the Mesopotamians celebrated when they celebrated the New Year? If you don't, they celebrated the creation of the world. This was when they recited the Anu Epos, the Babylonian epic of creation, when Marduk conquered the terrible sea serpent Tiamat. As part of the festival, they actually

19:41

ritually enacted the combat between Marduk and Tiamat. They create these wooden effigies of Tiamat or the enemy, and then they'd ritually destroy them in a symbolic battle, which of course we know Marduk victoriously won. So when this battle was performed during the New Year rite, it reaffirmed Marduk's divine ordering power, his power and authority to establish order in the cosmos.

20:11

as well as his right to rule as a celestial king. Right after this, the earthly Mesopotamian king would take Marduk's hand in a binding ritual, which reaffirmed the king's oath or contract or covenant with Marduk. This hand ritual, of course, legitimized and affirmed the earthly Mesopotamian king's right to rule.

20:39

It's right after this that scholars believe the reenactment of Demusi's marriage to the goddess Inanna was performed ritually. It's known among scholars as the Hieros Gamos. Hieros being the Greek word for sacred or holy and gamos being the Greek word for marriage or wedding. So the Hieros Gamos means the sacred marriage. Scholars like Stephen Langdon, Samuel

21:07

and David Thomas argue that the sacred marriage was the central element of the New Year festival. During the Akitu festival, the marriage was seen as a reenactment of the primordial marital union of the gods. It was believed to regenerate the cosmos and to ensure fertility and prosperity in the land. And we're going to talk a lot more about this when we get to ritual, but I mention it here to demonstrate

21:37

that the marriage of the gods wasn't just an ancillary belief. It was directly tied to all of the other stubborn bits we've talked about on this program, like slaying the dragon, the right to rule as a heavenly king, the creation of the world, and the legitimation of earthly kingship. The god's marriage was seen as the culminating right that would ensure the fertility and the prosperity of the kingdom.

22:06

Okay, let's move to ancient Egypt now. If you're a long time listener to the program, you know that the high god among the ancient Egyptians is the god Atum, A-T-U-M. Sometimes it's spelled A-T-E-M, Atem, as mentioned in Pyramid Text 600. Over time, Atum and the ancient Egyptian gods like Rae and Ra were merged together into kind of composite deities. So they were referred to as Atumra or Rae-Atum.

22:36

and various religious texts use their names interchangeably. And this is important because functionally they represent the same High Creator God. I just don't want you to get confused by this. In Pyramid Text 527, we see the beginning of the ancient Egyptian theogony or genealogy of the gods. In this text, the High God Atum is described as giving birth to two divine children, Shu and Tefnut.

23:07

And the text tells us that he does this by his own hand. So we kind of get the impression that the High God Atum produced these children without a reproductive partner, that he was a self-sufficient deity. But there's actually more here than meets the eye. See, the ancient Egyptian word for hand is gerit, which is grammatically feminine and was understood

23:33

by the ancient Egyptians to be the symbolic personification of Atum's consort. In several ancient Egyptian sources, God's wife is given the formal titulary, Jaret Netur, which means God's hand. Dr. Alward and Blackman notes on page 10 of his article,

24:00

on the position of women in the ancient Egyptian hierarchy. It's found in volume seven of the Journal of Egyptian Archaeology that quote, the God's hand is identical with the God's wife. Dr. Mina Salah notes on pages three and four of her 2009 book, God's Wife, that the title God's Hand quote, seems to emphasize its bearer's sexual role

24:30

in relation to the creator God. When a God is first mentioned as having a wife, it is the Ithophallic God, Min. I mention this because in Egyptian creation myths, particularly those involving the high god, Atum, Atum's hand is understood to be the feminine entity that assists him in the act of creation, his wife. In the ancient Egyptian texts that spanned at least

25:00

three millennia. Atum's wife varied depending on the region of the period, but he was invariably depicted as having a wife. One of the earliest and most prominent female counterparts of Atum, described as his consort in Heliopolitan theology, is a really important goddess who I bet most of you have never heard of before. And her name was Eusas, or sometimes it's pronounced, Eusaset.

25:30

Richard H. Wilkinson says this of the goddess, Yousas on page 150 of his book, *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt*, quote, Yousas was a Heliopolitan goddess whose name seems to mean she comes who is great and who functioned as a feminine counterpart of the male solar creator, Atum. The earliest known reference to Atum's wife,

25:59

you saw us, is found in the Old Kingdom Pyramid Text. So it's very, very old, which we've noted several times on the program, or dated to around 2400 BC. In utterance 519, which reads, and this English translation is found in Dr. Edward P. Butler's book, *Theological Encyclopedia of the Goddesses and Gods of the Ancient Egyptians*. Quote, I.

26:29

and I here is the deceased Egyptian king. I am the son of Kepri. Now, Kepri is the god who represents the rising sun. Born in Hethapet. Hethapet's important here, because according to French Egyptologist Jacques Vandier, Hethapet refers to the female vulva, as well as a religious site near Heliopolis.

26:58

Under the Tresses. Tresses here refer to hair. Sometimes it's translated as under the curls of the goddess of Usaustown. The goddess of Usaustown, of course, refers to some town that's associated with the goddess Usaust. Atum's wife, north of On. If you recall, On is the Greek name for Heliopolis. So Usaustown existed

27:27

just north of Heliopolis, who, and who here refers to, you saw us, ascended from the vertex of Geb. A vertex is where three points come together, like the tip of a triangle or the tip of a pyramid. And Geb is the god of the earth. So the vertex of Geb here refers to the primordial mound that rose out of the primordial waters and became the earth.

27:57

Butler agrees with this interpretation, which I'll get to in just a second. All right, so what is this text telling us? Well, here the deceased King of Egypt is telling us that he was born from under the goddess, you saw us as hair, which Butler argues refers to the pubic hair of her vulva. He writes, quote, while the tresses in question may be hanging down from the head, they may also be an anatomical reference

28:26

in accord with the reading of Hethapet as vulva. So the first half of the utterance could read, quote, I am the son of the high God born from the vulva under the pubic hair of the goddess, you saw us. So the deceased king is telling us that he is the son of divine parents.

28:53

In the second half of the utterance, the deceased Pharaoh tells us that when you saw us gave birth to him, it took place just north of Heliopolis. Now, Heliopolis is very, very important here, kids. If you'll recall, Heliopolis was one of the most sacred, if not the most sacred site in the

entire ancient world. And that's because the ancient Egyptians believed that the very first particle of earth to emerge out of the primordial waters of chaotic matter happened right there.
29:22

The ancient Egyptians believed that Heliopolis was the literal location where the creation of the earth began. The place, and this is important, where the high god Atum himself appeared above the waters and rose up out of the waters on the sacred hill that emerged out of the waters. The primordial hillock, as stated in Pyramid Text 600, which
29:51

We dedicated an entire episode to. So if you haven't given it a listen, you may want to do that. And of which every ancient Egyptian pyramid perched atop the Sahara desert is a stylized version of. So when the deceased Egyptian king tells us in the second part of utterance 519 that Atum's wife, the goddess you saw us, gave birth to him near Heliopolis,
30:20

and that she was the goddess who, quote, ascended from the vertex of Gab, we get this really amazing image that she too, like Atum, rose. The text says, ascended the vertex, the primordial mound in the beginning, just like Atum. This is an absolutely amazing pyramid text, because when we couple pyramid text 600,
30:48

which talks about Atum rising atop the primordial mound. With Pyramid Text 519, which talks about Atum's wife, you saw us ascending the primordial mound. We get the picture of a divine royal couple rising together on the first day of creation upon the primordial hillock, the first earth to emerge out of the primordial waters.

31:17

It's quite astounding. So Pyramid Text 519 could be translated, quote, I am the son of the high god, Ray. So he's acknowledging his divine father, the rising sun, born from the vulva under the pubic hair of the goddess, you saw us, north of Heliopolis. You saw us who ascended
31:47

on the primordial hill of the earth. So he's acknowledging his divine mother as well. So he's giving us right here, his divine parentage. Now all of this gets even more interesting. Listen to Butler describe what was kept in Esaus town. Esaus' sacred location just north of Heliopolis. Butler writes, quote, the tresses in question
32:17

may also be those of a sacred tree associated with you saw us for we find occasional references to an acacia. Now an acacia is a type of tree sacred to you saw us in coffin text spell 660 which mentions quote the acacia of you saw us town north of souls of on. So what are the coffin texts?

32:47

dated 2100 BC, Telus was kept in Esaus' sacred location just north of Heliopolis. A tree, a sacred acacia tree. And from Marie-Louise Bull, former head of the Department of Classical and Near Eastern Antiquities at the National Museum of Denmark, the goddess Esaus, the wife of Atum, is the earliest known tree goddess in ancient Egypt.

33:17

even earlier than Hathor. Bull says this of the sacred Esaus acacia tree on page 86 of her article, the goddesses of the Egyptian tree cult found in volume six of the journal of Near

Eastern studies. Quote, in the neighborhood of Heliopolis, there was a shrine for the female counterpart of the sun god, Atun. She was Seiosus. Now, Seiosus is the Greek rendering of Eusaos.

33:47

who was a personification of the God Atum's hand. In this place, Atum's children, Shu and Tefnet were born, and here the sacred Acacia was worshiped. I've got to stop right here, because here Bull tells us, in this place, in the place where the earth was first created, the center of the earth and the cosmos, the most sacred place on earth, God's temple,

34:17

in the place where stood a sacred acacia tree intimately linked to Atum's wife, Usaas, quote, Atum's children, Shu and Tefnet were born. And what did the deceased Egyptian king just tell us in Pyramid Text 519? The exact same thing. He just told us that he too was born to Usaas right there.

34:46

in the location where stood her sacred acacia tree. Now keep all of this in your back pocket that children are born from or near this tree because this is going to be really important when we get into some Native American accounts in a couple of episodes. I have a ton I want to say about this, but I'm going to save it for the episode on the creation of human beings. For now, I want you to hold on to all of this, especially the link between God's wife, the sacred tree and the

35:15

birth of offspring, because it's all gonna come together in a couple weeks. If you have time to ponder it a bit before we get there, think about how the sacred tree and the primordial mound are connected. So here's a little clue. Butler writes, quote, the reading which would see here a sacred tree would accord well with the reference to ascending from the vertex of Geb,

35:43

to be understood therefore as a hill or mound. The two readings are in any event not mutually exclusive. And no, no they are not. In fact, the tree in the Primordial Hill, often referred to as the sacred mountain, were used across the ancient world as microcosmic symbols of the macrocosm. Ponder that a bit. If you can't figure out how both

36:13

Symbolize the macrocosm. Don't worry too much. I'll explain it in much greater detail in the episodes that are coming up. But pondering the symbols before those episodes is a really great way to sharpen your symbolism literacy. Before we move on, let's listen to what else Bull has to say about Atum's wife and the shrine that housed the acacia tree associated with her. On page 86 Bull continues, quote,

36:42

An execration text. Now, if you're not familiar with execution texts, these are texts that list all of the names of the Pharaoh's enemies. From the late period contains the following passage in connection with the god Seth. Okay, do you remember who the ancient Egyptian god Seth was?

37:03

If you don't, Seth is the god of chaos. He's the awful monster who brings nothing but disorder, destruction, degradation, desolation, and decay. He's the awful enemy who must be conquered. So the text Bull is about to quote is about him. It's also important to note that this text dates to a

time rather late, to sometime between 600 and 300 BC, though the content itself is probably based off of much, much older material.

37:32

but still the same, it's important to note that. The exe-creation text reads, quote, he, and he here is Seth, has approached the wonderful hall, the shrine or temple of Se-o-sis with the acacia tree in which life and death are contained. Now, this is interesting. Here we have an ancient Egyptian text that tells us that God's enemy, Seth,

38:01

entered the shrine or temple near Heliopolis where the earth was first created and where stood Euseas's acacia tree. Note how this text refers to Euseas, the high god Atum's wife's tree as, quote, the acacia tree in which life and death are contained. So note how Euseas's tree is associated with the dualism of life and death.

38:30

This is a pretty important aspect of her tree. And the African acacia tree is actually a really, really great symbol of this, because acacia trees have the ability to thrive in harsh, arid conditions. And they're also evergreens. So this makes them a great symbol for life. But on the flip side, some acacia species, especially those that are native to Africa produce

38:56

synogenic compounds in their leaves. And they do this to thwart the herbivores like giraffes who love to eat them. And those compounds can release cyanide when the leaves are damaged, which of course makes them toxic to the animals that try to eat them. And it sometimes even kills them, which makes the acacia tree a fitting symbol for death too.

39:23

We learned earlier that it was near this tree of life and death that the dead Egyptian king was born, brought to life from the goddess, Yusas's vulva. And like I mentioned, this text is likely based on much, much older material. For example, in the pyramid texts, which are dated 2000 years earlier than this text, in pyramid text 470, it says that the deceased king will be taken to

39:53

quote, the high places of Seth to that high sycamore, which is a sacred tree of the Eastern sky. Are any of you seeing a connection here to the Judeo-Christian Garden of Eden story? Because you should, which speaks to the power of the ancient tradition. So both of these accounts take place in the same setting, in the sacred center of the earth.

40:22

in a sacred temple. To learn more about the Garden of Eden as a sacred temple, give episode number four a listen, if you haven't. They both contain a sacred tree. In the ancient Egyptian execration text, this tree is referred to in dualistic terms as the quote, tree in which life and death are contained. And in the Judeo-Christian account, a dualistic tree is referred to in Genesis chapter two, verse nine.

40:52

as the quote, tree of knowledge of good and evil. And I don't have time to fully develop this here. We will down the line, but note here how in ancient Egypt, God's wife, you saw us, is associated with a sacred dualistic acacia tree, the tree of life and death, birth into this life, this mortal existence and death, the exit out of this life, this mortal existence. And in the Judeo-Christian tradition,

41:21

The dualistic tree is associated with the ability to gain knowledge of the difference between what is good and what is evil, what is sacred and what is profane. When the two trees, the tree in ancient Egypt and the tree in the Judeo-Christian accounts are theologically considered, the tree seems to suggest that by being born into this life, mortality,

41:49

One can gain knowledge of what is good and what is evil. Theologically, this is quite profound, because it suggests that we human beings are born into this mortal existence for a distinct purpose, to learn, to gain knowledge about what is good and what is evil. Many, many people have wondered what the purpose of this whole earthly experience is.

42:16

And here we see the ancients telling us that one of the major purposes for why we're here on earth is to gain this knowledge. In Genesis chapter three, verse five, the serpent tells Eve, and this is the King James version, quote, for God does know that in the day ye eat thereof, so eating the fruit of the tree, then your eyes shall be opened and ye shall be as gods knowing good and evil.

42:46

Man, theologically, this is an amazing verse because here the snake tells Eve that if she'll partake of the fruit of the tree, now fruit here is important because fruit is something that is produced by the tree. It comes by way of the tree. It can't be separated from the tree itself. Of the knowledge of good and evil, she'll be able to acquire the knowledge that she needs to quote,

43:16

be as the gods. I posit that partaking of the fruit here refers to Eve's choice to be born. Born through God's wife into a mortal world like the Egyptian king who was born from her vulva. Because remember, before Eve partook of the fruit, there was no death or decay. The earth was still in heaven's embrace.

43:44

The snake is basically telling her that it's only by partaking of the fruit, by choosing to be born into this mortal world, that she can gain the knowledge that's necessary to become like the gods. Now, Eve tells the snake that she doesn't wanna do this because she knows if she does, she knows she's going to die. She knows she'll be born into a mortal, corruptible world where she'll ultimately die.

44:12

Note here though, how Eve has the option to choose to eat the fruit of the tree or not to eat the fruit of the tree. It's her choice. Nobody's making her eat the fruit. I bring this up because this is theologically significant. It indicates that agency is an important part of our existence, both before and after we got here. So if you're wondering how you got on planet Earth, it may just be that you yourself

44:41

like Eve, partook of the tree of knowledge of good and evil and chose to be born into this world. Now, this is not just my thinking. In a couple of episodes, we're gonna get into some really interesting myths that tell us about how when the earth was in heaven's embrace, the people there were really agitated because their situation couldn't improve until heaven and earth split.

45:08

which in the Judeo-Christian tradition is when the earth fell, fell far, far from heaven and death and decay, mortality was introduced into the world. All right, back to Genesis chapter three, verse five. The serpent tells Eve that if she partakes of the fruit, she shall quote, be as the gods, knowing good and evil. Note that gods here is plural.

45:38

It's Elohim in the Hebrew text, indicating that there is more than one God in the heavens. Other English translations like the New International Version, New Living Translation, and the New American Standard Bible sanitize the text by translating Elohim as God, making it singular. So it complies with later Bonotheism.

46:05

But the original Hebrew text clearly states Elohim, the gods. This verse is telling us that in order to become like the gods, note how this implies that we human beings can become like the gods, deification, we must first acquire knowledge. Where we can, as the verse says, know, K-N-O-W, the difference between good and evil.

46:34

Knowledge that Adam and Eve at this point in the account did not have so they couldn't become like the gods Unless they chose to partake of the tree unless they chose to be born into this mortal world Which indicates that this earthly existence is a critical part a necessary part of the process to become like the gods We'll talk about this a lot more down the line, but I wanted to point it out here because all of this is tied

47:04

to the sacred tree that the ancients associated with God's wife. For the purposes of this episode, just as the sacred acacia tree in ancient Egypt is associated with God's wife, you saw us. I posit that the tree of good and evil in the Judeo-Christian tradition is a symbol of God's wife. Why?

47:31

Because as we're gonna see more in depth in a couple of episodes, it's through her, through the tree, that human beings are born into this world and through whom human beings can have an earthly experience where they can learn the difference between good and evil. This would mean that when Eve chose to partake of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, that what she was really doing was choosing to be born through the tree.

47:59

through God's wife, the queen of heaven into this mortal world so that she could learn the difference between good and evil. Listen to what verse six of Genesis chapter three says. It reads, quote, and when the woman, this is talking about Eve, saw that the tree was good for food and that it was pleasant to the eyes and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof and did eat,

48:28

and gave also to her husband with her, and he did eat." We can clearly see in this text that one of the primary reasons Eve partook of the fruit of the tree was because it would make her, quote, wise. The Hebrew word that's translated as wise here is sakal, S-A-K-A-L. The topical lexicon on Bible Hub says this of the word sakal.

48:58

The concept of Sakal is integral to the biblical understanding of wisdom, emphasizing not only intellectual acumen, but also moral and spiritual insight. It underscores the importance of aligning one's actions with divine principles to achieve success and understanding.

49:24

We're going to talk a whole lot more about the acquisition of wisdom as we get into ritual, but for the purposes of today's episode, I want you to note how God's wife is associated with the acquisition of wisdom. The spiritual knowledge that apparently can only be gained when we choose to be born on earth and journey through this moral experience. You're going to see down the line that the connection between wisdom

49:53

and a sacred tree is found all over the world. Believe it or not, the choice to be born on earth is a widespread theme among those who have had near death experiences. Many of them recount how during their near death experience, they were shown their personal choice to leave their heavenly home and come to earth. Many even say that they chose along with the help of a guide,

50:22

the trials and challenges that they would endure here so that they could develop more God-like attributes. Listen to Dr. Christine Dolehan recount what she was shown about her choice to be born into this world. As I was walking or floating down this path, I also perceived someone or something else next to me that I perceived as my mentor. It was a being that was so much more

50:52

evolved and had so much more wisdom than I did. It felt like maybe he was in a similar space or a similar place that I had been at that moment beforehand, but he had had the choice of sort of stepping into the next role of mentoring souls and what to do next. So I can only say that he was a mentor. He was sort of larger and taller on my right side. I perceived him as male.

51:21

This being on my right was internally loving. mean, everything was incredibly loving over on this other side. Very loving, very non-judgmental. I was also discussing with my mentor at the time that this knife time that I had chosen and why it come and or why I was going into this new lifetime. And then also kind of voicing a bit of reluctance because I really, I knew that I had to come. I knew that there was something really important and that I had chosen to do this.

51:51

But I didn't really want to go. And I want to make this clear because in past interviews, got feedback like, well, great, here we are. being made to come down to Earth. I want to make clear this was a free will decision. I did come here free will. We're not slaves. We're not made to go down there. This is a free will decision. And all of us make it in a free will way because we know it's good for us to come.

52:21

One last thing that I want to say about Genesis chapter three is that after Eve and Adam chose to partake of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, verse seven says, quote, and the eyes of them, so Adam and Eve, were opened and they knew that they were naked and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons. Several Jewish commentaries and rabbinic sources

52:48

speculate that the tree of knowledge of good and evil was a fig tree. In the Talmud, Barakot 40a, for example, reads, Rabbi Nehemiah says it was a fig tree. They must have taken the leaves from the tree closest at hand the tree of knowledge.

53:11

Of course, the tree itself is symbolic. So is the notion that the tree was a fig tree. But the fact that the original author of Genesis in the Hebrew tradition associated the leaves that Adam and Eve used to cover their reproductive loins with a fig tree is not trivial. See, in the ancient world, the fig tree and the fig fruit itself, its plump shape and the abundance of seeds,

53:39

were strongly associated with fertility. So note that in both of these accounts, the ancient Egyptian and the Judeo-Christian, that the sacred tree is strongly associated with the power to produce offspring. Be it the high God, you saw us as power to give birth to the gods or to give birth to the earthly kings or the tree of knowledge of good and evil in its strong association with Adam and Eve's reproductive organs, which they covered.

54:09

with fig leaves in which rabbinic sources argue came directly from the tree. A late Kabbalistic work written by Moses de Leon around 1290 AD tells a really interesting Jewish legend of a tree that was found in paradise from which all souls were born. The legend reads, Rabbi Yosei taught

54:38

There were three prominent rabbi Yosses who lived during the Tanah Aytik period between the first and second centuries AD. It's unclear which of these three Yosses the text is referring to, but it does at least attribute the legend to a much, much earlier date. Quote, God has a tree of flowering souls in paradise. This tree is surrounded by the four winds of the world.

55:08

Now the four winds is interesting here. If we know what the four winds are, they're assigned to the cardinal points, then this marks the tree is being located in the sacred center. From the branches of this tree sprout forth all souls. For they grow upon this tree as is written, I am a cypress tree in bloom, your fruit issues forth from me. And that's found in Hosea chapter 14 verse nine.

55:38

Note here how one of the meanings of the fruit of the tree is offspring. That's a widespread ancient Near Eastern symbol. And from the roots of this tree sprout the souls of all the righteous ones whose names are inscribed there. Now that's super interesting because if you remember many, many episodes ago, we talked about how the ancient Egyptian god Thoth inscribed the Egyptian king's royal name, the name written in the cartouche.

56:07

on the leaves of the sacred persiatry. From this we learn that all souls are the fruit of the Holy One, blessed be he. This legend is found in Howard Schwartz's aptly named book on Jewish mythology, Tree of Souls. I haven't read it all, I'm working on it, it's a thick book. So in both cases,

56:36

the symbolism of the tree points heavily to the importance of procreative powers, the ability to produce offspring. In fact the Judeo-Christian sacred tree found in the garden temple, the tree of knowledge of good and evil symbolizes at least in part God's wife. And I'm purposely trying to avoid being overly dogmatic here, because I know enough about symbols to know that they were used by the ancients and probably by the high God himself.

57:05

precisely because they can and they do have the ability to contain multiple layers of meaning within a single symbol, not just one. Yet still the same, think that the textual evidence found in the ancient world is more than abundant to make the claim that one of the primary meanings of the sacred tree is that it was meant to represent God's wife, the Queen of Heaven. It's also highly significant that Adam and Eve clothed

57:34

their reproductive organs in leaves from her tree, the reproductive organs that they would use to fulfill the commandment by God to multiply and replenish the earth, which would continue the queen of heaven's great work of giving birth so that we could each have a mortal experience where we could acquire that knowledge of good and evil necessary to become like the gods.

Now,

58:04

At this point, if you're a long time listener, you might be thinking, hey, now wait a minute. Didn't you say earlier in the podcast that the sacred tree symbolized God? And now you're saying it symbolizes God's wife? Well, yes, that's exactly what I'm saying. In the ancient world, the sacred tree is actually not an exclusively male or female symbol. It was actually used primarily to represent deity.

58:33

and the role the deity played in connecting heaven and earth together. It was also used to represent earthly kings or a king who was a representation of deity on earth and who also played a vital role in connecting heaven and earth together. And this is one of the reasons why ancient Egyptian kings emphasized the point that they were born through God's wife, which we pointed out was symbolized by the acacia tree.

59:03

This divine parentage legitimized his right to rule as a king over the whole earth. This is gonna be really important in a couple of months when we talk about the first man Adam. So keep that in mind. In Pyramid Text 294, we see this clearly stated when the Egyptian king exclaims, quote, I am Horus. Horus is the heavenly king

59:32

the living King represented, who came from the acacia, who came from the acacia. Note how the earthly King states his divine parentage here twice. He's really trying to drive home the point that the acacia tree, the queen of heaven is his mother. He is her royal son. He is the heir because she is his mother. So note how closely the sacred tree

01:00:01

and God's wife are tied to kingship and the legitimation of that kingship. Again, the theology of the ancient tradition is a theology all about kingship and queenship. In the ancient world, there are many examples of the sacred tree representing both male and female deities or kings. I'm

gonna give you a couple examples of this. In Pyramid Text 572, we learn of a God by the name of Sopdu.

01:00:31

who the text tells us bears the epitaph, he who is under his trees, or in other texts, it's singular, he who is under his tree. So we see here, obviously, a male connotation to the tree. In the Hebrew Bible, in Daniel chapter four, verses 10 to 27, we see a similar thing. And I'm gonna read some of the text so you can get a feel for it. In this text, King Nebuchadnezzar is having a really difficult time understanding a dream that he had.

01:01:00

and this dream was of a great tree. So he appeals to the prophet Daniel to help him interpret the symbols. Starting in verse 10, the King James Version reads, and this is King Nebuchadnezzar speaking, quote,

01:01:30

and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth. The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all." Then in verse 18, the prophet Daniel tells King Nebuchadnezzar that he was given the privilege of seeing the king's dream too. And in verses 20 through 22, he interprets what was meant by the symbol of the tree. The text reads,

01:02:00

And this is the prophet Daniel speaking now.

01:02:27

So when King Nebuchadnezzar asks Daniel what the great tree in his dream symbolizes, Daniel tells him it represents him. It is thou, O King, Daniel tells him. This is classic ancient Near Eastern tree symbolism. We're gonna come back to this text and dissect it in detail when we discuss the world tree in a couple of episodes. There's a lot here.

01:02:55

For our purposes today, it illustrates the fact that the sacred tree in the ancient world was used to symbolize royal divine status, regardless of sex. In terms of heavenly kingship and queenship theology, this is important to recognize because in Psalm 92, it's a Psalm attributed to King David, David exclaims the following, starting in verse 10.

01:03:23

Speaking of Yahweh's power, quote, but my horn. Remember that a horn was used in the ancient world as a symbol of power. So David's talking about his power. But my horn, shalt thou exalt like the horn of a unicorn. The Hebrew here is kiram, which actually means wild bull.

01:03:50

Remember, in the ancient world, the bull was widely used as a symbol for God, because bulls were powerful, especially their horns, as well as for their remarkable virility, the power to father countless offspring. It's basically saying that Yahweh would exalt him like a God. And this becomes even more clear and is directly linked to the theology of heavenly kingship in the rest of the verse when King David says, quote,

01:04:20

I shall be anointed with fresh oil. If you're a long time listener to the program, then you know that the anointing is a kingship rite. It's the ritual that takes place when God exalts one to the station of heavenly king. Let's read the whole verse again so you can hear it. Again, this is

David speaking, quote, but my horn shalt thou exalt like the horn of an wild bull. I shall be anointed

01:04:49

with fresh oil. If you don't think the ancient Israelites believed in deification or heavenly kingship, then we need to really think again, because it's right there in incredibly plain language when you understand the language of the ancients. But there's more. We've got to keep reading. In verse 12, King David continues, quote, the righteous shall. Now,

01:05:18

Just guess what the Hebrew word is that is translated as righteous here. You long time listeners should know. Yeah, it's tzedek, the cosmic law. We spent a whole episode on this on episode number 28, which you have to listen to if you haven't, if you wanna grasp the full magnitude of what David is saying here. King David is saying that anyone, including you and me who keep the cosmic law,

01:05:47

shall, well, shall what? Well, that's where it gets amazing. The verse continues, quote, the righteous shall flourish like the palm tree. He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

01:06:07

What did King David just say? He just said that those who keep the cosmic law of righteousness will become a tree, a palm tree or cedar tree, both of which were used in the ancient world to symbolize the sacred tree. King David is teaching that those who uphold the cosmic law will become a sacred tree, which in the ancient world, as I just mentioned, represents divine royal status.

01:06:37

heavenly kingship and queenship. When you think about this, when Adam and Eve sewed together fig leaves and wore them, leaves which the rabbi Nehemiah argued came from the sacred tree of knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden, it was likely that they did so in part to claim their royal status like the ancient Egyptian king did when he exclaimed his status as the offspring of the tree. As well as a

01:07:06

a symbol of their divine potential, like David says here, to become a sacred tree themselves.

What's clear from the ancient world is that the sacred tree represented God, his wife, and royalty, all of which must be considered when one interprets the symbolism of the fig tree aprons Adam and Eve made in war. I argue that they must be understood as royal regalia.

01:07:36

Wow, I'm way over time, but I have to make one more comment about what David says here before I close out this episode. If you'll recall in tablet five of the Epic of Gilgamesh, King Gilgamesh and Enkidu make an arduous journey to an incredible forest of cedar trees, which the text tells us is the quote, dwelling place of the gods. The tablet reads, and this is the Marine Kovacs translation, quote,

01:08:06

They, this is talking about Gilgamesh and Enkidu, stood at the forest's edge, gazing at the top of the cedar tree, gazing at the entrance to the forest. They saw the cedar mountain, the dwelling of the gods, the throne, dais of Emini. Emini here is actually not a god. It actually means sacred location or sanctuary. The woods were a thicket.

01:08:36

among the cedars. So this isn't any old regular forest of trees. These are cedar trees, sacred trees that are found in a sacred location where there's a sanctuary and royalty. There's a throne there and it's where the gods dwell. I hope you're honing your symbolism literacy and can see here that the quote cedar forest Gilgamesh and Enkidu entered is a forest of righteous

01:09:06

exalted people, gods, people who have become, like David said, trees. The same thing is actually said in the Hebrew Bible in Genesis chapter two of the Garden of Eden. In verses eight and nine it reads, quote, and the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden and there he put the man whom he had formed.

01:09:33

and out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life also in the midst of the garden and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Note in this verse how the sanctuary God built eastward in Eden was loaded with trees. The text says the garden was full of quote, every tree

01:10:02

that is pleasant to the sight. This is a reference to the garden being full of divine royal beings. Remember the trees the text is referring to here is being used symbolically. That's super clear as we've seen with the tree of knowledge of good and evil. I think most casual readers of this account miss that there are loads and loads of trees in the garden and that those trees too

01:10:32

were being used symbolically to refer to, as King David tells us, the righteous, kings and queens of Zedek, upholders of the cosmic law. God's garden was loaded with these people. This interpretation is what Near Eastern symbolism demands. I mentioned this very early in the podcast. I think it was around episode number eight or something.

01:10:59

when I talked about the architecture in Westminster's Abbey. But just as a reminder, this symbolism of the trees is captured in the world's greatest cathedrals. My favorite cathedral in the United States is National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. If you look at the interior, and I'll post some pictures of it on the webpage for this episode, you'll notice that the massive pillars that line the nave

01:11:27

are meant to represent sturdy trees whose branches join with the branches of the other pillar trees to form this beautiful Edenic garden canopy over the congregants. The whole objective of this architecture is to recreate the Garden of Eden sanctuary on earth. That's what the cathedrals are meant to represent. And each one of these pillars is a tree. The garden, as you can see, is full

01:11:56

of tree pillars, human beings, King David tells us, who upheld Tzedek and were exalted like a wild bull and who were anointed and whom now flourish like a sacred cedar. Think on that symbolism the next time you enter a cathedral. Wow, this episode didn't quite go in the direction I anticipated, but still the same, it's all relevant because it's directly connected to

01:12:26

the ancient accounts that attest that the high god was married and that his wife, who was symbolized by a sacred tree, gave birth to gods and kings. Since we were originally talking in this section about the ancient Egyptian god, Atum, and his wife, you saw us. I'll close out by mentioning that, like we see in ancient Mesopotamia, in ancient Egypt, the theology was a family business.

01:12:55

and the high god, along with several of his divine children, were married. For example, Shu was married to Tefnut. Geb was married to Nut. The creator god, Patah, was married to Sekhmet. Ra was married to Hathor. Amun was married to Mut. And most famously, Osiris was married to Isis. And there are a lot, lot more than I've mentioned.

01:13:22

And remember too, this is also replicated by earthly kings. You can see some of the pyramids, you have the large pyramid, then you'll have two or three smaller pyramids, which was the king or the Pharaoh's wives as above, so below. As we've seen in this episode, in ancient Mesopotamia and in ancient Egypt, the high God was married and he reigned with his wife, be it key or you saw us and together they produced a line of royal progeny.

01:13:52

be it divine and or human. The theology of the ancient tradition is a family theology. That's it for me, I've got to leave it there. We'll pick it up right here in our next episode. With that, I'll leave you with the words of William Shakespeare. Knowledge is the wing wherewith we fly to heaven. I'm Jack Logan.

01:14:23

You've been listening to the Ancient Tradition. A Wonk Media Production.

Episode #57 - Who is God? - A Married Being, Part II

<https://theancienttradition.com/57-who-is-god-a-married-being-part-ii/>

00:00

Music

00:10

Listening to the Ancient Tradition. A Wonk Media Production. Music provided by Joseph McDade. Here's your host, Dr. Jack Logan.

00:25

Welcome to The Ancient Tradition. I'm your host, Jack Logan.

00:31

Welcome to the program. It's great to have all of you listening in today. As always, welcome to all of our new listeners. It's great to have you listening in. And of course, welcome back to all of our longtime listeners. Of course, we love having you back. I've got a long one for us today. We're going to pick up right where we left off in our last episode. If you remember, I mentioned that one of the things that really struck me when I first started diving into religious traditions,

01:01

especially those found in the ancient world, was the persistent and what I consider fascinating notion that God, especially the high God, was married. The ancients taught that God ruled as a king in the heavens with his consort, his wife, the Queen of Heaven, and together they reigned from their sacred palace temple located symbolically at the top of the sacred mountain that marked the

01:29

the center, the sacred center of all creation, their kingdom. In our last episode, we found that in the ancient texts, the Sumerian high god On was married to Ki and the ancient Egyptian high god Atum was married to Usaz, who we learned from the ancient Egyptian pyramid and coffin text was symbolized by a tree, an acacia tree.

01:57

In today's episode, we're going to take a look at a couple of other high gods and see what we can learn about their marital status from the ancient record. We're going to start by jumping into the ancient Canaanite literature. The Canaanites were an ancient people who lived in the region known as Canaan, which today encompasses modern day Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan.

02:24

We refer to this area as the Southern Levant. People lived in this area during the Bronze Age, which dates to roughly 3500 to 1150 BC. Now, city-states didn't begin to emerge in this area until the middle of the Bronze Age, between about 2000 and 1550 BC.

02:50

And the people that we know as the Canaanites actually refers to a Semitic speaking people who lived there during the Late Bronze Age between 1550 and 1200 BC. Most of our literature about the Canaanites comes out of this age, the Late Bronze Age, and they come primarily from the palace and temple archives that were found at the city of Ugarit.

03:17

And that's located near the modern day city of Roshamra. And that's in Syria. And this is why scholars refer to the Canaanite literature as the Ugaritic literature. It's in this literature that we learn that the Canaanite high god El, E-L, just like we see all across the ancient world, was married. And who do the Canaanites tell us he was married to? They tell us he was married to a woman by the name of

03:47

Adirat, A-T-I-R-A-T, which is rendered athirat or ashur-to in transliteration. You might be more familiar with her Hebrew name, which is rendered ashura. So we go from athirat to ashura. We can learn quite a bit about El's consort, Adirah, by the names and the titles that the Canaanites gave her.

04:16

The most common title, one that appears 21 times in the Ugaritic literature is Rabitu Ratu Yam. It's my favorite because when it's translated into English, we have Rabitu, which is translated by scholars as lady or the great lady. It actually literally translates as female great one, which emphasizes both her sex and her

04:45

chief status. Now this is significant because if you recall in cuneiform tablets from Mesopotamia, the king of the land was called Lugol, where Loo meant man and Gol meant great. So when we put the two together, Lugol, you'd get great man. In ancient Mesopotamia, Lugol or great man was the name that the people gave to a powerful leader or the head of a family. In English,

05:14

Scholars render Lugal king. So when we see here in the Ugaritic literature that Adirat was given a similar title, the great lady, we get the same connotation. Rabito was actually the feminine form of great or chief. So Adirat could be rendered the great lady or the chief lady. And like in Mesopotamia, this title signified a powerful ruler or head of the family.

05:43

but this time it's female. So like what's done with Lugal in the Mesopotamian literature, Rabito can be rendered into English as queen or matriarch. Now the second part of Adarath's title, Rabitu Aratu Yam, is Aratu. Some scholars translate this as a genitive particle, meaning of, but other scholars,

06:07

And this is based on a prominent Northwest Semitic tradition where titles were written in the form of a short sentence. Translate aratu in its verb form, meaning to walk on or tread on or trample. Which to this point would give her the title, the queen who treads or tramples. Well, treads or tramples what? Well, the last part of her title is yam, Y-A-M-M.

06:36

You long time listeners should know what yam means. It means sea. And it's most often used to refer to the awful sea monster or sea serpent yam who resided in the chaotic primordial waters or sea. So when we put all three parts of the high god El's wife's title together, Rabitu Aratu Yam, it renders something along the lines of the great lady or queen

07:06

who tramples or treads on the sea dragon, which is the translation that W.F. Albright, former WW Spence Professor of Semitic Languages at John Hopkins University argued in his book, Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan. Now, I of course absolutely love that the most frequent title we find for otter-ot

07:33

The high god El's wife in the Ugaritic literature is something along the lines of the queen who tramples the sea dragon. And that's because this title ties her to so many of the other stubborn bits we've discussed on this program. I love how her title captures the theology of the ancient

tradition in a nutshell. And I also find this title fascinating because we're talking about the queen of heaven here.

08:02

and not the King of Heaven. In so many of the ancient texts that we've covered on the program, the battle with the sea monster is largely told in male terms. For example, this past week, I made my daughters watch the first Hobbit movie with me, Peter Jackson's The Hobbit, The Unexpected Journey, because they had never seen it. And I can't have that, especially since J.R.R. Tolkien's writings contain so many of the elements of the ancient tradition.

08:33

It had been a really long time since I'd seen it, definitely before we started this podcast. So I was struck this past weekend when the old white bearded dwarf Balin recounted the story of the dwarf Thorin's battle with the terrible monster, the leader of the orcs, the gruesome pale orc Azog. In this battle scene, the hideous orc

09:02

decapitates Thorin's grandfather who was the reigning king of the dwarfs and he swings it triumphantly in the air and then he hurls it to the ground and this incites all of the rest of the hideous orcs. Thorin watches this in horror. It appears as if the dwarfs are on the verge of utter defeat. Thorin screams out in defiance and then he races towards the grotesque Azog.

09:32

wielding his sword and his shield. The repulsive orc, who's at least five times taller than Thorin, swings his giant club at Thorin and this knocks his sword and his shield to the ground. So Thorin is utterly defenseless. Without a sword and shield, there's really no way that he can survive the next blow that comes. The fearsome Azog raises his massive club

10:01

over his shoulder. He's channeling all of his strength and then he brings it crashing down towards Thorin's head. Thorin's defeat seems assured, yet in that moment Thorin grabs something. He grabs something near him and he uses it to protect him from Azog's blow. Do you know what he grabs? Do you know what it is? Well listen to this clip and see.

10:31

You long time listeners are going to find this super, super interesting and theologically profound. Here's the clip.

10:44

began.

10:47

be heading the king.

11:04

Thorin's father was driven mad by grief. He went missing, taken prisoner or killed. We did not know.

11:15

We were leaderless. Defeat and death are upon us.

11:26

is when I saw him.

11:32

A young dwarf prince facing down the pale orc.

11:43

You alone have used this terrible phone.

11:57

wielding nothing but an open branch as a shield.

12:15

The Defiler

12:20

Turin would not be so easily broken.

12:31

How did Thorin survive the battle with the Pale Orc? Well, Balin tells us that Thorin grabbed the branch of an oak tree. The branch of an oak tree to protect him. Balin says, quote,

13:01

be so easily broken. Don't think for a second that J.R.R. Tolkien didn't know what he was doing when he wrote that Thorin used the branch of an oak to save him that day. Because Tolkien absolutely did. If you remember, Tolkien drew heavily from the Norse legend of Sigmund, where if you'll remember, Sigmund the king's son was the only one who could pull the sword from the barn stoker tree. The special weapon he needed to defeat

13:30

the dragon and which represented a branch of the tree. know, Tolkien absolutely knew what the oak tree represented symbolically and he purposely used it right here in The Hobbit as a way to both reveal and conceal the theology. It's pretty fantastic. So what did the oak tree represent symbolically? Well, I'm not going to go over it again here. We've discussed the oak tree.

13:59

several times on the podcast, including in our last episode, so you long-time listeners should know. If you're a new listener, there are loads of back episodes that are worth listening to if you'd like to know what the oak tree represented symbolically. After Thorin uses the oaken branch to protect himself from the fearsome orc's fatal blow, Thorin grabs a sword and he charges towards the pale oak

14:28

and he severs his arm. The orc stumbles backwards and collapses to the ground. So Thorin thinks he's probably on his way to dying. Thorin triumphantly raises his sword and he charges with full courage towards the army of raging orcs who await him. The army of dwarfs are inspired by this and they raise their swords in alliance with Thorin and they charge towards the orcs.

14:58

Great battle ensues. But it's what the old white beard dwarf Balin says next that reveals Tolkien's familiarity with the theology taught within the ancient tradition. Listen to what Balin says.

15:23

I thought to myself

15:29

There is one who I could follow.

15:35

There is one.

15:50

I love that Balin says, quote, there is one that I could follow. There is one I could call king. This is the theology of the ancient tradition in a nutshell. Upon defeating the hideous pale orc with the branch of an oak tree, Thorin is now worthy to be called king. In the movie, when Balin says these words,

16:19

The camera shows Thorin climbing to the top of a hill, which is not insignificant. The branch of the oak tree in one hand and a special sword in the other hand. Both symbolize the same thing. The clip's worth watching, so if you'd like to see it, you can find it on the webpage for this episode. Now know that was a bit of a detour, but it illustrates that

16:45

Much of the Dragon Slayer kingship theology has been expressed in male terms. So it's quite significant that in the Canaanite texts, the high god's wife is spoken of in these same terms. That she too is a Dragon Slayer. She is the great lady or queen who tramples the sea monster.

17:11

Now, some scholars object to the translation of the title Rabito Aratu Yam on the grounds that there is nothing in the Ugaritic literature themselves that talks of Atara actually engaging battle with Yam. I might find this argument persuasive if it weren't for the fact that there is an account in the Ugaritic ball cycle of a female god battling and victor-

17:39

notoriously defeating the Sea Dragon Yam, which is clear evidence that female gods could, and I would argue from a theological standpoint, have to be dragon slayers too. So to translate Rabito Aratu Yam as the queen who tramples the Sea Dragon would not only not be anomalous, it would do more to legitimize her position at the top of the pantheon.

18:08

as El's wife, the Queen of Heaven, than almost any other epitaph that Canaanites could give her. We're going to return to Adiracht in a minute, but before you do, who is this other female god who victoriously conquered the Sea Dragon? What do we know about her? Well, her name was Anat, A-N-A-T, and she's a very important figure in the Ugaritic literature. She's not only important because she's Baal's fiercest ally,

18:37

But for the purposes of this episode, she's important because she's believed by many scholars to be the consort or wife of Baal, the hero son of the High God El. Now, not all scholars agree with this conclusion, but despite this, there's actually considerable contextual evidence in the Ugaritic literature

19:03

to support the notion that she is Baal's wife. And we're gonna explore that evidence in detail much, much later down the line. When we get to the episode where Anat mourns over Baal's death and wages war against the god Mote, the god of death, who's another manifestation of the dragon archetype. It's Anat's defeat of Mote that frees Baal from death.

19:32

and by which he's resurrected. A narrative that's strikingly similar to the ancient Egyptian account of Osiris's wife, Isis, restoring Osiris to life after his death. Now at the pace I'm going

though, we probably won't get to that for quite a while. It's worth noting though that it's Baal's wife, Anat, who is the female god who is described in the Ugaritic literature as a dragon slayer.
20:02

We actually have an account of this in cuneiform tablet PRU, which was found in the Royal Palace of Ugarit and it's tablet 2.3 and it's found in lines 8 to 9, which read, in the land of Mahanim, he, and he here refers to the dragon, swirled the sea. His double tongue licked the heavens. His twin tails churned up the sea. She,

20:31

and she here refers to Anat, fixed the un-muzzled dragon. She bound him to the heights of Lebanon. Lebanon here is the cultural localization of the sacred mountain. Here we clearly see that Anat herself fixes or binds the dragon. Richard J. Clifford says this of the goddess Anat on page

20:57

59 of his book, The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament. Quote, from a speech of a knot we learn that soften. Now soften is the name the Canaanites gave to the sacred cosmic mountain, which is important because the battle that takes place between a knot and the dragon takes place on the top of this mountain. And why is this significant? Well, because the top of the mountain is the dwelling place of the gods. It's the location of God's sacred

21:26

temple sanctuary. It's the primordial hillock in the ancient Egyptian literature and the Garden of Eden in the Judeo-Christian literature. It's at the top of this mountain that a knot binds the dragon. So note how all three of these civilizations attest that the dragon be at the evil set in ancient Egypt like we talked about in our last episode.

21:55

the evil serpent in the Judeo-Christian Garden of Eden or the evil yam in the Ugaritic literature is described as being present in God's sacred temple sanctuary. That clearly speaks to a common source. We shouldn't be surprised that the awful dragon, as awful as he was and is, was present in God's temple sanctuary at the top of the cosmic mountain. Cause if you recall,

22:23

The ancient texts tell us that the dragon wasn't always awful. They tell us that he was originally a member of the council of the gods, one of the high gods beloved sons until that is he wanted to usurp God's power and dominion and steal the throne until he rebelled against the high God. An act which we see here led to a battle on the top of Mount Soffin, a battle that took place in God's temple sanctuary.

22:54

I point this out so that you have some context for why a knot's battle with the dragon takes place on Mount Soffin. And also so you can see the continuity in the accounts across the ancient Near East. Let's continue reading what Richard J. Clifford has to say about a knot's battle with the dragon. Quote, from a speech of a knot, we learn that Soffin is the scene of another furious combat. On one occasion, she

23:23

This is Anat, is provoked to describe her past battles for Baal against the monsters. Now Clifford's going to go on here and quote what Anat has to say in the Ugaritic texts, which are

found on cuneiform tablets three and four. Quote, did I not crush the beloved of El, Yam? Did I not destroy El's stream, Rabim?

23:51

stream here refers to Yam as the waters. Here she explains why she went to battle. Because the dragon and his minions wanted to drive her husband, Baal, from God's temple sanctuary on the top of the mountain.

24:19

Here we see that the dragon Yam and his minions wanted to kick ball off his throne in the heavens from his dais, from his powerful seat.

24:32

from this text, it's clear that the dragon and his minions wanted to get rid of Baal and that Baal's wife, took the battle to the awful dragon and his awful followers. In this text, Anat is clearly described as a dragon slayer. Throughout the Ugaritic texts, Anat is described as a mighty warrior, a mighty war goddess, which is not surprising considering this battle with the sea dragon.

25:01

She's a spiritual warrior. In the text, she's referred to by the high God L as his quote, daughter. And as you're going to see in a couple of minutes, one of her well-attested epitaphs is found 10 times in the Ugaritic literature. And it's quite important. And it's the epitaph, Yabamat Liam, where Yabamat is generally understood to mean sister-in-law or daughter-in-law. And Liam,

25:31

means people's nations or clans. So the title would mean something like sister-in-law of the clans or nations. Many scholars contextually translate Yabomet as progenitrix instead of sister-in-law to emphasize her role as the progenitor or mother of a family line of clans or nations. A scholar by the name of Joshua Fox wrote an entire article on this epitaph which you can find

25:59

in the International Yearbook of the Archaeology of Syria and Palestine, Volume 30, where he argues that Anat's epitaph, Yambet-Liam, is the female counterpart to Baal's epitaph, Yambu-Lilum, which means brother-in-law or progenitor of the gods or progenitor of the sons of God. In either case, these epitaphs emphasize that Anat and Baal

26:29

are the progenitors, the father and mother of an important family line or nation. Fox writes, quote,

26:58

there are accounts in the ancient literature of females who both battled the dragon and were understood to hold exalted positions. We know from the Ugaritic ball cycle that Baal destroyed the sea monster Yam with a pair of clubs that were specially crafted by the craftsman god, Cothar Wacossus. Following Yam's defeat, the text tells us that kingship was given to Baal.

27:26

KTU 1.2.4, lines 32 to 34 read, Lo and behold, Yam is dead and Baal now reigns as sovereign. In Cuneiform tablet 2.3, the divine craftsman Cothar Wacossus tells Baal, quote, Thou shalt take thine eternal kingdom, thine everlasting dominion.

27:57

if Anat's to be understood as Baal's wife. This would mean that Baal and Anat reigned together as sovereigns, as king and queen over an eternal kingdom, an everlasting dominion. In Cuneiform tablet KTU 1.108, she's given a sequence of epitaphs which conform with this interpretation, which include, quote, the mistress of kingship, the mistress of dominion.

28:27

the mistress of the high heavens and the mistress of the kept headdress or crown. Aisha Ramuni, author of the Divine Epitaphs in the Ugaritic Alphabetic Texts, says on page 109 that all of Enoch's epitaphs, quote, express Enoch's power and authority within the Ugaritic pantheon.

28:55

And I'd say they're amazing titles because they place the theology of the ancient tradition on full display. As I mentioned, there's considerable evidence in the Ugaritic literature to suggest that Anat is Baal's wife. And I'll share a little bit more of that at the beginning of our next episode. But just as a quick example in Cuneiform tablet 4AB and RS319, Baal and Anat are described as

29:23

having sexual intercourse and in Cuneiform tablet 4AB3, knot gives birth to their baby, a baby that the text refers to as a wild bull, which is a fitting image given that the bull was one of the most prominent symbols for a male god in the ancient world, as we've pointed out several times on the program. In Cuneiform tablet 4AB3, it reads, quote,

29:53

She, this refers to a knot, goes up to Arar, up to Arar and soften. That's the sacred mountain. In the Pleasance, the Mount of Possession, the Mount of Possession here refers to the sacred palace temple or kingdom that Baal inherited for slaying the sea serpent Yam. She, a knot, cries aloud to Baal, receive Baal.

30:39

So here Anat goes to the sacred mountain and she proclaims glad tidings that a wild bull, young god has been born to Baal and then Baal rejoices.

30:52

This passage comes right after Balin and Ahnott had had sexual intercourse. The two had begun their roles as the progenitor and progenitress of God's orination. Before we move on, I've got a couple more things that I'd like to highlight about the Canaanite high god El's wife, Adiracht. In the Ugaritic literature, Adiracht is given the epitaph, Kha'nit-alim, where

31:19

K'neet means to create, to produce, or to begat. And ilim means gods. So, K'neet ilim means the creator or begater of the gods. This epitaph clearly emphasizes her procreative role as the mother, the begater of divine offspring. El cannot produce offspring without her. Her presence is indispensable to the continuation of the divine family.

31:49

This could possibly go without saying, but I want to make sure that you're not missing the profound nature of what the ancients are teaching us here. They're teaching us that God is not a solitary being. They're teaching us that God has a family, that God is a family man, that he's married, that he has a wife, that he has children, that the divine realm is a two-parent household.

32:16

The ancients are telling us that the divine realm is familial, relational, and sexed. Adorat's epitaphs reveal that it's through her union with El that divine royal offspring are born and that the divine family is possible. Now the most important thing that I wanted to point out about El's wife Adorat is that she's referred to in the literature as Kadesh.

32:45

QDS. In Cuneiform Tablet 16.1.11, line 22, it reads, Atterat is called Kudzu, which is the same as Kadesh. A scholar by the name of John Day out of Oxford University says this of the meaning Kadesh. And this is written in his article, Asherah in the Hebrew Bible and Northwest Semitic Literature, published in volume 105.

33:14

the Journal of Biblical Literature. And this is found on page 388. Quote, the goddess authorized called on a number of occasions kudzu, a name meaning holiness or sanctuary. I think it's really telling that God's wife has given the epitaph holiness or sanctuary. The root of kudzu, Kadesh,

33:42

is used in a lot of different Semitic languages, but it's always used to convey a couple of ideas. Consecration, sanctity, and separation from the profane. When it's used as a noun, kudzu means holiness, a holy place, a sanctuary, or a temple. In fact, the Aramean word for temple is kudza.

34:11

Day notes Adorah's association with a sanctuary or a temple on page 389. says, what are the major occasions in which Adorah appears in the Ugaritic texts? Most prominently, she appears in the text concerning Baal's desire for a house, which is a temple. The title kudzu clearly speaks to the profound sanctified nature of God's wife.

34:39

It emphasizes her sacred status among the gods. It emphasizes that she is the personification of holiness. She is holiness. What I really find compelling is the identification of God's wife with sacred space. On page 389, Day notes that her proper name, Adorat, denotes holy place or sanctuary.

35:09

Day writes, and he's speaking of her name, Adirrot. Quote, what is its etymology? An earlier suggestion of Albright was that the name Adirrot means holy place sanctuary. And this view is held today by such scholars as H. Geese and J.C. DeMore. In support, it is noted that the Semitic root TR, place, came to denote holy place.

35:39

sanctuary and this meaning is attested for in the Akkadian Asirtu, Essertu, Issertu, and Ashretu, Phoenician SRT, Aramaic TR and TRT, and Ugaritic ATR. The goddess Atharat is called on on a number of occasions kudzu a name meaning holiness or sanctuary.

36:07

And so it is argued that it would be very fitting if the name Atharat bore a similar meaning. In other words, is telling us that El's wife's proper name Atharat and her title Kutsu both mean the same thing, sanctuary or temple. God's wife is the personification of a sanctuary. She's so holy that she is sacred space.

36:36

is a sanctuary, a temple. This is going to be very important towards the end of today's episode when we get into the early Christian literature. Okay, up to this point in our discussion on God's marital status, we've seen that among the ancient Mesopotamians, Egyptians, and Canaanites, that the high god was unequivocally married. So what about among the ancient Hebrews? Was the high god of the Old Testament, El, married? Well,

37:06

It depends on who you ask. Generally speaking, if you ask modern day adherents of the Judeo-Christian tradition, you get a pretty resounding no. But when you ask biblical scholars, those scholars who have spent their careers carefully examining the biblical texts, the history and the archaeology of the Israelites, you get a different answer. Do you remember Dr. Stavro Kapulou, the Oxford trained professor who we talked about on the program?

37:37

Well, listen to what she says about the marital status of God in the Bible. Quote, after years of research specializing in the history and religion of Israel, I have come to the colorful and what would seem to some uncomfortable conclusion that God had a wife. Dr. Stavro Kapulu isn't the only biblical scholar that's come to this conclusion. In fact,

38:03

There's a significant and growing body of scholarship and scholars who argue, and this comes directly from archaeological evidence, artifacts that have been unearthed, as well as direct passages in the Bible that refer to Asherah. If you remember, Asherah is the Hebrew form of Atarat, the name of the Canaanite high god El's wife, who we've just been talking about, the woman who is so sacred and holy that her proper name and her epitaph, Kudzu,

38:33

actually mean sanctuary or temple. So let's look at the archaeological evidence. Archaeologists have found thousands of female figurines. They're known as Judean pillar figurines across Israel. These figurines date to the Iron Age II period, which spans from 1000 to 586 BC, the same time known as the Israelite first temple period, the time of King Solomon's temple.

39:03

The largest concentration of these figurines was found in and around Jerusalem. Now there are a lot of reasons why scholars believe that these figurines are representations of Asherah. There's two main reasons why. The first is because there's some strong iconographic parallels between the pillars and the Levantine goddesses. Most notably the prominent depiction of their breasts.

39:31

which emphasizes their role as a mother, a progenitress. And the second reason is because archeologists have actually found inscriptions that contain the phrase Yahweh and quote, his Asherah. The first inscription was found in the West Bank near Hebron. It was found on a tomb wall. And then they found multiple inscriptions

39:58

in the northeastern part of the Sinai Peninsula, right near the Israeli border. They found one inscription on wall plaster and then they found two inscriptions on pithos. Pithos are large storage jars. All of these explicitly stated, quote, Yahweh and his Asherah. Now, all of these inscriptions are dated to the eighth century BC. For example, the inscription on Pithos A reads, quote,

40:28

by Yahweh of Temin and by his Asherah. Dr. William G. Deaver, a Harvard-trained expert in the history of the ancient Near East and the ancient kingdoms of Israel, wrote the following on page 30 of his article, Asherah, Consort of Yahweh, New Evidence. Quote, the conclusion of our survey. And the article lays out all of the archeological and textual evidence.

40:57

is by now obvious. I believe that the lady of Adroud, now Adroud is the town in the Sinai Peninsula where these were found, is not simply a representation of the great goddess, but can be identified specifically with Asherah. Her appearance, both seated on a throne and mentioned in a text coupling her with Yahweh,

41:24

and named as an agent of blessing strongly suggests that she was revered as the consort of Yahweh. As Dr. Stavro Coppel mentioned earlier, the idea that the God of the Old Testament had a wife might feel strange or even uncomfortable to a lot of people today. But the truth is, as we pointed out in the last episode and in this episode,

41:52

the ancient Near East, the high god is always married. The anomaly is when the high god is not married. Of course, there's nothing prohibiting Jews and Christians today from believing in a god who is not married. That's their prerogative. But what I'm trying to illustrate here is there is considerable archaeological evidence to argue that before the Babylonian exile, the ancient Israelites

42:22

knew of, made figurines of, and made offerings to Asherah, the Hebrew form of Atira, who was the wife of El and Canaan, and of whom we find inscriptions that refer to her as Yahweh's Asherah, his Asherah, in and around Israel. If this interests you, if you're interested in learning more about this, there are a lot of books and articles that have been written on the subject, books

42:52

like When God Had a Wife, The Fall and Rise of the Sacred Feminine in the Judeo-Christian Tradition by Lynn Picknett and Clive Prince, Did God Have a Wife by William G. Deaver, The Hebrew Goddess by Rafael Ptai, and Asherah, History's Vanquished Goddess by Darlene Koznik. These books do a really nice job of laying out the evidence.

43:20

The BBC also published a docu-series titled, Did God Have a Wife with Dr. Stavro Kapulou. And PBS published another docu-series by the same name with Dr. Deaver. If you'd like to watch either of those, I've posted a link to them on the webpage for this episode. In addition, if you'd like to see pictures of the Judean pillar figurines or the inscription of Yahweh and his Asherah, you can find them too on the webpage for this episode.

43:49

In terms of the biblical evidence, the name Asherah or Asereem is found 40 times in the Hebrew Bible. John Barclay Burns of George Mason University notes in his article, Female Pillar Figurines of the Iron Age, A Study in Text and Artifact found in volume 36 of Andrews University Seminary Studies, the following on page 24, quote, the majority of references to Asherah

44:19

would appear to indicate a cultic object. The figure was made of wood, planted or driven in the ground or erected often beside an altar. In light of the textual evidence and in view of the connection of the goddess with a tree, Asherah was most likely an artificial and stylized sacred tree. What Burns is telling us here

44:48

is that the references to Asherah in the Hebrew Bible associate her with a cultic object, an artificial or stylized tree of some sort that was planted beside an altar. Now this is interesting. Asherah's association with a tree and an altar is stated explicitly in Deuteronomy chapter 16 verse 21, which reads, and this is the English standard version, quote,

45:18

You shall not plant any tree as an asherah beside the altar you build for the Lord your God. The Amplified Bible translation says this. You shall not plant for yourself an asherah of any kind of tree or wood beside the altar of the Lord your God, which you shall make. Okay, there's a couple of things that are worth noting here. First note how in ancient Israel the symbol used

45:46

to signify Asherah, God's wife, was a tree or a cultic object of some type that looked like a tree. This is in complete conformity with what we saw in ancient Egypt, where the high god Atum's wife, you saw us, was symbolized by an acacia tree. Second, you'll note that the author of this text is telling the Israelites that they're not supposed to do this. Create a stylized tree and place it beside the altar of Yahweh.

46:17

This is highly, highly suspect because during the first temple period, this is exactly what was placed near the altar in Yahweh's temple, a stylized tree. You might be more familiar with it by its name, the menorah. In 1 Kings chapter seven, verse 49, we're told that the menorah stood

46:45

before the inner sanctuary. But in the Christian New Testament in Revelation chapter 22 verse 2, John the beloved sees a vision of the Holy of Holies and in that vision he sees the tree of life planted there in the midst by the throne of God.

47:08

So what are we to make of the prohibition to this in Deuteronomy? If a tree was actually placed near the altar to Yahweh in King Solomon's temple? Well, there's a general consensus among biblical scholars that the book of Deuteronomy, where the prohibition is found, was composed or compiled during the late monarchical period and then later edited into its current form during the Babylonian exile.

47:37

The group of authors or editors who shaped the theological and literary perspective found in Deuteronomy are known among scholars as the Deuteronomists. The reason this is important is because scholars like Margaret Barker, who you can find on our companion website, theancienttradition.com under scholars, lays out a considerable amount of evidence that the Deuteronomists altered the text.

48:03

to radically reform and deliberately suppress the older Jerusalem temple tradition. She's written a number of books on this subject, all of which are very good. As part of their editing agenda,

Barker argues they deliberately eradicated Asherah from Israelite religion. This was done, she argues, as part of a larger strategy by the Deuteronomists.

48:32

to impose strict monotheism. If you aren't familiar with a lot of the biblical scholarship that's been produced in the past couple of decades, you may not be aware that there is pretty conclusive evidence that ancient Israel was a polytheistic religion before the Babylonian exile. The BBC documentary I mentioned earlier, hosted by Dr. Stavro Coppulu, lays this all out. Here's what she says.

49:06

I've come to the very place where the Bible says monotheism was practiced. This is probably where the Temple of Jerusalem once stood, supposedly the sanctuary where only one God was revered. And yet, if you examine the biblical texts, you find within them clear references to more than one God here in Jerusalem itself. God, it seems, didn't always act alone.

49:34

I saw Yahweh sitting on his throne, with all the host of heaven standing beside him, to the left of him and the right of him.

49:43

God has taken his place in the divine council. In the midst of the gods, he holds judgment. Let us make mankind in our image according to our likeness. Who is like you, Yahweh, among the gods? The Bible itself is telling us that Israel had its own divine council, its own pantheon of gods.

50:07

In other words, the religion of the Israelites was polytheistic, just like that of the Canaanites. It's not the conventional view, and it weakens further the foundations of monotheism. But Herbert Neer, a professor of biblical history, has researched the real beliefs and practices of the ancient Israelites. He feels we're blinded to the polytheism in the Bible's pages. So do you think Israelite religion was polytheistic?

50:36

Of course I do think that, and we have many traces of it conserved in the Old Testament. Only if you read the Old Testament through the lenses of monotheism, you should neglect several important texts and you could come to the conclusion that Abraham and Moses were monotheistic believers of Yahweh. But as we now know, it was quite different. In the Old Testament we have several texts which speak about a divine council, for example also in the Psalms and in the Prophets.

51:02

So there are divine beings helping Yahweh to fulfill his duties. For example, if something has to be done on earth, Yahweh has to send his messenger. So when we read texts like, who is like you or Yahweh among the gods, this is a reference to the divine council, to a polytheism. Yes, and a very clear reference, of course. So polytheism was normal in ancient Israel too? Yes, it was normal like in any other ancient Near Eastern cultures.

51:31

If you're a long time listener to the program, you know we've hit on much of what Dr. Stavro Coppulu and the other biblical scholars argue here. That ancient Israel was originally polytheistic or henotheistic. We talked about this in episode number 16, the council of the gods

and in episode number 17, more than one God. In the Hebrew Bible, there's evidence that in the early ancient Israelite religion, the Israelite God El

52:00

and the Israelite God Yahweh were two separate gods who were later merged into one. As we saw in the Septuagint in Deuteronomy chapter 32 verses 8 9, Yahweh was originally understood to be El's son, a distinction that's preserved in much of the New Testament, especially in the book of Hebrews, where God the Father is understood to be Christ's actual father and Christ is understood to be God's actual son.

52:28

And when we consider Asherah, like we've done in today's episode, what we get is the Father, the Mother, and the Son. A family. This really comes to fruition in the New Testament when God the Father and the Virgin Mary have a son, Christ. It's very, very difficult to reconcile Christ's conception.

52:55

with the theology where God the Father and God the Son are the same thing. It takes a lot of mental gymnastics to make sense of God the Son conceiving himself with his mother Mary. I remind you that the notion that God the Father and God the Son are one being and the notion that God is sexless and without form are later ideas. In their original form,

53:25

God was a sext being who had a wife with whom he had a son. This is the form in the ancient world. In ancient Mesopotamia, the high god On was married to Key and they had a son Enki. In ancient Egypt, the high god Atum was married to Ussas and they had a son Shu. In Canaan, the high god El was married to Atarat

53:54

and they had a son, Baal. This same family-based theology is clear to see in the New Testament when the text is not forced to conform with later ideas like strict monotheism, Trinitarian theology, or Plato's philosophical ideas of a sexless, formless God. Somehow I think a lot of Christians already know this.

54:23

And believe this, and that's because of the way Mary, the mother of Jesus, is venerated. A couple of weeks ago, I was in the beautiful little town of Sitka, Alaska. If you've never been there, it's worth visiting. In the center of the town sits a small cathedral, St. Michael's Cathedral. It's the oldest Russian Orthodox cathedral in the United States. In the early 19th century, the Russians controlled the fur trade in what we now call Alaska.

54:53

and Sitka served as their headquarters. So while I was there, I dropped in and I was immediately struck by this large, beautiful icon of Mary. It's called Our Lady of the Inexhaustible Cup. In this image, which is a recent commission, Mary is depicted wearing a crimson cosmic robe. There are two eight pointed stars

55:23

sitting on her shoulders. The robe veils her head and in the very center of the veil, the center of her forehead, sits a prominent eight-pointed star. Now we've discussed this several times on the program. The eight-pointed star is the symbol for deified beings, for gods, those who reside in the sacred center. If you'd like to learn more about this, give episode number 38.

55:51

and he went a little further, listen. What I found most striking though, was that Mary was depicted wearing a jeweled crown. She's depicted as a queen. And with her cosmic robes, this surely conveys that she is the queen of heaven. A queen is one who rules over a kingdom.

56:18

The artist is anonymous. This is common for icons, so we don't know who created it. But based on the symbolism in the icon, the artist is conveying that Mary is both a god and a queen, both of which defy orthodox theology. If Mary is the mother of Jesus, then we need to reassess whether God has a wife. I mean, in the New Testament,

56:48

Christ is conceived with a woman. He doesn't do it alone. And if Mary is a God, then we have to reassess strict monotheism. And if Mary is a queen, she reigns over a kingdom, and then we need to reassess whether God reigns as a solitary being. All of these are modern day reassessments.

57:16

The ancients always taught these things. So why is this icon sitting prominently in St. Michael's Cathedral? I do not know. What it suggests to me is that deep down somebody already seems to know these things or believe these things. If you'd like to see a picture of Our Lady of the Inexhaustible Cup, you can find it on the webpage for this episode.

57:45

As we saw in Canaan, the high god El and his wife Adorot had a son, Baal, who we learned earlier in today's episode was also married. He was married, if you recall, to the goddess, Anat. If you remember, she's the goddess in the Uridic-Baal cycle who battled and bound the sea dragon, Yam. Anat is a dragon slayer. So you'll also recall that Anat and Baal conceived and gave birth to a son, a young bull.

58:16

Continuing the Divine Family Line. This is interesting because in the early episodes of this podcast, we came across another female dragonslayer. I don't know if you remember who she was. Though her dragon slaying was described in more conspicuously spiritual terms. In a Jewish text dated to between 100 BC and 100 AD known as the Book of Joseph and Azaneth.

58:43

I mention this because these two female dragon slayers, one the wife of the god Baal and the other a human being, whom after she slew the dragon was anointed by God with the quote, unction of incorruption, which is a kingship or queenship rite. She was then clothed in a wedding robe, crowned with a gold wreath like a queen and married to Joseph of Egypt, where God

59:12

tells her in chapter 15 that she will be Joseph's quote, beloved bride forever. Forever. God tells her that her marriage to Joseph will endure into the eternities. It will be an everlasting marriage. I mentioned Azaneth because she's not only a good example of a female dragon slayer, she's also a good example of how dragon slaying, kingship, in this case queenship,

59:42

and marriage are all theologically interconnected. How they're steps in a grand cohesive theology. In this text, Azaneth's marriage to Joseph is the culminating right. Now listen to what

God tells Azaneth right after he anoints her with the unction of incorruption. This is found in chapter 16.

01:00:11

and been anointed with the unction of incorruption. Lo, now today thy flesh produceth flowers of life from the fountain of the Most High, and thy bones shall be made fat like the cedars of the paradise of delight of God, and unwarying powers shall maintain thee. Accordingly, thy youth shall not see old age, nor shall they beauty

01:00:40

fail forever. So what does God tell Azanith right after he anoints her with the unction of incorruption? Well, he tells her that she is now like a tree. Yep, a tree. God tells her that she is now like a tree that stands. A tree that stands where? A tree that stands in paradise. Yep,

01:01:10

just like all of the other trees planted in paradise, like we discussed in our last episode. God says to Azanath, quote, thy bones shall be made fat like the cedars of the paradise of delight of God. Now that Azanath has slayed the dragon and been anointed a queen, she'll stand like a cedar tree in paradise, where she will not age

01:01:40

nor will her beauty fail. Now note how all of this is then tied to marriage. God tells Azanith quote, God most high loveth her and all the angels revere her and I love her exceedingly for that she herself also is my sister. And lo for my part I go to Joseph. It's talking about Joseph of Egypt here.

01:02:07

and will speak to him all these words concerning thee. And he will come to thee today and see thee and rejoice over thee and love thee and be thy bridegroom and thou shalt be his beloved bride forever." So note there how God tells her that she can now be married to Joseph forever, for eternity.

01:02:33

which is really interesting because this text is believed to be a Jewish text. So here we have a Jewish text talking about marriages that last forever into eternity. Remember, she's been anointed with the oil of incorruption, the oil of immortality. So when the text says forever, that's what the text means. For eternity. This text,

01:03:00

clearly speaks of marriages lasting into and existing in heaven. Now listen to what God tells her, quote,

01:03:28

and adorn thyself as a good bride and make thyself ready to meet him. And when the angel of the Lord in the shape of a man had finished speaking these words to Azanath, she rejoiced." As a quick aside, did you catch that the text referred to God as in the shape of a man? That's what the text says. And again, this is believed by scholars to be a Jewish text.

01:03:57

In chapter 18, we read that Azanath does as God asks her, and adorns herself in the first robe, the ancient robe, which we're told in the text turns out to be a robe like lightning. When the text refers to this robe as her quote, first robe or ancient robe, a robe that the text then tells us is like lightning,

01:04:24

Scholars think that this refers in some way to a former light or glory that Azenith used to have in the first, which Isermais refers to the first time, which is super intriguing. The text tells us that she does this and then adorns herself with precious stones and jewelry. After this, the text tells us, quote, and a golden wreath she put about her head.

01:04:52

She placed a golden crown atop her head. She's a queen. She does all of this in preparation for her wedding to Joseph, which again, God tells her will last forever. The Slavonic version of the text actually states that she put on wedding remnant and decked herself like a bride for the wedding chamber. Keep the wedding chamber aspect of this passage in your back pocket because it's going to be important at the very close of today's episode.

01:05:20

What's interesting is that right after this, Azanath sees a reflection of herself in a water basin. And she notes that her face shines like the sun. There is a glory to her. But then listen to this. In the reflection, she sees herself once again as a tree. And this is found in chapter 18.

01:05:47

In this text, she looks into the basin and she sees her eyes and her cheeks and her lips, and then she sees her neck. And it says, as an all variegated Cyprus. Cyprus. A Cyprus, of course, is a tree. If you aren't familiar with the word variegated, it usually means colorful, which is interesting because Cyprus trees are evergreens, so they're never quote colorful. A variegated Cyprus.

01:06:15

usually refers to a cypress tree whose leaves have lightened. And when this happens, the leaves take on a golden hue. So note how when Azaneth looks into the basin, she sees that she looks like a golden tree. This is fascinating. If you'd like to see a picture or two of variegated cypress trees, you can find them on the webpage for this episode.

01:06:44

After this, Azanath and Joseph are married. And the Pharaoh says to Joseph in chapter 21, quote,

01:07:12

is as the son of the Most High, and thou shalt be called his bride henceforth and forever." Note again how this text speaks to the notion of marriage lasting, quote, unto time eternal. This is theologically breathtaking. Also noted in this text how Joseph is referred to as, quote, the son of the Most High.

01:07:41

This will be important down the line. All in all, note how Azenith's triumph over the dragon is connected not only to queenship, but to immortality where she'll stand like a tree in paradise. And to marriage, a marriage to Joseph that the text tells us will last, quote, unto time eternal. The notion of a marriage that is eternal

01:08:10

makes sense if God, like the ancients teach, is himself married. If you'd like to listen to a full audio recording of the book of Joseph and Azanith, you can find it on our sister podcast, The Ancient Tradition Audio-Rid. I want to conclude this episode by taking a look at the marital

status of Christ in the early Christian writings. When we examine these texts, we find that there is not

01:08:38

a single passage in either the canonical or apocryphal writings that says Jesus was married. But at the same time, I'd also like to know that when we examine these texts, we don't find a single passage in either the canonical or apocryphal writings that says Jesus is not married. Those who say Jesus was not married don't have any more textual evidence to support their claim than those who say he was married.

01:09:07

The old adage, the absence of evidence is not the evidence of absence is apropos here. The plain fact is that we just don't know what Christ's marital status was. There's no textual evidence either way to definitively claim that he was or was not married. Historically speaking though, it's important to point out that in the ancient world,

01:09:36

the son of the high god, like the high god himself was married. In ancient Egypt, Atum's son Shu was married to Tefnut, and Osiris, the hero son, was married to Isis, and the archetypal earthly son Horus was married to Hathor. In Mesopotamia, An's son Enki was married to Damkina,

01:10:06

And the hero son, Marduk, was married to Sarpunet. In Canaan, El-San-Bal, the hero son, like we noted in today's episode, was married to Anat. And in ancient Israel, Yahweh, who's mentioned in the Septuagint in Deuteronomy chapter 32, eight to nine, as one of the most high God's sons, appears to be understood by early Israelites to be married to Asherah.

01:10:34

as is evidenced by the Judean pillar figurines and the inscriptions that refer to Yahweh and His Asherah. So if I were to guess whether or not Christ, the hero son of El, God the Father, was married, I would guess that he was. Because that is what we find across the ancient world. The hero son was married to...

01:11:03

Marriage as you can see was part and partial to the theology of the ancient tradition Before I close this out. I want to offer up one last thought about Christ's marital status This is something that I've thought about for a while It's something that I've never heard anyone else suggest Scholar or layman so keep that in mind Still the same. I think there's something here If you'll recall earlier in today's discussion on otter off

01:11:34

the high god El's wife. We noted that Atarat's proper name, Atarat, and the special epitaph that was given to her, kudzu, both meant the same thing, a holy place, a sanctuary, or a temple. From this we glean that God's wife is so holy that she herself is holy space, that she's the

01:12:03

personification of a sanctuary or temple. I find the identification of God's wife with a temple incredibly compelling because when we examine the title assigned to Mary Magdalene in the early Christian tradition, we find the same thing. The name Magdalene is not a surname.

01:12:31

It's what's called a toponymic identifier. It means of. It's widely believed, and there's a good reason for this, that the designation Magdalene means of Magdala, which refers to a first century Jewish village named Magdala, located on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. Luke describes Mary Magdalene in chapter 23 verse 55 as, quote,

01:13:00

the woman which came with Jesus from Galilee. So it's appropriate to conclude that she was from the village of Magdala in Galilee. This was a common naming convention used in the ancient world to distinguish individuals who shared the same first name. So calling her Mary Magdalene would distinguish her from the other Marys in Christ's circle. Mary Magdalene would be like saying Mary from the village of Magdala. Now,

01:13:30

I don't contend with any of this, it's sound. But I would argue from what we've seen in so many of the world's ancient texts that we've covered on the program, that there's more here than meets the eye. Remember, symbols were intentionally used by the ancients in their writings to both reveal and conceal important sacred truths. And I think that that is what is going on here.

01:13:58

See, the name Magdal originates from the Aramaic word magdala, which means tower. This is closely related to the Hebrew word migdal, which also means tower, and which comes from the root gadal, which means to be great or high. So here we see that Mary's name Magdalene is associated with being great, high, and with a tower.

01:14:28

Well, why is this significant? Well, it's significant because in the Old Testament a tower was used to symbolize sacred space. The most sacred space in the entire Israelite world. The Israelite temple, the Temple of Yahweh. I'm going to illustrate this by turning to Isaiah chapter 5.

01:14:56

the parable of the Lord's vineyard. Listen to the first couple of verses. And this is Isaiah speaking. My well-beloved, Isaiah is speaking of Yahweh here, hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill. Note how this vineyard is on a hill. And he fenced it. Note how there's a fence around Yahweh's vineyard. This is the fence, the cosmic wall.

01:15:25

We spent episodes number 51, 52, and 53 talking about. And gathered out the stones thereof and planted it with the choicest vine. Note how Yahweh planted a vine inside the sacred space. This is the same as planting a tree or trees in the Garden of Eden. It's talking about a person or people here. Now listen to this. And built a tower in the midst of it. A tower.

01:15:55

And where did he build this tower? The text says, in the midst. In the midst of the vineyard, right in the middle, in the sacred center of the vineyard, God built a tower. What this means is that the tower doesn't exactly represent God's temple. The whole vineyard represents God's temple. The area fenced off from the dragon. So what does the tower represent?

01:16:26

Sometimes this tower is referred to as a watchtower because it's the tower from which Yahweh watches over his vineyard. Again though, what does this tower represent? Well, the tower represents the innermost sanctum of God's temple, the place where God himself dwells. The tower represents the most sacred place in the entire cosmos.

01:16:56

the Holy of Holies. Yeah, the Holy of Holies. So when I read in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John that Jesus's most intimate female disciple, Mary Magdalene's epitaph, means tower, I pause. And I really pause when I couple this with the knowledge that in the Ugaritic literature, the high god El's wife, Atarat,

01:17:23

was also given a proper name and the epitaph kudzu meaning temple or sanctuary. With both Adirad and Mary Magdalene, we're getting an incredibly strong association between a female close to God and their name connotating sacred space, a temple or the Holy of Holies. In Greek, Mary isn't referred to as Mary Magdalene.

01:17:52

She's referred to as Mary the Magdalene. In its exoteric form, this would be Mary the woman of Magdala. In its esoteric form, from what we've seen in this episode, it would be Mary the Holy of Holies. Now, I'm not exactly sure what this means theologically, but it's there.

01:18:21

We haven't gotten into this in the program yet, but the innermost sanctum, the Holy of Holies in the ancient world was also associated with the marital bedchamber. So that's worth considering too. At a minimum, I think it's safe to conclude that these women were so holy that they themselves were the personification of a sanctuary.

01:18:49

Maybe it's that they were so holy that they themselves were a holy of holies. That's definitely what their epitaphs seem to imply, which to me is just mind blowing. I've got to leave it there. We'll pick it up right here in our next episode. With that, I'll leave you with the words of William Shakespeare, knowledge is the wing we're with.

01:19:18

we fly to heaven. I'm Jack Logan.

01:19:27

You've been listening to the Ancient Tradition. A Wonk Media Production.

Episode #58 - Who is God? - A Married Being, Part III

<https://theancienttradition.com/58-who-is-god-a-married-being-part-iii/>

00:00

Music

00:09

You're listening to The Ancient Tradition. A Wonk Media Production. Music provided by Joseph McDade. He is your host, Dr. Jack Logan.

00:25

Welcome to the ancient tradition. I'm your host, Jack Logan.

00:32

Welcome to the program. It's great to have all of you listening in today. It's beautiful outside my window. I hope it's the same outside yours. Today's episode is jam packed. So I'm going to just jump right in. Before I do though, I want to let our new listeners know that this podcast has a companion website, theancienttradition.com. You can find pictures and links and a transcript for today's episode right on the site.

00:59

And you can also find some general information about the podcast, past episodes, and a list of notable books and scholars if you want to continue researching. Sometimes there's a delay between episodes, so if you're curious as to when the next episode will be released, check out the website, because we usually post updates there. For the past couple of episodes, we've been examining who God is.

01:25

You've probably noticed that much of what the ancients taught about the nature of God is at odds with what much of the modern world teaches about the nature of God. And one such source of difference is God's marital status. In the past two episodes, we've seen that the ancients taught that God does not rule over the heavens as a solitary being. They taught that God is married, that

01:54

He rules over the heavens with his divine consort, his wife, the queen of heaven. A divine woman who we learned in our last episode is described in the Ugaritic literature as Kadesh, the personification of holiness, the personification of sacred space, which is quite something. So in those episodes, we established that the high God in Egypt

02:24

Mesopotamia and Canaan were married. And then we also looked at some archeological evidence that indicated that some Israelites during the first temple period, particularly in the vicinity of Jerusalem, believed that the God of the Old Testament was married. So today we're gonna wrap up our discussion on God's marital status by looking all over the world. We're gonna look at all of the major civilizations.

02:50

We're gonna look at the Hindu, the Chinese, the Hittites, the Greeks, and the Maya, and a couple others. And what you're gonna see is that with the notable exception of Islam, in every one of these ancient civilizations, the high god is married. So let's start with the Hindu. Among the Hindu, the creator god is Brahma. He's a member of the Trimurti.

03:17

the Trinity of Supreme Divinity, which includes Vishnu and Shiva. If you remember, Brahma is the God who resided inside the Haranyagarbha, the golden egg, the universal womb, the sacred center, which is akin to the Holy of Holies. Remember, this is the egg that appeared over the primordial waters, then broke open. Brahma came forth and created the heavens and the earth.

03:44

So what do the Hindu writings say about Brahma's marital status? Well, in pretty much all of the Hindu scriptures, in the Vedas, the Brahmanas, the Upanishads, and in the Puranas, Brahma is described as being married. He's married to the goddess Saraswati. It's in the Mutsya Purana, which is considered the oldest

04:11

and the most authoritative of the Puranas. It's dated to between 250 and 500 AD that we read of Brahma's enchantment and then marriage to the goddess Saraswati. In this account, Brahma sees Saraswati, he's enchanted with her, and then listen to what happens next. Starting in chapter three, line 35, we read, and this is the A Talukdhar of Ud translation.

04:40

Brahma continued uttering, Oh, what an enchanting form. Oh, what an enchanting form in his love for the goddess Saraswati. And the latter, referring to Saraswati, after saluting him began to circumambulate him in reverence. Brahma fixed his gaze on Saraswati and could not distract himself from her as she was circumambulating him.

05:08

He felt shy of turning his head each time to her direction. He therefore created four heads, each pointed to a direction in order that he may see Saraswati undisturbed without having to turn his head each time in course of her circumambulations. Brahma, fired with passion in her company, married Saraswati and began to pass his days in enjoyment inside a lotus.

05:37

He enjoyed the company of Saraswati for a hundred years and after a long time Manu was born to them. Okay, there's a lot of interesting things going on in this account. Did you catch what Saraswati was doing? Because it's important. The text tells us that she quote, began to circumambulate him in reverence. So she's making a circle around him. Do you recognize what Saraswati is making here?

06:07

If you've been listening to the program for a while, you should probably know. If Brahma is sitting in the middle and Saraswati is making a circle around him, what is Saraswati making? She's making a circum-punked. Yes, a circum-punked. And what is the circum-punked meant to symbolize? If you recall, it's meant to focus our attention on what's in the center.

06:37

the sacred center. It's meant to symbolize that Brahma resides in the sacred center of all things, in the Holy of Holies. Are you beginning to see how in no matter which religion we look, we're being taught the same doctrine here about God? What accounts for this? This is a serious historical, archaeological, anthropological, and sociological question. Now,

07:06

Brahma is so struck by Saraswati that he doesn't want to take his eyes off of her while she's circling around him. So what does he do? He creates four heads, one head to face each of the cardinal points, north, south, east, and west. Keep in mind though that this is symbolic. Brahma didn't literally create four heads for himself. The four heads are meant to convey a deeper meaning.

07:32

If you recall in the ancient world, the four cardinal points were used to mark the center place. Where the four cardinal points converged marked the center, the sacred center. The sacred center again of all things. And it's right where the four cardinal points converge that Brahma sits. So take note how this account is emphasizing the same symbolic message twice.

08:01

that Brahma resides in the sacred center of the cosmos. Now it's important to note here in this passage that Brahma is not symbolically associated with the sacred center until Saraswati comes onto the scene. It's Saraswati who creates the circum-punct. It's Saraswati's presence that triggers Brahma to create four heads.

08:29

If you recall in the ancient world when the ancients used the four cardinal points, they used them to symbolize geographic totality. So in this passage, Brahma's four heads are being used to convey the notion that he is the Lord over the totality of his creations. He is the King of the four corners. For the purposes of today's episode though, I want you to see that the author of this Hindu scripture wants you, the reader.

08:58

recognize that Brahma doesn't create four heads. He doesn't become the king of the four corners until Saraswati comes onto the scene. The author wants you to understand that Saraswati played some sort of really important role in Brahma's exaltation as a cosmic king. Now speaking of cosmic kingship in traditional Indian iconography

09:26

Brahma is almost always depicted with these four heads that he created after meeting Saraswati. And then on each one of his head, he's topped with a golden crown. Yes, a crown. And get this, each golden crown is shaped like a mountain. He's wearing four mountain crowns called Makuta crowns. Why? Because this crown represents the sacred mountain, Mount Maru.

09:55

which is the Hindu cultural expression of the primordial mound. Yes, Brahma is wearing the primordial mound on each of his foreheads. They are his crowns. You know, why would he do this? Well, he does this because it represents his personal spiritual ascent and his authority as the king that reigns on the top or the peak of the mound. Now, after this, the text tells us,

10:24

directly that Brahma married Saraswati. The text reads, quote, Brahma married Saraswati and began to pass his days in enjoyment inside a lotus. The text couldn't state it any more clearly than it has. The text directly states that the high Hindu god Brahma is married. So what did the text tell us that they did after they got married?

10:51

It says that they began to pass their days in enjoyment living inside a lotus. Okay. The lotus is incredibly important in Hinduism. It's one of the most revered, one of the most important symbols in Hinduism. It represents some very important cosmological and theological concepts. First of all, it represents creation. When the lotus blooms, this represents the cosmic birth of the universe and our world.

11:21

And it also represents enlightenment, the spiritual birth of those that are seeking greater light. And it's a really great symbol because the real life water lily or lotus sits right on the waters, just

like the primordial waters. And as the lotus blooms, beauty and order and creation is born out of the waters, just like the primordial mound. The lotus is a kin.

11:49

to the ancient Near Eastern arc or bark that sits on the waters. So just like the ancient Egyptian Ray sits on his throne in the center of the arc that floats on the waters, the Hindu Brahma sits on his throne in the center of the lotus that floats on the waters. The lotus is also a great symbol for spiritual enlightenment or growth because in the morning when the sun shines down on the lotus,

12:18

the petals unfold or blossom, which symbolizes the soul's expansion that accompanies spiritual growth or enlightenment. And when the spiritual growth is fully realized, when the lotus fully blossoms, it symbolizes divine perfection. So when we learn in this account that Brahma and Saraswati lived their days in a lotus,

12:45

That's akin to saying that they lived out their days in divine perfection together in the sacred center. And don't forget, Brahma sits on a lotus throne. This passage is basically telling us that the high God Brahma and his wife, Saraswati, lived out their days in the Holy of Holies, which is incredibly interesting, especially in light of our last episode where we

13:12

learned that Mary Magdalene's epitaph, Magdhal or Migdhal, meant tower. Both passages, this one here in the Hindu Mutsya Purana and the other one in the Christian New Testament, Matthew chapter 27 verses 55 to 56, associate female intimates of God with the Holy of Holies. That's interesting.

13:39

If you'd like to see a depiction of the four headed Brahma crowned with gilded Mount Marous, seated on a lotus throne, you can find it on the webpage for this episode. In chapter four of the Muttsia Purana, we learn a little bit more about the high God Brahma and his wife Saraswati's relationship. Round lines eight to nine, it reads, and this is speaking of the two, quote, she is the better half of the Lord.

14:09

Brahma and Saraswati are inseparables. Sometimes only one of the two puts on appearance and sometimes both do the same, but all the same, both are always together. They never remain apart as sunshine or light never lives devoid of its shadow. Similarly, Brahma never lives apart from Saraswati. That's a beautiful description of a very loving

14:38

relationship between the high god Brahma, the lord of the four corners, and his consort, Saraswati, living together as inseparable companions, divine husband and wife in the sacred lotus center. The passage we read earlier in chapter three ends with the following line, quote, he, Brahma, enjoyed the company of Saraswati for a hundred years, and after a long time,

15:06

Manu was born to them. So this passage tells us that a long time after Brahma and Saraswati were married, Saraswati gave birth to a baby boy, a boy named Manu. Now this is very, very important because Manu is the Hindu atom, the first man, the progenitor of the human race. So note here how in the oldest Hindu Purana, we read that God, the creator,

15:35

and his wife Saraswati gave birth to the first human being on earth, Manu. This is theologically significant and we'll talk about this a lot more in coming episode. I just wanted to point it out here so it's on your radar. When we look at the iconography of Saraswati, she's usually depicted wearing a white sare and in Hinduism, white represents clarity.

16:03

purity of mind. She's usually wearing the Makuta crown, the sacred Mount Maru, just like her husband, and she's usually depicted in the company of a swan. The swan represents her ability to discern truth from falsehood or wisdom, higher truth and knowledge. And like her husband, she's usually depicted seated on a lotus.

16:33

Let's turn to the Hurrians now. We haven't talked a bunch on the program about the Hurrians, but we should. Scholars believe the Hurrians were a non-Semitic, non-Indo-European people who spoke the language Hurrian and flourished during the Bronze Age, which was from the mid-third millennium BC to the early first millennium BC. They inhabited the area just north of Syria.

17:00

and Upper Mesopotamia and then South Eastern Anatolia, which is modern day Turkey. The Hurrians played a really important role in this area and they influenced a lot of their neighbors like the Hittites who inhabited the other parts of Anatolia or Turkey. The Hurrians were polytheistic and chief among the gods was Teshub, T-E-S-H-U-B. Teshub is sometimes referred to as a hero Hittite god.

17:29

because of the religious syncretism that took place between the Hurrians and the Hittites. We've talked about Teshab briefly on the program a couple of times. If you don't remember, not surprising, we talk about a lot of stuff on this program, but to kind of refresh your memory, Teshab is the hero god who reigned as the head of the Hurrian pantheon. In the Hurrian literature, he was given the titles Eri, which means Lord, and Shari.

17:59

which means king. And he was also referred to in the literature as Shari Enatze, which means king of the gods. And in at least one text, it refers to him as Eni Enaze, which means god of gods. There aren't a lot of depictions of Teshub that we have in the ancient record, but the ones that we do have show him standing on a bull or, no surprise,

18:27

standing on a mountain, which you know by now represents the Primordial Hill. Now don't believe I've ever gone over the account of Teshub slaying the monster Ulcumi on the program. We've talked about it, but I don't remember think I've ever shared the story. So I want to do that briefly here. In a text known as the Song of Ulcumi, Teshub battles the terrible stone monster Ulcumi. Ulcumi's name means

18:56

Uli destroy and Kumi was the location of Teshub's temple, his residence. It was the center of Teshub religious worship. So we can see by the monster's name that his main objective here was to destroy Teshub and his dominion. His main objective was to supplant or usurp just like

all of the other monsters that we see across the ancient world. He wanted to usurp Teshub's throne.

19:24

Now, Ulikumi was a monster that was made of stone, but the text tells us that he came up from the sea waters. In this text, Ulikumi is referred to as Basalt, which is a rock. The Song of Ulikumi, Tablet One, starting in Section 19 reads, just as Qumarbi, now Qumarbi is Teshub's father, raised Teshub. So now he has raised against him this Basalt.

19:54

as a supplanter. The basalt kept growing. It was standing like a shaft with the sea coming up to its knees. The stone came out of the water. So we're seeing a lot of parallels here with the sea serpent. In tablet two, we read about the battle. Starting in section 32, it reads, quote, Teshub, the king of Kumi set his eye. He set his eye upon the dreadful basalt.

20:24

Teshub sat down on the ground and his tears flowed like streams. Tearfully, Teshub said, who can any longer behold the struggle of such a one? Who can behold the terrors of such a one any longer? And this is really interesting. Here we see the king of the gods, Teshub, weeping over the terror that the terrible monster is causing. The tablet's broken in this section.

20:53

But at this point in the account, Teshub's sister comes along to help Teshub by singing a song, which is like a prayer. A song that the text says, quote, heaven and earth echoed back, which is super interesting because we get the chorus idea here, like we talked about a long time ago when we talked about the Lord of the dance. At this point, a wave appears out of the water and says something really interesting to Teshub's sister.

21:22

The wave says, quote, for whose benefit are you singing? The man referring to Ulikumi is deaf. He cannot hear. He is blind in his eyes. He cannot see. He has no compassion. So go away and find your brother, referring to Tesheb, before the skull of his head becomes really terrifying.

21:50

Keep the reference here to Ulikumi's inability to hear or see in your back pocket, because it's gonna be quite relevant when we get to ritual. At this point, the battle between Teshub and Ulikumi ensues. Now the text is pretty broken here, but it describes Ulikumi as growing to this absolutely enormous size. It's described in the text as growing.

22:15

to 9,000 danas high and 9,000 danas wide. A dana is 10.7 kilometers long. So we're talking about an absolutely enormous monster here. In section 43, it reads, it, Uli Kumi, took its stand before the gates of the city Kumi like a shaft.

22:43

So note here how Ulikumi stands outside the gate to the city. He's outside the city wall, the cosmic wall we talked about in episodes number 51 to 53. Then in section 60 it says, it, Ulikumi, has blocked heaven, the holy temples. Section 66, the valiant king of Kumi here. Then they came to the place of assembly.

23:10

So we're talking about the assembly of the gods here and all the gods began to bellow like cattle at Uli Kumi. Teshub leaped into his wagon and with thunder came down to the sea.

Teshub fought the basalt. The monster then says to Teshub, quote, I will go up to heaven to kingship. I will take to myself Kumi, the God's holy temples.

23:39

and the Kuntara shrines. Now Kuntara shrines are temples. They're the houses of the gods in the heavens. I will scatter the gods down from the sky like meal, which is like flower. So this suggests that there's a whole lot of gods in the heavens. Now, unfortunately the tablet breaks here, so we don't know how the battle ends, but it's presumed that Teshub came off victor, because in the other text it shows that Teshub is the one who ultimately reigns

24:08

as the king of the gods and not Ulikumi. And there are other hero Hittite texts that confirm Teshub's victory like the Song of the Sea, KBO 26.105 and the myth of Piscesa. Interestingly, Gary Beckman, he's a professor of Hittite in Mesopotamian studies at the University of Michigan. And he argues that the battle over kingship in heaven, like we've been arguing on this program, shows up all over the ancient world.

24:38

On page 570 of his book mythology, he writes, parallels with Greek material, especially with the theogony of Hesiod have led to the question of whether the myth of battle for mastery in heaven might be of Indo-European origin. But since similarities are also to be noted in Mesopotamian and Syrian mythology, we may rather be dealing with a mythological aerial feature, common

25:07

to the Eastern Mediterranean area, Anatolia and Mesopotamia. Which of course is exactly what I've been arguing that this is all coming out of one common fount. In terms of the premise of this podcast and some of the stubborn bits that we've discussed in the program, I hope this gives you a better idea of who the Hurrian High God Teshup is and how he fits right in with the dragon.

25:35

divine kingship pattern that we see all across the ancient world. Now for the purposes of today's episode though, the Hurrian Hittites tell us that the king of the gods, Tesheb, was married. And we find this on a god list. It's similar to the Sumerian god list on equals Anum that we talked about a couple of episodes ago. Alfonso Archie, doctor of Anatolian studies and the author of the Western Hurrian Pantheon and its background.

26:05

published in the book Beyond Hati, writes, speaking of the Hurrian god lists found in Aleppo, the following on page nine, quote, at the head of the pantheon are Teshub and his consort, Hebat, H-E-B-A-T, each of whom is followed by a court known as a kaludi of deities, respectively male and female.

26:32

According to KUB 29.8, 1, 3-7, and 50-57, the gods were aligned along the right side, the goddesses on the left. So like we saw with the Sumerian god list, Teshub is inscribed in the right hand column and his wife Hebat's name is inscribed in the left hand column. It's from this list that we see that the high Herohittite god, Teshub was married.

27:01

Now, interestingly, French Assyriologist Jean-Marie Durand argues that Hebat's name is likely derived from the Semitic root H-B-B, which means to love. So he proposes interpreting her

name, Hebbat, as beloved. Now, we haven't discussed this in the program yet, but this is quite significant. When we get into ritual, I'm going to argue that the phrase the beloved

27:27

isn't just a nice expression, but that it was used by the ancients as an epitaph to designate someone who was ritually complete, one who had experienced full spiritual rebirth as a son or in this case, a daughter of God. In the ancient world, the title beloved was used to designate someone who had gained favor or who had a special relationship with God. The epitaphs

27:56

Beloved of Atum and Beloved of Reh were regularly used in ancient Egypt by the pharaohs right in their royal titularity to express their divine legitimacy, their close relationship with the gods. For example, Ramses II, his Horus name was Ka-Nacht-Meri-Ra, which renders the strong bull Beloved of Ra.

28:26

In ancient Egyptian, the word for beloved was Mary, rendered M-E-R-Y in English, which is why Ramsey's the second's horse name was Ka-Nacht-Mary-Ra. Now there's lots of variants of his horse name. One of them, variate C3, has it Ka-Nacht-Sa-A-Tun, which renders the strong bull, son of Atun. So we can see in this variant that beloved

28:55

is replaced with son. And I'm going to talk about this a whole lot more down the line, but I wanted to point it out here because it highlights the significance of the Herohittite High God's wife's name, Chabad, which according to Durand means the beloved. To be named beloved is also significant in terms of the discussion that we had in our last episode about Mary Magdalene. Why? Well,

29:23

Because a lot of scholars argue that the popular name Mary, M-A-R-Y, is of Egyptian origin. The scholars argue that Egypt is most likely the origin for the name Mary because of the historical context of the Israelites in Egypt. They argue that Miriam, a name that was famously born by Moses's sister, was derived from the Egyptian titled Maryamun, meaning, like we just mentioned,

29:53

beloved of Amun. They argue that Maryamun became Maryum and Maryum was then shortened to Mary, meaning, you guessed it, the beloved. So this would mean that Mary Magdalene's name could be rendered the beloved, the tower. A rendering that I argue carries absolutely profound theological

30:22

significance. It's not too much to surmise that Miriam is a name of Egyptian origin because it's well established among scholars that the name of Miriam's brother, Moses, is an Egyptian name. And you're never going to guess what Moses's name is in Egyptian. It means son. So for example, tutmoses, tutmoses means son of those. In the compound name, the God's name comes first.

30:50

and then it's followed by Moses, which indicates to be born of or son of. So among the Israelites, the name Moses doesn't tell us who Moses is the son of, but considering the Egyptian context of the name, this implies that Moses is the son of God, which you'll see down the line,

like I mentioned, is of profound theological significance. A significance that is like we see in ancient Egypt directly tied to kingship.

31:19

Or in terms of today's discussion, queenship.

31:24

All right. In the Heru-Hittite literature, Teshub's wife, Habat, is given some pretty great epitaphs. Queen or Lady of Heaven. And in a Hittite treaty between Hatti and Egypt, it's actually inscribed right on the walls of the Temple of Amun in Karnak. It's known as the treaty between Ramses II and Hattusalee III. Teshub's wife, Habat.

31:53

given the distinct epitaph, Queen of Heaven. There's some interesting things in the Haryan religious tradition. For example, there are two distinct rituals there. The ritual of kingship is known as the Sarasi ritual. It confirmed Teshab's status as the supreme divine ruler. It paralleled earthly kingship. But there's also actually a ritual of ladyship or queenship. It's known as the Alasi ritual.

32:23

and it emphasized Chabot's status as the Queen of Heaven or as the tablet that outlines this ritual known as CTH 718. It's dated to between 1600 and 1180 BC, calls her in section 19, the quote, lady of gods and kings. I like that one. Gary Beckman, he's the expert on the Alasi ritual and he wrote a whole book about

32:52

cth 718 it's titled the babalili ritual from hatusha and this is what it says about the purpose of the ritual on page five he writes quote the goal of the babalili ritual is the purification of a member of the royal family from the pollution of sin so note that the goal

33:18

the Alasi Queenship Ritual is to purify those participating in the ritual from sin. In CTH 718 section 3 we learn that in this Queenship Ritual, a Katra woman, and a Katra woman is a priestess, is to go down to a spring and to make offerings into the spring of bread and wine and oil and then draw the water. The text refers to this water as the water of purification.

33:49

So he's then to take the purified water to the gate house, which scholars believe refers to the primary gate of the capital city of the Hittites, Hattusha. Now can't remember if we've talked about this in the program or not, but Hattusha was surrounded by a massive wall. It was over five miles long and encircled the entire city. And if you've listened to episodes 51 to 53, you know why Hattusha was surrounded by a wall. There's a lot of archeological remains still.

34:18

So we know that outsiders could access the city through five different gates, the Lion Gate, the King's Gate, and the Sphinx Gate. The most prominent gate was the Lion's Gate. So this is likely the gate where the priestess was to take the water of purification. Like I mentioned, there's a lot of remains today. So just as a quick aside, in 1986, UNESCO designated the ancient Hittite city of Hattusha a World Heritage Site. So if you'd like to see pictures of the Lion Gate, you can find them.

34:47

on the webpage for this episode. So at this point in the ritual, the participant ritually washes their hands. And then there's this really elaborate ritual that unfolds. It's significant to note that this purification ritual takes place at the gate of the city, because this implies that the participant cannot enter the city without being washed or purified first. And this makes sense when we consider that the walled city itself

35:17

is a microcosm, a microcosmic representation of God's grand cosmic temple. To enter the city of Atusha is to enter sacred space, so one must be purified to enter that space. As part of the Elasi queenship ritual, two sheep were involved. Beckman writes, quote, near the end of the tablet, the scene shifts to a riverbank where two additional sheep

35:46

one for the deity and one for the offerent are introduced as substitutes. Unfortunately, the ultimate disposition of these animals is obscured by a break in the text. So we don't know how these two sheep were used, but the ultimate purpose of the ritual was to purify the participant who was a member of the royal family from the pollution of sin. Overall, you can see

36:14

According to the hero Hittite literature, the high god Teshub was married. And there's a lot of very interesting things going on with his wife, Habat's proper name, her epitaphs, and the queenship rituals associated with her. Now let's take a look at ancient Greece. The high god of the Titans was Cronus. So according to the ancient Greek literature, was he married? Yes, yes he was. He was married to Rhea.

36:42

Together Cronus and Rhea ruled as the king and the queen of the Titans. In line 453 of Hesiod's Theogony we read, and this is the Hugh G. Evelyn White translation, quote, But Rhea was subject in love to Cronus and bore splendid children, Hestia, Demeter, and gold-shot Hera, and strong Hades and wise Zeus. So as we can see here, Rhea is

37:12

the mother of the gods. Now, what about the high god Zeus who overthrew Cronus and became the high god? Was he married? Yes, yes he was. He was married to Hera. Together Zeus and Hera reigned on Mount Olympus as the king and queen of the gods. She is the queen of the 12 Olympians on Mount Olympus. We read of Zeus's marriage to Hera.

37:40

between lines 920 and 925 of Hesiod's theogony, which reads, quote, he, Zeus, made Hera his blooming wife, and she was joined in love with the king of gods and men, and brought forth Hebe and Ares and Aletheia. In Aristophanes' Greek comedy, Birds,

38:06

dated to the fifth century BC, we also learn of Zeus's marriage to Hera. Starting in line 1720, it reads, quote, let your nuptial hymns, your nuptial songs greet Zeus and his wife. It was in the midst of such wedding festivities that the fates formerly united Olympian Hera to the King Zeus, who governs the gods from the summit of his inaccessible throne.

38:36

Oh Hymen. Now Hymen is the Greek god of marriage ceremonies. Oh Hymenos, rosy Eros with the golden wings, held he reigns and guided the chariot, twas he who presided over the

union of Zeus and the fortunate Hera. In this passage we can see it clearly indicates that Zeus and Hera were married. Interestingly, the goddess Gaia

39:05

gave Zeus and Hera a tree with golden apples as their wedding gift. Hera was so delighted to receive this gift and she asked Gaia to plant it in her divine garden, which was located at the far western edge of the world. These golden apples were believed to grant immortality to those who ate them and they were guarded by a hundred headed dragon named Laedon who never slept.

39:35

In the ancient Greek historian, Diodorus Siculus's history known as the Library of History, Book 5, we find a very interesting passage about how the Greeks on the island of Crete imitated or replicated the marriage between Zeus and Hera. Chapter 72, Section 4 reads, men say that the marriage of Zeus and Hera was held in the territory of the Nassians on the island of Crete.

40:03

at the place near the river Theron, where now a temple stands in which the natives of the palace annually offer holy sacrifices and imitate the ceremony of the marriage in the manner in which tradition tells it was originally performed. So when we read here that once a year, the people of Crete reenacted the marriage of Zeus and Hera, it's clear that their union was understood or honored as a heros gamos.

40:34

Their divine union was more than myth. It symbolized the archetypal marriage, the cosmic union that guaranteed fertility, order, and prosperity in the cosmos and on earth. Zeus and Hera's marriage served as the divine model. As above, so below. For all marriages, the sacred bond believed to be the bedrock of both divine and mortal society.

41:04

In the Greek literature, Hera is given a lot of really important epithets like bride, patroness of marriage, the yoke of marriage, one who brings the fulfillment of marriage, as well as queen, she of the heights. And listen to this one, she of the mound, life-giving, bearing arms or shield, the giver of victory. When we look at her name, Hera,

41:32

Entomologically speaking, nobody's quite sure what her name means or where it came from, but there's been a lot of scholars and historians and philosophers who have offered up varying possibilities. Two of these possibilities are actually quite interesting. One possibility is that her name is connected to the Greek word hora, which according to Strong's Greek dictionary means a finite season, a limited time. It's where we get our English word hour.

42:02

Hora is believed to be connected to the idea of being ripe for marriage, which indicates that there was a right age or a season for marriage. And what's really interesting is that Plato and other Greek writers used the word errata to describe someone who was at their most desirable, most beautiful or in the right season. And you're never going to guess what the Greek word errata means. It means

42:32

Beloved. Yes, beloved. According to Plato, errata is directly translated as beloved. It's used in the ancient Greek literature and poetry to describe someone who is deeply loved. All right, and

the other possibility, and this is offered up by John Chadwick. He's an English linguist and classical scholar. He argues on page 87 of his book, *The Mycenaean World*, quote,
43:00

her name may be connected to the Greek, heros. Now, heros is rendered in English as heroes or hero. Chadwick goes on to add that, you know, it's impossible to know since the etymology is pretty obscure, but the notion that her name could be associated with the notion of a hero is pretty intriguing, you know, especially since we've learned on this program, heroes are individuals who slay dragons and save others from the dragon.

43:27

It's intriguing to me to think that her name could possibly reflect the female personification of the hero. Like we saw in our last episode with Baal's Anat who bound the dragon or El's wife, Adara, who trampled the sea monster. Of course, it's not a sure etymology for Hera, but I also want to point out it's worth noting that the hero Heracles, the greatest of Greek heroes, is named after her. Hera.

43:56

Heracles, if you'll recall Heracles in a fit of madness killed his wife and children. Overwhelmed with grief for these actions, he went and sought guidance from the Oracle of Delphi and the Oracle instructed him to serve the King of Tyrrhyns. The King of Tyrrhyns told him that in order to be purified of his sin, he had to complete a series of 12 seemingly impossible tasks, one of which included slaying,

44:25

the nine-headed fire-breathing serpent Hydra, which he successfully did. In his name, Heracles, Hera of course refers to Hera, the queen of the gods. And Cleos is the Greek word for glory. So Heracles means Hera's glory or the glory of Hera. In the end, Heracles victoriously triumphed over all 12 labors

44:53

earning his redemption, bringing glory to the Queen of the Gods.

45:02

If we turn to Persia, to Zoroastrianism, was the high god Ahura Mazda married? Well, it depends on who you ask. In mainstream Zoroastrianism, Ahura Mazda is not described as having a wife, at least not in the conventional sense, but he does have a very, very close female counterpart named Spenta Armaiti. In other Zoroastrian traditions, Ahura Mazda is married.

45:31

to Spenta are mighty. And together as God and goddess, they give birth to a very important person in Zoroastrianism, a person by the name of Caimars. Well, who was Caimars? Caimars was the very first human being, the Zoroastrian atom, the progenitor of all mankind. Now, what's really interesting in terms of this program is that in Zoroastrian religion,

46:00

Cao Mars, the first man was taught, we presume by Ahura Mazda himself, in the very beginning, the quote, good religion. Carlo Credi, he's a professor of history of Iran at Sapienza University of Rome, and he said the following in an article he wrote on Cao Mars, quote, it is noteworthy that Cao Mars is assigned a

46:28

prominent role in Zoroastrian religion, being the first to accept the good religion in its entirety. Caimars was the quote, first to accept the good religion in its entirety. Well, how is this possible? He's the first man. I mean, this implies that God taught Caimars in the beginning. I'm getting a little ahead of myself, but what Crete is saying here is the crux.

46:58

of this entire podcast that in the very beginning, starting with the first man, God revealed a full religious tradition to human beings. And here we have the Zoroastrians attesting to this very thing that the first human being, Caio Mars, was taught and fully accepted the religious tradition God gave him. Now, the Zoroastrian account of Caio Mars gets even better though, because guess what else the Zoroastrians teach about him? They teach that he was the very

47:27

first king or shah of the world. Yes, the very first human king. The ruling shahs both in antiquity and in the Middle Ages claimed descent from him. And we're going to talk about this a whole lot more in a couple of episodes, but note in this account how everything is tied together, how we're starting to get a cohesive religious theology here.

47:56

The high god is married. He and his wife give birth to the first human being, whom they reveal a full religious tradition to and whom they coronate as the world's first king. These are key theological tenets of the ancient tradition. There's a Persian text, a Persian text of uncertain date known as the Awa de Omega.

48:24

even refers to Khayomars as the quote, King of the mountain. In the Sanskrit version, he's called the great King. Now, like I mentioned, we'll talk about this a lot more in a couple of episodes, but for the purposes of this episode, I want you to see that the theology is directly tied to God. In this case, Ahura Mazda having a wife, a wife who gave birth to the world's first man,

48:53

and first king. Let's turn to the Maya of Mesoamerica now. We learned that the greatest of the gods of the Yucatan is the creator god Atsamna. Like the rest of the gods we've seen, Atsamna was married and he was married to the goddess Ishell. Ishell was a jaguar goddess associated with fertility, pregnant women, midwives, medicine and war.

49:22

She's often depicted equipped with a shield and a spear. She, along with her husband, Yitzamna, gave birth to four sons, and in some accounts, she gave birth to 13. And they are known as the B'qabs. Now these sons created the heaven and earth, and all four of them were charged with holding up and guarding the four corners of the universe. In the account of the 13 sons,

49:51

Each son was tasked with ruling over one of the 13 upper levels of the heavens. We're to talk about both of these accounts in much greater detail down the line. It's important to note that under Yisamnus and Eshel's union, the Mayan people experienced prosperity and fertility. Their union was foundational to the Mayan earthly and divine order.

50:18

In Eukatech Maya, the name E-Shell means E, Lady, and Shell can mean light or shining or rainbow. So her name means something like Lady of Light or Shining Lady or Rainbow Lady. If

we turn to the Aztecs, you'll notice that they held a lot of beliefs that were really similar to the Maya, and that's because the Aztec arose

50:45

prominence several centuries after Mayan influence had spread all across Mesoamerica. Let's take a minute and listen to Adam Brown of Pantheon Mythology. Walk us through the Aztecs account.

51:13

before the earth itself had taken shape. In this void, there existed two powerful deities, Omece Kutli and Omece Huatl. They were the divine duality, representing the ultimate source of all creation. Omece Kutli was often depicted as a male god, while Omece Huatl was his female counterpart. Together, they embodied the balance and unity of opposites, the fundamental forces from which all things would emerge.

51:42

In the darkness of the cosmos, Ometekutli and Omesehwatl contemplated the state of the world. They desired to bring order to the chaos and give rise to a new cycle of creation. With their combined power, they initiated a cosmic dance, a divine union that sparked the birth of the gods. From their union, four gods were born. Weetzee Lopochli, Tezcatlipoca, Quetzalcoatl and Hipecotec.

52:11

These gods held the key to creating the world and shaping its destiny. Each deity brought their unique qualities to the emerging universe, guiding the forces of creation, change, wisdom and transformation. As the gods ventured forth, they encountered the giant ancient earth monster, Tral Te Kutli. This fearsome creature possessed the power to create and destroy. Its body formed the foundation of the world to be. With determination,

52:41

and divine might, the gods overpowered Tlaocatutli. They divided the monster's body into two halves. From its upper half, they fashioned the heavens and the sky, adorning it with shimmering stars and the radiant sun. A great ball of fire that would light the world. Its lower half became the fertile earth, teeming with life and potential.

53:09

The Aztecs held that the supreme god, the god who reigned in Omeyucan, the highest of the 13 heavens, and who represented the source of all creation, was known as Ometiotl. He was believed to embody both male and female. He was known as the Lord of Duality, or as the Two God. The male aspect, or the Two Lord, was Ometikutli, and the female aspect, or the

53:38

lady was Omei-sewado and they're referred to as the father and mother of the gods and the quote father and mother of us all. Together Omeitekutli and Omeitewado produced four sons. Shipe-totec, Teske-lopoko, Ketse-kwado, and Weite-lopotli. These four sons are referred to as the Teske-lopokas and each one was assigned

54:06

to be the ruler of a specific cardinal point, north, south, east, or west. If you recall, it was these four sons that took the dead carcass of the primordial dragon and used it to create the world, just like we saw Marduk do in the Mesopotamian enuma liege. We haven't talked about world ages or dispensations yet, but each one of these four sons took turns

54:33

ruling over a particular age and we'll talk about all of this more down the line. But for our purposes here, these gods were the sons of the two Lord Omete Kutli and his counterpart, the two lady Omese Waddle, who resided as one in the highest heaven.

54:56

Among the Inca, the chief god was the god Varacocha. Varacocha was believed to be the architect of the universe, the supreme creator, as well as the architect of civilization itself. Now we haven't talked about Varacocha on the program yet, but we're going to. For the purposes though of today's episode, Varacocha was sometimes, it varied by account, described as having a wife. A woman the Inca called

55:25

Mama Kocha or Mama Kocha. And get this, just guess what Mama Kocha means in Quechua. No, it's not beloved, but get this, it literally means mother of the sea. Mama means mother and Kocha means sea or body of water. So Mama Kocha means mother of the sea. And why did the Inca call her this? Well, because she had the power to calm the sea.

55:56

Where have we heard this before? Where have we heard that the high god's wife had the power to rule the sea? Well, it was in our last episode. If you remember, we learned in that episode that the Canaanite high god, El's wife, Otterod, was given the epitaph, Lady of the Sea, or the lady who trampled the sea. Well here, halfway around the world, thousands of years later, among a totally different group of peoples,

56:25

the Incan high God Vera Koch's wife is given the name Mother of the Sea precisely because she has the power to calm the sea. Now I might think this is just coincidence. mean, practically speaking, it made sense that people who live in coastal regions or near lakes would develop a God who had the power to calm the sea. But I get skeptical of this explanation

56:54

when this exact power is assigned to a female god. And I get even more skeptical when this exact power is assigned to a female god who is the high god's wife. And then that's when it just gets a little too coincidental for me to think it's coincidence. In one legend, Veracocha and Mamacucha had a son, Enti, the Incan sun god.

57:22

who was himself married to Mamma Kea, who gave birth to Monco Cawpock, the legendary founder and first Sapa Inca, the first emperor or king of the Incan Empire. Are you starting to see a pattern? Because you should. Among the Chinese, the high god, the Jade Emperor, is always described as married.

57:52

He's married to Shi Huangmu, also known as the Queen Mother of the West. In Taoist mythology and Chinese folklore, Shi Huangmu is regarded as the supreme goddess of heaven. She's portrayed as powerful, the leader of all of the goddesses. In Taoist temples, she's described as absolutely beautiful, one who looks to be in her 30s. I love that.

58:23

All accounts agree that she holds significant authority and rules right alongside her husband, the Jade Emperor, as the supreme empress of heaven, the mystical mountain, Mount Kunlun. In her

palace, a retinue of important goddesses and spiritual attendants surround her. Shiwangmu is mentioned in the oldest known Chinese writings, the Oracle Bones.

58:53

where she's described as a warrior goddess, which is interesting, much like Anat, who we learned in our last episode went to war against the terrible dragon and bound him. A scholar by the name of Masako Mori wrote this really fascinating article titled Quest for the Archetypal Image of Shi Huangmu, where he actually argues in chapter two that the development of the Chinese Shi Huangmu was heavily influenced

59:22

by a knot. On page 20, he writes, quote,

59:52

literary treasure trove and archaeological findings. Shi Huangmu is a mother goddess par excellence. Mori makes a point here that I've been trying to make throughout the podcast that nearly all of the religious traditions of today can be traced back to one found in the ancient Near East. In the Chinese literature, the Jade Emperor's wife Shi Huangmu

01:00:21

is said to have a very special garden on Mount Kunlun, which contains an orchard of peach trees, the fruit of which peaches grants one immortality. On Mount Kunlun, at a special feast that's held right on her birthday, Shiwangmu serves these peaches to her honored guests, granting them immortality. Now,

01:00:50

Don't miss the cosmic symbolism here of Shiwangmu's Peach Orchard. Because remember, symbolically in the ancient world, trees represented divine royal people. And if you'll recall in episode number 50, a cosmic temple, we learned that the gold one appeared to the old yellow one, the Chinese Adam, in the beginning and taught him that the cosmos was structured like a stone fruit.

01:01:19

He said, quote, the great earth lies in the middle of the world sea. The water flows around all the sides of the great earth as the juicy meat surrounds the seed of fruit. Now I don't know what precise type of fruit the gold one used for this demonstration, but since we're talking about a Chinese account here, I'm gonna guess that it was a peach. Peaches are the

01:01:49

stone, fruit, par, nun. What I'm trying to say here is that when we consider what the Gold One taught the Chinese Abbot, then we understand that every single peach in Xu Angmu's peach orchard represents a cosmic kingdom, innumerable cosmic kingdoms. And when we consider the orchard represents hundreds of trees, exalted people, like we discussed in episode number 56,

01:02:16

and each person tree contains hundreds of peaches, then what we have by an orchard of peaches is universes beyond universes. A Tang dynasty collection of poems that was commissioned by Emperor Kangxi of the Qing dynasty in 1705 gives us this really beautiful description of Shiwangmu's residence in the heavens. Take a listen.

01:02:46

This is starting in line 49, 42. reads, riding on the mist, I wandered to lofty world wind peak. That's speaking here of the peak of Mount Koon Loon. The lady of the Supreme primordial descends through Jade interior doors. The queen mother opens her blue gem palace. Celestial people, what a crowd.

01:03:16

So notice how there are loads of people there. A lofty meeting inside the Scion audience hall. Scion is a color of blue. Arrayed attendants perform cloud songs. Realized intonations fill the grand empty space. So it sounds like there's a lot of beautiful singing there. So convivial and certainly infinite.

01:03:42

by convivial it sounds like this is a friendly lively and enjoyable place and infinite it's eternal where God and his wife reside sounds like a truly wonderful place I'm running out of time so I'm gonna run through these next few quickly among the Shinto the indigenous religion of Japan the male creator God is a Nagi is married to is a Nami if you'll recall is a Nagi and is a Nami were the ones who

01:04:11

together used a jeweled spear to stir the chaotic primordial waters. And when they lifted the spear, drops fell from its tip and solidified to form the first Japanese island, Onogoro Shima. After this island was created, Izanagi and Izanami descended upon the island and built a great palace there and built a heavenly pillar on the top of the palace.

01:04:39

right there they performed a marriage ritual by circling the pillar. The account of this is recorded in the Japanese Kojiki. It's the earliest known compilation of Japanese oral traditions believed to have been composed between 711 and 712 AD. In chapter four it reads and this is the Donald A. Philippi translation quote

01:05:08

descending from the heavens to this island. They erected a heavenly pillar and a spacious palace. Izanagi said, then let us, you and me, walk in a circle around this heavenly pillar and meet and have conjugal intercourse. After thus agreeing, Izanagi then said, you walk around from the right and I will walk around from the left and meet you.

01:05:37

After having agreed to this, they circled around. So I hope you see how they're making a circum-punked here again. Notice how this is similar to the Hindu account of Saraswati, circumambulating Brahma. And I don't have time to go into all the symbolism of the pillar and the circumambulation of the pillar, but I hope knowing what you've learned on this program that you might have some idea of what's being symbolized here. We'll definitely talk about this more when we get into ritual.

01:06:07

After Izanagi and Izanami are married, we learn in chapter seven that they gave birth to a number of Shinto gods known as Kami. From here, the myth gets a little bit convoluted and Izanami and Izanagi actually get divorced. And ultimately in chapter 11, Izanagi produces by himself a daughter, the supreme goddess Amaterasu, considered today to be the chief deity of the Shinto pantheon.

01:06:36

She's important because she's considered the progenitor of the Imperial House of Japan. All Japanese emperors claim to be her direct descendant. I wonder sometimes if Izanami was removed from the mythological picture by way of divorce so that there would be no goddess that could challenge Amaterasu's supremacy. We definitely see things like that in ancient literature and in ancient mythology. But regardless,

01:07:06

Note that all Japanese emperors claim that they have the right to the throne because Amaterasu, the great August goddess who shines in heaven, is their mother. Like we saw in ancient Egypt when the deceased pharaoh claimed legitimacy to their throne, having been born from Atum's wife, you saw us.

01:07:32

If we turn to Islam, revealed to Muhammad in 610 AD, the high god Allah is unequivocally not married. But remember in Islam, Allah is not believed to have a body, nor is Allah believed to be male or female. Allah is believed to be beyond sex or gender. So it's not surprising that Allah is not believed to be married.

01:08:03

Finally, let's turn to Scandinavia. Among the Norrises, the high god Odin was married and he was married to Frigg, F-R-I-G-G. In Snorri Sturluson's 13th century, Prose Edda in the Gylfaginning in section nine, it reads, and this is the Arthur Broder translation, quote, there is one abode called Hildesgald. Hildesgald is the name of Odin's throne.

01:08:32

And when all father, which is Odin, sat in the high seat there, he looked out over the whole world and saw every man's acts and knew all things which he saw. His wife was called Frigg, daughter of Fjörgen. And their blood has come that kindred which we all call the races of Assyr. Now the Assyr are the gods that have people the elder Asgard. Asgard is the heavenly realm.

01:09:00

and those kingdoms which pertain to it. And that is a divine race. So we can see this passage that Odin and Frigg were the parents of a line of divine children. In the Norse writings, Frigg is described as the foremost of the Assyr, the highest ranking goddess who's surrounded by a retinue of goddesses like Fulla, Gnaw, and Hlin.

01:09:29

In the text, she's described as a loving mother, one who possesses great wisdom, and the relationship between her and Odin is depicted as one of mutual respect and partnership and a very deep affection. In honor of Odin's wife, the queen of the gods, Frigg, I'm releasing today's episode on a Friday. So what's the connection?

01:09:59

Well, the English word Friday is derived from the old English word Frigg, which means Frigg's Day. Yes, Friday is just the modern day English way of saying Frigg's Day. See, the Romans named each day of the week after one of the seven classical planets, and they named Friday after Venus, the goddess of love. So when the Germanic peoples adopted the Roman calendar,

01:10:27

they replaced the Roman gods with their own gods. And since Frigg was like Venus, was considered a goddess of love and beauty, they changed Venus Day to Frigg's Day. Before I

close out this episode, I have to say one last thing about Odin's beautiful wife, Frigg. You're never gonna believe what Frigg's name means. Just take a guess. Yes, Frigg means

01:10:57

beloved. See, the name Frigg is etymologically derived from the Proto-Germanic word Frio, which means beloved. And Frio is built from the Proto-Indo-European root Priya, which also means beloved. This root is the source of her name, be it Frigg in Old Norse,

01:11:23

Freia in Old High German or Freig in Old English. They all carry the same meaning, beloved. The sense of deep love and endearment. I can't make this stuff up. It's all right in the historical record. That's it for me. I'll leave you with the words of William Shakespeare. Knowledge is the wing wherewith we fly to heaven.

01:11:52

Happy Frig Day, everyone. I'm Jack Logan.

01:11:59

You've been listening to the Ancient Tradition. A Wonk Media Production.

Episode #59 - Royal Marriage & The Sacred Center

Not live