Did God Have A Wife?

Prepared by Nathan L Morrison For Sunday February 9th, 2020

Text: Isaiah 45:5-6, 18-22; 46:9

# Intro

1. Archaeologists, historians, and scholars have all contributed in confirming Biblical evidences over the years, things which believers already knew, but could then have proof!
   1. The Hittites – 1876: Archibald Sayce, 1906: Hugo Winckler
   2. The Pilate Inscription – 1961: Confirming he was “Prefect,” not just a “Procurator”
   3. Baruch’s Seal – 1975: Confirming his existence and lineage as described
2. People from that same group have also been the greatest critics, atheists, and detractors of God’s word, seeking to discredit, explain it away, and classify it with all the other nations’ mythology.
3. Sometimes when they do this, however, it has a different effect than they perhaps intended!
   1. Often times when they find evidences that they say support their agendas, the evidence actually supports the Biblical account as being true, and having happened!
4. “God's Wife Edited Out of the Bible – Almost” by Jennifer Viegas, regarding Francesca Stavrakopoulou’s research/theory that God’s wife the Asherah was attempted to be edited out. (<https://www.seeker.com/gods-wife-edited-out-of-the-bible-almost.html>)
   1. Francesca Stavrakopoulou is a British Biblical scholar and broadcaster. She is currently Professor of Hebrew Bible and Ancient Religion at the University of Exeter in South West England.
      1. The main focus of her research is on the Hebrew Bible, and on Israelite and Judahite history and religion.
      2. She is an atheist who claims the Bible isn’t true, and says Moses didn’t write the 1st five books because Moses didn’t exist.
      3. She also said, “The Bible was written by men with Daddy issues.”
      4. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7xVBldyy_Oo>)
      5. (<https://www.eternitynews.com.au/opinion/the-bible-was-written-by-men-with-daddy-issues-says-atheist-scholar/>)
   2. She claims evidences found from the 8th century, along with the Biblical narrative, show Asherah was worshiped alongside YHWH as His wife in the Temple.
   3. She claims this is evidence that male scholars and religious leaders later tried to edit out the Asherah and diminish her role in Jewish worship.
   4. Her work (books and lectures) was the basis of a 3-part documentary by Discovery called the ‘Bible’s Buried Secrets’, presented by Dr. Francesca Stavrakopoulou, broadcast by the BBC in the UK.
   5. She and others conclude that this proves the Jews were polytheists before 586 B.C.
5. While on the surface this article is infuriating, and blasphemous, it actually does the opposite of what they claim it should do (undermine faith), they admit it proves the Biblical account!
6. Did God have a wife, and was there a male chauvinistic conspiracy to cover it up?

## Did the Israelites Worship Asherah Alongside YHWH?

1. Asherah: *H842* “asherah”: happy, Phoenician goddess, Astarte, Istar, Ishtar; Ashtoreth *(H6253)*
   1. KJV: “Asherah” = grove (16), groves (24), Ashtoreth (3), Queen of Heaven (5)
   2. NKJ: “Asherah” = wooden image (12), wooden images (21), image (1), Asherah (5), Asherahs (1), Ashtoreth (3), Queen of Heaven (5)
   3. NAS: “Asherah” = Asherah (18), Asheroth (2), Asherim (20), Ashtoreth (3), Queen of Heaven (5)
   4. 48 times the Asherah is mentioned; hardly an *edit!* (Hittites: 47 times)
2. Judges 6:25-32
   1. In the early days of the Judges, the people had already began worshiping Asherah.
   2. Gideon tore down the altar to Baal & Asherah and used its wood to build an altar to God!
   3. The people wanted to put him to death but his father said, “Let Baal contend for himself.”
3. I Kings 16:32-33: Ahab built a temple to Baal and also “made the Asherah.”
4. I Kings 18:19-21
   1. Elijah called for the people to gather at Mt. Carmel, along with 450 prophets of Baal, and 400 prophets of Asherah.
   2. He asked, “How long will you hesitate between two opinions?” This implies they were worshiping both God and Baal, along with the Asherah.
   3. Israel in the north did and was punished for it! *(II Kings 13:6; 17:16: The Asherah remained in Samaria after Israel was no more!)*
5. II Kings 21:3-7
   1. Manasseh was evil, he undid all that his father Hezekiah had done for God, and he walked after Ahab (even farther), and he built an Asherah and placed it in the Temple!
   2. So not only did Israel in the north serve the Asherah alongside God, but then Judah did so as well, even placing the Asherah inside the Temple!
6. Not surprising that archaeologists have found evidences saying the Asherah was inside the Temple; for the Scriptures declare it was! (Women made “hangings” for her – II Kings 23:7)
7. The answer is YES, the Israelites served Asherah alongside God, even inside the Temple! *(That does not mean it was right!)*
8. Did God Have a Wife?
9. Gen. 1:26-27; Mt. 28:19
   1. God is plural when He says, “Let Us make man in Our image.”
   2. But it is not plural referring to a “divine pair” such as God and His wife, but to a divine trinity, “the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.”
   3. That also leaves out the modern take on Mary Magdalene being Jesus’ wife!
10. Ex. 34:12-17
    1. God warned them to not intermarry with the nations lest they forget Him and serve the gods of other nations, and He specifically mentioned the “Asherim” *(H842).*
    2. He said they were to have NO other gods.
11. Deut. 16:21-22
    1. God told them not to build an Asherah beside His altar.
    2. They did, and both Israel to the north and Judah in the south were destroyed! *(II Ki17;25)*
12. Is. 45:5-6, 18-22; 46:9
    1. YHWH alone is God, and there is no other!
    2. He created the heavens and the earth and He alone can save!
    3. Judah would be punished because they forsook God and served the gods of the other nations, including the Asherah! *(II Kings 24:33: Judah was punished for the sins of Manasseh, which included putting the Asherah in the temple – II Kings 21:3-7)*
13. Closest thing to a wife of God mentioned is His earthly relationship to:
    1. Israel *(Jer. 3:6-10; Hos. 2:2, 19-20):* Described as God’s physical wife, the people!
    2. The church *(II Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:27; Rev. 19:7-9):* Described as Christ’s wife, saints!
14. The answer is NO! God did not, does not have, nor will have a divine “wife” for He alone is God, and besides Him, there is no other! *(There is no saving power in the Asherah! – Jer. 44:16-23)*
15. Did the Israelites Believe God Had a Wife?
16. Jeremiah 7:18; 44:16-23
    1. After the fall of Jerusalem, the remnant that fled to Egypt twisted their history to show that their calamity began when they stopped worshiping the “queen of heaven.”
    2. Jeremiah reminded them that it was for worshiping the “queen of heaven” in the 1st place!
    3. He said to keep their vows and continue to sacrifice to the “queen of heaven” for God said He would wipe out all the Israelites who went to Egypt (44:24-27)!
17. The “queen of heaven” could refer to the moon as it did in other cultures, or to Ishtar of the Babylonians (goddess of fertility, love, war, sex), or they might have seen Asherah as God’s consort.
    1. She was worshiped in the Temple of God, and there are artifacts found that list their names together, “YHWH and His Asherah,” or “YHWH and His wife Asherah.”
18. These things don’t prove God had a wife, but that the minds of the people had become so corrupt in thinking this and attributing to God what was so common in other nations’ mythologies.
    1. In Babylonian mythology she was the consort of Tammuz *(Ezek. 8:14: Tammuz was also worshiped by Israelite women at the Temple!).*
19. The minds of the people were corrupt; it is possible they did *believe* God had a wife, and they were punished for serving false gods!

## Conclusion

1. The amazing thing about these archaeological finds is that they weren’t found in Jerusalem, or near the Temple!
   1. II Kings 23:4-7: King Josiah removed the Asherah and the things that didn’t belong in the Temple and burned them by the brook Kidron.
2. No, the Asherah was a false god whose worship brought about the downfall of Israel and Judah, and was not the wife of YHWH!
3. No, there wasn’t a cover-up, but in fact, the Scriptures confirm that the Israelites did worship the Asherah (as well as many other false gods) – a fact artifacts confirm as well!
   1. A cover-up would most likely have left out how corrupt the people had become and not mention that the Jews served her at all, let alone in the Temple!
4. The finding of these artifacts should impress upon us how wide-spread their idolatry went (found in modern day Syria), and how corrupt their thinking was.
   1. It also confirms the Biblical account, and so should also strengthen our faith!
5. We need to learn the lessons from the past – serve God alone, for only He can save, and besides Him, there is no other!
6. If not a Christian, you are subject to His judgment. Become a Christian! Repent & be baptized!
7. If a Christian with unrepented sin, you too are subject to the judgment seat of Christ. Repent!
8. Whatever your requests may be, let them be known ***NOW*** while we stand and sing!