**Deception or Decision**

**The Blessing of Jacob and Esau**

**Matriarchal Authority in the Old Testament**

# Introduction

In the study of the Old Testament an interpretive problem often arises in Genesis Chapter 27. This passage of scripture considers the blessing of Esau, and Jacob his brother, by their patriarch and father, Isaac. The textual exegesis implies that Rebekah played a prominent role in what many might call a deception. Biblical scholars and teachers have tried to explain away the treachery of Rebekah, while trying to maintain the righteousness of Isaac and his not knowing. Often the question of unworthiness falls upon Rebekah positioning her as faithless, by not trusting in her husband and patriarch that he would give the birthright to the deserving son.

This work presents an alternative view based on textual and scriptural analysis, which would imply that there was no deception, only matriarchal authority on the part of Rebekah. To begin, the chapter should be reviewed to understand the thesis and following discussion.

GENESIS 27

1 AND it came to pass, that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see, he called Esau his eldest son, and said unto him, My son: and he said unto him, Behold, [here am] I.

2 And he said, Behold now, I am old, I know not the day of my death:

3 Now therefore take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take me [some] venison;

4 And make me savoury meat, such as I love, and bring [it] to me, that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee before I die.

5 And Rebekah heard when Isaac spake to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt [for] venison, [and] to bring [it].

6 And Rebekah spake unto Jacob her son, saying, Behold, I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother, saying,

7 Bring me venison, and make me savoury meat, that I may eat, and bless thee before the LORD before my death.

8 Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to that which I command thee.

9 Go now to the flock, and fetch me from thence two good kids of the goats; and I will make them savoury meat for thy father, such as he loveth:

10 And thou shalt bring [it] to thy father, that he may eat, and that he may bless thee before his death.

11 And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, Behold, Esau my brother [is] a hairy man, and I [am] a smooth man:

12 My father peradventure will feel me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver; and I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing.

13 And his mother said unto him, Upon me [be] thy curse, my son: only obey my voice, and go fetch me [them].

14 And he went, and fetched, and brought [them] to his mother: and his mother made savoury meat, such as his father loved.

15 And Rebekah took goodly raiment of her eldest son Esau, which [were] with her in the house, and put them upon Jacob her younger son:

16 And she put the skins of the kids of the goats upon his hands, and upon the smooth of his neck:

17 And she gave the savoury meat and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob.

18 And he came unto his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here [am] I; who [art] thou, my son?

19 And Jacob said unto his father, I [am] Esau thy firstborn; I have done according as thou badest me: arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me.

20 And Isaac said unto his son, How [is it] that thou hast found [it] so quickly, my son? And he said, Because the LORD thy God brought [it] to me.

21 And Isaac said unto Jacob, Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou [be] my very son Esau or not.

22 And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father; and he felt him, and said, The voice [is] Jacob's voice, but the hands [are] the hands of Esau.

23 And he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau's hands: so he blessed him.

24 And he said, [Art] thou my very son Esau? And he said, I [am].

25 And he said, Bring [it] near to me, and I will eat of my son's venison, that my soul may bless thee. And he brought [it] near to him, and he did eat: and he brought him wine, and he drank.

26 And his father Isaac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss me, my son.

27 And he came near, and kissed him: and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son [is] as the smell of a field which the LORD hath blessed:

28 Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine:

29 Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed [be] every one that curseth thee, and blessed [be] he that blesseth thee.

30 And it came to pass, as soon as Isaac had made an end of blessing Jacob, and Jacob was yet scarce gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting.

31 And he also had made savoury meat, and brought it unto his father, and said unto his father, Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me.

32 And Isaac his father said unto him, Who [art] thou? And he said, I [am] thy son, thy firstborn Esau.

33 And Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, Who? where [is] he that hath taken venison, and brought [it] me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him? yea, [and] he shall be blessed.

34 And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, [even] me also, O my father.

35 And he said, Thy brother came with subtilty, and hath taken away thy blessing.

36 And he said, Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing. And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?

37 And Isaac answered and said unto Esau, Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants; and with corn and wine have I sustained him: and what shall I do now unto thee, my son?

38 And Esau said unto his father, Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, [even] me also, O my father. And Esau lifted up his voice, and wept.

39 And Isaac his father answered and said unto him, Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above;

40 And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck.

41 And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob.

42 And these words of Esau her elder son were told to Rebekah: and she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said unto him, Behold, thy brother Esau, as touching thee, doth comfort himself, [purposing] to kill thee.

43 Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; and arise, flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran;

44 And tarry with him a few days, until thy brother's fury turn away;

45 Until thy brother's anger turn away from thee, and he forget [that] which thou hast done to him: then I will send, and fetch thee from thence: why should I be deprived also of you both in one day?

46 And Rebekah said to Isaac, I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth: if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these [which are] of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me?

With the stage set and cast in place the curtain raises with an intimate discussion between Isaac and his beloved firstborn son, Esau. The prophet requested that Esau bring him "savoury meat such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee before I die" (vs. 4). The preceding phrase is an indication that the request of Isaac, and action of Esau is in preparation for a sacramental or ritual meal. As soon as Esau exits to hunt for the "venison" the proverbial plot thickens. Rebekah, now the main character and privy to the discussion between her eldest son and husband, enters the scene and speaks to Jacob, "My son obey my voice according to that which I command thee." Rebekah, in command of the situation orders Jacob to step into Esau's position and bring "two good kids of the goats" so that she may prepare the sacral meal for Isaac.

The objective of Rebekah as the matriarch, and the intention of this narrative was to ensure that Isaac bless with the birthright blessing, Jacob and not Esau before his death (vs. 10). Years before Rebekah knew by revelation which child was to receive the birthright. Genesis Chapter 25 reads:

  *21 And Isaac entreated the LORD for his wife, because she [was] barren: and the LORD was entreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived.*

 *22 And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If [it be] so, why [am] I thus? And she went to inquire of the LORD.*

 *23 And the LORD said unto her, Two nations [are] in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and [the one] people shall be stronger than [the other] people; and the elder shall serve the younger.*

 *24 And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, [there were] twins in her womb. (Gen. 25:22-23).*

The mother of the twins learned that "two nations" were within her, and that "the elder shall serve the younger." It must be noted that the revelation concerning the birthright came to Rebekah, and not to Isaac the father of the children. Rebekah, knowing that Jacob was the chosen one of the Lord and the one who should receive the birthright blessing from Isaac, began the preparations.

Twice Rebekah commands Jacob; "obey my voice" (Gen. 27:8, 13). Holding a position of authority, the matriarch directed her son in the arrangements that were to be made and the information that would be given to Isaac during the ritual blessing. She appeared not only to be fully acquainted with the liturgy, but also played a key role in the blessing itself. Jacob's fears are manifested in his concern that he might appear to be the "deceiver" (vs. 12) and that there would be "a curse...and not a blessing." This foreboding of Jacob was quickly silenced when "his mother said unto him, *upon me be thy curse, my son: only obey my voice*” Only in a position of authority may one be responsible for the actions of another, as Rebekah promised she would be. Had this been a deception, Rebekah as well as her son Jacob would be held accountable. Yet neither are reprimanded in the scriptural text by Isaac or the Lord. Jacob's mother accepted full responsibility for the correct or incorrect (as it seemed) performance and acceptability of this priesthood ordinance as executed by the patriarch.

Rebekah prepared the ritual meal, and then took the "goodly raiment of her eldest son Esau." These ritual priesthood garments *she kept in her house,* and then clothed Jacob her younger son (vs. 15). Rebekah was in charge of, and maintained possession of the "goodly raiment" or sacred vestments of the birthright son. These are the robes of authority that only the birthright son may wear, as he becomes the birthright son or patriarch.[[1]](#footnote-1) Rebekah, in preparation for the blessing clothed Jacob with the "goodly raiment" of the firstborn. This seems to imply that Rebekah's responsibility was to ***prepare****,* ***clothe****, and* ***present*** the birthright son to her husband and patriarch. Rebekah knew the signs for which Isaac would be looking and prepared Jacob for the ordinance and blessing by placing these "signs of recognition," that the patriarch would recognize by touching Jacob's hands through his veil of Blindness.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Notice the ritual motif that is taking place in verses 18-29. Verse 18 begins the questions of Isaac who was to endow the firstborn with the blessing. He questions; "who art thou, my son?" or (what is your name?) Jacob responded by stating; "I am Esau thy firstborn." Here the given name of the firstborn is given to the patriarch as a key word to legitimize the blessing. The act of Jacob taking upon himself a new name, even the name of the first-born may be in response to the command of Rebekah for Jacob to "obey" her voice. It also may be in connection with chapter 25 verses 29-34 where Esau sells his birthright, or that which is sacred for `pot of gold’ lentils to his brother Jacob. In Chapter 25, Esau "swear to" Jacob that he would have his sacred blessing declaring "what profit shall this birthright do to me?" "Thus Esau despised his birthright." Accordingly, Jacob could claim and take upon himself the name of the firstborn by virtue of purchase, and the acquisition of knowledge (perhaps even signs of recognition) required by the first-born to know. Following Isaac's question of "who art thou:" and the response "I am Esau thy firstborn;" the initiate continued: "I have done according as thou badest me." Stating that he has been true and faithful to his father's commands requests that a greater blessing be bestowed upon him saying: "sit and eat...that thy soul may bless me."

Isaac then invited Jacob to "come near" (vs. 21) so that he may "feel" or touch Jacob "whether thou be my very son Esau or not." Isaac must test the birthright son to be assured that his firstborn son is prepared and that he is not there unworthily, or an imposter. In verse 22 Isaac then applied the test of recognition, for which Rebekah prepared Jacob. Isaac states: "The voice is Jacob's voice but the hands are the hands of Esau" (the hands of the firstborn). Again in verse 24 Isaac asked the questions "Art thou my very son Esau? And he said, I am." Following the ritual meal, (in verse 25) Isaac requested that his son "come near now, and kiss me" (Gen. 27:26).[[3]](#footnote-3) While in this mutual and ritual embrace Isaac surrenders to the signs he was looking for and states: "Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine: Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee." In the following chapter (Gen. 28:1-5) this blessing is expanded and explained as the familiar Abrahamic covenant. However, this aspect of the blessing is done in connection with the marriage of Jacob so that the rights/rites of this blessing might continue in the family lines.

When Esau returned Isaac told him that the blessing given to Jacob would stand, and that Esau would be Jacob's servant. The Patriarch Isaac, accepted that the blessing given was inspired and could not be rescinded. Jacob had met the requirements, having knowledge of the signs and phrases of recognition, and most important having been prepared and presented by his mother as the birthright son.

The last verse of this chapter reveals that Rebekah realized that the priesthood blessing just given by Isaac would have no effect, and be invalid "if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth." Discussing the prospect of a Canaanite marriage, Rebekah stated about herself "what good shall my life do me?" If concern for posterity or temporal inheritance were Rebekah's only reservation the feeling about the spouse of Jacob would not be a disturbing matter. However, if linage and the blessings of the priesthood could only come through chosen family lines then Rebekah could say, "what good shall my life do me?" Had Jacob married, as did Esau, he would not be able to pass the patriarchal priesthood to his posterity, thus losing the birthright and patriarchal authority that Rebekah prepared him for.

The mother and matriarch, or Rebekah in this case, is responsible to make sure the blessings and ordinances of the priesthood are given to her offspring. The righteous priesthood holder is a glory to his mother who gave him life and prepares him for ordinances of eternal life. The worthy sons become the matriarch's inheritance of righteousness as she becomes like Sarah, the `mother of kings and priests unto God.'[[4]](#footnote-4) Thus Rebekah, in her right, expressed her concern about the wife of Jacob. In response to Rebekah, Isaac counseled Jacob and "charged him" saying "Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan." Following this command Isaac again blessed him in verses three and four: "And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people; And give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham."

The involvement of Rebekah in the blessing of Jacob was one of decision and responsibility, not deception, and should not be ignored in an interpretive exegesis of male and female relationships in Genesis. Likewise we should not gloss over the involvement of the wives and mothers of patriarchs, prophets, and kings as recorded in ancient scripture.

Only the mother can verify the father and lineage of the child. She alone may testify who her firstborn is, and to whom the birthright belongs. Thus by revelation, Rebekah knew which child should receive the birthright. She then prepared and presented that son for the endowed blessing from his father when the time had arrived. With this patriarchal authority and right that Rebekah held, Isaac could not rebel against his wife, the presented son, or the inspired blessing given under his hand. The pattern espoused here is a motif inherent in the patriarchal order of Genesis and can be seen elsewhere in Old Testament examples.

**THE PATRIARCHAL ORDER**

This ancient patriarchal order consists of a husband and wife with equal power but divided responsibilities. The husband's duty was to administer the ordinances of salvation and exaltation to his family and posterity, setting apart a new patriarch for the extended family before his death. One of the wife's responsibilities in this order of the priesthood would be to present, or "bear" physically, as well as spiritually her children to the patriarch for his acceptance, naming, and blessing.

The scriptures state that when Adam named his companion he called her "woman for she was taken out of man." In this pure and innocent state, before the fall, both the man and woman are given the divine blessings. Genesis 1:28 recounts that "God blessed **them**, and said unto **them**" jointly not individually, as husband and wife and not singularly. The blessings that they were given are known as the `covenants of the fathers' that show up so often in the scriptural texts. However, it must be kept in mind these blessings were first given in a state of perfection and incorruption, when sin, selfishness, or pride did not exist. These blessings are: 1) *Posterity*, the power to be fruitful and the command to use this power to multiply. 2) Subdue the Earth, this is the *inheritance* that was given to the first man and woman as they take control of the new creation and its environment. 3) Dominion, this governing power is given to them over every living thing. It is the power, authority and responsibility to bless all that lives on the earth. This dominion of Genesis 1:28 Joseph Smith equates with *priesthood* authority.[[5]](#footnote-5) These blessings were given to **"THEM"** before the fall. **"THEY"**, were blessed with posterity, inheritance, and priesthood in the patriarchal order of marriage.

Following the fall the blessings that were given to the perfect couple in an incorruptible environment must be changed and reintroduced into a world controlled by natural law and governed by the natural man and woman. The responsibilities and blessings given jointly before death must now be divided in mortality so that the *individual* may "work out their own salvation in fear and trembling" (Mormon 9:27). This order of the priesthood, or the "covenant of marriage" given before the fall, continues but the responsibilities are divided. To the woman is given the physical and emotional responsibility to bear and nurture her children in this world governed by natural law. In "*sorrow*" she must bring her children to her husband in birth, and in blessing. The man must also fulfill his obligation in "*sorrow*" (the same Hebrew word as with the woman) as he subdues the earth by working and living by the "sweat of his brow" providing an inheritance, and physically sustaining his wife and children. The word "sorrow" means to "labor, work, or toil in pain" and consequently both the man and woman must fulfill their individual responsibilities in a natural world of sorrow.[[6]](#footnote-6) The "dominion" or priesthood authority that both were blessed with is divided at this time also as "he shall rule over" the woman, which means to "preside" and to "administer" to his wife and family the ordinances of salvation and exaltation.[[7]](#footnote-7) Also part of her now divided responsibilities in the patriarchal priesthood are stated as; "Thy desires shall be to thy husband." This does not have the connotation of submission or need, but one of power. The word "desires" in Hebrew has the original meaning of "calf, leg, shank, or thigh" which is used in the context of "hold up, support or sustain."[[8]](#footnote-8) Thus the priesthood and dominion given to Adam and Eve before the fall continues to exist in the patriarchal order of the priesthood, but the responsibilities are divided. Divided, that they may work out their own salvation individually and their exaltation, "in this order of the priesthood," together as a husband and wife. Each individual is equally important in the marriage relationship. He will administer the ordinances and she will sustain him in his priesthood responsibilities by preparing and presenting their children for the ordinances of salvation and exaltation. The man cannot fulfill his obligation without her, nor she without him, performing in righteousness and being worthy to administer all ordinances that are required for salvation and eternal life. This may seem trite, or a naive way at looking at the responsibilities of a husband and wife, yet when considering the whole purpose of this patriarchal order of marriage is only to exalt ourselves and our children these divided responsibilities fall into perspective. For what purpose is life but to learn to be come like God in our love of God and our families and fellow man. As God, the father of us all declares that all creation is only a design with the intention to accomplish his only work and glory, which is "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life" of his children (Moses 1:39). In this mortal lifetime we could have no greater goal, or more important work than even God Himself has. The division of responsibilities after the fall does not limit the progression of a woman or man. It does not stifle the individuality, or character, but only strengthens and builds that character in order to reach the inherent potential of an exalted being. God has been and always will be just and loving, and He "esteemeth all flesh as one." The blessings or sacrifices of Adam and Eve in a temporal world do not give station or rank, only responsibility. In this life men and women are given the faculties and powers to match the blessings that will allow their character to develop the attributes of Godliness as they learn to become "one flesh." The sacrifice, by law can only be equal, one cannot be blessed more than the other, and potential in eternity will not be any greater for man than for woman. The physical differences between men and women, their abilities, inadequacies, and sexuality exist as an institution of nature and not as a punishment of sin. Spiritually, there exists no distinction of male or female in the celestial blessings that are promised. The potential remains the same if they are sealed, or as the scriptures state, "cleave" unto each another (Moses 3:24). The growth possibilities are limitless in matrimony, as they learn to love each other unconditionally at all times and in all things. This godlike attribute of charity may best be learned in a marriage relationship; not by thinking of yourself first, but giving yourself for the benefit of the united "one flesh." Salvation in any degree is individual, based on obedience and faithfulness. However, Exaltation in the highest degree, comes only to the righteous pair who are sealed into "the image and likeness of God" (D&C 131:2; 132:4-6) seeking to accomplish the same work and glory as God.

After the expulsion from the Garden of Eden, the woman receives a new name, and became known as Eve. The name change from "woman" to "Eve" is in consideration to the blessing that now she shall "bring forth children" in sorrow (Moses 4:22). Now, in mortality she literally becomes Eve, "the mother of all living" (Moses 4:26). To our mothers we must look for our lineage and physical connection to our fathers. The fathers in turn seal themselves via their mothers to their fathers, and so on back to Adam. Traditionally the children are sealed to their mother as she sanctions all relationships between father and child, from conception to exaltation. "Adam knew his wife, and *she bare unto him* sons and daughters" (Moses 5:2). These children of Adam were born before he had received the gospel and the understanding of the atonement as revealed by the angels. Adam and Eve "made all things known unto their" posterity yet "they believed it not" (Moses 5:12-13). Eve then gives birth to the first B.I.C. baby (born in the covenant) proclaiming, in light of the above thesis, "*I have gotten* a man from the Lord; wherefore he may not reject his words" (Moses 5:16). Eve is excited. This child will be hers to bear or present unto Adam as the new patriarch. Consequently she declares, "I have gotten a man from the Lord." As the story proceeds, Cain was unworthy for the birthright and it passed to Abel and then to Seth (Moses 6:2).

**ABRAHAM AND EGYPT**

This same matrilineal motif can be seen in the Abraham passages that deal with the settlement of Egypt. It was a woman that discovered Egypt and then placed her sons in it (Abraham 1:24). The first government was established by "*Pharaoh the eldest son* of Egyptus, the daughter of Ham" (Abraham 1:25). The descent, or right of leadership in Egypt was matrilineal, which it could be and should be as the mother presents her firstborn son. Yet the government continued to be "after the manner of the government of Ham, which was patriarchal" (Abr. 1:24-25). Thus Egypt could be matrilineal and patriarchal at the same time as in the case of Rebekah, Isaac and Jacob. The settling of Egypt and the coronation of the "Pharaoh" by his mother as described in Abraham has often been used to characterize a false and pagan matriarchal culture. Yet, according to this Semitic and patriarchal pattern, Abraham explains to us that Egyptus only exercised her right as a mother (matrilineal choice) choosing her "eldest" and most "righteous" son as ruler. Even though the choice of leadership was matrilineal, the government was patriarchal as they sought "earnestly to imitate that order established by the fathers" (Abr. 1:25-26).

**A NEW TERM**

A term or phrase to describe this Semitic paradigm does not exist. However, for the lack of any idiom, I would like to coin the phrase for this pattern as a "***Matrilineal Patriarchy***." This term would be defined as: In the Patriarchal order of the priesthood, meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage, the birth-**right** is determined by the mother or by "matrilineal" preparation and choice. The **rites** of the firstborn (i.e. The priesthood and authority to be patriarch, prophet, priest, or king) are bestowed upon the presented and worthy son by the father. Thus presentation of birthright comes by maternal authority, just as priesthood comes by paternal ordinance and blessing.

**MOSES**

An Egyptian tradition of this notion mentioned in Abraham and discussed above, may be seen in Exodus 2:10 as Moses was brought "unto Pharaoh's daughter, and *he became* ***her*** *son*. And she called his name Moses." Pharaoh's daughter had the right to present her son (Moses) as the heir to the throne. This is evident in Hebrews 11:24, 25 where Paul writes that when Moses "was come to years, (he) refused to be *called the son of Pharaoh's daughter*; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." By the rite/right of matrilineal presentation, Moses could have become Pharaoh of Egypt had he been willing to be called the "son of Pharaoh's daughter" as he was presented by his step-mother. In Egypt the right to rule came through the maternal line of the mother or the wife of Pharaoh, yet the pharonic authority existed in the male as Abraham states. Interestingly, following the rejection of the throne of Egypt by Moses, he later marries the daughter of "the priest of Midian" and receives his priesthood authority to be the prophet, priest, and king to all of Israel from the father of his wife, Jethro (D.& C. 84:6).

**ABRAHAM, SARAH, AND HAGAR**

The story of Sarah and Hagar in Genesis also reveals the rights of the matriarchal authority and the importance of the matrilineal decent. Genesis Chapter Sixteen begins with the statement that "Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar."

Sarai realizing the need of children (for her line as well as the priesthood) requests of her husband Abraham; "I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that ***I may obtain children by her***" (Gen. 16:2). The literal translation of the Hebrew would be; ". . . that I shall be built up by her." "Built up" in this context would mean lineage or succession.[[9]](#footnote-9) It is clear from this passage that the child of this union of Abraham and Hagar would be declared Sarai's child and offspring. After Hagar, the surrogate mother saw that she had conceived (Gen. 16:4) "her mistress was despised in her eyes." This is a similar problem in the story of barren Hannah and the second wife in 1 Samuel Chapter One.

Sarai seems to blame her husband for some of the conflict between her and Hagar as she states; "My wrong be upon thee: I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: the Lord judge between me and thee" (16:5). The text is not clear what the problem was between Sarai and Abram, it may have been Abram's abounding love for those in his care that made Hagar feel more elevated than she should. Whatever the reason, Abram realized that he did not have any power or authority in the conflict between Sarai and Hagar as he steps back in respect to the "law of Sarah" recognizing his wife's authority as first wife and matriarch. Verse Six reads; "But Abram said unto Sarai, behold, thy maid is in thy hand; do to her as it pleaseth thee. And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face."

At this point it would be well to quote from the Code of Hammurabi, which dates to the time of Abraham and had become the basic and accepted rules of law throughout the Middle East. Paragraph 146-147 follows below.

*If a man has married a priestess, who is also a wife, and she has given a slave girl to her husband and she bears sons, if (thereafter) that slave girl goes about making herself equal to her mistress, because she has borne sons, her mistress may not sell her; she may put the mark of a slave on her and count her with the slave girls. If she has not borne sons, her mistress may sell her.*[[10]](#footnote-10)

It is apparent from the Code above that the wife gives the concubine to her husband, and thus the wife takes the responsibility of discipline in the event of concubinical infraction. This same understanding is seen in the relationship between Sarah, Hagar and Abram. Abram's responsibility, as the Lord later commands, is to respect Sarah's discipline of Hagar despite his concern for her.

Chapter Twenty One of Genesis records the birth of Isaac and the extended conflict between Sarah and Hagar. In verse three we see the naming of Sarah's child: "And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, *whom Sarah bear to him*, Isaac." Observe in verse nine that "*Sarah saw* the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking." Ishmael is no longer considered by Sarah as her son, but the son of "the Egyptian" which she bore to Abraham. The patriarch is the father of Ishmael, and is technically Abram's firstborn son. However, Ishmael is not the **matriarch's chosen** and firstborn. It is the patriarch's wife who is involved in the choice of the birthright son. Sarah requests or demands, in her right, that Hagar and her son be cast out. The reason for this rejection: "for the son of this bond-woman (or slave) *shall not be heir with my son*, even with Isaac." In conjunction with the Code of Hammurabi quoted above, Hagar is no longer a handmaid but a "bond-woman" or slave. Again the responsibility to present the birthright son belongs to the wife of the patriarch, she has the authority in this order of the priesthood to present the heir of her choice as `birthright son'. The text reveals Abraham's feelings and concerns for Hagar and Ishmael as he rises early to see them off and personally prepares them for their journey. Abraham, in his love and concern for Hagar and his son Ishmael gives them their freedom from the position of bondage and slavery. Yet "God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; *in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called*" (Gen. 21:12). As instructed of the Lord the patriarch Abraham must concede to the wishes of his wife as she exercises her authority and responsibility in the patriarchal priesthood.

**JUDAH AND TAMAR**

In Genesis 38 the story of Judah and Tamar is recounted, and often in a classroom setting with much embarrassment. Verses six and seven begins the narrative as "Judah took a wife for Er his ***firstborn***, whose name was Tamar. And Er, Judah's ***firstborn***, was wicked in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD slew him." The issue, it seems, lies in the "firstborn" blessings that should be due to Er and his wife Tamar. The offspring, had there been any, of Er and Tamar would have received the birthright and blessing of Judah. At the time of Er's demise, Tamar had no seed to present as the "firstborn" thereby guaranteeing her offspring, and herself, the matriarchal rights that were due. The *Levirate Law of Marriage* addresses this problem of Tamar and the earlier death of Er in Deuteronomy 25:5-10. The passage describes this "Levirate Law" and its relationship with the firstborn: "the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her" (Deut. 25:5). This "duty of an husband's brother" is to guarantee lineage, and inheritance to the wife of the firstborn son. The widow should then be married to the deceased's brother in order "that the firstborn whom she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel" (Deut. 25:6). This law would insure that the inheritance, of the wife and her seed would remain in the patriarchal line, entitling that particular linage with the rights and blessings of the patriarchal priesthood. The Levirate Law guarantees that the wife has offspring, and at least the firstborn son may be presented as the deceased husband's patriarchal heir. Even though the child would be the physical progeny of the brother, the spiritual "sealing" and birthright blessing remains with the woman and her first husband. Thus the child born (at least the firstborn) does not belong to the brother but to the wife and her sealed partner. This Law protects the woman's rights as a wife and partner in a patriarchal order of marriage. Because of the wife's obligation to present the firstborn as the heir and birthright son, the Levirate Law preserves and protects the matrilineal patriarchy.

In obedience to this law, Onan was commanded by Judah to "Go in unto thy brother's wife, and marry her, and raise up seed to thy brother" (Gen. 38:8). It was Judah's responsibility, as the living patriarch, to see that Tamar's rights are preserved and has seed to present as the firstborn of Judah's firstborn the heir of Er. Onan, on the other hand "knew that the seed should not be his" and takes measures to ensure that Tamar has no child in his elder brother's name and blessing. Onan comes to an untimely death leaving Tamar childless again. It is probable that Onan felt that if Tamar did not have children then the birthright blessings and his father’s inheritance would then be his, receiving the double portion becoming the patriarch of his father's family. The responsibility remains upon Judah to make sure he has an heir through Tamar, the wife of his firstborn. To shorten the story, Tamar, disguised as a harlot (yet still within her rights) becomes pregnant by Judah. Her demands of payment and recognition are Judah's "signet, and thy bracelets, and thy staff" (Gen. 38:18). Tamar uses these objects again as she reveals the father of her children. It is interesting that those things she required of Judah are the very objects that would have passed to Judah's firstborn, Er, and then to Tamar's firstborn son. These items, the "signet" of the family and the "rod" of authority actually belong to the firstborn son of Tamar and Er, the son that she would later introduce to Judah. These things Judah acknowledged and stated: "she hath been more righteous than I; because that I gave her not to Shelah my son" (Gen. 38:26).

**MOSES AND ZIPPORAH**

The responsible wife in the patriarchal priesthood will prepare and make sure that her children receive the necessary ordinances of salvation and exaltation. She not only would bare the infant child unto the father in childbirth, but also must bare the worthy offspring to the priesthood authority for the prescribed ordinances as they are born again. With this in mind, the somewhat difficult passage of Exodus 4:24-26 might become a little clearer. Moses, under his patriarchal responsibilities, was commanded by the Lord to circumcise his son, yet because of his reluctance "the Lord was angry with Moses, and his hand was about to fall upon him" (JST Ex. 4:24). True to her matriarchal responsibility, the wife of Moses made sure her children received the ordinances required by the Lord, for them and for the righteousness and life of her husband: "Then Zipporah took a sharp stone and circumcised her son, and cast the stone at his feet, and said, Surely thou art a bloody husband unto me. And the Lord spared Moses and let him go, *because Zipporah, his wife, circumcised the child*" (JST Ex. 4:25-26). Thus according to the J.S.T. the life of the prophet was spared because his wife preformed the priesthood ordinance that was required for her children.

 Temple marriage is the ordinance that bestows the patriarchal priesthood upon the sealed couple.[[11]](#footnote-11) This is same priesthood that Adam and Eve were blessed with before the fall (Gen. 1:28) the same priesthood that they had after the fall, but with divided responsibilities. This "order of the priesthood" is the order of heaven, and resides in a couple who have been sealed together and given the same commission in life as our first parents were given in the Garden of Eden. The main responsibility of this patriarchal priesthood, which the married couple jointly holds, is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of their children, by instruction and ordinance. The authority to administer over people outside of a family line is a power reserved for the Melchizedek priesthood. For example; A father can bless his children or perform an ordinance of salvation or exaltation (i.e. baptism) for his children under the authority of the patriarchal priesthood which he jointly holds with his wife after having been sealed in the temple. To perform the same ordinance or blessing for his home teaching families he must perform the ordinance under, the authority of the Melchizedek priesthood. The authority of the Melchizedek priesthood is to take care of, spiritually and temporally, those who do not have a righteous father and patriarch to take care of them. This we see especially in the Old Testament as the call and warning comes from the prophets to take care of "the fatherless the widow and the orphan." However, it must be kept in mind that "all authorities or offices in the church are appendages to this (melchizedek) priesthood" (D& C 107:5). Therefore, as the Melchizedek priesthood is the greater priesthood and "has power and authority over all the offices in the church in all ages of the world, to administer in spiritual things" (D&C 107:8) all ordinances and blessings are pronounced and preformed under this Melchizedek authority, which includes the patriarchal and Aaronic authorities. Because the responsibility of this Melchizedek priesthood is to make sure every man woman and child, have the opportunity, and receive if worthy, the ordinances of salvation and exaltation, it is administered by organization. The prophet and president of the church is responsible to make sure that these ordinances are preformed, to assist him are apostles, stake presidents and bishops. Thus all ordinances preformed that are for salvation and/or exaltation must be done with the knowledge and direction of the Melchizedek priesthood authority that preside over the person involved.

Moses becomes the first Melchizedek priesthood leader outside of the patriarchal age (because of the masses) without being a patriarch. He learns that this priesthood was not to be administered by a single leader, as was the patriarchal, but by organization and council. Jethro, in his wisdom and priesthood knowledge teaches Moses that he is not the father and patriarch of the children of Israel, but that he is prophet and high priest of the melchizedek priesthood, and can help take care of each family’s spiritual and temporal needs through the melchizedek and Aaronic priesthood organizations.

We see that Moses perhaps overcome with his new Melchizedek obligations neglects his patriarchal responsibilities and fails to perform an ordinance for his children. This familial responsibility the Lord feels strongly enough about, to condemn, chastise, and remove the prophet from his position if the ordinance is not preformed. A similar situation of Melchizedek responsibilities getting in the way of family order required chastisement from the Lord, even to the first presidency of the church in this dispensation (D&C 93:40-49). Perhaps the statements of the prophets like; "no success in life can compensate for failure in the home" or another such as "the greatest work you will do in this life will be within the walls of your own home" have meanings far beyond temporal success and physical or mental work.[[12]](#footnote-12) Perhaps families’ come first even is spiritual progression.

**MOTHERLY VISIONS**

As seen in the case of Rebekah, revelation about the unborn child and the blessings the child will receive, are most often given to the mother. This knowledge is given to the mother as she has the obligation in the marriage partnership to know the child's future, and prepare her posterity for the priesthood blessings and responsibilities. Examples of angelic knowledge given to mothers may be seen below.

There was a certain man whose "name was Manoah; and his wife was barren, and bare not." So begins the scriptural story of the birth of Samson in Judges Chapter Thirteen. The text continues: "And the angel of the LORD *appeared unto the woman*, and said unto her...thou shalt conceive, and bear a son" (Judges 13:3). In verses four and five the angel tells the mother to be that this child will be a *nazarite*, and "shall begin to deliver Israel." Told of this experience by his wife, Manoah "entreated the LORD" (vs. 8.) for a similar revelation. The angel returns, in response to Manoah's prayer, however, the messenger appears to Manoah's wife again, who then introduces her husband to the messenger. The point of recounting this story is to show that the revelation concerning the children often came to the mother as in the case of Rebekah.

The announcement of the birthright son by angelic messenger is similar to the visitation of Gabriel to the mother of Christ. Mary receives the revelation that she is highly favored of the Lord and that her son shall be called "Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David" (Luke 1:32). She understood sacred things about her child, who he was, and his purpose and calling. Most important, she alone could bare witness of Christ's true Father, knowing that he was the firstborn in the spirit, and the only begotten in the flesh. These are the things that only the mother can comprehend in her mind and heart. This was sacred knowledge, therefore, Mary, like Rebekah and the wife of Manoah "kept all these sayings in her heart" (Luke 2:51). Mary also presented the Christ child to God in the temple (Luke 2:21-39) as did Hannah in the following scriptural account.

The story of Hannah and the birth of Samuel (1 Samuel chapter one) should not be over-looked in the context of matriarchal (that is the wife of a patriarch) responsibilities. The text implies that of Elkanah's two wives, Hannah was the first, and the most loved. Being the first wife she would have the right to name the birthright son, "but Hannah had no children" (1 Sam. 1:2). Elkanah had given his second wife, Peninnah and her children "portions" but "to Hannah he gave a *worthy portion*; for he loved Hannah; but the LORD had shut up her womb" (verses 4-5). Similar to Sarah and Hagar, Hannah's "adversary" (the other wife) "provoked her sore, for to make her fret, because the LORD had shut up her womb." At the time of sacrifice Hannah "vowed a vow, and said...give unto thine handmaid a man child, then ***I*** *will give* him unto the LORD all the days of his life" (verse 11). It was Hannah not Elkanah that promises or vows a vow to give the child, if blessed with one, to the Lord. The high priest Eli promised Hannah that "the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him" (verse 17). Hannah conceives and gives birth to her firstborn son, and names the child Samuel "because I have asked him of the Lord." Acting within her rights and responsibilities, verses 24-28 makes it clear that Hannah, the mother of Samuel, brought, and presented her child to the Lord and Eli the high priest. Hannah's husband Elkanah respects her rights stating, "do what seemeth thee good; tarry until thou have weaned him; only the Lord establish His word" (vs. 23). Thus she fulfilled her vow in presenting her firstborn son to serve the Lord as a nazarite.

**BATH-SHEBA**

In First Kings, Chapter One, the prophet Nathan reminded Bath-sheba the favored wife of King David, that she had been promised that Solomon, her son was to become king of Israel after David's death. Bath-sheba under the direction, and with the help of the prophet succeeds in guaranteeing the kingship for her son. Solomon then is enthroned by initiation and ordinance as seen in Chapter One. The interesting thing that must be kept in mind is the conspicuous part played by the mother of the new king. The author of Kings was obviously aware of the matriarchal or matrilineal relationship toward authority and kingship. This recognition is conveyed in the text as the prophet Nathan consults the mother, and then converses with David about the new king. David then calls Bath-Sheba to him and "swear" saying, "Assuredly Solomon *thy son* shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my stead" (1 Kings 1:28-30). Respecting the right of matriarchate succession, Solomon was referred to by his father, as `Bath-sheba's son.' Once recognized as the heir to the throne, David, his father then refers to the king to be, as "Solomon my son" (1 Kings 1:33).

With only two exceptions, Joram and Ahaz (2 Kings 8:10 ff. and 2 Kings 16:1 respectively) the names of the mothers of every king of Judah are carefully mentioned in the Old Testament.[[13]](#footnote-13) Each mother is mentioned in relationship to the king's enthronement in virtually the same pattern as 2 Kings 14:2: "He was twenty and five years old when be began to reign, and reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. and his mother's name was Jehoaddan of Jerusalem."[[14]](#footnote-14) Because of the deliberate inclusion of the mother's name in the coronation setting it would logically appear that for some reason the name of the king's mother played an important role in recognizing the legitimacy of the sovereign in the coronation ritual.[[15]](#footnote-15)

**THE SIGN**

The sign of royal birth and covenant relationship, between God and mankind, is often the mother conceiving the promised child. In Genesis Chapter 17 Abraham is told that he will be a "father of many nations" and that the Lord will "make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee" (Gen. 17:4, 6). The sign of this promise is that Sarah, not a handmaid, shall conceive and "she shall be a *mother* of nations; kings of people shall be of her" (Gen. 17:16) and *Sarah shall bear* unto thee at this set time in the next year" (vs.21). This sign will be a miracle indeed as Abraham "fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? And shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?" (Vs. 17). The statement, "shall a child be born unto the old" has the familiar sound of "shall a virgin conceive" or "how shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" (Luke 1:34) to be uttered in a later time.

The next chapter (Gen. 18) the messengers came to Abraham and asked "where is Sarah thy wife" Abraham responds that she is in her tent to which the messengers reveal the sign of God's covenant, again to Abraham, *"Sarah thy wife shall have a son"* (Gen. 18:10). The text in verse 11 makes clear that any conception by Sarah or Abraham would be nothing short of a miracle; "Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women." This time Sarah heard the message of her conception and she "laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?" The Lords responds to Abraham and to Sarah in particular saying, "any thing too hard for the Lord?" (With Mary it is stated: "for with God nothing shall be impossible" Luke 1:37). At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and *Sarah shall have a son*" (vs. 14). The *"Sign of the Mother"* relates it to the sign of the birth of the King of Kings. The pattern of Sarah seems to be to close for coincidence with the pattern of Mary the mother of the Christ.

**MARY**

Isaiah Chapter Seven verse Fourteen is considered to be the divine sign of recognition for the savior; "Therefore the Lord himself shall *give you a sign;* Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." This becomes the first sign of recognition and is used by Matthew (Matt. 1:23) to verify the divinity of Jesus Christ. The same verse is quoted in 2 Ne. 17:14 and explained by Nephi as the sign of the redeemer that was to come (see 2 Ne. 25:12, ff. for Nephi's interpretation). The virgin, or miraculous conception is a sign of divine providence, a sign for the birth of Christ, likewise, a sign of the birth of Isaac as the old Sarah impossibly conceives the covenant linage. Both events are miraculous and cannot naturally occur in the minds of both Mary and Sarah. It must be remembered that even Nephi receives a similar vision of Isaiah as he states; "I beheld the city of Nazareth; and in the city of Nazareth I beheld a virgin, and she was exceedingly fair and white. . . And he said unto me: Behold, the virgin whom thou seest is the *mother of the Son of God*, after the manner of the flesh" (1 Ne. 11:13, 18).

In Mosiah King Benjamin teaches us that the savior will be "called Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of heaven and earth, the Creator of all things from the beginning; and *his mother shall be called Mary*" (Mosiah 3:8). The mention of the name "Mary" is more than an indication or passing interest of family ties. The virginal conception and the name of the mother of Christ becomes a sign of recognition for the savior’s birth even to the Nephites far removed in time and space. This same thought is extended in Alma's testimony of the redeemer as he states that; "he shall be *born of Mary*, at Jerusalem which is the land of our forefathers, *she being a virgin*, a precious and chosen vessel, who shall be overshadowed and conceive by the power of the Holy Ghost, and bring forth a son, yea, even the Son of God" (Alma 7:10). Similarly, the authors of the Gospels recognize the Sign of the Mother as authoritative in the testimony of the Savior’s birth. Matthew 1:16-25, is not just a story of Christ but a genealogy and history of the events relating to the mother of Christ. Were this not so Matthew would begin with Chapter Two "Jesus was born in Bethlehem." Luke states in his preface; "that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed" (vs.4). From there he dives into what we call the nativity story, however, it actually relates the history of Mary to prove that her son is the long awaited Christ child.

"According to law" Mary presented her son to God in the temple (Luke 2) as her firstborn child and son that was to be dedicated to the work of the Father. Likewise, according to law, Rebekah prepared and presented the birthright son to the patriarch and priesthood authority for the blessings and ordinances required for salvation and exaltation. The knowledge, and action, of Mary, Rebekah, and Sarah was done by divine revelation about their children and the child's birthright and responsibilities.

**CONCLUSION**

The mother in the patriarchal priesthood order of marriage plays a dominant role in the bearing and nurturing of children, bearing in both birth and rebirth, nurturing in both body and in spirit. Mother Eve was told after the fall that "in sorrow" she should bring forth children into this life, a sorrow that means to labor, work or toil in pain. It was only after the man and woman were driven from the Garden of Eden that the first woman was called, as her name implies, "Eve, the mother of all living." Her responsibility with her husband’s help, was to bear, nurture, prepare and present her children to her patriarchal companion, that from him, they might receive the ordinances of salvation and exaltation. After partaking of the forbidden fruit the Lord tells Satan that He would put "enmity between thee (Satan) and the seed of the woman." Some commentators feel that this is a direct reference to Christ, and it may well be. However, Eve, as the first mother, is promised in this verse that there will be "enmity" or a natural abhorrence, or gut reaction toward evil. This "enmity" will give the seed of the woman a fair chance in a wicked world, put them on equal ground, so that the choices her children make will truly be probationary. In this same verse the Lord implies that the posterity or "seed" comes from the woman. She is given the responsibility to prepare and teach this enmity toward evil and wickedness. The mother in Zion then is truly the foundation of Zion. When prepared, the mother will then present her offspring as the inheritors of the blessings of the firstborn. As Eve, Sarah, Rebekah, Mary and other great mothers in scripture demonstrate, the role of being the woman Eve, "the mother of all living" plays a most important part in marriage. The bearing, nurturing, and presentation of her posterity becomes the role, responsibility, and authority of the wife and mother in the patriarchal priesthood order of marriage. This priesthood she jointly holds with her husband as a queen and priestess having entered "into that order of the Priesthood" The authority of patriarchal priesthood was not lost by Adam or Eve in mortality. However, for each to work out their own salvation in fear and trembling, there must be a division of obligation and accountability. Separated from God at the fall and from each other, the husband and wife must work together, in righteousness to fulfill completely the obligation given to each one, by God, at the time of the fall. The hope in this life is to be worthy to be called and anointed kings and queens, priests and priestesses, gods and goddess. To receive again the blessing given by God before the fall, jointly, not individually, as He "said unto **them**" and "blessed **them**" with posterity, inheritance, and priesthood throughout all eternity.

1. . Louis Ginzberg, The Legends of the Jews, Vol 1, (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1968) pp.332-3233. Ginzberg states that these garments or "goodly raiment" were "the high-priestly raiment in which God had clothed Adam, `the first-born of the world,' for in the days before the erection of the Tabernacle all the first-born males officiated as priests." See also Harry Sperling and Maurice Simon trans. The Zohar, Vol. 2, (London: The Soncino Press, 1984) pp. 56, 57. The Zohar states that these were "the precious garments which, originally belonging to Adam . . . but when Jacob put them on they were restored to their rightful place . . . for Jacob inherited the beauty of Adam; hence those garments found in him their rightful owner." The continuation of the story of Jacob offers further consideration as he gives the "coat of many colors" to his most beloved, or birthright son, Joseph, who is despised by his elder brothers. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. . Brown, Driver, Briggs, Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951) pp.972-973. The Hebrew root used in this text is and has four basic meanings one of which is "be acquainted with, recognize, perceive, visit, and inspect." Rebekah put in or on the hands of Jacob those things that would allow Isaac to recognize the birthright son. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. . B.D.B., p.676, The root word used in the Hebrew text can mean kiss, smell, gently touch, handle or hold. This same root word is used to describe the touching of the cherubim on the Ark of the Covenant, which rested in the Holy of Holies behind the veil of the temple of Jerusalem. The touching of the cherubim is described as a physical embrace like that of a man and woman. See Raphael Patai, On Jewish Folklore, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1983) pp. 61-62. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. . In the Book of Mormon the credit for the righteousness of the sons of Helaman is given to the faith, testimonies and teachings of their mothers. Elder McConkie makes the statement about the role of the mother from the beginning of time: "I rate Eve also as one of the greatest women among all of those who have or will come to earth. She, as the mother of all living, set the pattern for all future mothers with reference to bringing up their children in light and truth. She received all the blessings of the gospel, enjoyed the gifts of the Spirit, and sought to prepare her posterity for like blessings." ("Our Sisters From the Beginning" Elder Bruce R. McConkie Of the Council of the Twelve, The Ensign, January, 1979).

 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. . Joseph Fielding Smith, Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book, 1976) p.157. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. . B.D.B. pp. 780-781. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. . Spencer W. Kimball, in Ensign, March. 1976, p. 72, states: "I have a question about the word rule. It gives the wrong impression. I would prefer to use the word preside because that's what he does. A righteous husband presides over his wife and family." [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. . B.D.B., p. 1003. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. . B.D.B. p. 124-125. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. . James B. Pritchard, Ancient Near Eastern Texts, (Princeton University Press: New Jersey, 1969), p. 172b. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. . Bruce R. McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), p. 560, "In addition to ordained patriarchs, there are also natural patriarchs. Every holder of the higher priesthood who has entered into the patriarchal order of celestial marriage--thereby receiving for himself the blessings of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob--is a natural patriarch to his posterity." See also McConkie's A New Witness for the Articles of Faith, (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985), pp.312, 315, and 602, McConkie states that "Celestial marriage is an "order of the priesthood." It is the patriarchal order" He continues on p. 602 that "the saints were to receive "the fullness of the priesthood" through celestial marriage, which is the patriarchal order." Also Joseph F. Smith, Gospel Doctrine, (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1986), p.291 indicates that the power of this priesthood is to have "certain rights and authority within his family, comparable to those of the bishop with relation to the ward." Patriarchal leadership is the "privilege to stand as the head of his household, and to perform the ordinances pertaining to his family.' [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. . David O. McKay, Family Home Evening Manual, 1968-1969, p.iii. see also Harold B. Lee, Stand Ye in Holy Places, (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1975), pp. 255-256. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. . Samuel Terrien, "The Omphalos Myth and Hebrew Religion" in Vetus Testamentum (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1970), Vol. 20, No.3, p.331. Terrien spends a good deal of time in this article about the "Queen Mother" and the maternal relationship between mother and king. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. . For other examples see: 1 Kings 14:21, 31; 15:2, 10; 22:42; 2 Kings 8:26; 12:1; 15:2, 33; 18:2; 21:1, 19; 22:1; 23:31, 36; 24:8, 18; 2 Chronicles 12:13; 13:2; 20:31; 22:2; 24:1; 25:1; 26:3; 27:1; 29:1; Jeremiah 52:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. . R. K. Harrison, "The Matriarchate and Hebrew Regal Succession" in The Evangelical Quarterly, Vol. 29, 1957, pp.29-34. Harrison makes the statement that early in the Israelite monarchy there was a definite pattern of "matrilineal descent" which seemed to legitimize the kings right to reign. Harrison gives many examples of this concept in the Old Testament text focusing on the reign of Saul and David. Harrison feels that much of the conflict between Saul and David existed because David married the heiress and "the throne would be his (David) by right of marriage, according to the traditional matriarchal pattern" (p.31). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)