Exposing the Idolatry of Mary Worship - An Overview

Selected Scriptures - John MacArthur

Tonight, as was made clear this morning, we are going to be looking at the subject of the idolatry of worshiping Mary. And I want to say a few things before I say a few things by way of an introduction. The first thing to say is my objective and my goal is to make known to you the truth for the sake of the truth, for the sake of the God of the truth who is to be honored. A second and corollary purpose is to let you know that the worship of Mary is, in fact, an idolatry that is displeasing to God. And I say that because it's critically important that we understand what it is that God desires and what it is He blesses and what it is that He rejects and punishes.

Now I want to break this up into several components. It's important, to begin with, to understand what the Roman Catholic Church and the people in the Roman Catholic system have and do believe about Mary. So we're going to begin with a look at what has been written and said and established about her. Then we're going to move from that into specific dogma, when the Church has absolutely laid down an absolute dogma regarding Mary, we'll take a look at that. Thirdly, we'll compare that with Scripture. And then finally, we'll conclude with a comparison of this to other texts of Scripture that relate to forms of idolatry, false gods and blasphemy of worshiping any other than the true and living God.

We're not surprised that some people worship people. *Romans chapter 1* says that when people suppress the truth of God and reject that which can be known of God that is in them, in the place of God they create their own idols in the form of man as well as beasts and other animals. It is a little bit unusual, however, in our society to worship dead people. There is a group of Jews in New York City called the Lubavitches (??) and they worship a dead rabbi.

Perhaps even more strange is the growing worship of the former emperor of Ethiopia. He was crowned emperor on November 2 in 1930. He died in 1975. For 45 years he was the emperor of Ethiopia. You would know him and history knows him as Haile Selassie I, or the first, but among his followers, Haile Selassie One. That is not his actual name, that's a name he took. And what it means is "the power of the Trinity." He took that name for himself. He also took other names for himself, "King of Kings, Lord of Lords," and borrowing from *Revelation 5:5*, "The Conquering Lion of Judah," a Messianic title. His pre-coronation name, the name that he was given at birth, an Ethiopian name, Ras Taffari Maconin (?). He was raised in the Ethiopian orthodox religion. He was particularly interested in the Bible and most of all in the Old Testament. Some of you will remember him, if you're old enough, you will remember Haile Selassie. He showed up at all kinds of world events for the 45 years of his reign, including, I believe, the funeral of John F. Kennedy. He was a remarkable man, five-foot-three, or five-foot-four with lifts. And always, no matter what the occasion, bedecked with a panoply of medals, dozens of them all over his coat. He actually claimed to be the 225th in an unbroken line of Ethiopian kings descending from a union between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. He actually went so far as to say, "*Psalm 87* verses 4 thorough 6 prophesied his coronation." That all seems very bizarre to us but you might want to know that there are well in excess of one million people who today as I speak to you worship him as God. They call him "Ja (?)," short for Yahweh. They call him the king of creation, the call him the living god and they call him god incarnate. Some identify him with the title, "The black messiah of the world." He is believed to be the reincarnation of Jesus Christ.

The religion that subscribes to these bizarre ideas about the man is drawn from his original name. His original name, I told you, Ras Taffari. His worshipers are called Rastifarians. Strangely this started not in Ethiopia but in Jamaica. And it started in 1930, the year of his coronation, when among the very poor and disenfranchised Jamaicans, they took seriously his claim to be king of kings and lord of lords, his claim to be the conquering lion of Judah and they began to worship him as God. The characteristics of the religion began to develop and they are fairly well fixed today. They believe only in the King James Version of the Bible, or the Am Harak (??) version which is in Ethiopian language. If you're in that religion, you have a personal relationship to Ras Taffari. That's why you are a Rastifarian, just as if you have a personal relationship to Christ you are a Christian. They say he didn't really die, his death was a scam and he's coming back to Africa on the day of judgment. They believe that only half the Bible has really been written. There's another half to the Bible that was stolen from black people in Africa by white people and is to be found hidden in the Ark of the Covenant if the Ark of the Covenant can be found and in that half of the Bible is a repository of African wisdom. They believe in physical immortality for devout believers, that is you don't die physically. They believe that Haile Selassie Ras Taffari is God the Father and God the Son and his followers are the Holy Spirit. He is the head and they are the body. They believe that in a reincarnation prior to that of Jesus he came into the world as Melchizedek.

Now if you were to go to a Rastifarian service, it would involve smoking marijuana while singing, dancing, feasting, reading the Bible and listening to their most popular prophet Bob Marley. Bob Marley took the Rastifarian concept and developed it into a form of music called reggae. You associate reggae music with Rastifarians and also dread locks which is the idea of going back to nature by never taking care of your hair, a kind of play on the Nazarite vow.

All this seems ridiculous, bizarre, ignorant, corrupt, perverse, foolish to worship a dead Ethiopian who is now in hell. It is really no more foolish than worshiping a dead woman who is now in heaven. Equally ridiculous, equally bizarre, equally blasphemous and idolatrous, equally foolish is the worship of Mary. It is the same thing and far more deadly, far more deadly because of the massive influence of the Roman Catholic system and its deceptiveness. And there are millions all over the world who worship Mary. Millions of images of her in every imaginable form are scattered throughout the world. They're obviously not able to even be counted...millions of them in every form and every location, churches, cathedrals, shrines, houses, streets, cars, wallets, everywhere are images, pictures, representations of Mary. Millions upon millions of people every day pray to her. They pray to her to save them. They pray to her to protect them. They pray to her to help them, to comfort them, to rescue them, to bring them to heaven and she has never heard one of those prayers ever. By any honest definition, this is idolatry, this is a severe violation of the first commandment, to have no other gods but the true and living God, is no different than pagan idolatry which God totally condemns as an abomination. So let's just get that clear at the beginning.

Roman Catholics worship Mary as if she were God. Cathedrals elevate her above God and above Christ. We were talking this evening about a cathedral in Pisa where we have visited which depicts Mary at the pinnacle as they almost all do all through Europe, she's at the top, Jesus and God are below her, and in that particular cathedral in Pisa, you have Jesus and God offering their crowns to Mary. People kiss her image. They kiss her statue. They kiss her picture. They crawl on their knees in penitential pain as some kind of preparation to come before statues of her. They pray to her regularly using the rosary. The rosary is a series of ten prayers, there are five of the tens making 50 prayers, and there are five prayers in between. The 50 are to Mary, the five are to God. There are five "Our Fathers," there are 50 "Hail Mary's." For every time you pray once to God the Father, you pray ten times to Mary...for five to God, fifty to Mary.

This is no different than worshiping Baal or Molech or Caesar or Buddha or Krishna or Haile Selassie. And the whole cult of Mary worship would be an unspeakable horror to Mary if she ever knew, she never will.

Now the Catholics try to wiggle around a little bit out of this by saying there are different kinds of worship. There is *doulia (?)*, that is the worship of saints and angels. There is *latria*, that is the worship of God. And there is *hyper-doulia* which is the worship of Mary alone. This is not just *doulia* which is a sort of low-level worship of saints and angels, this is hyper or upper level *doulia*, not quite *latria*. This is a silly, artificial kind of distinction that even Roman Catholic people can't sort out. They worship saints. They venerate or worship angels. Far above saints and angels they worship Mary. And they attempt to worship God. But if you're worshiping those who are not God, God does not accept your worship. It is an artificial distinction, *doulia* and *latria* from Greek words are synonyms, they do not distinguish worship at all. Mary is believed to hold the sovereign authority of God.

Now I don't want to assign to the Catholic Church anything that they don't say, so I am about, at this point, to let you hear Rome speak. This is going to be a little bit beleaguering but it's very important for you to understand that this is not coming from me, these are their claims for Mary.

In the celebration of the Marion year, Pope Pius XII accurately reflected the Church's view of the Virgin Mary when the Pope stood up to give this following Pontifical prayer, and I quote: "Enraptured by the splendor of your heavenly beauty and impelled by the anxieties of the world, we cast ourselves into your arms, O immaculate mother of Jesus and our mother, Mary we adore and praise the peerless richness of the sublime gifts with which God has filled you above every other mere creature from the moment of conception until the day on which your assumption into heaven He crowned you Queen of the Universe. O crystal fountain of faith, bathe our hearts with your heavenly perfume. O conqueress of evil and death, inspire in us a deep horror of sin which makes the soul detestable to God and the slave of hell. O well-beloved of God, hear the ardent cries which rise up from every heart in this year dedicated to you. Then tenderly, O Mary, cover our aching womb, convert the wicked, dry the tears of the afflicted and the oppressed. Comfort the poor and humble. Quench hatred. Sweeten harshness. Safeguard the flower of purity. Protect the holy Church. In your name resounding harmoniously in heaven, may they recognize that all are brothers and that the nations are members of one family. Receive, O sweet mother, our humble supplications and above all, obtain for us on that day, happy with you that we may repeat before your throne that hymn which is sung today around your altars, you are beautiful, O Mary, you are glory, O Mary, you are the joy, are the honor of our people," end quote.

Now if that is not worship, I don't know what worship is. There is no other definition for that. None whatsoever. Rob Zins (??) writes, "The snowball of Mary in superiority will roll down the slope of Catholic fantasy until she becomes in their minds immaculately conceived, sinless, assumed into heaven and finally redemptress and co-redeemer with Jesus Christ," end quote. And that is exactly right. In fact, Roman Catholics refer to her as "Theoticas (?)," God bearer. They say she gave birth to God and thus is to be elevated and adored. She gave birth to God...that is a terrible misconception. She gave birth to Jesus in His humanity, she did not give birth to God, God was never born.

Someone may think I'm overstating or exaggerating the blasphemy toward God that comes in Mary worship, so I have to do this very distasteful exercise to let you hear from the sources themselves.

1745...St. Alphonsus Delaguarie (?) wrote a massive book called *The Glories of Mary*. It is 750 pages, all of which I read. That was a very painful exercise, believe me. It has been published many, many times since 1745. It is fully authorized by the Roman Catholic Church. Its latest edition that I have is a smaller abridged version of it, published by the Catholic Book Publishing Company of New York and officially stamped by the Vicar General, the Archdiocese of New York. The original was fully sanctioned as well. One of the sanctioners of this are the Redemptorist Fathers and they sanctioned an edition of it in 1931 through the Cardinal in New York City. The purpose of Delaguarie, his work, is to make the impression of wonder and awe at the realization of Mary's power. She is viewed as powerful. The book then and all its subsequent publishings and in all of its subsequent formats calls on all of us to be loyal and faithful to Mary for everything we need spiritually, including our salvation. I went back to the original edition which has been published again and again and again, the one I have is a 1931 reprint which was, as I said, sanctioned by the Redemptorist Fathers and the Cardinal in New York City. Here are some of the prayers. Listen to this.

"O Mary, sweet refuge of poor sinners, assist me with thy mercy. Banish me from the infernal enemies and come thou to take my soul and present it to the eternal judge. My queen, do not abandon me, I give you my heart and soul." What Delaguarie did was collect all the great tributes to Mary going all the way back to the fifth century and amasses them in this huge tome, collective tribute from all the ages to Mary. That one came from page 670. Here's another one. "O immaculate and holy, pure Virgin Mary, mother of God, queen of the world, thou art the joy of the saints, thou art the peacemaker between sinners and God, thou art the advocate of the abandoned, the secure haven of those who are on the sea of this world, thou art the consolation of this world, the ransom of slaves, the comforter of the afflicted, the salvation of the universe."

Here's another one. "We have confidence but in thee, O most faithful virgin. O great mediatrix of peace between men and God, the love of all men and of God to whom be honor and benediction with the Father and the Holy Ghost. Amen."

Here's another one. "O sovereign lady, saint of all saints, our strength and our refuge, God as it were of this world, glory of heaven, accept those who love thee."

Another one, "O sovereign princess, turn, O Mary, thy loving eyes on me. Look at me and draw me to thee."

Another one, "Mary, blessed virgin, immaculate queen, I dedicate my family forever to thy service. I appoint thee ruler of my whole house. Bless us, defend us, provide for us, counsel us, comfort us, assist us in our infirmities, especially in the sorrows of death. Grant that we may go to heaven."

All of these are prayers that belong only to...whom?...to God. God says, *"My glory will I not give to another."* If Jesus were here today, He might go into a Catholic Church and make a whip and throw the money-changers out.

There are weekly prayers to Mary. Here's a Sunday prayer. "Behold, O mother of God, at thy feet a miserable sinner, a slave of hell who has recourse to thee and trusts in thee. I do not deserve that thou should even look at me, but I know that thou having seen thy son die for the salvation of sinners hast the greatest desire to help them. I hear all call thee the refuge of sinners, the hope of those who are in despair and the help of the abandoned. Thou art then my refuge, my hope and my help. Thou hast to save me by thy intercession. Help me for the love of Jesus Christ, extend thy hand to a

miserable creature who has fallen and recommends himself to thee. I know that thy pleasure is to help a sinner to thy utmost. Help me therefore now that thou canst do so. By my sins I have lost divine grace and with it I have lost my soul. I now place myself in thy hands. Tell me what I must do to recover the favor of my Lord and I will immediately do it. He sends me to thee that thou may help me. And He wills that I should have recourse to thy mercy, that not only the merits of thy Son but also that thy intercession may help me to save my soul. To thee then I have recourse. Do thou who prayed for so many others pray also to Jesus for me. Ask Him to pardon me and He will forgive me. Tell Him that thou desires my salvation and He will save me. Show how thou canst enrich those who trust in thee. Amen. Thus I hope, thus may it be."

Praying to Mary on a Sunday prayer for your salvation and Jesus will do what Mary wants Him to do. On Wednesday you pray this prayer: "My most beloved lady, I thank thee for having delivered me from hell as many times as I have deserved it by my sins. Miserable creature that I was, I was once condemned to that prison and perhaps already after the first sin, the sentence would have been put into execution if thou in thy compassion hast not helped me. Thou without even being asked by me and only in thy goodness didst restrain divine justice. And then conquering my obduracy (stubbornness), thou didst draw me to have confidence in thee. O into how many other sins should I have afterward fallen in the dangers in which I have been hadst not thou, my loving mother, preserved me by the graces which thou didst obtain for me? Ah, my queen, continue to guard me from hell for what will thy mercy and the favors which thou hast shown me avail if I am lost? If I did not always love thee, now at least after God I love thee above all things, never allow me to turn my back on thee and on God who by thy means has granted me so many graces. My mother, most amiable lady, never allow me to have the misfortune to hate thee and curse thee for all eternity in hell."

It goes on. "Wilt thou endure to see a servant of thine who loves thee lost? O Mary, what sayest thou? I shall be lost if I abandon thee. But who can ever more have the heart to leave thee? How can I ever forget the love thou hast born me? My lady, since thou hast done so much to save me, complete the work, continue the aid, continue to help me. But what do I say if at a time when I live forgetful of thee? Thou didst favor me so much, how much more may I not hope for now that I love thee and recommend myself to thee. No, he can never be lost who recommends himself to thee, he alone is lost who has not recourse to thee. Ah, my mother, leave me not in my own hands, for I shall then be lost. Grant that I may also have recourse to thee, save me, my hope, save me from hell, but in the first place, save me from sin which alone can condemn me."

You wonder why Catholics are attached to Mary? If you don't love Mary, you don't have any hope of being saved. She's the one who holds off divine justice. She's the one who talks God into accepting sinners. Page 9 of that book it says, "It is God's own goodness which comes to us through Mary's intercession." We shall learn in this study that no grace of any kind is distributed to anyone any time that doesn't pass through Mary. That's why you want to adore Mary because if Mary feels your love, you're going to get what you have and if she doesn't, you're just not going to get it because it all comes through Mary or it doesn't come at all.

It's understandable why they worship Mary. They don't have any hope without her. Here are some quotes. "As queen she possesses by right the whole kingdom of her Son." That is to say she possesses everything that is within the kingdom of her Son to dispense by right. Another one, "There are just as many creatures serving Mary as there are serving God." Another one, "All things in heaven and earth are under God's dominion so that they are at the same time under

Mary's dominion. She has dominion and power over all creation." Another one, "Jesus is King of justice, Mary is queen of mercy." Now you're starting to get to the core of this thing.

Jesus operates on justice, Mary operates on mercy. You don't want justice, you want mercy. It's hard to get justice...it's hard to get mercy out of Jesus, it's easier to get it out of Mary because she's compassionate and Jesus can't resist His mother when she pleads for mercy on behalf of someone who's asked her for it. Love Mary and she'll get the mercy you need from Jesus because Jesus can't resist His mother. Which is a blasphemy against the nature of God as a Savior and the heart of Christ as a compassionate Savior.

Another quote from Delaguarie's treatise. "Every prayer of Mary's is like an established law for our Lord. She establishes the law by which God acts. Further, "Every prayer of Mary's is like an established law for our Lord, obliging Him to be merciful to everyone for whom she intercedes." Why are Catholic people so caught up with Mary? Because God has to do what Mary asks Him to do, that's His obligation. She sets the law for God.

Another one, "Mary throws open the door of God's mercies to anyone she pleases when she pleases as she pleases." Who determines who gets mercy? Mary. Who determines who God saves? Mary. Who determines who God helps? Mary. So you want to be in with Mary.

Further quotes. "There are no sinners who will be lost no matter how great their crimes when Mary intercedes for them."

Another one, "She has great compassion for sinners who come to her determined to do better." There's a little window on the works' system.

Here's another quote, "Nothing resists her power for God the Father looks upon her glory as if it were His own." Pretty frightening, isn't it? Equal glory with God? Equal power with God? Sovereignty over who is saved? Sovereignty over God for she sets the law by which God operates?

Another quote from page 22 of Delaguarie's book. "Nothing resists her power for God the Father looks upon her glory as if it were His own AND...finishing that quote...God the Son taking delight in glorifying her grants her every perfection as if He were paying a debt." God has to do what she says and Jesus has to do what she says as if He were paying a debt.

The following page, page 23, and these quotes come from the history of Catholic devotion to Mary, I'm not giving you every date, I'm just quoting them from the authorized book. Page 23, "The Son is under great obligation to her. Jesus to pay what He owes to Mary listens to her requests and grants them." So you've got God and Jesus doing what Mary tells them to do.

Page 25 and 26, "Mary is the mother of our souls. Mary is our spiritual mother."

She is sovereign. She sets the heavenly law. She operates with glory equal to God. God and Jesus do what she tells them to do. She is the source of spiritual life. She gives life to our souls. She gives birth to our souls. And here's the sum of it on page 40, "If I love Mary, I will obtain from God whatever I want." If I love Mary, I will obtain from God whatever I want. I expect if you begin to attack Mary, this is pretty traumatic stuff for people who are caught in Roman Catholic deception because all their

life they've been trained that whatever they want is going to come through Mary. You disconnect them from Mary, they have to reinvent their whole understanding of religion as they should.

Another quote from page 43, "Those who want to be children of this great mother must first give up sin." Oh, so that's what it takes, just give up sin? First give up sin and then they can expect to be accepted as her children. So Mary justifies the righteous while Jesus justifies the ungodly.

Further from page 45 and 46, "As long as sinners remain obstinate, Mary can't love them. But if they repent and plead with her to lift them out of their state of sin, this good mother will reach out her strong hand to them, break loose their chains and lead them to salvation." Wow! That's just amazing. "She lifts people out of sin when they repent to her. She breaks the chains of sin and leads sinners to salvation." It also says on page 46, "She reconciles sinners to God."

You see...are you beginning to put the picture together? She has all the properties of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Page 51, "All you who hunger for the Kingdom of God honor the Blessed Virgin Mary and you will find life and eternal salvation." The way to be saved is to honor Mary. Page 53, "Mary is the ark which saves from eternal destruction anyone who takes shelter in it. Under the shelter of Mary sinners are saved." Page 55, "She will welcome us and secure our salvation." Same page, "If Mary ignores or condemns anyone, that person is inevitably lost."

What a grip. If Mary isn't for you, you're going to hell. If she is, you're going to heaven. Whoever...page 153, "Whoever bears the mark of devotion to Mary, God recognizes as His own."

A few more blasphemous notions. Page 30 and 31 has these statements. "To honor the Queen of Heaven, the Queen of Angels, is to gain eternal life. This most gracious lady will honor in the next world those who honor her in this world. Let us therefore always with our hearts and tongues honor this divine mother in order that we may be conducted by her into the Kingdom of the blessed. Salvation of sinners should come from the remembrance of her praises whose womb was made the way through which the Savior came to save sinners. All graces are dispensed by Mary. All who are saved are saved only by the means of this divine mother. The salvation of all depends upon Mary and her intercession. Blessed are they who bind themselves with love and confidence to these two anchors of salvation, Jesus and Mary. They will not be lost. Farewell until we meet in paradise at the feet of this most sweet mother and this most loving Son, there to praise them and to love them face-to-face for all eternity."

Is that what heaven is? The worship of Mary? Catholic catechism, 1994, paragraph 2,677 says, Catholic catechism, "By asking Mary to pray for us, we acknowledge ourselves to be poor sinners and we address ourselves to the mother of mercy, thee all holy one." I can't figure out how God is any different...the all holy one, the sovereign one, the source of salvation, the source of all graces, the comforter, the sympathizer. And that is why on page 402 it says this, "The divine mother can be called the Savior of the world." Same page, page 402, "When God was about to redeem the human race, He deposited the whole price in Mary's hands." Same page...next page, 403, "The Son can deny nothing to such a mother."

In Delaguarie's book and some other sources, there are hymns to Mary. You will notice there are none in our hymnal. And unless you've been raised in a Catholic Church, you've never seen such a thing. But there are a number of hymns that have been written to Mary and are sung to Mary. They're really distasteful. I...I picked out just one verse, "Queen art thou whom all things worship, earth and hell and

heaven above, but thy heart over flows with goodness just and sinners feel thy love." All creation worships her, earth, hell, heaven and her heart over flows with goodness to everybody.

Now it should be noted historically that the official worship of Mary was established in 431 A.D..... 431 A.D. Prayers to Mary came around 600 A.D. A few hundred years past before this cult developed. It really is a form, an old, old pagan form of the goddess worship, Baal and Ashteroth, Isis and Osiris in Egypt. You can trace the Babylonian mystery religions, you can trace the mother/child cult all the way back to pagan goddess worship. You even find references to that in the Da Vinci Code. That's a huge issue for the Feminists who think that modern day Christianity has reinvented religions true understanding and replaced the goddess who is the true ruler of the universe with a male figure. But this goddess worship has been around for a long, long time. Even the idea of the Queen of Heaven has been around for a long, long time.

I want you to turn to *Jeremiah 44* for a minute. In *Jeremiah 44*, actually go back, that's 37 chapters too far...or so. If you go back...on Jeremiah, remember now, Jeremiah is prophesying the destruction of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Lord's house which came to pass in the Babylonian captivity. The Jewish people are going to be punished by God severely. The Babylonians are going to come, destroy Jerusalem, destroy the temple, slaughter, massacre people and then take some captive back to Babylon where they will be for the duration of the Babylonian captivity. What are the sins that have brought about the judgment of God? Go to verse 17, "*Do you not see what they're doing in the cities of Judah in the streets of Jerusalem?"* What are they doing? *"Children gather wood, the fathers kindle the fire and the women need dough to make cakes for*...whom?...for whom?...*for the Queen of Heaven."* By the way, heaven has no queen. You know that? It has a king, it has no queen. This is paganism, blatant, outright paganism. It is the paganism, the false form of worship for which the people of Israel were judged. They were offering their cakes baked to the Queen of Heaven, as part of the libations and other things given to gods, false gods.

Verse 20, *"My anger and My wrath will be poured out on this place on man, on beast, on the trees of the field, on the fruit of the ground, it will burn and not be quenched."* This is serious. God is going to bring about horrific judgment on those who worship the Queen of Heaven. It comes again in the forty-fourth chapter, you can jump ahead. In the forty-fourth chapter it appears again, *verse 17, Jeremiah 44,* there's an obstinacy, a real obstinacy among the Jews. Even when Jeremiah confronted them, said you have violated the Law of God, you have blasphemed God with your worship of false gods, in particular this worship of the goddess, the Queen of Heaven. This is blasphemy. The people didn't care. They didn't listen. They hated Jeremiah. You remember eventually they threw him in a pit to silence him. Some of them went down into Egypt knowing that the punishment was going to come, they ran to Egypt to think they could get away from it, they could go down to Egypt and they could ply their idolatry down there and escape judgment. And God reminds them in verse 13, *"I'll punish those who live in Egypt as I have punished those who live in Jerusalem."* You're not going to get away from Me. I don't care where you go. And that's exactly what happened. There were Jews who went to Egypt to be saved and Egypt had a great invasion and terrible destruction as well. And again, what was the issue here? Verse 15, *"The men who were aware that their wives were burning sacrifices to other gods, women were sort of leading this parade as women have always been drawn to this goddess worship,"* verse 17, *"Their defiance is expressed but rather we will certainly carry out every word that has proceeded from our mouths. We don't care what you say, Jeremiah, we will not listen, we will not change, we will burn sacrifices to the Queen of Heaven, pour out libations to her just as we ourselves, our forefathers, our kings, our princes did in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem."* Wow! Was this pretty pervasive?

The whole country is caught up in the worship of this goddess, this Queen of Heaven. There is nothing anywhere in the pages of the New Testament that attributes to Mary any of these ridiculous attributes of sovereignty, supernatural power, nothing. This is just a woman like any other woman. But there's plenty in pagan history to point to the worship of a queen in heaven. And paganism on a number of fronts has infiltrated Roman Catholicism, it is steeped in paganism. The queen of heaven is right out of paganism. And it was pervasive. *"Our forefathers, it's been going on for a long time, generations, our kings, our princes, everywhere in all the cities, the common people in the streets. For then we had plenty of food. When we were worshiping the queen of heaven, everything was good. She was giving us everything we asked for. It was all going well. There was no misfortune,* the end of verse 17. *But since we stopped burning sacrifices to the queen of heaven and pouring out libations to her, we've lacked everything and met our end by the sword and by famine. Now look what's happened. Now we're being conquered because we stopped worshiping the queen of heaven."* This is the bottom line, folks, the lie of paganism, the lie is as long as you keep worshiping the queen of heaven, you're going to get all the good stuff. If you ever stop, then there's no channel for the blessing of God. Verse 19, *"So said the women, we were burning sacrifices to the queen of heaven and were pouring out libations to her. Was it without our husbands that we made for her sacrificial cakes in her image and poured out libations to her?* Of course not, they were all in agreement. It was the rulers and the men and the women and everybody. *"And everything was going fine and all of a sudden now look at us, we're under siege and we're in the midst of judgment and we stopped doing that and now look what's gone wrong."*

Jeremiah verse 24 said to all the people, including the women, *"Hear the Word of the Lord, all Judah who are in the land of Egypt. Those of you who think you can escape down there to Egypt and worship the queen of heaven, the Lord of host, the God of Israel says as follows, As for you and your wives, you have spoken with your mouths, fulfilled it with your hands saying, we will certainly perform our vows that we have vowed to burn sacrifices to the queen of heaven and pour out libations to her. Go ahead and confirm your vows and certainly perform your vows.* Have at it, folks, go worship the queen of heaven. *Nevertheless, hear the Word of the Lord.* If you're down there in Egypt where this was going on and they were sustaining it down there, they...there had been a cessation of it in Judah under the threat of judgment, the judgment had come and they said... well we stopped and this is why the judgment come. The truth was, the judgment had come because they had done it for so long but some escaped to Egypt and said, *"We're going to keep doing what we're going to do."* And He says to them, *"All Judah who are living in the land of Egypt, I have sworn by My great name, says the Lord, never shall My name be invoked again by the mouth of any man of Judah in all the land of Egypt saying as the Lord God lives."* I'm finished with you, you will never have My name in your mouth again. *"I am watching over them for harm and not for good and all the men of Judah who are in the land of Egypt will meet their end by the sword and by famine until they are completely gone."* There will just be a remnant left.

Pretty serious stuff to worship the queen of heaven. The false Mary of Roman Catholicism is a lie and a deception. It is pagan goddess worship, imported into Christianity. It steals glory from God the Father. It steals glory from God the Son. Steals glory from God the Holy Spirit. And you cannot worship the true God and sit at the table of demons. You can't, it's an abomination. The queen of heaven is nothing but an occult concept. The Catholic cult of the Virgin Mary, Queen of Heaven, leads people into demon worship cause demons impersonate false gods. The Roman Virgin Mary is included, by the way, on some web sites. The Roman Virgin Mary is included on some web sites of goddesses. If you want to look at them, there's a website called, "The Spiral Goddess Grove." Another one called "The White Moon and Goddess 2000," and Mary is one of the goddess figures. She is considered to be the divine feminine.

In reality, this is Satan transforming himself into an angel of light, getting people to worship a dead woman...dead in terms of any connection to this world. She hears no prayers. She has no supernatural divine power. She does not operate on her own. She answers no prayers. She sends no grace. She does nothing. Really, you'd have to believe that the two greatest hoaxes that have ever been perpetrated on the world in any connection with Christianity are that the Pope is the representative of Jesus Christ in the world and that Mary is the source of all spiritual graces. Two horrific lies right out of the pit. Pagan/goddess worship dressed up in Roman Catholic fantasy, just as idolatrous as the ancient worship of the Semitic goddess Astarte known as Ishtar, originally among the Babylonians. The veneration shown to Mary in Roman Catholicism is no less offensive than the worship of Ishtar and Astarte. The worship of Semiramis, the worship of Isis. It is no less offensive to God than the worship that King Manasseh gave to the Tyrian goddess Asherah. Remember he had a carved image set up in the house of the Lord, remember *2 Kings* you can read it, *2 Kings chapter 21. He set up a goddess in the house of the Lord, 2 Kings 21:12* says, *"For this abomination God sent calamity on Jerusalem and Judah."* The Roman Catholic Church has set up an idol in every Church, every cathedral, every Catholic home and the image is everywhere. It is virtually indistinguishable from Roman Catholicism.

The Church enthrones Mary in heaven. From the viewpoint of the people she is above Christ because Christ and God have to do what she asks. I ask you, can the Roman Catholic Church escape the judgment of God? I don't think so. And who's behind all this? Not God, God doesn't give His glory to any other. But Satan steals the glory of God whenever he can.

Now that is the general background that you need to know. Next Sunday night, because our time is gone, I am going to talk about specific Roman Catholic dogma about Mary. I can give you a quick rundown. The Immaculate Conception, sinlessness, perpetual virginity, assumption or ascension into heaven, we'll even talk more about Queen of Heaven, apparitions, so-called appearances of Mary which is part of the dogma of Mary, and most disturbing, that she is mediatrix or mediatress, that is she mediates all divine graces to us because she is co-redeemer with the Lord Jesus Christ. And we will go through all of those right out of the Catholic theology books. And then, one final exercise, will be to compare that with Scripture and to send out a very, very impassioned strong loving warning for people to run with all their might from this damning idolatry...which is a horrible dishonor to Mary, more importantly, to God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

Father, this is so difficult for us to talk through these things and yet so necessary because it must be addressed. When we look at what the Bible actually says about Mary, it's so beautiful, so simple, she knew her place. In the one statement that we have that came from her lips, her praise, she celebrated that You, God, are her Savior. How wonderful that she knew she was a sinner who like every other sinner needed a Savior. Help us, Lord, to hold fast to the truth and to run with all our might from lies and deceptions. Rescue people, Lord, from this horrible, horrible deception that they might come to the true and pure grace that comes only through You, our triune God... Father, Son and Holy Spirit. These things we ask for the glory that is Yours and Yours alone. Amen.

John MacArthur - gty.org

Exposing the Idolatry of Mary Worship: What the Bible Says

Selected Scriptures - John MacArthur

We have been looking at the subject of the idolatry of Mary worship in what is really a study of false religion, Roman Catholicism, and its worship of Mary. Interestingly enough I this past week had the opportunity to be on the Larry King Show, some of you probably saw it, with a whole group of Roman Catholics and several priests. And in the Green Room there were some Catholic apologists and Catholic media people, and Roman Catholic publicity people and there were some young men from the Vatican Seminary and the usual Father Manning. I was checking on my facts as I had the opportunity to do that in talking to them about things and it was affirmed to me that the very things that we are talking about in this study of Mary are the things to which they are truly and genuinely devoted.

We spent three weeks discussing what the Catholic Church essentially says about Mary. We've talked about their devotion to Mary. We've talked about their doctrine regarding Mary. In the end, when all is said and done, the very obvious dominant perception is that they worship Mary. In fact, on a pragmatic basis they worship Mary far more than they worship even the Lord Jesus Christ and far more than they worship the true and living God. It is idolatry in the clearest form. And to deal with this we need only really to do two things biblically. One is to see what the Bible says about idolatry, and the other is to see what the Bible actually says about Mary. And then we will clearly understand that they have invented a goddess to worship who has no relationship to the true Mary, the mother of Jesus revealed in Scripture, the historical Mary.

I want to begin, however, with *Psalm 115* and I want you to turn to *Psalm 115* because I want what the Psalm says to be fixed in your mind. I think it will be helpful for us just to listen to this Psalm or to follow it along in the Bible as I read it.

Psalm 115: "Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to Thy name give glory because of Thy lovingkindness, because of Thy truth. Why should the nations say, 'Where, now, is their God?' But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases. The idols are silver and gold, the work of man's hands. They have mouths, but they cannot speak; they have eyes, but they cannot see; they have ears, but they cannot hear; they have noses, but they cannot smell; they have hands, but they cannot feel; they have feet, but they cannot walk; they cannot make a sound with their throat. Those who make them will become like them, everyone who trusts in them. O Israel, trust in the Lord; He is their help and their shield. O house of Aaron, trust in the Lord; He is their help and their shield. You who fear the Lord, trust in the Lord, He is their help and their shield. The Lord has been mindful of us; He will bless us; He will bless the house of Israel, He will bless the house of Aaron. He will bless those who fear the Lord, the small together with the great. May the Lord give you increase, you and your children. May you be blessed of the Lord, maker of heaven and earth. The heavens are the heavens of the Lord; but the earth He has given to the sons of men. The dead do not praise the Lord, nor do any who go down into silence; but as for us, we will bless the Lord from this time forth and forever. Praise the Lord!"

Now I want you to know the singularity of that call to praise. The Lord alone is to be glorified. The Lord is the source of lovingkindness. The Lord is the source of truth. The Lord is to be trusted. He is our help and our shield. The Lord alone is to be feared. He again is our help and our shield. The Lord does not need to be reminded about us, He is mindful of us, He will bless us. He is to receive all our praise.

In *Psalm 116, "I love the Lord because He hears my voice and my supplications. Because He has inclined His ear to me, therefore I shall call upon Him as long as I live."* I don't need another God. I don't need a mediator. I don't need an intermediary. I don't need someone to plead my case before God. Even in the direst circumstance, verse 3, "*The cords of death encompassed me, the terrors of Sheol came me; I found distress and sorrow. Then I called upon the name of the Lord: 'O Lord, I beseech Thee, save my life!'"*

You will remember that Pope John Paul II when he was shot kept crying, "Mary, save me... Mary, save me...Mary, save me." And why call upon the Lord?

Verse 5-19, *"Gracious is the Lord and righteous; yes, our God is compassionate. The Lord preserves the simple; I was brought low, and He saved me. Return to your rest, O my soul, for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you. For Thou hast rescued my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling. I shall walk before the Lord in the land of the living. I believed when I said, 'I am greatly afflicted.' I said in my alarm, 'All men are liars.' What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits toward me? I shall lift up the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord. I shall pay my vows to the Lord, Oh may it be in the presence of all His people. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His godly ones. O Lord, surely I am Thy servant, I am Thy servant, the son of Thy handmaid. Thou hast loosed my bonds. To Thee I shall offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and call upon the name of the Lord. I shall pay my vows to the Lord, O may it be in the presence of all His people. In the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of you, O Jerusalem. Praise the Lord!"*

Psalm 117, "Praise the Lord, all nations; laud Him, all peoples! For His lovingkindness is great toward us, and the truth of the Lord is everlasting. Praise the Lord!"

Psalm 118, "Give thanks to the Lord for He is good. For His lovingkindness is everlasting. O let Israel say, 'His lovingkindness is everlasting.' O let the house of Aaron say, 'His lovingkindness is everlasting.' O let those who fear the Lord say, 'His lovingkindness is everlasting.'"

The Roman Catholic view of Mary calls into question the compassion, the sympathy, the lovingkindness of God. It places in the people's minds doubt about God's care, concern, sympathy, compassion and interest in their plight. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Bible ends in the *twenty-second chapter of Revelation* with John having heard the amazing revelations and in this particular case from an angel, when he heard, *verse 8 of Revelation 22,* it says, *"I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things. And he said to me, 'Do not do that, I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren, the prophets, and of those who heed the words of this book. Worship God.'"*

In another scene in the book of *Revelation* there is an angel, an everlasting...flying through heaven with an everlasting message, *"Worship God...Worship God,"* who is to be worshiped as our Redeemer, our Benefactor, our Comforter, our Sympathizer, our Deliverer. The Lord is the object of all our worship. The Lord is the object of all our thanksgiving. The Lord, the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, He alone is to be worshiped, He alone is to be venerated, He alone is to be adored, He alone is to be supplicated, He alone is to be petitioned. There is no need for any other person to intercede. You can go directly to God. The Old Testament makes it abundantly clear, and in the New Testament we go directly to God the Son and by God the Son directly to God the Father. We are drawn to God the Son by the Spirit and we are given access to God the Father by the Son. That's why *1 Timothy 2:5* says, *"There is one God and one Mediator also between God*

and men, the man Christ Jesus." There is one Mediator and it is the man, Christ Jesus...not angels, not saints, and not Mary. All our burdens, all our prayers, all our requests go directly to God through our relationship with Jesus Christ. *John 14:13, "Whatever you ask, Jesus said, in My name that will I do that the Father may be glorified in the Son."* If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it. God is not reluctant to hear our prayers. Nor is Jesus reluctant to hear our prayers so that we need to go to the mother of Jesus who supposedly can soften up Jesus who then can soften up God to show some interest in our dilemmas. And John again writing in *1 John 5 and verse 14* says, *"This is the confidence which we have before Him that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us and we know that He hears us in whatever we ask and so we know that we have the request which we have asked from Him."* We go directly to God...directly by the prompting of the Spirit to God the Son, and through God the Son to God the Father.

We ended our discussion of the Catholic view of Mary last time by talking about the fact that they teach that Mary is the co-mediatrix. That is along with Jesus she is the mediator of all graces. She is the channel of all graces. You remember statements made like this, "Mary is the mother of all graces. Mary is the source of all mercies. No grace is conferred on anyone without her mediation and intercession and cooperation. All graces come to us through Mary's hands. Mary is the direct intercessor with Christ who receives from Christ all graces and dispenses them to us and therefore our prayers should be directed at Mary." All of that, of course, is lies and deception and again strikes a blow at the nature of God as one who is loving, kind, compassionate, sympathetic and caring. It strikes a blow against the mediatorship of the Lord Jesus Christ who is the only one we need to go to - to be taken directly to the Father.

Neither is Mary co-redemptrix, as the Roman Catholic Church says. And this was one of John Paul II's big issues. I quote from him, "Mary participates in our redemption." And, of course, he is borrowing language from Pius XI who said, "Mary participates in the redemption achieved by her Son and all graces are granted only through her intercession. She participated with Jesus Christ in the very painful act of redemption." They have Mary in her pain giving up her Son, participating in some form in our redemption so that Christ is not the one mediator, nor is He the one and only Redeemer.

We closed our session last time talking about the fact that the Roman Catholic Church teaches that Mary had more righteousness than she needed to get into heaven. She had more merit than was required and so her excess merit was deposited in what is called "The Treasury of Merit," and you can take the merit that Mary gained and deposit it there and have it applied to your life as a Roman Catholic so that it can shorten or eliminate earthly discipline, or more importantly, it can shorten your time in Purgatory. This is the doctrine of The Treasury of Merit, the doctrine of Indulgences, or Absolution. You receive a certain amount of forgiveness by the merit or the righteousness of Mary being imputed to you in life and in Purgatory. Her good works, the good works of the Blessed Virgin are in the Treasury of Merit. Roman Catholic theology, you'll remember, says that Treasury of Merit includes the good works of the Virgin, immense and unfathomable and pristine in their value before God.

Inventing this goddess who has nothing to do with the true Mary of actual history, the mother of Jesus, inventing this goddess and giving her powers of mediation of all graces, giving her powers of redemption, and giving her powers of imputed righteousness to the accounts of those who appeal to her is a fabrication. It is, as I said, the inventing of a goddess by the mingling of paganism and Gnosticism with Christianity. It really all is paganism and all is Gnosticism, only the name Mary is borrowed from Christianity.

This is pretty consistent with a lot of other Gnostic belief, even the Da Vinci Code pulls up one of the old Gnostic heresies regarding Mary Magdalene. The idea in the Da Vinci Code, borrowing that old Gnostic heresy, is that Mary Magdalene was supposed to be the queen of the church. She was supposed to be head of the church and the Apostles were upset at that and they got rid of her and Peter usurped the place of Mary Magdalene in an act of overt male chauvinism, the kind of male coup and took over the church. Of course the roots of that kind of teaching and belief are found in ancient feminism which has its roots in goddess worship which goes way back into Babylon. It was a satanic ploy from the very beginning as Satan endeavors to counterfeit and upset the divine order and male headship.

So what you have with Mary is just another form of paganism that swept into the church, mixed itself with Christianity. It is nothing but goddess worship.

Now in conclusion, and we have just some time to conclude, I just want to talk about three things to kind of pull it together in three conclusions. One, I want to talk about the blaspheming. This entire concoction is blasphemous. That is to say it is an assault on God. It is a full-blown assault on God. It is an assault on God the Father. It is an assault on God the Holy Spirit. And it is an assault on God the Son. And we've already indicated that in the introductory words. But let me just kind of unfold it for you.

First of all, the worship of Mary is an attack on God Himself. Mary becomes the mother of the Son of God. Mary becomes the mother of God in their language. She is called the Queen of heaven, and therefore she is the rival of the King of heaven, the sovereign God Himself. As we have learned, she is granted sovereignty. She is worthy of worship, worthy of praise. She demands if you want salvation that you adore her, that you love her, that you enthrone her because she is loving, gracious, merciful. She is all-knowing, all seeing and all powerful. Delaguare (?) in *The Glories of Mary*, page 566, quote: "At the command of Mary all obey, even God." Blasphemy against God.

This goddess worship is also blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Mary is the comforter. Mary is the sympathizer. Mary is the helper. Mary is the empowerer. Mary is the advocate. Mary is the encourager. Mary is even the sanctifier who works to make her children pure.

This goddess worship is also an attack against the Son. She becomes a counterfeit Savior, born sinless, without the stain of original sin, living a sinless life. She is called the all-holy child. She becomes redeemer, provider of salvation, dispenser of forgiveness, source of all blessing from salvation to glorification. She is called the all-holy one, clearly a title belonging only to God.

And if you've been with us for the last three weeks, you have felt the heat of the blasphemy. So the blaspheming is the first thing to understand in conclusion. Secondly, let's call it the comparing. We need to do a little comparing here. What does Scripture say about Mary? What is the real story of Mary?

All right, get your Bible, I've been waiting a long time for this. And I just want to give you a real quick rundown, a little bit of a Bible study here. Here just a quick one. Turn to *Matthew 1*, this is going to go quickly, so you need to move with us. Verse 16 we're introduced to her in the lineage from David down to Mary and Joseph. Mary is introduced in *Matthew 1:16* simply by these words, *"To Jacob was born Joseph, the husband of Mary by whom was born Jesus who is called Christ."* The Bible discreetly never calls her the mother of God which is a very misleading title,

always the mother of Jesus. And so we meet Mary, she is the wife in the genealogy of a man named Joseph, both of them are in the Messianic line coming down through David, two different families but all ancestors go back to David so that He is royal in blood from the mother and royal in right from the father where the right to rule is passed.

We see her again in verse 18. She is betrothed. This is a formal engagement to Joseph. And she is found to be with child before they have had any physical relationship at all. Joseph is a righteous man, doesn't want to disgrace her and so he decides to divorce her secretly because divorce is a righteous thing to do if your wife has been unfaithful even in the period prior to the consummation of the wedding. And then, of course, an angel comes and says, *"Don't be afraid," verse 20, "to take Mary as your wife, for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit."* And so, he keeps her, verse 25, as a virgin until she gave birth to a Son and he called His name Jesus.

This is a young girl, 13-14 years old, in that environment she is told by an angel she is going to have a child without a man. This child will be God with us, Emmanuel, and God tells her husband and the child is born and that's the story. There it is. Chapter 2, they come into the house, see the child with Mary, His mother. She appears again briefly in chapter 2. She is mentioned in verse 14. He arose, being Joseph, took the child and His mother, she's not named but referred to there. And in verse 21, after having taken the child into Egypt, verse 21, he arose and took the child and his mother, came into the land of Israel. Already her name is disappearing from the narrative.

That's all we have until we get to the first chapter of Luke...*Luke chapter 1*. And down in verse 26 the angel Gabriel is sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph...same basic information. The virgin's name is Mary. And coming in the angel says, *"Hail, favored one, the Lord is with you."* It must have been an interesting response if an angel showed up and greeted her in that way. She was consequently greatly troubled, kept wondering what was going on. The angel said, *"Don't be afraid, Mary, you found favor. You'll conceive in your womb, bear a son, it will be Jesus,"* and he goes on to say he'll be the Son of the Most High, the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David, He'll be the Messiah. He'll be the Son of God.

How's it going to happen? *Verse 35, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you. The power of the Most High overshadow you. For that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God."* Mary responds to this incredible announcement in verse 38 by saying, "*Behold the bondslave of the Lord,"* she acknowledges herself as the...what?...of the Lord? The bondslave. I just want to make sure you understand that. She sees herself as the servant of the Lord, not God as her servant. And she accepts this announcement and says, "*Be it done unto me according to Your Word."*

She's mentioned in verse 39, she goes to see a relative by the name of Elizabeth who is also miraculously pregnant because she was a very old lady when the Lord came upon her and allowed her with her husband, Zacharias, to conceive a child who would be John the Baptist, born a few months before Jesus and would be the forerunner of the Lord Jesus Himself.

The first time we hear Mary speak and the only time is in verse 46 and Mary said, *"My soul exalts the Lord."* Now we could stop there and build a whole lot of theology on that. "*My soul exalts the Lord*." I mean, let's get it right. Mary submits to God, God doesn't submit to Mary and Mary exalts the Lord, the Lord doesn't exalt Mary. And furthermore in verse 47, *"My spirit has rejoiced in God, my*...what? ... *my Savior*." That may be the most definitive thing that ever comes out of the lips of Mary. To acknowledge that God is her Savior is to acknowledge that she is a sinner.

And not only that, she is a lowly bondslave, in verse 48, *"He has regard for the humble state of His bondslave." Verse 49, "The mighty one has done great things for me and holy is His name."* And then this, *"And His mercy is upon generation after generation."* She identifies God not as harsh, not as indifferent, not as distant, but as...what?...merciful. *"He's done mighty deeds with His arms,"* she's reciting history. "*Scattered those who were proud in the thoughts of their hearts, brought down rulers from their thrones, exalted those who were humble."* Mary worships God. *"He's filled the hungry with good things. Sent away the rich empty-handed. Given help to Israel, His servant, in remembrance of His mercy, spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and his offspring forever."*

As a young girl, a young Jewish girl, 13-14 years old, very devout, miraculously she is to be the mother of the Son of God and all she can do is acknowledge that she is a humble, lowly servant and she is rejoicing in a God who is her Savior. Now the actual event, chapter 2, she is mentioned in verse 5 because Joseph goes to register, along with Mary who was engaged to him and is already pregnant. They get down there in Bethlehem and the days are completed for her to give birth. In verse 7 she gave birth to her firstborn son. Obviously the use of firstborn indicates that she had others. The indication that he kept her a virgin until Christ was born is also an indication that he did not keep her a virgin after Christ was born, but then was the marriage and then was the consummation. The language of Scripture is so very clear about all of this.

She gives birth there in verse 7, wraps Him in cloth, lying in a manger and that's because there's no room in the inn. Verse 34, she goes to the temple to go through a purification ceremony. Again she would do this...this is symbolic of her sinfulness. She goes there to engage in a purification ceremony which was required of all those Jewish women who gave birth under that old covenant. And she goes there, she meets this old saintly man, Simeon, who blesses the little family and said to Mary, His mother, *"This child is appointed for the fall and the rise of many in Israel, a sign to be opposed and a sword will pierce even your own soul to the end, the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."* And there she is mentioned again in that encounter with Simeon.

That's basically it until a little bit later in chapter 2 but twelve years later in time. She shows up in verse 48. They're trying to find Jesus. They've gone to the Passover, Jesus in His twelfth year, they can't find Him. They leave town in a big entourage heading back to Nazareth in the north when they wake up to the fact that He's not there. They go back and they look for Him. They find Him and His mother said to Him, it doesn't give her name but His mother in verse 48 said to Him, *"Son, why have You treated us this way? Behold, Your father and I have been anxiously looking for You."* Now you would think in a Catholic context He would say, "O sweet mother, I...I bow before you." He doesn't say that. He says, *"Why were you looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house?"* What is He saying? He's saying you have no claim on Me. He has come to the point at this age, He's really a young adult, and He now knows fully who He is. He's grown in wisdom and stature and favor with God and man. He's fully developed in His understanding of who He is. Who He is is the one who does His Father's business in His Father's house. And His Father... the Father of whom He speaks...is God. Of course they didn't get it, verse 50, didn't understand the statements He made to them because His father was a carpenter, His earthly father. And when He went down with them and came to Nazareth, He continued in subjection to them dutifully even though they had been put on notice this was temporary and His mother treasured all these things in her heart. And He kept on increasing and growing.

That's it basically during the childhood of Jesus. Turn for a moment to *John chapter 2.* All we know about Mary up to there is what I told you. In *John 2 and verse 1*, Jesus does His first miracle

and His first miracle is at a wedding in Cana. Cana is suburb of Nazareth, if those kind of places had suburbs. It's a little town next door, I've been there a few times. It's a little walk from Nazareth. And a wedding was going on there. Weddings were big events. The mother of Jesus was there. Jesus was invited and His disciples to the wedding because it was in the town nearby, right next to it and they would have known, it would have been extended family, friends, probably people who had attended the same synagogue, they knew everybody. And they were there along with Mary, Jesus, the disciples, they all were invited to the wedding. And when the wine gave out, Jesus, of course, being known by everyone and brought the disciples along with Him, even though they were from other places, when the wine gave out the mother of Jesus said to Him...and this was typical mother, typical Jewish mother, we might say, "Son, they have no wine...they have no wine."

Now to this point He had not done a miracle. And what that tells me about Jesus was that as children go and young men go, He certainly would have been the most attentive, the most sensitive, and the most resourceful human being who ever lived on the planet. And one can imagine that God, perfect God in human flesh, even though He didn't do anything miraculous, did everything well and everything right that never any opportunity for sensitivity, any opportunity for assistance, any opportunity for help, any opportunity to solve a problem He was there and did it in perfection. This is what she knew Him to be. And so what she is doing is what she probably did her whole life. I mean, I can imagine her saying many times, "Son, there's a leak in the roof. Son, I don't have enough food. Son, whatever...my neighbor has a problem." And whatever the problem was He would have been within the framework of His own perfection the solver of all problems. And not expecting that she thought He would do a miracle, but that He was so resourceful.

And the response is really amazing. *"Jesus said to her, 'Woman,'"* Wow...not exactly impolite, but really not what you would expect Him to say to His mother if He held her in some awe, and if they were sustaining some kind of relationship where He bowed to her and did everything she asked. "Woman," this has the effect of distancing her. "*What do I have to do with you?"* Now that is harsh. "What do I have to do with you?" In other words, this is a common, in my study Bible I put a note that this is a common Semitic idiom. And there's a couple of places in the Old Testament where you see it and it is intended as a comment to distance two parties. It even conveys a degree of reproach. Jesus is not rude but He is very abrupt. And the phrase is simply a way to say, "What do you and I and what we do have in common?" That's all in the past. I don't live there anymore. That's over.

You told Me what to do for 30 years, you don't tell Me anymore. "*What have I to do with you? My hour is not yet come."* I operate on a completely different timetable under completely different authority. And so He distances her at the age of 12, He distances her at the beginning of His ministry.

While you're in the gospel of *John, chapter 2,* drop down to *verse 12. "After this He went down to Capernaum, He and His mother, and His brothers and His disciples and there they stayed a few days."* I'm just putting that in because that's what Scripture says. They took a short trip to Capernaum. You can walk there in a day. They took a short trip to Capernaum. That is all it says. But what it does also say is that He went there with His mother and His...what?...brothers, His half-brothers, in reality, the children of Mary and Joseph.

In *Matthew chapter 12,* turn to *Matthew chapter 12,* another very interesting account. Now we're pass the first miracle, Jesus is out in His ministry. And in *Matthew 12:46,* by the way, this is also in *Mark 3* and also in *Luke 8*...three of the gospels give this account. *Verse 46, Matthew 12,* He was speaking to the multitudes. His mother and brothers were standing outside seeking to speak to Him.

I don't know what the issue was, I don't know what the problem was, I don't know what the dilemma was, I don't know what His mother wanted. You remember, of course, right?, that His brothers did not believe in Him. They did not believe in Him until after the resurrection. But anyway, they all showed up, His mother and His brothers are standing outside while He's in some location speaking. Verse 47, "Someone comes through the mob scene," and Mark makes it particularly a dense crowd, *Mark 3,* "*Someone says to Him, 'Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You.'"* That would be like me preaching and somebody coming in and saying, "Hey, John, your mother wants you." Really! This is probably not a good time to go, whatever it is she wants. But that's essentially what happened. And He responded by this same kind of language that we saw at the age of twelve and at the beginning of His miracle ministry, He answered the one who was telling Him and said, *"Who is My mother and My brothers?"* Now, He is not just saying...Look...you have to understand, I have a heavenly Father and I have to be doing His business. He's not just saying I am no longer going to do what you tell Me, He is now saying, You don't have a singular claim to even being My mother. Those relationships are really gone. And He stretched out His hand to the disciples and He said, "*Behold, My mother and My brothers."*

What does He mean by that? He means all those earthly family relationships are over. They're over. And He goes on to say that. *"Whoever...verse 50...does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother."* The people who have a relationship to Me are the people who do the will of My Father. And, of course, the will of the Father is that you believe in the Son, right? "*This is My beloved Son, hear Him."* Wow. Mary has gone from the heights of angelic revelation, the heights of virgin birth to the realization of her own sin in need of a Savior to a ceremony of purification which symbolized her sinfulness and need for cleansing, to being told by Jesus at age 12 that no longer was His family going to have the priority claim on His life, He had a different Father that He was going to serve, to being told you and I really have nothing in common anymore, to being told you do not have a unique relationship with Me at all. That's all in the past.

In the *thirteenth chapter of Matthew and verse 55*, we get another glimpse into the life of Mary. When Jesus was teaching people were saying all kinds of things, verse 55, "*Is not this the carpenter's son, is not His mother called Mary and His brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas?"* What we get out of that is, I mean, how can He be very special when He has such common family members? Nobody was exalting Mary. In fact, the whole idea here was, *"Where...verse 54... did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers when He came from such common people?"* He has brothers named James, Joseph, Simon, Judas and had sisters. And we know them all, they all live around here. Where did this man get all these things? They understood very common ordinary family. By the way, the Roman Catholics say that these aren't brothers, these are cousins. They're not sisters, they're cousins even though the word for cousin isn't used, the word for brother is, *adelphos*, but it doesn't matter what word is used in the Bible because the Church says that and the Church trumps the Bible in that system. And by the way, you have other indications of Jesus' family in *Mark 6* and in *John 6, Mark 6:3* and *4; John 6:42.*

Now let's go to the end of the life of Jesus. That's really all we know until we come to *the nineteenth chapter of John. The nineteenth chapter of John* we are at the crucifixion. And verse 25, they were standing by the cross of Jesus, His mother and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas and Mary Magdalene. Mary is a very common name, obviously. *"Jesus therefore saw His mother and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby,"* that's John always referring to Himself like that. He said to His mother, *"Woman, behold your son,"* again woman, maintaining that distance. It's as if Jesus anticipated the bizarre fabrications that would come around this name and this historic girl, Mary, and did everything He consciously do in His ministry to deter that. *"Woman, behold your son,"*

He's not pointing to Himself, He's pointing to John, probably nodding with His head since His hands were nailed to the cross. *"And He said to the disciple, 'Behold your mother.' From that hour the disciple took her into his own household."* His father, his earthly father, Joseph, was her husband was probably dead. He disappears from the story at the very beginning, never shows up again. She had nobody to care for her. The care of widows was important. So He turns her over to John to care for her. From now on, you're her son, she's your mother. Again the obvious distancing of Himself.

She appears one more time, *Acts 1*. The disciples, verse 12, returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet near Jerusalem, Sabbath day's journey away. Sabbath day's journey would be a very short one cause you couldn't walk very far on the Sabbath. When they had entered, they went up to an upper room where they were staying, that is Peter and John and James and Andrew, Phillip, Bartholomew...and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, Judas the son of James. Judas Iscariot, of course, is missing now. *"These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus and with His brothers."* That's good news. His brothers came to believe after the resurrection and they show up in the upper room on the day of Pentecost in a prayer meeting, along with their mom, Mary.

Please notice, they were there devoting themselves to prayer, along with Mary. They were not there to pray to Mary. Her name never appears again anywhere in the New Testament, never ever again. But there is one other reference that we looked at in the gospel of *Luke* that's helpful to continue to understand the role that she played, *Luke 11, verse 27*. Jesus here is teaching, some of you remember this passage in *Luke 11, and verse 27, "It came about while He said these things one of the women in the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, 'Blessed is the womb that bore You and the breasts at which You nursed."* Sounds like a pre-Catholic Catholic. The Blessed Virgin...*"Blessed is the womb that bore You and the breasts at which You nursed."* But He said, *"No*, just the opposite, *blessed are those who hear the Word of God* and...what?...*observe it."* This was a perfect opportunity for Him to launch Mary worship. This was a perfect opportunity for Him to set Mary in the priority place in the church. All He had to say was, "You are absolutely right, don't forget it and make sure you give her the praise and the worship and the adoration that she deserves." He says nothing of the kind, on the contrary, just the opposite. *"Blessed are those who hear the Word of God and observe it."* There is clearly in the life and words of Jesus a consistent, strong rejection of any special honor to this woman. It is not that He didn't care for her, He showed that He cared for her when He put her in the loving care of His beloved Apostle, John. He cared for her. But He would not allow her or anyone else to think that she had some claim on Him, that she had some access that no one else has, that she had some authority that no one else has, some power that no one else has, some entrance that no one else has, some knowledge that no one else has, even blessing that no one else has, even adoration that no one else has. He rejected all of that. And with that, she is gone from the pages of the Bible.

The Apostle Paul in the epistles makes reference to the mother of Jesus twice, but never names her. In *Romans* he says, referring to God's Son, that He was born of a descendent of David, according to the flesh. Again the distancing is so clear. Paul will not pick her up and elevate her because the Spirit of God would not allow that. Paul would know that. In *Galatians*, the second time he refers to her he says, *"When the fullness of the time came God sent forth His Son, born of a woman."*

As far as any explanation of the gospel goes, as far as any explanation of spiritual life goes, Mary plays no role. Paul writes the magnificent treatise on the doctrine of salvation called the book of *Romans* and all he can say about the mother of Jesus is *"A descendant of David."* He writes the great treatise, *Galatians*, on the pure and true and only gospel and all he can say is, "*He was born of a woman."*

Scripture says nothing about her life. It says nothing about her later years. It says nothing about her death. It says nothing about her burial. Although there are reams of Catholic volumes that talk about the life of Mary, the experiences of Mary, the miracles of Mary, the death of Mary, etc., etc., etc. All fabrications, all lies, all either the invention of men or the invention of demons. The Bible gives no description of her character at all, no description of her physical appearance at all. There is no biblical example of anybody praying to her, honoring her, venerating her. When she appears with believers, she's just one among many. And I think it's got to be shocking to Roman Catholics who read the Bible for the first time and most don't ever read it. But for those who do, how surprising it is that so little is said about Mary when in the system so much is said about her...so much. There are, and I went through one list today, hundreds and hundreds, if not thousands of web sites on Mary, taking you down every imaginable trail into the fantasy of Mary worship.

One other footnote along this line of comparing the Catholic view of Mary with the Bible. Mary is mentioned more times in the Koran than in the Bible. That's an oddity, isn't it? But then, of course, we would understand that Satan who authored the Koran would want to make more of Mary than ought to be made of her. That's consistent. Interestingly enough, the Muslims revere Mary. Some of you will remember and probably don't want to admit it, Bishop Fulton Sheen. Anybody remember him? Long time ago, it was on television. He was a very polished, refined, articulate Catholic priest who would speak on television in the early years. I remember seeing him as a very young child. Well, this is 50 years ago Sheen was on television. And Bishop Sheen predicted... he predicted that Islam would be converted to Roman Catholicism. He said, quote; "Because of a summoning of the Muslims to a veneration of the mother of God." Rome is making a lot of overtures to the Muslims. The Pope has made them, Pope John Paul was forever trying to bring together the Muslims and the common element is their reverence for Mary. Mary for the Muslims is actually called the true Sahida (?) the true lady. And maybe in the end when there is one great massive world religion, it will be goddess worship that pulls it all together.

Well we've talked about the blaspheming, we've talked about the comparing. A final third point, the warning. And I...I can take a few minutes or all night on this one, but because you're so kind I'll keep it very brief. Scripture has very much to say about worshiping a false god, right? This is the warning, the condemnation of all who worship a false god, of all who advocate the worship of a false god is all over the Scripture and it actually starts back, as you know, in the Old Testament. And probably the best place to start is at the clearest articulation of the Law of God in the Ten Commandments, *Exodus 20, "Then God spoke all these words saying, 'I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself an idol or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth, beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God."*

I just the other day went to visit somebody at St. Joseph Hospital in Burbank, I walk up toward the hospital and there is a huge idol greeting me. And who is it? Well it's supposed to be the image of Mary. I walk in the building and there's another idol. I get in the elevator, I get off the floor, there is another idol. Once in a while I see an image of Jesus, but He's always limp and dead on a cross. In *Deuteronomy and chapter 5, "I am the Lord your God,"* it's a reiteration, *Deuteronomy* the second law, the repetition of the original law of *Exodus. "I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself an idol or any likeness of what is in heaven above, or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth, you shall not worship them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God."*

Chapter 6 verse 13, *"You shall fear only the Lord your God. You shall worship Him and swear by His name. You shall not follow other gods, any of the gods of the peoples who surround you for the Lord your God in the midst of you is a jealous God, otherwise the anger of the Lord your God will be kindled against you and He will wipe you off the face of the earth. You shall not put the Lord your God to the test."* Don't test God's patience with idol worship.

The *eighteenth chapter of Deuteronomy verse 9, "When you enter the land which the Lord your God gives you, you shall not learn to imitate the detestable things of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens or a sorcerer, or one who casts a spell or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead."* The worship of Mary is an ill-conceived effort to call up a dead woman. It's also a partner with mediums, spiritists, spell casters, sorcerers, witches, diviners and all the rest. Verse 12, *"For whoever does these things is detestable to the Lord and because of these detestable things the Lord your God will drive them out before you. You shall be blameless before the Lord your God."* It strikes you...it should strike you so obvious, there is not one single place in the Bible where it ever suggests we are to worship Mary and everywhere it is clearly stated we worship God and Him alone. So very obvious.

Look at *Psalm 106* and this is very much the same but I want to give you some Scriptures you can use if you talk to folks about this. *Psalm 106 verse 28, "They joined themselves also to Baal-peor,"* this is the Baal of a place called Peor. *"They worshiped Baal and they ate sacrifices offered to the dead."* Again this idea that somehow dead people can be worshiped and can be petitioned. *Isaiah chapter 45*, and if you want more of this, just look up idolatry in the topical index in the back of the Study Bible and you'll find many passages. But in *Isaiah 45*, I want you to get this, verse 20, this really describes the idolatry of Mary. "*Gather yourselves...Isaiah 45:20...gather yourselves and come, draw near together, you fugitives of the nations, they have no knowledge who carry about their wooden idol,"* sometimes you see Roman Catholics in parades with a wooden Mary, *"who carry about their wooden idol and pray to a god who cannot save. Declare and set forth your case. Indeed, let them consult together, who has announced this from of old, who has long since declared it? Is it not I the Lord and there is no other God besides Me, a righteous God and a Savior.* He is not a reluctant Savior, He is a righteous God and Savior. *There is none except Me."* And here's the call, verse 22, "*Turn to Me and be saved all the ends of the earth for I am God and there is no other."* And one would ask the question, how in the world was somebody supposed to get saved before Mary if she is the mediatrix of all graces? "*I am God and there is no other."*

Jeremiah chapter 2, verse 9, and this will be the last one we'll use in the Old Testament. *Jeremiah 2:9, "Therefore I will yet contend with you, declares the Lord. I have an argument with you,"* He says. Down in verse 11, "*Has a nation changed gods."* Have you changed gods? That's what Roman Catholicism has done, changed gods. "*Have you changed gods when they were not gods?"* Have you substituted a non-god for God? "*But My people have changed their glory*...God being their glory...*for that which doesn't profit. Be appalled, O heavens, at this and shudder, be very desolate, declares the Lord, for My people have committed two evils. They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, to hew for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."* You abandoned God who alone is the fountain of living waters for goddess, a broken cistern that offers absolutely nothing...nothing.

This is consistent with the New Testament. The New Testament calls for the same complete and total devotion to God. *Matthew 4:9*, Satan tempting Jesus says, *"I'll give You everything You can see if You*

fall down and worship me." Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan, for it is written, you shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only." That from the lips of the Lord Jesus Himself.

Romans 1, just a few more and we'll be finished. *Romans 1 verse 22,* here's a description of humanity. *"Professing to be wise they became fools*. Professing to be wise they became fools and how did their foolishness manifest itself? *They exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man, or woman."* That's exactly what Romanism has done. And so God gave them over. This is a divine judgment that falls on that. *"God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity that their bodies might be dishonored among them, for they exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshiped and served the...*what?*...the creature,* a woman*, rather than the Creator who is blessed forever. Amen. And for this reason, God gave them over to degrading passions for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, in the same way the men also abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error."* Could pedophilia and homosexuality and immorality that runs rampant in the Catholic system be part of the judgment of God on those who have abandoned the true God for the worship of a human being?

In *1 Corinthians chapter 5 verse 11, "Actually I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother."* Now this gets real personal, folks. "*Not to associate with any so-called brother if he should be an immoral person or covetous, or...* what?*... an idolater."* People going around today saying, "O our Catholic brothers and our Catholic sisters..." I wish that were true. You can't associate with them in an affirming accepting fellowship if they worship idols. Chapter 10 tells us why, *1 Corinthians 10:14, "Therefore my beloved, flee from idolatry."* Idolatry is seductive, poisonous, it's toxic. You can't stay around it. Verse 16, *"Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread we break a sharing in the body of Christ?*' He's saying, you know, we come together around Christ, we come together to celebrate Christ in His sacrifice and in His death. You can't do that and then go worship idols. You can't do that. Verse 20, "*The things the Gentile sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God. And I don't want you to become a sharer in demons."* Idolatry is demon designed, demon worship. You can't drink the cup of the Lord, verse 21, and the cup of demons. You can't partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. You can't worship Mary and worship God. Or you will, verse 22, certainly provoke the Lord to jealousy.

Second Corinthians 6 verse 15, "What harmony has Christ with Satan...Belial is a term for Satan...what harmony has Christ with Satan? *What has a believer in common with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? We are the temple of the living God."* You have nothing to do with that. Roman Catholicism has nothing to do with true Christianity, the true church. It is something completely different, it belongs to the kingdom of darkness.

Finally in *Ephesians 5 verse 5, "For this you know with certainty, no immoral or impure person or covetous man who is an idolater has any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and God."* If you worship a false God, you have no part in the Kingdom of Christ and the Kingdom of God... no part.

And you see, beloved, that is why the Bible says, *1 John 5:21, "Guard yourselves from idols, flee idolatry,"* as we just read. You can't worship a false god and the true God at the same time. But we worship the true and living God.

I want to close with a glimpse of heaven. *Revelation 4,* you remember this, *Revelation 4:8, "*Every being in heaven is saying, *'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty who was and who is and is to come.'"* And they're all in verse 11 saying, *"Worthy art Thou, our Lord, and our God, to receive glory and honor and power for Thou didst create all things and because of Thy will they existed and were created." In chapter 5 verse 9, "And they sang a new song, 'Worthy art Thou,'"* speaking of Christ, *"'To take the book and break its seals, for Thou was slain and did purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation and Thou hast made them to be a Kingdom and priest to our God and they will reign upon the earth.'"* In verse 12, *"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing."* And verse 13, *"To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever and all the beings of heaven said Amen. And they all fell down and worshiped."*

Do you see Mary in there anywhere? What a bizarre deception. Okay, we will stop at that point. And I do want to do one more thing, not tonight. I hope next Sunday night there's one more element of Roman Catholicism that you need to know about and that's the Mass. So if the Lord wills, and I can get all the work done while I'm back in Louisville at The Together For the Gospel Conference with Al Moeller (?), next Sunday night we'll talk about the Mass cause it's a critical area. You've been so patient tonight, like you had a choice.

Lord, bless these precious people and encourage them because they've been given the knowledge of the truth by Your grace and help us, Lord, to lead many out of this horrible darkness.

John MacArthur – gty.org