

## ~QUEEN OF THE HEAVENS (194)

- The title of a goddess worshiped by apostate Israelites in the days of Jeremiah.
- But we shall positively do every word that has gone forth from our mouth, in order to make sacrificial smoke to the **queen of the heavens** and to pour out to her drink offerings, just as we ourselves and our forefathers, our kings and our princes did in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, when we used to be satisfied with bread and to be well off, and we did not see any calamity at all. (**Jeremiah 44:17**)
- And from the time that we ceased to make sacrificial smoke to the **queen of the heavens** and pour out drink offerings to her we have lacked everything, and by the sword and by the famine we have come to our finish. (**Jeremiah 44:18**)
- Also, when we were making sacrificial smoke to the **queen of the heavens** and were disposed to pour out drink offerings to her, did we without asking our husbands make for her sacrificial cakes, in order to make an image of her, and to pour out drink offerings to her? (**Jeremiah 44:19**)
- Although the women were primarily involved, apparently the entire family participated in some way in worshiping the **queen of the heavens**. The women baked sacrificial cakes, the sons collected the firewood, and the fathers lit the fires.
- The sons are picking up sticks of wood, and the fathers are lighting the fire, and the wives are kneading flour dough in order to make sacrificial cakes to the **queen of the heavens**, and there is a pouring out of drink offerings to other gods for the purpose of offending me. (**Jeremiah 7:18**)
- That the worship of this goddess had a strong hold on the Jews is reflected by the fact that those who had fled down to Egypt after the murder of Governor Gedaliah attributed their calamity to their neglecting to make sacrificial smoke and drink offerings to the **queen of the heavens**. The prophet Jeremiah, though, forcefully pointed out the wrongness of their view.

- **And all the men who were knowing that their wives had been making sacrificial smoke to other gods, and all the wives who were standing as a great congregation, and all the people who were dwelling in the land of Egypt, in Pathros, proceeded to answer Jeremiah, saying; (Jeremiah 44:15)**
- **As regards the word that you have spoken to us in the name of Yehowah, we are not listening to you. (Jeremiah 44:16)**
- **But we shall positively do every word that has gone forth from our mouth, in order to make sacrificial smoke to the **queen of the heavens** and to pour out to her drink offerings, just as we ourselves and our forefathers, our kings and our princes did in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, when we used to be satisfied with bread and to be well off, and we did not see any calamity at all. (Jeremiah 44:17)**
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- **In turn Jeremiah said to all the people, to the able-bodied men and to the wives and to all the people, who were answering him with a word, saying; (Jeremiah 44:20)**
- **As for the sacrificial smoke that you made in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, you and your forefathers, your kings and your princes and the people of the land, was it not this that Yehowah remembered and that proceeded to come up into his heart? (Jeremiah 44:21)**
- **Finally Yehowah was no longer able to put up with it because of the badness of your dealings, because of the detestable things that you had done, and so your land came to be a devastated place and an object of astonishment and a malediction, without an inhabitant, as at this day. (Jeremiah 44:22)**

- **Because of the fact that you made sacrificial smoke and that you sinned against Yehowah and did not obey the voice of Yehowah and in his Law and in his statutes and in his reminders you did not walk, that is why there has befallen you this calamity as at this day. (Jeremiah 44:23)**
- **And Jeremiah continued on to say to all the people and to all the women; Hear the word of Yehowah, all Judah who are in the land of Egypt. (Jeremiah 44:24)**
- **This is what Yehowah of armies, the God of Israel, has said; As for you men and your wives, you women also speak with your mouths, and with your hands you people have made a fulfillment, saying; We shall without fail perform our vows that we have vowed, to make sacrificial smoke to the **queen of the heavens** and to pour out drink offerings to her. You women will without fail carry out your vows, and you will without fail perform your vows. (Jeremiah 44:25)**
- **Therefore hear the word of Yehowah, all Judah who are dwelling in the land of Egypt, Here I myself have sworn by my great name, Yehowah has said, that my name will no more prove to be something called out by the mouth of any man of Judah, saying; As the Sovereign Lord Yehowah is alive! In all the land of Egypt. (Jeremiah 44:26)**
- **Here I am keeping alert toward them for calamity and not for good, and all the men of Judah that are in the land of Egypt will certainly come to their finish by the sword and by the famine, until they cease to be. (Jeremiah 44:27)**
- **And as for the ones escaping from the sword, they will return from the land of Egypt to the land of Judah, few in number, and all those of the remnant of Judah, who are coming into the land of Egypt to reside there as aliens, will certainly know whose word comes true, that from me or that from them. (Jeremiah 44:28)**
- **And this is the sign for you, is the utterance of Yehowah, that I am turning my attention upon you in this place, in order, that you may know that my words will without fail come true upon you for calamity: (Jeremiah 44:29)**
- **This is what Yehowah has said; Here I am giving Pharaoh Hophra, the king of Egypt, into the hand of his enemies and into**

the hand of those seeking for his soul, just as I have given Zedekiah the king of Judah into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, his enemy and the one seeking for his soul. (Jeremiah 44:30)

- The Scriptures do not specifically identify the **queen of the heavens**. It has been suggested that this goddess is to be identified with the Sumerian fertility goddess Inanna, Babylonian Ishtar. The name Inanna literally means, **Queen of Heaven**.
- The corresponding Babylonian goddess Ishtar was qualified in the Akkadian texts by the epithets, **queen of the heavens** and **queen of the heavens and of the stars**.
- It appears that Ishtar worship spread to other countries. In one of the Amarna Tablets, Tushratta, writing to Amenophis III, mentions **Ishtar, mistress of heaven**. In Egypt, an inscription of King Horemheb, believed to have reigned in the **14th Century B.C.E**, mentions, **Astarte Ishtar lady of heaven**. From this **Astarte** the modern **Easter** celebration in Christendom got its name and many of its customs like the Easter egg hunts, part of fertility worship.
- A fragment of a stele found at Memphis from the reign of Merneptah, Egyptian king believed to have reigned in the **13th century B.C.E**, represents **Astarte** with the inscription; **Astarte, lady of heaven**. In the Persian period, at Syene or modern Aswan, Astarte was surnamed, the **queen of the heavens**.
- The worship of the **queen of the heavens** was practiced as late as the **Fourth Century C.E**. In about **375 C.E**, in his treatise **Panarion [79,1,7]**, Epiphanius states: [Epiphanius, edited by Karl Holl, Leipzig, 1933, Vol. 3, pp. 476,482,483]
- Some women decorate a sort of chariot or a four-cornered bench and, after stretching over it a piece of linen, on a certain feast day of the year they place in front of it a loaf for some days and offer it up in the name of Mary.
- Then all the women partake of this loaf. [Epiphanius 79,8,1,2] connected these practices with the worship of the **queen** of the heavens presented in Jeremiah and quotes;
- The sons are picking up sticks of wood, and the fathers are lighting the fire, and the wives are kneading flour dough in order

to make sacrificial cakes to the **queen of the heavens**, and there is a pouring out of drink offerings to other gods for the purpose of offending me. (**Jeremiah 7:18**)

- **This is what Yehowah of armies, the God of Israel, has said; As for you men and your wives, you women also speak with your mouths, and with your hands you people have made a fulfillment, saying; We shall without fail perform our vows that we have vowed, to make sacrificial smoke to the **queen of the heavens** and to pour out drink offerings to her. You women will without fail carry out your vows, and you will without fail perform your vows. (**Jeremiah 44:25**)**