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Divine Nurturer - Maternal Depictions of God in the Bible

Main Verses:

- [Isaiah 66:13](#)
- [Exodus 15:3](#)
- [Hosea 11:1-4](#)
- [Numbers 11:12](#)
- [Deuteronomy 32:18](#)
- [Isaiah 49:15](#)
- [Isaiah 42:14](#)
- [Psalm 91:4](#)
- [Matthew 23:37](#)
- [Psalm 131:2](#)

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Shabbat Shalom! We've worshipped the living God this morning. Come in, join. Thank you, Father. You are with us. Oh come behold the works of God, the nations at his feet. He breaks the bow and bends the spear and tells the wolves to sing. Oh mighty one of Israel, you are our salvation. We walk by faith in God who burns the chariots with fire. Lord of hosts, you're with us, with us in the fire, with us as a shelter, with us in the snow. We'll lead through the business, by and by we go, but with a voice to earth, it bows in all the mountains, room and to the sea, all the hearts of men, you let them Hallelujah. Though the oceans roar, you are the Lord of all. The ones, the winds and waves, it makes my heart beat still. Though the earth gives way, the mountains move into the sea. The nations raise up. With us in the cross. With us as a tree. With us in the. Through us in the cross. As a shell. With us in the storm. We'll meet us. We bless your name, Father. Worthy Father. Thank you, Elohim. Thank you, you are with us. I'll teach you this new song this morning. Simply singing his name. Declaring who the Father is in our

lives. His faithfulness. His worthiness. Sing out in I. Elohim. Great I am. Your Word. Worthy is great, is great, great to be, is great to be. Forever shed, Yeshua, I worship you. Worthy you are, worthy, worthy, worthy are you. Worthy you are, worthy you are, Yahweh you are. Worthy forever, Yahweh. Let the king of my heart be the shadow where I hide. The ransom for my life, oh, he is my song. You are good, you are good, oh, you are good, you are good, you're good. Wind inside of my sails, anchor in the, oh, he is my song. Let the king of my heart be, fire inside of my veins, and he is my day. He is the king of my heart. The wind inside my sails. He is my song. The king of my heart. The fire inside my veins. The echo of my days. My song. You're never gonna let, never gonna let me die. You're never gonna let, never gonna let me down. You're never gonna let, never gonna let me down. You're never gonna let, never gonna let, you're never, never gonna let, never gonna let me down, Jesus. Oh, you're, you are good, you are good. You're never gonna let me down. Oh, you're never, never, never gonna let me down. You're good. Oh, yes, you are good. You're good. You're good. You are good. You're good. You're never gonna let, you're never gonna let me down. You're never gonna let, never gonna let me down. You're never gonna let, never gonna let me down. You're never gonna let, never gonna let me down. It's so true, it's so true, oh You're never gonna let, never gonna let me down You're never gonna let, never gonna let me down When the night is holding on to me God is holding on, yes he's holding on When the night is holding on to me God is holding on You are good, you are good, you are good, you are good Sometimes I find there's a fork in the road Should I stay, should I try to climb higher? To do what I'm made for, to know the good shepherd. To breathe in the air of the mountain. Fill my lungs with the air of the mountain. Hold my vision in my eyes. Miles and miles high. I don't see you getting tired. Good shepherd. Your steps have tested the strength of me. Fear cannot hold me. I'm set on the mystery. Your invitation is calling. Yes, He's calling. Though faint is my strength, you're my eyes. The way you give strength to my faith, so I'm climbed. You give strength to my day, so I'm climbed. My vision miles and miles high. I don't see you getting tired. Good Shepherd. Your steps have tested the strength of the shepherd. Faithful to take. Yes, I know you're with me. Always with me. He is with us today. You are with us today. Oh, the foothills. Oh, the foothills are no place for me anymore. Even broken feet could not keep me from seeking the one who faced death out of love for me. You said, follow me, so I'm following. Oh, the foothills are no place for me anymore. Even broken feet. Could not keep me from seeking The one who faced death out of love for me You said follow so I'm not me anymore You said so I'm good shepherd Cause your steps have tested the strength of me Good shepherd, faithful to take I know you're with me, oh you are faithful You'll always be faithful, always, always will be. Faithful you are and faithful you'll be. We pour out our praise for the weight. Faithful you are and faithful you'll be forever, forever. Faithful you, faithful you'll be. Our praise for the weight. Faithful you are. Faithful you'll be. Pour out your praise. Faithful. Faithful you'll be. The way you are. Faithful you'll be. Good shepherd. Your steps have tested the strength of the ground. Good shepherd. Faithful to take all the way. You're with me. Faithful you are. Faithful you'll be forever. Forever. Faithful you are and faithful you'll be forever. Love sustains before you. Love was to breathe until it sinks in. And I will lean on the loving arm of a beautiful Father. Breathe deep and know that He is good. He's a love like no other. Red and giving me space. So I'll stay still. He sings of the beautiful. And know that he is good. He's a love like no other. Filling to the loving heart. And know that he's a love like no other. For I knew you. for me i can see your love is better and i'm breathing deep of your goodness your loving kind too Your word says your kindness leads us to repentance. Your kindness leads us to the place where we are capable and able to completely surrender our lives to you. For who you are and to see us in your reflection. There is

a love like no other. Your love is a love like no other, Father. We thank you for lavishing your love on us today. We thank you, Father, that you bring us to this place, your place full of love, full of kindness, full of goodness and faithfulness, Father. That you lead us in such a gentle, compassionate, caring way, Father. Never stop, can't you you should love you and we can't get in all this is for you yeah we love you declare your love for him this morning we love you we'll never stop can't live without you you should love you And we can't get enough. All this is for you. We love you. Never stop. We love you. And we can't get enough. All this is for you.

Come and consume God's permission. Our hearts are yours. We want you. Come and consume God, all we are. We give you permission, our hearts are yours, we want you. Come and consume God, all we are. We give you permission, our hearts are yours, we want you. We give you permission, our hearts are yours, we want you. Come and consume God, all we are.

We give you permission, our hearts are yours, we want you. We want you. We give you permission. Our hearts are yours. We want you. We want you. Come and consume God. We want you. We give you permission. Our hearts are yours. We want you. We want you. Come and consume God. All we are. We give you permission. Our hearts are yours. We want you. We want you. Come and consume God. He's a safe place. You can give it all. You don't have to hold back. You don't have to fear that he's going to squander what you're giving him or that he's going to misuse what you're giving him or that he's going to betray you or reject you or he's going to belittle you. He's a trustworthy father. He's a trustworthy lover. He sees you from the inside out. He created you fearfully and wonderfully. He knows exactly what he designed for you to do and to be. And he sees that we are dust. He remembers that we are dust. And he loves us with an undying love and a passionate pursuit. So you can release. You can release to

him. You can say, consume me. Because he is faithful to move in such a way that it brings good and his glory as we surrender. So let's sing that again. Let's sing that come and consume. So come and consume God, all we are. I give you permission, my hearts are yours. We want you, we want you. Come and consume God. All we are. We give you permission. Our hearts are yours. We want you. We want you. We need you. We lean on you. Thank you,

Father. Thank you, Father, that we can lean back into you, Father. That you support us in all ways. In the loving arm of a beautiful Father. Abba, we thank you. We thank you for your goodness. We thank you for your faithfulness to us. We thank you for your presence here today because you're changing hearts. You're changing lives. You're restoring things that have been broken. You're loosening chains. You're releasing us into a new level of freedom.

And I thank you, Father. We bless you, Father. We give you honor. We give you praise. And we say, continue, Father. Continue to have your way this morning. Continue to speak. Continue to move. We honor you, Father. In Yeshua's mighty, mighty name. Amen. Amen. You may be seated. Amen. That's right. Give him praise. Mr. Ethan is going to bring our Torah portion this morning. It's a little small. The book of Leviticus is a weird book for most people. It can be a long and kind of boring read full of weird rules and rituals for the children of Israel to follow.

But I'd like to propose that Leviticus, the whole book, is actually a lot deeper. It's a lot more important and so much more interesting than just being a book of just odd rules and regulations. I'd also like to show you how this week's Torah portion, which is chapters 16 through 18, is the heart of Leviticus. So to fully understand Leviticus, we need to understand the setting. We need to understand where we're at. And so thus far in the biblical narrative, we have the people of Israel who are coming out of Egypt in this grand exodus. They're led by Moses to Mount Sinai where God speaks the Ten Commandments and enters into a covenant relationship with Israel. So he has these plans to make them prosper, to set them apart among the nations, and to have his spirit dwell there. with the people in a tabernacle.

However, shortly after this, they enter into, or shortly after they enter into the covenant, Israel commits a horrible sin with a golden calf, breaking that covenant and making the people unholy and preventing them from entering into the tabernacle. In fact, at the end of Exodus, it actually says that not even Moses was able to enter the tabernacle. And that's where you start to see the importance of the book of Leviticus. You look at Leviticus 1.1, where it starts saying, It says that we're reminded of Moses' inability to enter the tabernacle by saying, the Lord spoke to Moses from the tent. Moses was outside the tent. The Lord, excuse me, was speaking to Moses from the tent. Something changes. Something happens between the beginning of Leviticus and of Exodus to the beginning of Numbers. Because in Numbers 1.1, you see that the Lord, it says in the beginning, that the Lord spoke to Moses in the tent. So we have this transition where Moses and the Israelites are forced outside of the tent. And then after the book of Leviticus, he's now inside the tent. And that's where you start to see the importance of Leviticus and what it's truly about. It's about how God has created a way graciously for sinful people to be reconciled back into his presence. And so something that's really cool about Leviticus is how it's structured, how the whole book is structured. It's structured in this very symmetrical way. You've got three categories, three kind of ways that God has laid out for his people to be reconciled back with him. You have chapters 1 through 7 and 23 through 25, which are the rituals and holy days. These are the different sacrifices that the Israelites offer to either say thanks or to give thanks or to ask for forgiveness when they've sinned. And then the second section is that it goes over the holy days, you know, the Day of Atonement. Not the Day of Atonement, excuse me. The Feast of Tabernacles, Firstfruits, etc. The next section, the next category has to do with the priests. So we have chapters 8 through 10, which goes over the ordination and inauguration of Aaron and his sons as priests. But we also see the death of Aaron's two sons, which serves as an example. They die as a result of presenting unauthorized fire before the Lord. And so it serves as an example, and it shows that the priests must remain holy and pure before God. Then in chapters 21 and 22, we see what qualifies someone as priests. So that's the second section. Then we have the third category, the third parallel, which goes over the purity of the Israelites and how to remain pure, how to remain clean. And so we have chapters 11 through 15, which are a lot of rituals and laws being ritually pure, physically pure. We see this is where we get the eating clean laws. This is the laws about not touching dead bodies as well as what to do with certain diseases and bodily fluids. And so it has to do with being pure, clean in a physical sense so that we can prevent a physical death, but also prevent those things that symbolize death from entering into God's presence. Then in chapters 18 through 20, we talk about the laws of holiness or the moral standards and behaviors that Israel is supposed to uphold to separate them from the other nations. How they're supposed to treat each other, their sexual relationships, as well as the spiritual practices and pagan practices that either keep us closer to or farther away from God's presence. So we have those three main categories, which are basically solutions or tools that God has provided for us to either stay in his presence or to return back into his presence. But there's one section that I haven't talked about yet. And that's this middle section, the heart of Leviticus, as I called it earlier. And this is chapters 16 and 17. And it's the biggest part of this week's Torah portion. This is where we have one more way that God gives us to come back into his presence. And that is the Day of Atonement. The Day of Atonement, here all of the sins of Israel that couldn't be covered by the rituals, the sacrifices, the priestly work, this is where they are covered. And this is where it's discussed and accounted for. During this ritual, this annual ritual, one goat, there are two goats, and one is slaughtered to atone for the sins of the people. The blood is then taken and poured out on the

altar before God. The other goat has all the sins confessed over it by the high priest, symbolically placing the sins of the people onto that one goat. And that's where it is then driven out into the wilderness so that the sins are completely removed from the people. the most important solution to our sin problem, where we see blood spilled out before God to atone for our sins. It says in chapter 17 that the life is in the blood, which shows the meaning, the reasoning for a need for the sacrificial system. It shows that the blood of the slain is in place of our blood. You know, the life, that there needs to be a life that's in place of ours. Which is why, which is why when you look at Fast forward and you see Jesus during the Last Supper when he says, this is my blood that is shed for many for the forgiveness of sins. It's so much bigger than just a surface reading could show. The life is in the blood. It doesn't belong to me. I think Hebrews 10 sums it up pretty well. Hebrews 10, 1 through 4. But in the sacrifices, there's a reminder of sins every year. For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. It's the blood of King Jesus, Yeshua Messiah, that our sins are fully taken away. And that is what the Day of Atonement, no, that is what Leviticus points towards. Leviticus is the shadow of things to come, of God's plan to reconcile sinful people back into his presence. In the heart of it, the Day of Atonement, the day our Messiah was sacrificed. Shalom. Thanks, man. Super good. All right, Ethan, thank you so much. How is everybody? It's good, yeah, all right. About 20%, okay, that's good. We're good. Announcements. All right, welcome everybody to Founded in Truth Fellowship. If it's your first time visiting today or watching online, Shabbat Shalom. So the, man, everybody, Pete and Pete Wilson and Jason Price, my friends. Story time. Story time. Story time. You're going to make me just spill it. Lord have mercy. So many years ago, I was speaking. And anybody, big readers in here? You got any big readers in here? Awesome. Yeah, I love to read. Sometimes you read words and you've heard the word before, but they've never actually been married in your mind as the same word, right? So you're reading words so many times and you're familiar with the word, the definition of the word, but... You think you know how to pronounce it. Well, I was speaking and speaking on prophecy or something and how the biblical authors use hyperbole, except I pronounce it hyperbole. All teaching long. Yeah, it wasn't just once. It was your first sermon you ever saw. Here's the message. Yeah, it wasn't just once. He judged you. Yeah, I know he judged me. And yeah, I was... It's like I just learned a word. I was excited to use it that day. Yep. So my good friends here, man, I feel like Caesar right now. It's just everybody around me. You know you have some really close friends when they will troll you about the most embarrassing moment in your entire life. So I love you guys. Thank you so much for thinking of me. So yeah, everybody, Josh, Jason, and Pete. Yeah, that's good. Let's see here. Turn the other cheek. Turn the other cheek. Turn the other cheek. Middle school Zoom class for kids' class of study will have its last class this Tuesday. We will resume the Bible study classes in August. That's good. Don't forget, though, Shabbat, not shot, is Let's see here, guys. Here we go. We got the Women's Fellowship finally starting up May 4th at 6.30. It's going to be here. If you can't make it in person, you can join via Zoom. It's going to be very exciting. And we have this coming Tuesday. Everybody say this Tuesday. This Tuesday. It's good. This Tuesday at 6.30 p.m., the men's Bible study is going to pick up in John's Gospel. So guys, please join us. That's right. Yes. We're going to be meeting here, right? Okay. We'll be meeting here at 6.30 Tuesday night. So guys, come join us. It's been an amazing Bible study. If you can't make it in person, you can join us on the Discord channel. If you don't know how to access the official Founded in Truth Fellowship Discord channel, you can contact Mr. Josh Inslee in the back there. So yeah, get joined up. And I think we are good to go. Guys, giving. Here we go. Guys, we are here. We are able to operate with the multiple

ministries that we have. We're able to meet, do feast days. We're here to do everything. We're able to do everything we can because of your generous financial support. And so thank you.

Thank you, everybody who... allows us to have the resources to be able to continue doing what we need to do. If you'd like to give to Founding Truth Fellowship or you feel like we've been a blessing to you and you feel like God is actually using this ministry, guys, I encourage you to pray about giving. You can give outside in the box, online, or on the various QR codes that Julia put up everywhere. I don't know why she has so many, but I'm very thankful for it. So thank you so much. Also, guys, the church that we are renting from is amazing. They keep doing like remodeling and keeps getting better and better, right? Yeah. I thought it would be really cool to take out the whole wall so that we can have an open space. And it's really cool.

It frees up the space, right? Really cool. Except for, well, we can hear everything out in the lobby now. So, that's great. So, guys, during worship, if you need to go out to the lobby to talk or kids or whatnot, just be conscious of that, that it is not a place that you are shielded from. We are shielded from you as far as laughing or carrying on or whatnot. So, everybody good? Good. Great. That was awesome. All right. Please stand. Every single week we have a tradition here where we thank God for the greatest asset he's given to us as a community, and that is the next generation. So we invite the children to come up as we say a special blessing over them, and we're going to get the chuppah out. So each week we hold up a special cloth called a chuppah over them that represents God's special blessings over them. All right, buddy. We're going to have to put you down here. I know. Hold on, hold on. People have bubbles. I got you, bud. All right. We'll get this hoop up. Yeah, let's get two of them. We're going to find, I'm not kidding about the retractable one that's going to be hooked to the back wall. Nobody. All right. All right. Everybody ready? Ready? Our Father, our King, Father, we thank you for this Sabbath day that you've carved out of creation to give to us as a sign, as a signet that points to the ultimate rest that is only found in your Son, Yeshua. Father, I ask that you would bless the young men here as Ephraim and Manasseh, that they would be fruitful in all of their ways, that you would equip them with the wisdom and the boldness to carry your banner throughout their generation, and the young ladies here, that you would bless them as Rachel and as Leah, Father, that you would embody the courage, the into them to be the mighty warriors of the next generation, carrying your banner of your kingdom. Father, I ask a blessing over the youth today that you would make them like Joshua and Caleb, the spies that ran into the land, carrying your promises forward instead of cowering in the valleys below. We thank you, Father, for this Sabbath. We thank you for your spirit of joy and truth, and we thank you for your son, Yeshua. In his name we pray. Amen. Amen. Guys, if you look up at the screens, I'm going to invite you to collectively say the Lord's Prayer with us. And we say it out loud every single week so that the children hear us and that they learn it that way.

So everybody ready? Hey, Ben, Benjamin. Oh, you ready? Oh, you don't? Okay. You ready? Okay. Everybody ready? Here we go. Do you ever find yourself searching for something bigger than you? For a community to be a part of? a place founded on truth and love a place to worship the king of kings the lord of lords and the son of god welcome to founded in truth where we're more than just a fellowship we're a family so welcome home All right. Well, Shabbat Shalom again, everybody. As the children are dismissed, the parents are taking the kids back and the volunteers. Yeah, we're so excited that you're here today. As usual, it's great to come together to celebrate the community. that was birthed out of Yeshua. And so it's amazing to be here. If this is your first time visiting our church today or watching online, we are glad you're here. We're a community of families of diverse backgrounds and individuals. And we love the Sabbath. We find joy in the entirety of the Bible. But most of all, we are a

community that seeks first and foremost to orbit the person of Jesus who we call Yeshua. So welcome to Founded in Truth. So Mother's Day is coming up. And that's fun. Some people are excited about it. That's good. And because we're not meeting next week, I figured why not take advantage of the season in order to talk about one of my passion subjects, the imagination and the creativity of the people who ended up writing the Bible and how they did that structurally and the methods that they used to do that. Now, Mother's Day. Mother's Day. Let's face it. Hopefully we honor our moms more than one day a year. Yeah, oh yeah, there was a delay there, I think. Are they going to see me? Absolutely. During the Civil War, there was a woman by the name of Ann Reeves, and she was a peace activist who had a reputation for essentially caring for the wounded soldiers from the Union and Confederate armies. And she encouraged organizations and people to do the same. Because if people are hurting, then you help them. And very powerful, very powerful. She had a huge impact post-war on reconciliation attempts, encouraging mothers of soldiers to come together in meetings, especially ones who may have lost children or their children were wounded. Her daughter, Anna Jarvis, was the one that petitioned that there should be a day set up to honor mothers. And of course, she was inspired to honor her mother by that. But she wanted a day to honor the suffering and the sacrifices and the pain of mothers everywhere, as well as to remind mothers to not neglect but pour into caring for their children like they should. Potent. Now, the day took off, became very popular extremely quickly. And, well, we love, as America, we love an opportunity to make money, don't we? So we commercialized it instantly. Cards and flowers, money, money, money. And that is the last thing that she ever wanted to see. She was disappointed at the conclusion of this day that she thought was going to have such a great impact. Yeah. And so... Needless to say, is what it is. Yeah, is what it is. You know, in all the excitement of buying flowers and gifts for our moms, which is a good thing, we should be honoring our mothers. Sometimes, do you guys realize that Mother's Day sometimes ends up causing a lot of pain for a lot of people for a lot of different reasons? It has. It's caused pain to a lot of women. And instead of being honored, many are reminded of the children that they have lost. or the children that they may have never conceived during barrenness, the children that they never got to hold. And like I said, in all of the excitement that we get going out and buying flowers and gifts, we as a church sometimes end up producing a marginalized demographic instead of serving them. Because the day that we celebrate as Mother's Day has long drifted away from its original intent of honoring moms who have went through the suffering of and went through the pain and went through the agony of anything that had to do with having children or raising children. And it's become a day that is obligatory to get flowers for your mother, which is good. But sometimes we forget the women that make up the story in the Bible. The matriarchs, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, all are depicted as mourning and suffering due to barrenness. Hannah, the Shunammite woman as well, The stories of our faith are built on mothers that suffer and that were looked down on and that did endure shame and that were marginalized because of barrenness. And God joins them in their suffering. He finds himself alongside them. He notices them and he embraces them. And sometimes this just calls me to reflect, what does that say about the church when we don't? So happy Mother's Day. May you be honored. Not for what you produce, but what you have endured and given and went through. Thank you. So today, we are going to dive into the topic of biblical metaphor and simile, or similes, and specifically when it's used to depict Yahweh as a variety of things. But as a mother and having female characteristics today, that's going to be the orbit. And for some of you, this may have been something you've never even seen or thought about, maybe never even heard of this topic. You know, maybe you've

never... God being portrayed as this in any way. And some of you may already be triggered by the topic itself. I've engaged with many people like that. And if you are having those feelings right now, I would ask you to tell those feelings to hold off for just a little bit as we dive into the Word of God. So let's start off in Isaiah. Isaiah 66 verse 13. And here's what the prophet says. And the context of this chapter is describing the final conclusion of God's mission for creation.

When all wrongs are made right, when the deserts flourish and bloom, and everything is leading up to this climactic new creation where God, His spirit fully engulfs the world through his image bearers. And he says this, Marinate in that for a second. So I will comfort you and you shall be comforted, Jerusalem. So God is speaking to his people here. God is speaking as an extension to you. And he's saying his comfort is going to consume you. And it will be like the comfort of a mother to her son. God is going to give you this comfort and compassion and her complete shalom, if you will, because you will be home. This is powerful. What a powerful depiction here that this God is also like, simile, a mother. In your greatest time of distress or anxiety or shame, this God gives you the ultimate comfort of a mother. That's how everything's going to wrap up in the end. How many of you remember a time when you were a child and you were held by a mother figure in your life? You remember being that young and what that embrace felt like? Do you remember that security to have that person, that guardian hold you? Nothing can get you while you're there. Nothing. You are safe. You are okay. Like when a child hurts themselves. Guys, you're going to relate to this. At least I hope.

Maybe not. So we have Ben and Evie and then, of course, Ari. And I've just had this observation ever since Benjamin was a little child. He'd skin his knee and he'd come running and I'd be the first one there. So, you know, first responder. Okay, pick him up. Holding him. And Ginny would just casually walk in the room because she wasn't there first. I was. And all of a sudden, I am rejected as his arms go up for mommy. I'm holding. I'm comfort. I'm patting the back. Evie, same thing. Hold me tight. Crying. Needs to be comforted. Either she's upset. She fell down. Bumped her knee. And so Evie's a little bit. She doesn't have to see Ginny. It's like after a minute. I'm right, am I not doing enough for you? There's something different there that I've noticed with my children. If mom is in the room, their arms, like as if magnetically charged, lift up to her. He wants to comfort us like that. Because when Jenny is holding any of our three children, there's nothing in the world that's threatening them, it's causing them stress or anxiety. They know that they are the safest they will ever get. And the prophet Isaiah is telling us something very intimate in this little line. When that is us, when we are hurting, when we are in pain, when we are in shame, when we are embarrassed, when we feel like we have failed, our God is able to embrace us only the way that the truest mother can. See, throughout the Bible, we see God depicted in many, many, many, many different ways. Never just one. Never. He is described in Exodus as a mighty man of war. Men, big mighty. Yahweh is a man of war, right? Just whatever that image brings, the ultimate warrior. He's described as a fortress, strong tower, protective tower that if you're running from your enemies... And you make it in, you close the gate, and you know that nothing can get you protected. God is described as a shield that is before us. Again, that sense of peace. He is described as a shepherd. He tends to us, leads us to still waters. A shepherd. So on one end of the spectrum, we have a man of war, like running through battle with a big sword, dismembering, just whatever. Man of war. And on the other end, we have a shepherd. that is gently tending to the wounds of the sheep, carrying them, finding them if they're lost, making sure that they're safe and fed. I love it. Why was God described in so many different ways in the Bible? Well, kind of the same way that we do it today. When humans attempt to articulate and describe things that aren't necessarily concrete concepts, we resort to devices

known as metaphors and similes. These are devices used to help describe or relate things like emotions or circumstances that are difficult, again, to explain or articulate literally. The primary place you find metaphor, for example, is where? What type of genre of literature? Poetry, right? But it overflows into everywhere. We use it today casually. Again, these devices help us take raw data, And they help us experience ideas and emotions using our imaginations instead of just processing the words. For example, relationships are hard, right? Sometimes. No? Oh, okay. No? Oh my. Especially ones that involve this thing called love, right? Love relationships tend to be difficult. Kids. Kids aren't hard at all. Gray hairs. So relationships tend to be hard because when we get angry or our partner in the relationship gets angry, it makes us lash out sometimes because of our inability to regulate our own emotions in response to anger that is found within this covenant commitment that we call love to each other. Everyone understands what I'm saying, right? That's data. I've articulated the data. You're like, yeah, I know. And you can relate to data. But what happens if we employ metaphor? Yeah, love is a battlefield. Now, you instantly get a movie. Did a movie just play in your mind when I said that? A song that hijacked the whole thing. Instantly, me, I get images of soldiers screaming and running just as hard as they can. Not really, no, just go across no man's land. Barren trees everywhere. Artillery hitting the ground beside them. On one side of them, they're trying to figure out how to comfort and save the people that they love. But on the other side, they're driving a bayonet into someone and don't know what's happening. There's smoke everywhere. And what do we do? Love is a battlefield. Does love ever feel like that sometimes? Thank you, Brad. It forces you to, metaphor and similes, it forces you to experience data. Love is a battlefield. When you have a day that's filled with instances of both disappointment and joyful moments. Wow, today was a... Roller coaster, right? It's different. It hits different as it should. You've been on a roller coaster before, and that experience is now associated with understanding this literal data that I'm giving you. And it's not a new practice. This is an ancient practice that has been used throughout every culture for thousands of years. And the biblical authors use it all the time. The Lord is my shepherd. God is not literally a shepherd. No. No. But the experience of a shepherd has now been associated to how God acts. God is a strong tower. God is not literally a strong tower. He doesn't have bricks and mortar and footings in the ground. It'd be kind of weird. That'd be an idol, right? It's a castle. No, but we can imagine being chased and running into a strong fortress and feeling safe, knowing that our enemies cannot get us and that that's what God is providing. Now, of course, that, that, that, that, metaphor is taken from Proverbs and it has to do with being foolish or being wealthy and foolish, essentially, and finding the true source of security in your life. Sin is crouching at the door. Love that poetic personification of sin in Genesis 4. Sin is crouching at the door, desiring to have its way with you. Sin is personified as a beast that wants to force itself upon you. That experience is now associated with with the cultivation of evil within your own heart. That's what that is inside of you. Are you going to let it or are you going to resist, push back? God is described as a father, metaphorically. He gives protection. He's willing to fight for his family. He gives inheritance. He disciplines Israel because like a father, he loves his child, loves his son. God loves us. This is what Yeshua refers to God as, God. wanting to highlight the central attribute of God's character that is being shown through himself. A father that runs to his children's needs. A father that would give anything to his children. A father that celebrates his children. A father that loves his children. A father that would kill the fatted calf and host a banquet for his children. Because all he wants to do is be with his children no matter what the cost. Now Hosea... amazing the way it's written. Hosea actually switches between genders in describing God. And the first three chapters mainly,

Hosea uses imagery of this marriage between Israel and Yahweh. And of course, Israel was not faithful. She was an adulteress. And God is portrayed as this husband that is just beside himself. He doesn't know how to process such a level of betrayal. He's out of control saying these things. He wishes things would happen to her. He's just so angry due to this situation.

But here in Hosea 11, 1 through 4, we have, which most would agree, the attributes of a mother giving compassion to her son. And here's what it says in Hosea 11, 1 through 4. It Here the feelings of Yahweh toward Israel are depicted... As if a mother who is teaching her son how to walk, who embraced her child with tender love, who healed him when he was ill, who fed him when he was hungry. All these tasks which God took upon himself were tasks likely assigned to mothers in Israelite households. And the context of the book, but in this chapter is, God does not want to see his people go back to Egypt because that's where they're heading. God does not want to see the reversal of the Exodus event happen because But that's what's happening. In verse 5, it continues, will they not return to Egypt? Will they not? And will not Assyria rule over them because they refuse to repent? Syria is about to come in to the northern tribes and exile them, overtake them, defeat them, and kick them out of the land and take them hostage. And so here Hosea is basically saying, like, it's Assyria coming in, but it's as if they're going back to Egypt because they have walked away from me. Verse 8, how can I give you up Ephraim? How can I hand you over Israel? How can I treat you like Adma? How can I make you like Zebairim? My heart is changed within me because all of my compassion is aroused. We have the reversal, and this is a theme throughout Hosea. You see God flipping back and forth, and why that happens is revealed in chapter... The point is revealed in chapter 14. So you have God as this just angry, can't believe this is happening. But later on, you have a sense of compassion. An irate husband who's just lost self-control as a response to this devastating betrayal. And then this compassion of a mother saying, I don't want you to do this. I don't want to see you stumble in here. I don't want you to see you make these mistakes. I don't want you to go on this journey because I know where it leads even if you don't. It's a reversal. Continuing in verse 10 of Hosea 11, they will follow the Lord. He will roar like a lion. When he roars, his children will come trembling from the west. They will come from Egypt, trembling like sparrows, from Assyria, fluttering like doves. I will settle them in their homes, declares the Lord. And so here's kind of like the climactic moment in Hosea. And you have this back and forth, back and forth, back and forth. God is compassionate and he's calling Israel back home. I don't want you to go. But here he's saying, you know what? Even if you go, I will rescue you. You will come back. So again, wrathful husband, but also compassionate maternal attributes. And God just wants to see his children home and taken care of and safe, but instead feels forced to allow them to suffer the consequences of their own actions. How am I supposed to let this happen and just stand by? Well, that's what they wanted. They wanted this to happen. That's the journey they took. They walked away from Yahweh. But in the end, Yahweh promises, I will return you home. No matter what Egypt you find yourself in, I will mount you up on wings of eagles. I will settle you back in your homes. You will be like doves and sparrows as you fly back to my nest. It's incredible. So Hosea is drawing this type of language of God having these maternal attributes or being depicted as a mother to Israel, and he's drawing them from the original Exodus account. That's the connection that's fueling this language, the divine lament here. Numbers 11, verse 12. Moses is getting upset because the people are getting annoying. So if you're a parent, you understand, right? And so here the people are coming to Moses, and they're like, why are we doing all this stuff? We want more things. You've taken us out of the land of Egypt. We want food. We want water. We want all these things. And Moses then complains to God, and he says this, did I

conceive all these people, God? Did I conceive them? Did I give birth to them so that you should tell them, carry them on your breast as a nursing mother carries a baby to the land that you swore to give your ancestors? Was this all me? Am I the one carrying the burden to nursing these people off my breast this whole way to the land? Fascinating. This is how Moses frames God's responsibility in this term. God, this is you, not me. I can't do this burden. This was you. You're the one who gave birth to them. You're the one that are carrying them at your breast as a nursing mother carries a baby. You're the one that's taking them back home to the land that you swore to them. Deuteronomy 32, 18. I love the language used here because it makes it turn your head sideways. Deuteronomy 32, 18. Yeah, I love it. He's the father that gives birth. In the Song of Moses here, the offense of Israel is emphasized by comparing its apostasy with a rebellious child who forgets his mother. Israel's offense is magnified by the use of the mother metaphor, likely because dishonoring your mother was a serious violation of covenant. Psalm 90, the prayer of Moses. It's powerful in imagery. Gave birth to creation. People get so caught up in trying to define and box in a being with an infinite nature. We just love to do that, right? We'd love to try anyway. And I don't know why. We love to have boxes and labels. But the prophets understood what they were doing. They understood that God can only be described in human language, but even that is a finite attempt to get the full glimpse of the character of God. As humans, we like to make sense of things, right? We love labeling things. We love to have boxes that are nice and neat, that we can stack things. We got to make sure the boxes never touch. And we love to have thin but deep lines in the sand. And the reason for this, I believe, is because we like to know what our label and identity is. And when we can label everyone else correctly in our own eyes or incorrectly, it helps us find peace on who we believe we are. Whenever we tribalize our identity, it helps us feel more secure in it. As long as there's them versus me, I feel more solidified in who I am. And so many times we will grab hold of a single presentation of God in the Bible, and that will be the box that God lives in. And God will never escape from this box I made for him. And we will form our entire theology through this funnel of how we relate and experience God. And the issue is that is not everyone's experience. It's not. It's not That's not everybody's experience. That is why there's so many different portrayals of God's characteristics in the Bible. Why are there so many different ideas? That's what the Bible is.

Ben caught me off guard the other night. He grabbed my bright red CSB Bible on my nightstand, and he was pretending to read it, which I was like, yeah, that's right. You know, that's right. Read it, bud. Proud of you. Now, background. Ben knows about Yeshua. He knows about Yeshua. I want to make sure that foundation is set up before anything else. He is not familiar with most of the stories in the Old Testament at all. I haven't taught them to him. And for obvious reasons, I mean, the flood that comes and kills everybody, no, that's not a portrayal of God I want to be foundational for him. I don't want him to get confused later. And wonder about Yeshua, I want him to ask questions about the stories there and be solidified in who Yeshua is. Abraham trying to kill his son, He doesn't know that story. I'm not going to teach that to my six-year-old right now. I'm starting with Jesus. But he asked, and he knows this, like we've read the Bible before, but he just kind of asked it. It was a weird question. He's like, what is the Bible? I mean, we've read from it. He knows what's in it, but what is the Bible?

And what do you say to a six-year-old that asks you this question in a way that's actually going to be productive and effective? Well, son, that's the word of God. How is he supposed to, I mean, what does that mean to a six-year-old? I was thankful to my past self. I was quick on my feet. And I said, well, son, it's a lot of stories, a collection of them. And they are all stories about how different people at different times described their experiences with God. And that's

what it is. That's what it is. And it was funny. He turned the page and he had the table of contents open. And I was like, yeah, they're all the stories. There you go. And all of these stories culminate and ultimately lead us to get to know who Yeshua or Jesus is. And so many times, you know, we get caught up in different things based on our experiences. And sometimes your experience with God ends up depicting God as a man of war because that's based on your circumstances and your experience and how God chose to meet with you in that moment. Victory, strong, tearing down the enemies. But for someone else with a very different background, living in a different life, having much different experiences, God is like a mother who holds you close and nurses you at her breast. And many times, as the biblical authors write about, it's a combination of those. It's a combination. Hosea 13, rollercoaster literature. Like I said, it's back and forth, back and forth, anger, wrath, gentleness, compassion. Hosea chapter 13, verse seven, just like we read before. So A, that escalated quickly. But here in verse 8, God is described as a mother bear who has had her cubs robbed of her. I will attack them and rip them open. Marinate on that. I mean, let's just hang out in this pot of water for a second. You understand the power behind this depiction because we understand the motherly instinct, especially in the animal kingdom. And this is how God is described. Now, unfortunately, he's describing his wrath towards Israel because Israel has taken her son away. It's unrecognizable. So yeah, my wrath is going to pour out on you as if you've taken my cubs from me. And then Hosea kind of wraps up with this chapter that culminates everything in Hosea up to it, the very last chapter, chapter 14. It's basically a choice. Like he's given Israel a choice. Like Come back to me and embrace my compassion or you're going to feel wrath poured out, which is the consequences of your own doing. Your sin will be turned around onto you and you will suffer if you go down this path of betrayal of the covenant. Or let me embrace you with my compassion. Come back to me. Israel's left with a choice. Which one will you choose? But the poetic expressions in this book are absolutely amazing. Another passage that speaks of God as a nursing mother is in Isaiah 49, 15. That's powerful. God's using this specific imagery to get in touch with the emotions here. Old Testament scholar Walter Bergman says this about this passage. He says, this passage indicates that Yahweh remembers the child because the mother feels the need to nurse as much as the child does. Thus, the metaphor of a nursing mother that speaks something about physical connection of a mother, not simply unconditional love. It goes beyond that. How can a nursing mother forget? And even if that impossible situation would occur, I will never forget. My bond with you is stronger than that. Moms, how often do you think about your children? How often do they think about you when they're young, right? And then that seems to fade, right? All the time. What if your kids are bad? What if they are rebellious? What if you're at it? Like when those things occur, what's your attitude towards them? Does your heart contain absolute malice? Does it contain absolute vengeance towards your children? Do you ever forget and just abandon your children forever because they're not as significant in your life? There's something unique here, the impulse to protect and nurture and love. This maternal impulse that transcends time, it transcends culture, it transcends social class. It's constant. This thing is so powerful, nothing can separate it. And that is exactly the premise of how Isaiah speaks to us about God. About Isaiah chapter 42, starting in verse 14. This is the messianic coming. The Messiah is coming and bringing the kids home. It's the end of the exile type of language. And it says this, For a long time I have kept silent. I have been quiet and held myself back. But now, like a woman in childbirth, I cry out, I gasp. I pant. I will lay waste the mountains and hills and dry up the vegetation. I will turn rivers into islands and dry up the pools. I will lead the blind by ways they have not known along unfamiliar paths. I will guide them. I will turn the

darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do. I will not forsake them." This is how God speaks about bringing his children home and in the exile, right? There will not be any obstacles because of me. So first off, the setup here, and you could view this different ways, but the setup here is, of course, with the intensity, recklessness, if you will, pursuit of a woman giving birth, God's going to knock down mountains over to get you. That intensity, do whatever it takes. Nothing will stop this mama bear, right? And I read one commentary, and I don't know if I agree with it, but it was interesting. It says, for a long time I have kept silent. And so they suggested that it was as if for like nine months, just like a woman who was with child. For nine months they remain silent until a woman gives birth, and that is when the intensity comes. Men, husbands, should your pregnant wife remain silent for nine months? Psalm 13. 57, verse 1. Have mercy on me, my God, have mercy on me, for in you I will take refuge. I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings. Familiar verse, until disaster has passed. So many times this verse is used throughout the scripture, specifically in the psalm. But you know what it's depicting, right? I think we have a picture. It's depicting little chicks under the wings of Mama Bird. Do we have another one? This one's famous. This one got viral. So when this went viral a few years ago, I think 2018, it's from India, it was described as the experience of motherhood. So mother bird protecting her young from the rain, suffering because of it, enduring because of it, gladly. This is, I feel like sometimes we put ourselves in positions where God makes that face at us, but so willing the graciousness of our God is to be poured out and the compassion of our God is to be poured out. Maybe you're going through a time where you are finding it hard to trust because life is hard. Life is drowning you. Our God is holding you. Our God is present, gives everything you need. Be at peace. Be at peace in the shadow of his wings. Matthew 23, 37, it says this in Yeshua speaking. He's lamenting over Jerusalem. It says, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it. Yeshua is speaking here and he's referencing several passages found in the Old Testament, again, such as Psalm 36 and others, which presents God as swooping down to embrace the whole world, spreading out his wings over humans to shelter them. Or Psalm 17, a psalm filled with the tender emotions. I think I have a, there's a chicken. This is how Yeshua likened himself and what he desired to do for the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Chicken, anyone ever had chickens? We had chickens for a while and it was fun until it wasn't. And... And the one thing, my wife watched chickens all the time. No, not anymore. We did it, check. But the one thing that we both enjoyed doing was just watching the dumb birds all the time. Funny little things to watch. Big, can't see their feet, so they're always scratched. They scratch and peck, but they scratch, but because they can't see what they scratch, they have to back up and look down. Yeah, it was good. They scratch and then look down and see if there's anything, and then they get up and they have to do it again. And I just enjoy chuckling at that morning coffee all the time. So funny-looking birds, but look at that. That was what Yeshua was picturing in hope for his people. Beautiful, impactful. When Ben gets shy or frightened or Evie gets shy or frightened, they run to Jenny, burying their heads in her legs and her lap. Hoping that she would shield them with her arms. Yeshua does not say, now I have yearned to march in here as a mighty warrior, slay the enemies, slay you. No, I've desired to gather you together as a mother hen. I have desired to spread my wings over you, to nurture you, to protect you, to keep you safe in my care as a mother. Yeshua paints himself as a chicken, a mother hen, a very vulnerable image. A mother hen who yearns for her chicks to brood under her wings, but they were not willing. Guys, I want to kind of conclude with this final psalm here. It's on Psalm 131, and it's a song of a sense of David, and it says, "My heart is not proud, Lord. My eyes are not haughty. I

do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me, but I have calmed and I have quieted myself. I am like a weaned child with its mother.'" When we come before God, is it to request something in our prayer life? When we come before God, is it to request something? Of course. Maybe we do it for praise, right? Go before God, just praise him. Things are great. Don't get me wrong. But when reflecting on this psalm, the psalmist is describing a different encounter, right? This child is content. This child is not making requests to his mother in the image. This child is not praising his mother in this depiction. This child sits on his mother's lap, cuddles up next to her, and is content with her warmth, security, and love. God is the God that equips for battle. He gives us strength to endure the good fight, makes you ready for war. But through all the songs, poetry, and prophets... That is not the complete picture of the God that we serve. The fullness of scope of the God that we serve is revealed absolutely in and through Yeshua. And it's a God that wants to meet us, embrace us, shelter us, comfort us, and give us shalom like we have never experienced before. I have calmed and quieted myself. I am like a weaned child with its mother. Like a weaned child, I am content. Put your hope in the Lord. So you can have this experience too. This is the reality of our God.

God is depicted as a father, our father. But not only. God is also depicted throughout the many examples as our mother. But not only. God is depicted as our caretaker. But not only.

Our defender. But not only. Our warrior. But not only. A healer. Deuteronomy 32, 11. God fathered you and gave birth to you. It's neat. You see what happens if we only isolate God as one of these things. We get a distorted, incomplete picture of who and what our God is and does. And thank goodness for the wisdom of the Holy Spirit imparted to the biblical authors because not everyone knows what a loving father's embrace feels like. Let's be honest. Not everybody knows what that embrace feels like. For some, the idea of a loving father figure out it's so far-fetched because all that it brings to mind in their life is trauma. It's an issue for a lot of people who call God Father. So too, some have no idea what it feels like to be embraced by a loving mother. Statistically, mothers are the perpetrators in the majority of abuse and neglect cases in America, 70%. I guess what I'm trying to portray here is God is with you no matter where you are at or no matter what the capacity that you need is. And maybe you're here today not realizing that. Maybe you're here today not understanding that God is not bound in a box. Maybe you're here today unable to feel some connection with God that everyone else seems to have all the time because there's a wall there that you cannot seem to walk down. And I'm here to tell you today, guess what? God can walk around a wall. God can walk around a wall. And I believe God is already with you and has been with you. And maybe you didn't even realize it. But if you find yourself in a place of shame, anxiety, fear, maybe you're hurting, maybe maybe you have no idea what true comfort feels like. That is something our God is capable of giving. That is the point of the variety of depictions found in the scriptures. I think that's the point specifically of the maternal depictions. And however you need to frame that love in order to understand it based on your life experiences or your past, I say you're allowed. Psalm 68, 5, a father to the fatherless, a defender of the widows that provides, that fights, that comforts, that heals, that nurtures. And our God, just like a mother, yearns for her children to run into her arms, solely depending on them, trusting and giving it all. Our God forgives. Our God gives peace. Our God is compassionate. And so during this season that we find ourselves in, we honor our mothers that have endured, that have suffered for the sake of their children, that have poured out their love through caring and nurturing, and that are always willing to sacrifice everything, no matter what, for the children that they love. And so if you'll please stand as we conclude in worship. Guys, I hope today, if anything, you've been exposed to a little bit of the beauty and the depth And based on your

experience and maybe trauma in your life, maybe something happened to you that has put up a wall between you feeling like you can ever experience or deserve to experience the comfort that our God gives. I'm here to let you know that our God is capable of giving that. Our God will be relentless in giving that. Our God is with you even now and has been. And so the takeaway here is, well, God will meet you and has always. And so join me in worship. Guys, if you need prayer today, we have a prayer team on either side of the room. We'd love to pray for you. It can be about a situation that you're going through right now. It can be about a situation in the past. It can be having to do with the message today or not. But guys, if you need to leave something here today, I encourage you to do that and maybe take something home with you. Alvina Malkinu, our father, our king, father, we thank you for this time together where we explore the word that you've given to us. Thank you for the opportunity to see the many attributes and characteristics of your love for us revealed through metaphor and simile and poetry to help us experience and understand the depth of your love and commitment and compassion and graciousness towards us. We thank you, Father, for the perfect representation of yourself found only in the person of Yeshua. And we thank you, Father, for that relationship with him. In Yeshua's name we pray. Amen. Worthy of every breath we could ever breathe, we live for you. Yeshua the name above every other name. Yeshua the only one you could ever save. Worthy of every breath we could ever breathe. We live for you. Oh, we live for you. To our hope there is no one like you. There is none beside you. Numb my eyes in wonder. And show me who you are and fill me with your heart and lead. to those around me worthy of every song we could ever sing worthy of all the praise we could ever worthy of every breath we could ever breathe you live for you sure you're worthy of we could ever bring there's no If your heart is to those If your heart is to those My life of all love It is a firm foundation And I'll put my trust Who I'll be shaking All is a firm foundation Put my trust in you There is no one like you. There is none beside you. Open up my eyes in wonder and show me who you are with your heart and lead. In your love to those around you I will build my life on your love It is a firm foundation And I will put my trust in you I will not be shaken I will never, never be shaken Open up my eyes in wonder and show me with your heart and lead. in your love to those around. Thank you, Father. Thank you for the confidence. Thank you for the hope. Thank you for the firm foundation that your love is for us. We bless you. We praise you. We honor you, Father. Thank you, Yeshua. Amen. Yevarecha Adonai Ve'yishmerecha Ya'er Adonai Panayim The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you his peace. Amen. Shabbat Shalom. I'm Matthew Vanderells and I hope you enjoyed this message. Found in Truth exists to build a community that bears the image of God and lives the redeemed life only Yeshua gives. If this message impacted you or if this ministry has been a blessing to you, we invite you to take part in making sure the message of Yeshua and the truth of God's word continues to reach others. To make sure this happens, you can donate through our online giving portal at foundedintruth.com slash give or by texting any amount to 704-275-0752. Don't forget to like and subscribe for new content every single week. And we thank you for your continued support. And we look forward to seeing you next time. Shalom.

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