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BLESSED MOTHERS

“While Jesus was saying 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,’” Luke 11:27. Mothers have an amazing role in our lives. We owe our very existence to the work our Mothers did in giving birth and caring for us. “For as the woman originates from the man, so also the man has his birth through the woman...” 1 Corinthians 11:12. Our mothers have sacrificed their bodies and their lives in the process. Even with all that goes into the difficult process of giving birth to a baby today, can you imagine the days before anesthetic and epidurals? Mothers have risked their very lives in bringing new life into this world. They bear up under the discomfort and pain, suffering through the process of

a living being growing and developing in their womb and eventually the agonizing painful delivery of pushing that child out into the world. And even after the exhausting and draining process, they immediately begin the sacrificial work of caring for, providing for and nurturing that child. Holding and rocking and feeding and changing their baby at all hours of the night, sacrificing sleep and comfort, they constantly give and exhaust themselves from the joy of having that precious new life in their arms. “Whenever a woman is in labor she has pain, because her hour has come; but when she gives birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish because of the joy that a child has been born into the world,” John 16:21. Then there is the constant selfless giving when their babies start

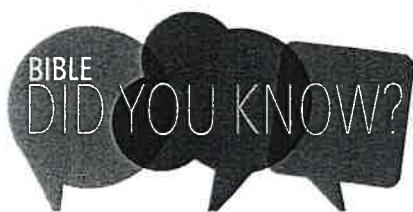
growing up, exploring the world they've been brought in to discover all of it's dangers and pains and letdowns, to be there when the tearful cry of "MOMMY!!!" is heard the moment those dangers, pains and letdowns are immediately experienced. Tenderly bandaging our wounds, kissing to make it better, and soothing and restoring our confidence and strength, our mothers even experience the pain of having to watch their precious babies go through that painful process of growing up and often experience the emotional heartbreak of witnessing it. "And Simon blessed them and said to Mary His mother, 'Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed—and a sword will pierce even your own soul – to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed,'" Luke 2:34-35. The physical and emotional work of mothers, providing for our emotional and physical needs, cleaning up after and loving us in tears and pain, is all worthy of honor and esteem. But let us also remember, that as much as that tireless and selfless work is honorable, note how Jesus shifts the praise from the physical sacrificial work even His own mother provided to the spiritual.

"'Blessed is the womb that bore You and the breasts at which You nursed.' But He said, 'On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it,'" Luke 11:27-28. As honorable as the physical work in giving birth and feeding and raising up Jesus, Christ points to the spiritual submission and obedience to God's word as being even more honorable. It's easy to get so caught up in the gratitude for the amazing physical sacrifices mothers make for us, and they deserve every bit of it, that we begin to overlook what is the most important part a mother can play, being a Godly example and teacher. Just as Jesus pointed out how we could gain the world only to lose our soul, sadly many while having wonderful mothers who raised them up and gave them everything they needed in this life never had a mother to read the bible to them or pray to God with them. Without that guidance and direction, the physical nurturing up of a child sadly goes in vain. When Paul was reminding Timothy to teach women to respect their place as submitting to the headship and leadership of their husbands and honoring this role of leadership by men in the church, he brings balance to this role reminding women that their true honor is

validated in the vital and necessary role they provide in bringing up children showing how much dependency we have upon this amazing ability only a woman provides. Yet even in this acknowledgment, Paul is quick to point out that this honor really is only noteworthy provided the women serving in this role are demonstrating a Godly character and submission to the Lord. "But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet. For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. But women will be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint," 1 Timothy 2:12-15. Note how just as Jesus emphasized, Paul also points to the true honorable nature of the great work mothers provide when offered through their spiritual submission to God. How truly honorable it is when even after all the tiring and exhausting work a mother does in caring for, feeding, changing, loving and nurturing their children, they find the energy and time to sit with them teaching them about Jesus, praying with them and helping them develop a

strong faith in the Lord. We are truly grateful for Godly mothers who help lead their children to learn to love and submit to the Lord's direction. All mothers deserve the recognition for what has been put into bringing us here in life. Yet remember, the Lord gave even greater honor to those who trusted in and obeyed the Lord to follow Him and lead their children in His ways as well. "She said, 'Oh, my lord! As your soul lives, my lord, I am the woman who stood here beside you, praying to the LORD. For this boy I prayed, and the LORD has given me my petition which I asked of Him. So I have also dedicated him to the LORD; as long as he lives he is dedicated to the LORD,'" 1 Samuel 1:26-28.

- Daniel Ruegg



"My son, if you will receive my words and treasure my commandments within you, make your ear attentive to wisdom, incline your heart to understanding; for if you cry for discernment, lift your voice for understanding; if you seek her as silver and search for her as for hidden treasures; then you will discern the fear of the LORD and discover the knowledge of God."
Prov. 2:1-5

People, Places, and Things of the **BIBLE**



Ketef Hinnom Scrolls

Many archaeology finds are named after the location in which they are found. The Ketef Hinnom scrolls are from Ketef Hinnom which is southwest of old Jerusalem, in Israel. More specifically they were located near the road that runs between Jerusalem and Bethlehem. They are possibly the oldest manuscripts currently known that recite what appears to be clear biblical verses.

They are often referred to as amulets as they were likely worn around the neck of whoever owned them. The idea behind an amulet is that some object on your body could ward off evil or danger. However, they are also still scrolls as they were sheets of silver rolled up. This idea is reinforced by the fact that the scripture that could be read are clear verses about the Lord preserving His people. The specific passages were part of the priestly blessing that Jewish priests would recite over the people. The same blessing is still common today at the end of many church services, such as the Lutherans.

24 "The Lord bless you and keep you;
25 The Lord make His face shine upon you,
And be gracious to you;
26 The Lord lift up His countenance upon you
And give you peace."

(Numbers 6:24-26)

The dating of the amulets are believed to be about 6th century BCE. Their survival is partly due to the material that was used to create them. The amulets were inscribed on silver which is not the most resilient metal but enough that it was able to survive longer than the average piece of parchment. These scrolls are relatively unknown, but they can be seen today in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem.

