The Wife of God

In the Gnostic Gospels, you have Mary Magdalene going to Jesus and saying, "I'm afraid of Peter because he hates me and all the race of women." She also says he's threatened me, meaning he threatened to kill her. And Peter goes to Jesus and says, "Let Mary leave us, because women are not worthy of life." Which is jaw-dropping even for that time and place. The symbolism is astonishing because Peter more or less founded what became the Catholic Church. And if you look at the Catholic Church now, it's not exactly bursting with females. So you have Peter, the misogynist villain, going off and founding not exactly a feminist-friendly organization, which has remained so to this day.
This is Adam Nox, and welcome to another *Interview with the Devil* here on *The Cult of You*.
And do I have a treat for you. This week, my guests, Lynn Picknett and Clive Prince, are the authors of classics like *The Stargate Conspiracy*, *The Templar Revelation*, and one of my personal favorites, *When God Had a Wife*.
If you've been following me on social media, you know I've been sharing some of the ideas from this book—my "holy gem" moments. I was listening to this audiobook while working out and found myself frozen in place, awestruck by the revelations. It was mind-opening how they pieced together these rich details of history.
You might have seen Lynn or Clive at some point—remember *The Da Vinci Code*? That film was directly inspired by their work, and they even have a cameo in it. They've influenced many thinkers exploring the true mystery of the Magdalene, the history of Jesus from a different lens, and, intriguingly, the mythic war between Baal and Yahweh. They reveal how ancient goddess traditions were repressed and overwritten by patriarchal religion.
This conversation starts slow, then blossoms into deep revelations as the questions open door after door. It's only a drop in the bucket—but what a delicious drop. Sit back, relax, and remember: live deliciously.
Listen, Clive, it's an absolute pleasure to have you on *The Cult of You*.
"It's a great pleasure to be here. Thank you, Adam."
The same pleasure I had in reading and listening to this book. I got a physical copy and started reading, but then I bought the audiobook just so I could listen at the gym. And there I was, in the middle of a workout, having these moments of profound insight, standing frozen while people probably thought I was just another guy posing.
So thank you. It's been an exquisite journey.
I want to jump in with a question: We always hear about "biblical proportions," but it turns out those proportions might be more myth than fact. Solomon's Temple, for instance, is described as this massive holy structure, yet historians say it's the size of an average modern church. What's the real story here?
Clive responds that as they began studying the Old Testament, they found many scholars considered much of it fictional—partly because of the lack of archaeological evidence for grand events like the Exodus or the Temple of Solomon. These stories are exaggerated. The Bible speaks of 600,000 men, plus their families, leaving Egypt—millions of people. Historians argue that such an event would be in Egyptian records if it had occurred.
The Temple of Solomon is described in grandiose terms, but its actual dimensions suggest something much smaller. And perhaps that's why archaeologists haven't found it—it's too small to match the expectations created by centuries of biblical interpretation.
Lynn adds that the Bible was written by people who wanted to use it as propaganda for their way of life. Whether they believed what they wrote is another question. She recalls going to the British Museum and being disturbed by the absence of evidence for the Israelites in Egypt, only to be told by a museum attendant that archaeologists believe they were never there.
This sparked her awakening. We've been conditioned to believe a dominant narrative because of what a small group of men wrote.
Let's explore that further—the idea of God in the Bible as a singular being. But as your research shows, Yahweh was one of many gods, originally a storm god, in competition with Baal and others. Can you elaborate?
Clive explains that the ancient Israelites were not monotheists. They were monolatrists—people who venerate one god above others, but still believe other gods exist. This was common in the ancient world. And the Bible doesn't really hide it. The first commandment is "You shall have no other gods before me"—not that there aren't any other gods, but until around the 5th century BC that texts began asserting there are no other gods. Until then, Yahweh was just one among many, often sharing traits with Baal. In fact, Yahweh and Baal were nearly indistinguishable at times—both storm gods, both protectors of nomadic tribes.
The evolution toward monotheism came through crisis. Each time the Hebrews suffered catastrophe, their prophets claimed it was due to a failure in devotion. Eventually, they concluded their problem was worshiping other gods at all. And that's when monotheism was born—not out of revelation, but out of desperation and fear.
Let's talk about the divine feminine. Your book unveils fascinating insights into the goddess traditions of the ancient Israelites. There's this notion of Asherah, the consort of Yahweh, being represented in the temple, the tabernacle, even the Ark of the Covenant. Can you take us deeper into that?
Lynn and Clive explain that Asherah, the sacred feminine, was central to early Israelite religion. Despite patriarchal tendencies, the ancient world always included goddesses. Asherah was Yahweh's wife. Symbols like palm trees and sacred groves—often associated with Asherah—are embedded in temple descriptions. She was worshiped alongside Yahweh for centuries, including in Solomon's Temple.
Her priestesses were later scorned, translated by later editors of the Bible as "temple prostitutes." But the original Hebrew word, *qedeshah*, means "holy women." Over time, "holy women" became "cult prostitutes" in modern translations—an insidious rewriting of the sacred feminine.
You mention the prophet Hosea being told to marry a "prostitute." But based on what we now know, that could be interpreted as him marrying a priestess of Asherah. Can you clarify?
Yes. Hosea was told to marry a "woman of whoredom," but if you look at the original language, it's more likely she was one of the *qedeshah*—a holy woman. This is part of the transition as the priesthood tried to erase goddess worship, reframing it as sexual deviance. Hosea's narrative is ambiguous—he both critiques and participates in older traditions.
There were multiple facets to Asherah—sometimes as a wise matron figure, sometimes as a sensual goddess. And while her grandmotherly aspects were more tolerable, her sexual autonomy terrified the male priests. She had to go.
That's powerful. And the fluidity of deities across cultures further complicates things. Asherah merges with Astarte, Ishtar, Anat—and even Egyptian goddesses like Hathor and Sekhmet. It's a recurring pattern: the goddess evolves, adapts, but never disappears entirely.
They continue by exploring Anat, a war goddess who "wades in blood up to her thighs," and Ishtar, who journeys to the underworld like Persephone. Even goddesses like Hathor, usually associated with beauty and nurturing, had warrior aspects.
These traditions were fluid, adaptive, and overlapping. People in the ancient world didn't separate their deities the way modern people do—they blended, morphed, and reimagined their gods constantly.

Clive points out that this blending of deities also shaped the development of Yahweh himself. Yahweh may have been a fusion of the Egyptian god Amun-Ra, the Canaanite storm god Baal, or even Set from Egyptian mythology. His traits are a pastiche of several divine archetypes—fierce, protective, jealous, and stormy.
Lynn elaborates that Moses, a central figure in the story of Yahweh's emergence, has an Egyptian name. He, along with the tribes of Levi and Ephraim, may have roots in Egyptian priesthoods. The Exodus may have involved only a couple of tribes with Egyptian heritage who later integrated Canaanite tribes into their culture. These Canaanite tribes had their own gods and goddesses, creating a rich mix of myth and theology that became the Israelite religion.
The evolution of Yahweh and his consolidation as the sole god can be traced to power struggles between these tribes—particularly Judah and Ephraim. When Judah's tribe gained power, they rewrote the religion to favor their god—Yahweh—removing competing deities and suppressing the feminine.
Adam brings it back to the taboo topic: Yahweh's wife. Asherah. We see symbolism pointing to her even in the Ark of the Covenant, with its cherubim modeled on Egyptian goddesses. She was present. She was worshipped. Yet today, she's virtually erased.
Lynn and Clive confirm this. Asherah was worshiped alongside Yahweh in Solomon's Temple for roughly 300 years. The Bible subtly references her and her priestesses, yet modern religious teachings ignore or deny her entirely.
The "temple prostitutes" were actually sacred priestesses—*qedeshah*—who held respected, noble roles in goddess worship. Victorian scholars, steeped in patriarchy, mislabeled them as prostitutes. This error has echoed through centuries of scholarship and religious doctrine.
They further explain how later prophets and editors demonized the sacred feminine. Hosea's command to marry a "prostitute" becomes symbolic of Yahweh reclaiming the people, but it's also a veiled condemnation of goddess worship. By portraying priestesses as fallen women, they justified purging them from the temple.
Asherah, they note, had multiple aspects—some of which were retained more comfortably than others. Her nurturing, maternal form was sometimes acceptable, but her erotic, autonomous, and warrior traits—her *qedeshah* form—were loathed and feared.
Adam asks: what about the fusion of mythologies? The overlap between Anat rescuing Baal from death and Ishtar's descent mirrors the Christian narrative of death and resurrection. These mythic echoes reappear again and again.
Lynn affirms this. These stories recycle and morph. Anat, Ishtar, Inanna—all are predecessors to Mary Magdalene in many ways. The theme of a goddess descending into darkness to retrieve a beloved or to die and rise again is fundamental.
The ancient world wasn't rigid in its theology. Gods and goddesses were not static. They changed roles and merged identities across cultures—Canaanite, Egyptian, Mesopotamian.
Clive points out that these goddesses were often worshipped under local names, blending traits to suit regional needs. Asherah becomes Astarte, Anat becomes Sekhmet. Even Hathor, the gentle cow goddess, had a warrior aspect.
Modern readers are surprised by this fluidity, but the ancients accepted it as natural. The divine feminine was not one-dimensional. It was wild, unpredictable, motherly, destructive, erotic, wise—sometimes all at once.
Adam relates this to Lilith. In later folklore, Lilith becomes a night demon who tempts men. But originally, Lilith and the *qedeshah* were initiators—seeing men's spiritual readiness through sexuality. If a man failed, it was his fault—not the woman's.
Clive agrees. The original stories often depict women as spiritual gatekeepers. The reversal—where women are blamed for men's weakness—came much later, with the rise of patriarchal religion.
They also share legends from southern France, where Lilith was said to fly at night, draining the energy or souls of men. Again, this reflects how powerful feminine figures were demonized over time.
Adam shifts focus to the Elephantine community in Egypt. Here, Jews worshipped Yahweh and a goddess, but their name for Yahweh was "Yahoo"—an earlier form of the divine name, lacking the full tetragrammaton.
Clive explains that this community likely predates the Jerusalem temple. Their traditions represent an older form of Hebrew religion—one where Yahweh had a divine consort, possibly Anat. This wasn't heresy; it was pre-temple orthodoxy.
As the temple cult gained power, it rewrote history—declaring these older practices as blasphemy. The editors of the Bible rebranded earlier traditions as pagan corruption.
Then, the conversation moves to Simon Magus—often called the Antichrist in early church texts. Yet Simon was a teacher of sacred sex, and his partner Helen was a spiritual embodiment of Sophia, divine wisdom.
Simon Magus saw himself as restoring the lost feminine. He took a "fallen" woman and raised her to goddess status—the inverse of what temple priests did when they turned goddesses into prostitutes. It was revolutionary.
The parallels between Simon and Jesus are striking. Both were disciples of John the Baptist. Both taught salvation, healed the sick, and had female consorts. The early church hated Simon because he was too much like Jesus—but with a goddess.
Helen was to Simon what Mary Magdalene was to Jesus. In fact, some scholars argue that Mary and Helen are the same archetype—possibly even the same historical woman, renamed across traditions.
They emphasize that Mary Magdalene was not merely a follower—she was Jesus's anointer, his high priestess. The act of anointing made him the Christ—literally, "the anointed one." That ritual was performed by a woman. That made her a priestess with authority.
This is downplayed in the New Testament. But the Gnostic Gospels tell a different story—where Mary is Jesus's partner, muse, and teacher. He kisses her. He loves her more than the others. She is the embodiment of Sophia.
The early church, uncomfortable with this, stripped her of power. Over time, she was repackaged as a repentant sinner—or worse, as a prostitute.
The conversation crescendos as they revisit Peter's hostility. In the Gnostic Gospels, Peter says Mary should leave because "women are not worthy of life." Jesus defends her. Yet Peter becomes the foundation of the institutional church—one that excludes women to this day.
Meanwhile, Mary Magdalene inspires egalitarian sects, such as the Cathars, who preached in male-female pairs. She is the apostle to the apostles—the sacred feminine the church tried to erase.

Clive continues, noting how these Gnostic texts and Syrian Christian writings both portray Peter in a similar light—as antagonistic to women and femininity. This convergence from separate sources suggests a shared cultural memory: Peter truly *was* hostile toward women, especially Mary Magdalene.
In one early Christian text, Peter even accuses John the Baptist of being a "false prophet," implying that Jesus had to come later to correct his errors. The pattern is clear: the feminine lineage, the goddess lineage, and even the prophets tied to the sacred feminine are maligned, rewritten, or erased.
John the Baptist, often presented as merely a precursor to Jesus, now emerges as a powerful figure in his own right—perhaps the original initiator of both Jesus and Simon Magus. Both had female consorts, both practiced sacred sex, and both were offering a way to reestablish the divine feminine in spiritual practice.
Adam marvels at the richness of the Simon Magus narrative. In many ways, Simon and Helen mirror Jesus and Mary Magdalene. Both couples had radical teachings rooted in love, spiritual union, and sexual mysticism. The difference? One pair was sanctified, and the other demonized. But perhaps they were really one and the same.
Lynn and Clive agree. The early church had to suppress Simon because he was too similar to Jesus. His presence threatened the monopoly of the emerging orthodox narrative.
Demonizing Simon wasn't about theology—it was about control.
The conversation deepens into the implications. If both Jesus and Simon had female consorts who embodied Sophia, then what does that say about the true foundation of early Christianity? It wasn't solely patriarchal. The feminine was essential. The goddess was there from the start.
Sophia—the Greek personification of wisdom—was a continuation of the Hebrew *Hokmah*, the divine feminine wisdom of the Old Testament. Sophia was not metaphor. She was a presence, an entity, a spiritual force. And through Mary and Helen, she re-emerged.
Adam points out the genius reversal in Simon's narrative. The temple priests took a goddess and turned her into a prostitute. Simon took a prostitute and turned her back into a goddess. A beautiful poetic justice. A restoration of balance.
Lynn notes that Sophia was hidden in plain sight. Jesus often referred to the "Wisdom of God" as an external being. But over time, translations changed the text to obscure her—turning "Wisdom" into "God's wisdom," stripping her of personhood. Another act of [redacted] Gnostic Gospels preserve her. In them, Mary Magdalene *is* Sophia. And in Simon's gospel, Helen *is* Sophia. Two different teachers. Same message. Same divine archetype.
Clive explains how this divine wisdom, Sophia, is often shown guiding or inhabiting these powerful women. She's not a concept. She's a being. And once you connect these dots, a fuller theology emerges—one where the feminine is not just a side character but the heart of the mystery.
Adam brings it home. He remarks that we're living under a collective hypnosis—a patriarchal spell that blinds us to these original truths. We accept a version of spirituality that is incomplete and distorted. But the story was always richer, more balanced. The goddess was never absent—she was edited out.
Lynn and Clive reinforce that these stories were *not* created by men trying to oppress women from the start. They were stories where women were central, powerful, sacred. Only later were they rewritten and redacted to serve a patriarchal agenda.
And the sacred feminine didn't just disappear. She survived in fragments: in the stories of Deborah the prophetess, of wise women advising kings, of Asherah lingering in temple imagery, of priestesses mistranslated as prostitutes.
These were not anomalies—they were remnants of a world where the feminine divine was integrated into the spiritual life of the people.
Psychologically, even in a patriarchal society, strong women still rise—wise women, household matriarchs, prophetesses. It's baked into human nature. The repression of the feminine is a cultural program—not a spiritual necessity.
Clive adds that the sacred feminine isn't being invented now by modern feminists or New Age teachers. It's being *remembered*. Rediscovered. Reclaimed. It was always there. It was part of the ancient Israelite religion, the Christian mystery traditions, the Gnostic revelations. The goddess doesn't disappear. She returns. She rises. She finds new forms.
Adam affirms this. He sees the return of the goddess everywhere—from the Sekhmet revivals to the modern witchcraft movement. The feminine is coming back. She is waking up inside people, inside traditions, inside scholarship. And this conversation is part of that awakening.
He thanks Lynn and Clive for their decades of work, their bravery, their dedication. Their books, especially *When God Had a Wife*, opened the door for so many to rediscover the divine feminine within spiritual traditions that had long hidden her.
He closes by reflecting on the importance of ancestral memory. Freud said that God may live within us, but if our stories are fractured, we can't access that divinity. Healing comes from remembering, from reuniting with our roots.
And as this podcast episode ends, we are left with the resonance of that sacred truth: The goddess was always there.She is here now.And she will never be erased again.