

## FAMILY LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST: DID JESUS HAVE SIBLINGS?

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Inaccurate Hollywood Movies, Mary's Perpetual Virginity Is Roman Catholic False Doctrine, The Biblical Basis Concerning Sanctified Heterosexual Marriage, Human Sexual Intercourse And Childbearing Are Ordained And Blessed By God, Abortion Is Outright Murder, Bible Condemns Gay And Lesbian Relationships False Doctrine: Mary Is Our Co-mediatrix And Co-redemptrix, Jesus Is Our Only Mediator, Scriptural Proof Regarding Jesus' Siblings, Seven Biological Brothers And Sisters At Minimum, Various Marys In The New Testament, Actual Brothers Or Simply Cousins Debate, Jesus' Brethren Rejected Him At First, James And Jude Were Jesus' Biological Siblings And Also Apostles, Different Jameses In The New Testament, James And Matthew May Possibly Have Been Brothers, Jesus May Have Chosen Brothers To Be Apostles For Mutual Encouragement And Support, Peter And Andrew, Jesus' Divinity Is Not Diminished As A Result Of Having Biological Brothers And Sisters, Cleansed From Sin By The Blood Of Jesus Christ, Conclusion, Additional Resources

The issue of whether or not Jesus Christ had siblings has been hotly debated between Catholics and Protestants for many years; centuries in fact. In all of the movies which I have seen over the years concerning the life of Christ, there has never been any mention of other family members. By tradition, most productions center on Joseph, Mary and Jesus. Of course, we know that many Hollywood movies are not known for their historical accuracy; and to base our understanding of God's Word on a Hollywood movie is ludicrous to say the least. In some cases, movie producers just don't do enough research, or else they purposely choose to ignore the facts. Of course, it is also true that many producers and directors won't hesitate to embellish the truth if it means increasing their profit margin.

But regarding the issue of whether or not Jesus Christ had

biological brothers and sisters, on one hand is the Roman Catholic Church which dogmatically claims that following Jesus' miraculous Conception and Birth -- which resulted from intervention by God's Holy Spirit -- Mary retained her virginity for the remainder of her mortal life, and never bore any more children. According to this erroneous Roman Catholic doctrine, we are to believe that for some strange reason, Joseph chose to become a celibate, which resulted in Mary remaining a perpetual virgin. This is why Catholics refer to her as the Virgin Mary. It isn't just because they believe that she was a virgin prior to Jesus' birth. It is because they are fully convinced that she remained a virgin afterwards as well.

The logic behind this position is flawed, and the unspoken intent behind making this claim is wrong as well. In other words, my impression at least, is that the Roman Catholic Church appears to believe that it would have somehow been wrong, or perhaps even sinful, for Joseph and Mary to have engaged in sex following Jesus' Birth. I honestly don't know what else to think. For the record, engaging in human sexual relations is perfectly normal, and perfectly healthy, when it is performed in accordance with God's mandates, as we find in the following verses:

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."

Genesis 1:27-28, KJV

"And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."

Genesis 2:23-24, KJV

"And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man

put asunder."

Matthew 19:5-6, KJV

"But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

Mark 10:6-9, KJV

"So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh."

Ephesians 5:28-31, KJV

If you are interested in learning more about the topic of Biblical marriages, please consider reading the two-part article entitled "Biblical Marriage Ceremonies".

To reiterate, sexual relations between a married couple is a very healthy, natural thing to do. It was ordained -- and is blessed -- by our Heavenly Father. It is not a sin, or dirty in any way. There is absolutely no reason why Joseph and Mary should have abstained from sexual intercourse following the Conception and Birth of Jesus. As I explain in such articles as "The Fruit of the Womb", childbearing is a blessing from the Lord. It is the natural order which He has ordained for mankind; and for Joseph to have suddenly become a celibate, and denied himself to Mary, or vice versa, would have been against the very nature and plan which had been ordained and blessed by God.

In contrast, as I also point out in the controversial series entitled "Abortion: The Slaughter of the Innocent", abortion amounts to violent, first-degree murder. Furthermore, gay and lesbian relationships are also strongly prohibited by God's Word; as I explain in the series "The Gay and Lesbian Agenda: To the Point!", as well as in "When Sin is no Longer a Sin" and "Queen James Bible: Blasphemous Abomination Exposed!".

As far as I can tell, the only reason why the Roman Catholic Church so desperately clings to this illogical doctrine, is because to do otherwise is to tear down the sacred image of one of their most beloved idols: the Virgin Mary. As I point out in the article entitled "Mary Worship, Christianity and Roman Catholicism", Mary was indeed chosen and blessed by God to be the vessel for His very own Son; but that is no reason to set her on a pedestal as Co-mediatrix, Co-redemptrix and Perpetual Virgin, such as the Roman Catholic faith has done. Furthermore, as I also clearly explain in other articles, it is known to all Bible-believing Christians that Jesus is the one and only true Mediator between God and man. Consider the following verses which verify this point:

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;"

1 Timothy 2:5, KJV

"But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises."

Hebrews 8:6, KJV

"And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."

Hebrews 9:15, KJV

"And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."

Hebrews 12:24, KJV

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

John 14:6, KJV

Returning to our main discussion regarding Jesus' siblings, on the other end of the spectrum we find certain Protestant denominations which insist that the Lord blessed Joseph and Mary with additional children following Jesus' birth. Now, it seems obvious that both sides can't possibly be right. So what is the real truth regarding this controversial matter?

As I have taught for many years now, the best way to find an answer regarding any Biblical matter is to go straight to the Scriptures and conduct serious Biblical research. Since some of my readers may not have the time to do this for yourselves, or may not know where or how to find the proper verses which address this issue, I have already done the work for you; and I will now be presenting the results of my research below for your careful and prayerful consideration. In my opinion, the following verses are very clear in their meaning. I honestly don't believe that there is any other way to understand them than to conclude that Jesus did in fact have other family; that is, siblings. What do you think?:

"While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

Matthew 12:46-50, KJV

"Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?"

Matthew 13:55-56, KJV

"Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children."

Matthew 27:56, KJV

"Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him."

Mark 6:3, KJV

There were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome;"

Mark 15:40, KJV

"And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles; Simon, (whom he also named Peter,) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called Zelotes, And Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor."

Luke 6:13-16, KJV

"His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world. For neither did his brethren believe in him."

John 7:3-5, KJV

"And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren."

Acts 1:13-14, KJV

But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother."

Galatians 1:19, KJV

"Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called:"

Jude 1:1, KJV

Taken as a whole, we can garner quite a bit of information from the previous verses. First of all, in my opinion, it can be easily understood -- without the need for any kind of interpretation or speculation -- that Jesus had a minimum of four biological brothers, as well as two sisters, and maybe even more. More specifically, His brothers' names were James, Joses, Simon and Judas. The latter was also known as Jude. The names of Jesus's sisters do not appear to be mentioned anywhere in the Gospels. At any rate, from the information that we are given, it appears that Joseph and Mary had at

least seven children: Jesus, James, Joses, Juda, Simon and two or more unnamed sisters.

Now, if we really want to be technical about it, we can say that James, Joses, Juda and Simon were Jesus' half-brothers in a biological sense, because Joseph was not Jesus' real father. However, for all intents and purposes, they were a family, they grew up together, and they were Jesus' siblings.

Regarding the various women who we find mentioned in these verses, let me point out that being as Mary -- or Miriam -- was a very common name in those days, just as it is popular at our current time as well, it can become a bit difficult to sort out who the various Marys were in the Gospels, as well as in the remainder of the New Testament. As a result, I have written another article entitled "Women in the Lives of Jesus and the Apostles", which you may be interested in reading.

In fact, as a result of this possible confusion concerning the various Marys, it can also be challenging to understand exactly who was married to who, and which children were born to which parents. This fact has not gone unnoticed by those parties -- such as the Roman Catholics -- who refuse to see that Jesus Christ was not a lone child. As such, they try to use the argument that the words "brethren" and "brother" are rather ambiguous in the Holy Scriptures.

The fact of the matter is that both of these words originate from the Greek word "adelphos", just as the word "sister" is derived from the feminine form "adelphe". While it is indeed true that "adelphos" has a variety of meanings in the Bible, the fact still remains that even if we were to remove some of the previous verses which seem somewhat ambiguous -- such as those regarding the various Marys -- we are still left with sufficient information to prove, in my opinion, that Jesus was not the only child of Joseph and Mary. He had siblings in the form of both biological brothers and sisters.

In their foolish attempt to repudiate the belief that Jesus had biological brothers and sisters, some of these naysayers even go so far as to claim that the word "brethren" really means cousins. This is another manmade invention and fallacy. The actual word "cousin" is only used one time in the entire New Testament. That is when the Angel Gabriel informs Mary that her cousin Elisabeth is also pregnant with child, as we

see by this verse:

"And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren."

Luke 1:36, KJV

In the previous verse, the word "cousin" is derived from the Greek word "suggenes". This word signifies being of the same kin; that is, related by blood. As you can see, it has a very liberal definition, as opposed to the more strict definition that we use for the word "cousin" today. However, the authors of the New Testament didn't use "suggenes" to describe Jesus' four brothers; they used "adelphos" instead. In my view, it suggests that their intent was to imply a closer relationship between Jesus and James, Joses, Juda, Simon and their sisters. In other words, they wanted us to understand that these men were Jesus' actual biological siblings.

From reading these verses closely, it appears that at first all -- or maybe at least some -- of his biological brothers doubted His Divine Status, and refused to acknowledge Him as the Son of God and Savior of the world. You will notice in the Gospel of John we are told "For neither did his brethren believe in him". Can anyone really blame them? We shouldn't be too harsh with Jesus siblings. If any of us were in their position, we probably would have reacted in the very same manner. Perhaps they thought to themselves that their older brother was crazy and delusional, and that he had a "messiah complex". At the very least, He must have been full of pride in order to make such preposterous claims. Perhaps they even found it embarrassing. Imagine what their friends thought.

However, please notice what happens after Jesus has done a few miracles. It appears that at least James and Jude came to understand the unique ministry and calling of their older brother, and even became two of His most devout Disciples. Eventually, they would write the Epistles of James and Jude. Thus we see that not only have we all been blessed by Jesus Himself, but we have been blessed by His biological brethren as well.

In case you don't quite understand why I state that James and Jude were not only Jesus' biological siblings, but also later became Disciples and Apostles, allow me to explain it

to you more fully by highlighting some points which we find mentioned in the previous verses that I shared with you.

In Luke 6:13-16, Judas is identified as "Judas the brother of James". In Acts 1:13-14, Judas is identified as "Judas the brother of James". In Jude 1:1, Jude is identified as "brother of James". In Galatians 1:19, James is identified as "James the Lord's brother". In reality, Judas and Jude are both derived from the same Greek name "Ioudas". Other than Judas Iscariot -- who was Jesus' betrayer -- all of the other verses where Judas and Jude are mentioned, are referring to the very same person; that is, one of Jesus' four biological brothers.

In the aforementioned verses where Judas is mentioned as the brother of James, and James is described as being "the Lord's brother", this is not referring to James, who along with his brother John, were the sons of Zebedee. Rather, those verses are referring to Jesus' biological brother who was also named James. It stands to reason then, that if James was the Lord's brother, and Judas -- or Jude -- was the brother of James, we can only conclude that James and Jude were two of Jesus' four brothers who eventually believed, and in fact became Apostles of the First Century Church, who wrote Epistles of their own.

What makes this issue even more complicated is the fact that there are actually three or four different men by the name of James who are mentioned in the Scriptures. The ones that we know of for certain are the following:

1) The son of Zebedee. He was an Apostle, and also the brother of the Apostle John; so together they are repeatedly referred to as the sons of Zebedee in the New Testament. He is commonly referred to as James the Greater, or James the Elder. This is the James who was killed by evil King Herod in the Book of Acts, as we see here:

"Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword."

Acts 12:1, 2, KJV

2) The son of Alphaeus. He was an Apostle, and is commonly referred to as James the Less. He is mentioned specifically in the following verses:

"Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus;"

Matthew 10:3, KJV

"And Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Canaanite,"

Mark 3:18, KJV

"Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called Zelotes,"

Luke 6:15, KJV

"And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James."

Acts 1:13, KJV

3) James the brother of Jesus Christ. He was also an Apostle.

Concerning James the son of Alphaeus -- who was also known as James the Less -- it is possible that he and Matthew -- who was likewise known as Levi, and who was also an Apostle -- may have actually been brothers. In both cases, we are told that their father's name was Alphaeus. As you read the following verses, please note that a publican is in fact a tax collector who sat "at the receipt of custom"; which is why it is commonly believed that the names Matthew and Levi are referring to the very same person:

"And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him."

Matthew 9:9, KJV

"And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him."

Mark 2:14, KJV

"And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican,

named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me. And he left all, rose up, and followed him. And Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them."

Luke 5:27-29, KJV

"Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus;"

Matthew 10:3, KJV

While we may not know for certain whether or not Matthew and James were actually biological brothers who were born to the same father -- that is, Alphaeus -- the Scriptures do make it very clear that Peter and Andrew were brothers, as were James and John. Considering this pattern, it seems reasonable to me to speculate that Matthew and James may have been brothers as well. Perhaps Jesus liked to do things in pairs. Why would He do this? We find a clear answer to this question in the Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes:

"Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken."

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, KJV

In other words, by choosing brothers to be His Apostles -- possibly as many as three pairs of brothers -- perhaps the Lord was ensuring that His followers could offer each other mutual encouragement and spiritual support during times of trial and temptation. Concerning Peter and Andrew, following are some verses which demonstrate that they were brothers:

"And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed him."

Matthew 4:18-20, KJV

"Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother;"

Matthew 10:2, KJV

"Simon, (whom he also named Peter,) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew,"

Luke 6:14, KJV

"One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother . . . Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter."

John 1:40, 44, KJV

"One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him,"

John 6:8, KJV

Returning to our main discussion, the fact that Jesus Christ had biological brothers and sisters in no way diminishes His Divinity. Neither does it negatively affect the mission which He came to fulfill on the Earth for the sake of humanity. He still remains the only-begotten Son of God -- that is, born of a human woman -- who died for the sins of the whole world. Whether Jesus was a lone child, or had siblings, His precious Blood still cleanses us from all unrighteousness, as we see by the following verses:

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin . . . If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

1 John 1:7, 9, KJV

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

Isaiah 1:18, KJV

"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is

my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

Matthew 26:26-28, KJV

"And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body. And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many."

Mark 14:22-24, KJV

"And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you."

Luke 22:14-20, KJV

"But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."

Ephesians 2:13, KJV

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;"

Hebrews 10:19-20, KJV

"Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate . . . Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

Hebrews 13:12, 20-21, KJV

"Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied."

1 Peter 1:2, KJV

"And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,"

Revelation 1:5, KJV

"And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Revelation 7:14, KJV

Neither does the fact that the Lord had biological siblings detract in any way from the unique and special status which pertains to Joseph and Mary. They were righteous people who were specifically chosen by God to bring into the world, and to raise, the Savior of humanity. To reiterate, it is my view that for them to engage in sexual relations, and father more children following the birth of Christ, has no bearing on the issue of our Salvation whatsoever. Don't you agree? As such, to resist this Scriptural doctrine -- as the Roman Catholic Church does -- is really pointless and unnecessary.

With these thoughts I will bring this article to a close. I trust that you have found it informative and enlightening, and I pray that it has been a blessing in your life. If you have an account with Facebook, Twitter, Google+ or with any other social network, I would really appreciate if you would take the time to click on the corresponding link that is found on this page. Thanks so much, and may God bless you abundantly!

For additional information, you may want to refer to the list of reading resources below which were also mentioned in this article, or which contain topics that are related to this article, and which are likewise located on the Bill's Bible Basics web server:

Abortion: The Slaughter of the Innocent  
Biblical Marriage Ceremonies  
Birth of Jesus and the Star of Bethlehem  
Lies and Deceptions of the Roman Catholic Church  
Lying Wonders of the Endtime  
Mary Worship, Christianity and Roman Catholicism  
Pontifex Maximus: Pagan High Priest to Roman Catholic Pope  
Queen James Bible: Blasphemous Abomination Exposed!  
The Fruit of the Womb  
The Gay and Lesbian Agenda: To the Point!  
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