

Did Jesus Have Brothers And Sisters?

Introduction.

- I. This lesson will examine the question “Did Jesus Have Brothers And Sisters?”
- II. There are many who answer “yes” to this question, and there are millions who answer “no” to this question.
 - A. Most of those who answer “no” teach that Mary remained a virgin.
 - B. They contend it is proper to worship Mary and pray to her.

Note:

- Catholics believe **Mary was conceived without original sin** in order to be a sinless bearer of God incarnate - Jesus Christ.
 - **This is known as Immaculate Conception.**
 - This sinlessness was accomplished only on account of God’s grace and not on Mary’s merit.
 - It is held that Mary never sinned by the grace of God.
 - Catholics believe that when she completed her earthly life she was assumed into heaven much like Elijah was.
- III. **It is important that we look at the scriptures and determine what they teach.** There are many doctrines that are taught or implied by the true answer to this question.

I. Agreement On Some Questions

- A. Most of those who answer this question “yes” or “no” believe that Mary was a virgin. (Matt. 1:18; Lk. 1:26-35).
 1. Both Matthew and Luke make it clear Mary was a virgin betrothed to Joseph.
 2. Both use the word “parthenos” that means “a virgin.”
 3. Matthew contends that the virgin birth was a fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy. (Isa 7:14; Matt. 1:22).

ISA 7:14 "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel. This prophecy was made in the 7 th century B.C..

4. Mary herself knew she was a virgin and could not understand how she could give birth to a child as a virgin.
5. It was by the power of God, not a human father, that Jesus would be conceived. (Lk. 1:34, 35).

6. Matthew’s account clearly shows she was a virgin. (Matt. 1:18-25).

B. Most of those who answer this question “yes” or “no” believe that Jesus was God in the flesh. (Matt. 1:23; Jn. 1:14, 18; 1 Tim. 3:16; 1 Jn. 4:1; 2 Jn. 8-10).

II. The Bible Plainly Teaches Christ Had Brothers And Sisters

<p>MAT 13:55 "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary, and His brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? MAT 13:56 "And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this man get all these things?"</p>	<p>MAT 12:46 While He was still speaking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers were standing outside, seeking to speak to Him.</p>	<p>MAR 6:3 "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, and Joses, and Judas, and Simon? Are not His sisters here with us?" And they took offense at Him.</p>
<p>JOH 2:12 After this He went down to Capernaum, He and His mother, and His brothers, and His disciples; and there they stayed a few days.</p>	<p>JOH 7:3 His brothers therefore said to Him, "Depart from here, and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may behold Your works which You are doing. JOH 7:5 For not even His brothers were believing in Him. JOH 7:10 But when His brothers had gone up to the feast, then He Himself also went up, not publicly, but as it were, in secret.</p>	<p>ACT 1:14 These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.</p>

A. These scriptures plainly teach Jesus and four brothers and a plurality of sisters.

1. **The names of the brothers are revealed** - James, Joseph (Joses), Simon, Judas (Jude).

a. Matthew 13:55 has “Ioudas” translated “Judas.”

b. Jude 1:1 has the same word “Ioudas” translated “Jude.”

2. The sisters are unnamed, and nothing is known about them.

B. The brothers of Jesus were unbelievers during the ministry of Christ. (Jn. 7:5).

JOH 7:5 For not even His brothers were believing in Him.

1. It is explicitly stated that His brothers did not believe in him.

2. It is assumed that His sisters did not believe in Him, but this is not stated.

3. We are not sure why they [the brothers and perhaps the sisters] did not believe in Jesus - the Bible never says.

a. It may have been because of the poverty of Jesus and the poverty of His family.

b. Mary and Joseph were very poor.

c. Their poverty is revealed by the sacrifices they offered.

LEV 5:11 ' But if his means are insufficient for two turtledoves or two young pigeons, then for his offering for that which he has sinned, he shall bring the tenth of an ephah of fine flour for a sin offering; he shall not put oil on it or place incense on it, for it is a sin offering.
 LEV 12:8 'But if she cannot afford a lamb, then she shall take two turtledoves or two young pigeons, the one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering; and the priest shall make atonement for her, and she shall be clean.' "

LUK 2:22 And when the days for their purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord
 LUK 2:23 (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every first-born male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord"),
LUK 2:24 and to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in the Law of the Lord, "A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons."

- d. Jesus was very poor. (Matt. 8:20), and it is assumed that likely His brothers and sisters were also poor.
- e. They might have asked the question, **“How could the Messiah, the Son of God be so poor?”**
- f. The crucifixion that came after the statement made in John 7:5 likely only added to their skepticism.
- g. The fact Jesus did not establish or speak of an earthly kingdom was also a stumbling-block to those who were expecting the Messiah to establish one.

4. John 7:5 does not mean they rejected everything about Christ.

- a. They likely believed He did miracles even as the enemies of Christ believed He had miraculous power. (Matt. 12:24).
- b. **Nicodemus** was not an enemy, but he said of Jesus. (Jn. 3:2).

JOH 3:2 this man came to Him by night, and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

- c. Working miracles and being the Messiah, the Son of God may not have been the same thing in their minds
- d. On the cross Jesus did not commit the care of His beloved mother to His unbelieving brothers, but to “the disciple whom He loved” - the apostle John. (Jn. 19:25, 26).

5. The resurrection of Christ and His ascension into heaven changed his brothers.

- a. After the resurrection of Jesus, Jesus appeared to James His brother.

1CO 15:3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

1CO 15:4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

1CO 15:5 and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

1CO 15:6 After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep;

1CO 15:7 **then He appeared to James**, then to all the apostles;

1CO 15:8 and last of all, as it were to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.

- b. The Bible does not actually state that “James” is the Lord’s brother, but this is the conclusion of most conservative scholars
6. Following the resurrection of Christ and the appearance to “James,” we learn that His brothers are gathered with 120 believers in Acts 1:15.
- a. **The brothers are listed with the believers.**
 - b. The sisters are not, but we cannot be sure they did not believe.
 - c. Luke does not affirm there were only 120 believers, but affirms that about 120 believers had gathered together for prayer.
7. Paul later teaches that the brothers were preachers of the word. (1 Cor. 9:1-6).

1CO 9:5 Do we not have a right to take along a believing wife, even as the rest of the apostles, and the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas?

- a. It is assumed that this has reference to all the brothers of Jesus.
- b. This may be correct, but the Bible does not affirm this.
- c. **It should be pointed out that nothing is said to exclude any of the brothers.**
- d. The text says “the brothers of the Lord.” (1 Cor. 9:5).

C. The Bible gives additional information about two of the brothers.

- 1. His brother James became an apostle. (Gal. 1:19).

GAL 1:19 But I did not see any other of the apostles except James, the Lord's brother.

- a. James was a great leader in the church. (Gal. 2:9).

GAL 2:9 and recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were **reputed to be pillars**, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we might go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised.

- b. James was a leader at the Jerusalem conference that occurred in about 50 A.D..
- c. He is again mentioned as a leader in Acts 21:18..
- d. **Most scholars believe that James the Lord’s brother wrote the book of James.**

- 1) The author of James was very well known to the brotherhood. He wrote Christians in the dispersion and simply calls himself “James.”
- 2) James the son of Zebedee died about 44 A.D. at the hands of Herod Agrippa I.
- 3) This was before the missionary journeys of Paul started in 45 A.D..
- 4) This James, though an apostle, was not well-known especially at the time James was likely

- e. James the son of Alphaeus was not well known in the early church. He is not mentioned by name in the book of Acts.

2. Jude or Judas, the brother of the Lord, most likely is the author of the book of Jude.

JUD 1:1 Jude, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to those who are the called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ:

- a. Note “Jude” calls himself the “brother of James.”
- b. If we are correct about “James” being the brother of the Lord, this means that Jude was also a brother of the Lord.

III. Arguments That These Were Not The Brothers And Sisters Of Christ.

A. Some argue that Mary remained a virgin all her life.

- 1. They contend that Mary was holy and would not have married and given birth to children..
- 2. This argument ignores the clear statements of the Bible that affirm otherwise.

MAT 1:25 and kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son ; and he called His name Jesus.	LUK 2:7 And she gave birth to her first-born son ; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.
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- a. Matthew clearly implies Mary only remained a virgin until Jesus was born.
- b. Luke speaks of Jesus as Mary’s “first-born son” that implies Mary had other sons.
- 3. It is taught that there is something inferior about the marital union, but God’s word does not teach this.
 - a. The author of marriage is God. (Gen. 2:18-25).
 - b. **Jesus** endorsed the truth that marriage is from God. (Matt. 19:3-6)
 - c. **Paul** compared the relationship between a husband and wife to Christ’s relationship to the church. (Eph. 5:23,25).
 - d. **The Hebrew writer** exclaimed that marriage is honorable among all. (Heb. 13:4).
 - e. **Paul** warned that those who would forbid marriage were apostates. (1 Tim. 4:1-3).
 - f. “Younger widows” were encouraged to marry. (1 Tim. 5:14).
 - g. **Paul** did say because of an impending distress at Corinth that the unmarried would be better off not to marry. (1 Cor. 11:26).
 - 1) The “impending distress” would be a difficult situation for all especially for the married.

2) Paul did not teach that marriage was inferior or that one sinned by being married.

B. Some argue that “brothers” and “sisters” are **used in the sense of cousins**.

1. There is no evidence for this conjecture.
2. This is attempt to explain away the brothers and sisters of Christ and keep Mary a virgin who was to be worshiped

Literal brother or brothers (Matt. 1:2, 11; 4:18,21; 10:2, 21; 12:46, 48, 49; 13:55; 14:3; 17:1; 19:29; 20:24; 22:24, 25; Mk. 1:16, 19; 3:17; 5:37; 6:3,17; 10:29;12:19, 20, 47; 13:12; Lk. 3:1; 6:14; 12:13; 15:27, 32; 20:28, 29; 21:16; Jn. 1:40, 41; 2:12; 6:8; Jn. 7:3, 5,, 10; 11:2, 29, 21, 23, 32).

“Brother” or “brothers” in the Gospels as fellow Jew or Believer (Matt. 5:22, 23, 24, 47; 7:4; 12:50; 18:15, 21, 35; 23:8; 25:40; Mk. 3:31, 32, 34; 35; Lk. 6:42; 8:19; 20, 21; 14:12, 26; 16:28, 29; Lk. 17:3; 22:32

“Sister” in the Gospels as literal sisters (Matt. 12:50; 13:56; 19:29; Mk. 3:33, 35; 6:3; 10:29; Lk. 10:39, 40; Lk. 14:6; Jn. 11:1, 3, 5, 28, 39; Jn. 19:25

“Sister” or “sisters” as fellow Jew or believer. (Matt. 12:50; Mk. 3:35; Mk. 10:30;

Conclusion.

- I. The Bible clearly teaches had fleshly brothers and sisters.
- II. It teaches Mary was a great woman who was chosen to give birth to Jesus, but does not teach the following.
 - A. Mary remained a virgin her whole life.
 1. She had at least 6 children after the birth of Jesus, and Joseph was the father of these 6 children.
 2. Joseph appears to have died before Christ began His ministry.
 3. The Bible does not record the death of Joseph, but it does not record the deaths of most of the leading characters especially in the New Testament.
 - B. **Mary is to be worshiped is not taught or implied.**
 - C. Mary deserves our respect, but not our worship.
 1. **An angel** speaking of Mary said.

LUK 1:28 And coming in, he said to her, "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you."

LUK 1:30 And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. “charis” means grace, favor.”

2. **Elizabeth** said of Mary.

LUK 1:41 And it came about that when Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

LUK 1:42 And she cried out with a loud voice, and said, "Blessed among women are you, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! What a privilege to give birth of the Son of God!

3. **Mary** exalts the Lord and said of herself.

LUK 1:46 **And Mary said:** "My soul exalts the Lord,

LUK 1:47 And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.

LUK 1:48 "For He has had regard for the humble state of His bondservant; For behold, from this time on all generations will count me blessed.

LUK 1:49 "For the Mighty One has done great things for me; And holy is His name.

D. **We are to worship only Deity.** (Matt. 4:10). It is sinful to worship Mary, the apostles, the angels.

III. As great as one might think it would be to be a brother or sister or mother of Christ, **Jesus taught it was more important to do the will of God.**

MAT 12:46 While He was still speaking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers were standing outside, seeking to speak to Him.

MAT 12:47 And someone said to Him, "Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You."

MAT 12:48 But He answered the one who was telling Him and said, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?"

MAT 12:49 And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, "Behold, My mother and My brothers!

MAT 12:50 "For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother."

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