

Jesus' Siblings

“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)

There are those that hold to a belief that Jesus was the only child that Mary bore. This position will not hold up to Scriptural test and leads to many other errors in doctrine and practice.

In this passage, Matthew refers to the *brethren* and *sisters* of Jesus when He returns to His hometown of Nazareth. Some will go to great strains to try and avoid the obvious truth presented in these verses – Jesus had siblings. He had half-brothers and sisters born of Mary and Joseph after His miraculous birth.

All objections to this truth are founded on myth and conjecture and not from Scripture. One objection says that the Greek word for “brother” can also refer to a person who is related like a cousin. The problem with this is that there is another word for “cousin” in Greek, and it is used elsewhere when clearly referring to a cousin as we understand it.¹

But even if the Greek for brother is used in the broader sense, what about the Greek word for sister? It is used in only two ways in the Bible. The first is in reference to a biological sister. The second usage is referring to a sister in the church. This second usage is not found until after the resurrection of Jesus in the early church. Therefore, the text clearly shows that Jesus had sisters. Further, why would cousins be spending so much time with Mary? This was not a traditional Jewish custom.

To combat this logical reasoning, a myth that Joseph was significantly older than Mary was contrived. This falsehood promotes the idea that Joseph had six children from a previous marriage and was widowed. First of all, there is absolutely no Scriptural or historical basis to consider this to be anything but a myth. And, if Joseph did have other children from a previous marriage, where were they when Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem and then later to Egypt and back? Again, there is not Biblical evidence to even hint at a previous marriage by Joseph.

These myths are promoted to support another myth and that is that Mary remained a virgin after the birth of Jesus. This again contradicts Scripture.

¹ Luke 1:36

“And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.” (Matthew 1:25)

This text plainly shows that Mary and Joseph lived as husband and wife after the birth of the Savior.

Jesus clearly had half-brothers and sisters that were younger than He. But why is this significant?

The major reason we should understand this is because there is no reason to promote the perpetual virginity of Mary and encourage young women to become nuns. There is also a teaching that goes along with this that preachers (or priests as they call them) should remain celibate as well. These teachings go against God's design in creation and the Apostle Paul warned Timothy about those that would promote such a practice:

*“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; **Forbidding to marry**, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.” (1st Timothy 4:1-3)*

It is clear, from this passage in Timothy, that those who promote the idea to abstain from marriage will also promote other unscriptural practices. Paul *clearly* shows that this is a **departure from the faith**.