

# DID JESUS HAVE BROTHERS?

**The answer- according to the Bible - is...No!**

But, what about Mark 6:3: “Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and the brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon...?” It says Jesus had brothers. Which means the Catholic Church is wrong when it teaches that Mary was a perpetual virgin.



Well, not so fast. First of all, there was no word for cousin, or for nephew or niece, or for aunt or uncle in ancient Hebrew or Aramaic - the Jews used “brother” or “sister” in all those instances. We see that in Genesis 14:14, where Lot, Abraham’s nephew, is called his “brother”.

Also, the James and Joses mentioned in Mark 6:3 as “brothers” of Jesus are actually the sons of a woman other than Mary the mother of Jesus. We see this in Matthew 27:55-56, Mark 15:40-41, and John 19:25. These passages show that the mother of James and Joses is not the same woman as Mary the mother of Jesus. Which means Jesus’ “brothers” were undoubtedly relatives - probably cousins - but not sons of the same mother.

And, in Galatians 1:19, Paul tells us that James, “the Lord’s brother,” is one of the Apostles. But there’s a problem. If James is indeed the “brother” of Jesus, then he must have Mary as his mother, and Joseph as his father. But, of the two apostles named James that we find in the Bible (e.g., Matthew 10:1-4), one of them had a father named Zebedee and the other had a father named Alphaeus - neither one of them had a father named Joseph! Which mean James, “the Lord’s brother,” was not Jesus’ sibling! Again, he was probably a cousin.

Finally, if Jesus had any brothers - if Mary had any other sons - would the last thing that Jesus did on earth be to grievously offend his surviving brothers? In John 19:26-27, right before He dies, Jesus entrusted the care of His mother to the beloved disciple, John. If Mary had any other sons, it would have been an incredible slap in the face to them that the Apostle John was entrusted with the care of their mother!

So, when we look at the “brothers” of Jesus in the broader context of Scripture, rather than just focusing on Mark 6:3, we see that the argument against the perpetual virginity of Mary has no foundation in the Bible.

And guess who agrees with the Catholic Church on this? Martin Luther and John Calvin:

*“Christ...was the only Son of Mary, and the Virgin Mary bore no children besides Him...I am inclined to agree with those who declare that ‘brothers’ really mean ‘cousins’ here, for Holy Writ and the Jews always call cousins brothers.” Martin Luther*

*“There have been certain folk who have wished to suggest from this passage (Matt 1:25) that the Virgin Mary had other children than the Son of God, and that Joseph had then dwelt with her later; but what folly this is!” John Calvin*

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