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Jesus' Mother and Brothers

Matthew 12:46-50; Mark 3:31-35; Luke 8:19-21

Jesus' mother and brothers DIG: What did the crowd expect? In light of the growing controversy, why might Jesus' mother and brothers be eager to speak with Him (see Mark 3:20-21)? What did the Lord say is the basis for a family relationship with Him? How do we know these were the Nazarene's own brothers and sisters from the same womb, and not His cousins? Is doing ADONAI's will an action or a belief (see Luke 6:46 and John 6:29)? What seven areas does the Roman Catholic Church elevate Mary over Jesus?

REFLECT: From your life this week, would others see you as a "brother or sister" of Yeshua, or a distant relative that no one wants to talk about at family gatherings? Why? Life can get crazy busy at times. How do you get near to Jesus in the midst of your crowded life?



After finishing **His** parables by the Sea (**to see link click [Es](#) - The Public Parables of the Kingdom by the Sea**), **Messiah** returned to **Peter's house** in Capernaum with **His** **talmidim**. At some point it was announced to **Him** that **His mother** and half-**brothers** were standing **outside** of **the house** wanting to see **Him** privately. The family had already been living in a suburb of Capernaum for some time. Joseph, the husband of **Mary** and the stepfather of **Jesus**, had already passed away. **But again** a smaller crowd gathered in the house. It was **so** packed and demanding that **Christ** and **His** apostles were not even able to eat (Mark 3:20).

Jesus had four half-**brothers** (also see [Ej - Isn't This the Carpenter's Son? Aren't His Brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Jude?](#)), and several half-**sisters**, who are not named (**Matthew 13:55-56**). These **brothers** were friendly toward **Him** earlier in **His** ministry (**John 2:12**); but, after **the Galilean Rabbi** was rejected in Nazareth (see [Ch - The Spirit of the LORD is One Me](#)) **they** seemed to distance themselves from **His** claims. Later on **they** ridiculed **Him**, calling **Him** the "Secret Messiah" (**John 7:5**).

At the present time **they** were unbelieving and indifferent, not to say hostile, or at least ready to interfere with **Christ's** work in favor of some kind of quiet and respectable life for sake of the family. **They** had been forced to move from Nazareth on **His** account and now the Pharisees and Torah-teachers from Jerusalem were present in Capernaum and the might of the Sanhedrin was against **Him**. **Miryam** wanted to be close to **her Son**, and it was **their** responsibility to take care of **their mother** after Joseph had died. **They** probably felt that **they** had better interfere now, or else the fanatical zeal of this **brother** of **theirs** might force **them** and **their mother** to face the inconvenience and difficulty of another move.

They had doubtless heard of the slander that was spoken about **Him** by **the Pharisees and the Torah-teacher's who came down from Jerusalem**. **They** said that **Beelzebub** possessed him! **By the prince of demons He is driving out demons (Matthew 12:24; Mark 3:22; Luke 11:15; John 7:20)**. **When the Lord's family heard** that **He** was so engrossed by **His** work that **He** even failed to take care for **His** physical needs, that **they went to take charge of Him**. This probably meant **they** decided to take **Him** back to Nazareth. **They** were intending to take **Him** by force against **His** will, for **they** said: **He is out of His mind (Mark 3:21)**. **The Meshiach's own family** realized something was very different. But, **they** misinterpreted **His** actions and thought that **He** needed to be protected from **Himself**. **His** zeal seemed to be bordering on insanity to **them**. **Christ's** healing ministry begged for theories to explain it. Herod had his theory (**Matthew 14:1-12**), **the Pharisees and Torah-teachers** had **theirs**, and **the family of Jesus** had **theirs**.

Yeshua's brothers and sisters had witnessed the intensity of **His** ministry and perhaps reasoned among **themselves** that **His** zeal bordered on fanaticism. The nervous tension was showing on **His** face. **He** looked tired. **They** probably convinced **Mary** to come along with **them** and bring her oldest **Son** home and let the excitement subside while **He** got some needed rest. So, the family all came to **Peter's** house together. Surely **He** would be persuaded by the show of interest and solidarity on **their** part.⁷⁰⁶

After all, **they** were **His** own flesh and blood!

While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, which was sitting around Him in a circle

(the talmidim naturally forming the inner ring and other disciples behind them and partly mingled with them filling the house), **His mother and brothers** (*adelphos*) **stood outside, wanting to speak to Him. But they were not able to get near Him because of the crowd** (Matthew 12:46; Luke 8:19). So **they sent someone in to call Him** (Mark 3:31).

Then a certain one at the request of the family wedged his way in and interrupting **the Lord** said: **Your mother and brothers** (*adelphos*) **are standing outside wanting to speak to You** (Matthew 12:47; Mark 3:32; Luke 8:20). The arrival of **Messiah's mother and brothers and sisters** gave **Him** the perfect opportunity to give **Miryam** the due worship that the Catholic Church teaches **she** deserves. But, **He** did nothing of the sort. On the contrary, **He** gave a graphic illustration of the need for a personal relationship with **Him**.

There must have been a stir in the room as **the crowd** was silent. What did **they** want? The situation was tense. **Jesus** had just emerged victorious over the dreaded Pharisees and Torah-teachers. But now **His** family, whether motivated by fear or affection, interrupted **His** ministry. What should **He** do about it? **He replied to those sitting around Him: Who is My mother, and who are My brothers** (*adelphos*) (Mark 3:33)? Context determines the use of the Greek word *adelphos*. Here the context is **mother and brothers**, or family.

Then the Anointed One looked at those seated in a circle around Him (see [Ez - The Private Parables of the Kingdom in the House](#)) and pointing to His apostles, **He said: Here are My mother and My brothers** (*adelphos*). **For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother** (*adelphos*) **and sister** (*adelphe*) **and mother** (Mattityahu 12:48-50; Mark 3:34-35). **His** words sent a double meaning their way. First, to direct **His mother and brothers** (*adelphos*) to focus on what matters most, hearing and obeying **God's** Word, and second, to guide them to a true relationship with **Him** that surpassed any physical blood ties.

At this point, our **Savior** clearly teaches here the spiritual nature of **His** Kingdom. It is to be a great spiritual family. They will do the will of the heavenly Father and are **His** true spiritual family. **Yeshua's** own earthly family, even **His** own **mother** failed to understand **Him** (at least on this occasion). It is good to understand that **His** family did understand **Him** more perfectly later on, but that was only after **His** resurrection.

If **Miryam** had had the influence and authority over **Christ** that is claimed by the Church of Rome, **He** would not have answered her as **He** did, but would have immediately honored **her** request to see **Him**. Here again we have Scriptural evidence that **Mary** has nothing to do with the ministry of **the Son of God** as regards to salvation. In fact, **He** rejects all

earthly relationships, and accepts only spiritual ones. The Pharisees claimed the right to enter the kingdom of Heaven merely on the basis of their physical ties back to Abraham. But, the point **Jesus** made was that only those who are the spiritual seed of Abraham would enter in.

Jesus' words marked a radical turning point for **Himself**, and more significantly, for **His** mother. **He** was redefining the family. Biological ties, which predominate all through the Bible, are not the strongest ties for **Yeshua** or to those who follow **Him**. The kingdom of **God** is not biological, but spiritual. **The Lord's** family isn't built on bloodlines, biology, or genetics, but on the blood of **Messiah** and a shared commitment to **God** and **His** Word. The ties that bind **God's** family together come from hearing and putting **His** words into practice.

Jesus was giving Mary the Gospel, the only path to blessedness. Shocking as it sounds, physically giving birth to **the Messiah** ultimately meant nothing if **Mary** never listened, believed in, and lived out the teachings of her **Son**. **Her** true calling in life - and the only bond with **Him** that matters - was to hear **His** words, believe in them and live by them. **Her** greatest calling was to follow **the Savior of Sinners** and cultivate the family resemblance by becoming like **her Son**. The one who takes to heart the words **Christ** spoke regarding **His** biological mother belongs to the only family in the world that truly matters as a full-fledged **brother** or **sister** or **mother** of **Jesus**. This is the most important family tree for us all.

Jesus knew **He** would end up on the cross being crucified in front of **His mother**. **Mary**, of course, was unaware of this until the end. So, throughout **His** life, **Yeshua** prepared **her** for that eventuality by changing **her** perception of **herself** from not only being **His mother**, but more importantly to being **His** disciple. So, what may be perceived as harsh or unkind words like: **Why were you searching for Me? Didn't you know I had to be in My Father's house (Luke 2:49)?** Or possibly, **Woman, why should that concern Me (John 2:4a CJB)?** were actually words of kindness and compassion.⁷⁰⁷

When the Church began at the Festival of Shavu'ot, there was only one **name given under heaven by which we must be saved**, that of **Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12)**. Wherever we are directed to **the Giver of Grace**, **Mary** is never mentioned. Surely this silence is a rebuke to those who would build a system of salvation around **her**. **God the Holy Spirit** has given us all the record in the Scriptures that we need concerning **Mary**, and there is no record of anyone ever calling on **Miryam** for salvation. **Nevertheless, the Roman Catholic Church teaches that Mary is superior to Christ in six different ways.**

First, the Roman Catholic Church elevates Mary to a superior position over Christ.

The Glories of Mary, written by Bishop Alphonse de Liguori in 1931 and revised in 1941, has become widely accepted as Catholic doctrine. It was indirectly a product of the Council of Trent, the 16th century version of Vatican II, to counter the Protestant Reformation. Known today as the Baltimore Catechism, it is still widely used and has never been repudiated. In it, **Miryam** is given the place belonging to **Christ**, "And **she** is truly a mediatrix of peace between sinners and **God**. Sinners receive pardon by . . . **Mary** alone" (*The Glories of Mary*, pages 82-83). But, the Bible declares: **For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus (First Timothy 2:5).**

Second, the Catholic Church glorifies Mary more than Christ. "Many things . . . are asked from **God**, and are not granted; however, [when] they are asked of **Mary**, they are obtained," for "**she** . . . is even Queen of Hell, and Sovereign Mistress of the devils" (*The Glories of Mary*, pages 141 and 143). But, the Word of **God** says: **In the name of Jesus Christ . . . for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved (Acts 3:6 and 4:12). His name is far above all rule and authority, power, dominion, and every name . . . not only in the present age but also in the one to come (Ephesians 1:21).**

Third, the Roman Church believes that Mary is the gate to heaven instead of Christ. "**Mary** is called . . . the gate of heaven because no one can enter that blessed kingdom without passing through **her**" (*The Glories of Mary*, page 160). "The way of salvation is open to none otherwise than through **Mary**," and since "our salvation is in the hands of **Mary** . . . [the one] who is protected by **Mary** will be saved, and [the one] who is not will be lost" (*The Glories of Mary*, pages 169 and 170). However, **Christ** said: **I AM the gate; whoever enters through Me will be saved (John 10:9a), and I AM the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me (John 14:6).**

Fourth, the Catholic Church gives Mary the power of Christ. "All power is given to you in heaven and on earth," so that "at the command of **Mary** all obey - even **God** . . . thus . . . **God** has placed the whole Church . . . under the domination of **Mary**" (*The Glories of Mary*, pages 180-181). **Mary** "is also **the Advocate** of the whole human race . . . for **she** can do what **she** wills with **God**" (*The Glories of Mary*, page 193). The Word of **God**, however, states: **All power is given to Me in heaven and on earth** so that **at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and He is the head of the body, the Church . . . so that in everything He might have the supremacy (Matthew 28:18; Philippians 2:9-11; Colossians 1:18). But if anybody does sin, we have an Advocate with the Father - Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world (First John 2:1-2).**

Fifth, the Catholic Church teaches that Mary is the peacemaker instead of Christ.

"**Mary** is the peace-maker between sinners and **God**" (*The Glories of Mary*, page 197). "We often more quickly obtain what we ask by calling on the name **Mary**, than by invoking the name of **Jesus**." "**She** . . . is our salvation, our life, our hope, our counsel, our refuge, our help" (*The Glories of Mary*, pages 254 and 257). However, thankfully, the Bible teaches: **But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He himself is our peace (Ephesians 2:13-14a).** And: **Until now you have not asked for anything in My name. Ask and you will receive for whatever you ask in My name My Father will give you (John 16:23-24).**

Sixth, the Roman Catholic Church gives Mary the glory that belongs to Christ. "The whole trinity, O **Mary**, gave you a name . . . above every other name, that at your name, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, on earth, and under the earth" (*The Glories of Mary*, page 260). The Bible, however, answers this heresy when it says: **Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name, the at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil 2:9-10).**⁷⁰⁸

It is an understatement to say that not every Catholic believes in this doctrine of **Mary**, and there are many true believers who have been saved despite the teaching of Rome. My wife was saved out of the Catholic Church. However, it cannot be overstated that this still remains the official doctrine of the Catholic Church and continues to be taught in Catholic parochial schools and colleges around the world.

The Roman Catholic Church uses these verses to perpetuate the myth of the perpetual virginity of **Mary**. **She** was a virgin when **the Holy Spirit** impregnated **her**. But afterward she had normal sexual relations with **her** husband Joseph, and they had a family together. Whether the inspired gospel writers used the masculine *adelphos* for **brother**, or the feminine *adelphe* for **sister**, they both have the same root, and mean *from the same womb*.

The Roman Catholic Church attempts to explain these away as cousins, and therefore not children of **Mary** and Joseph at all. However, biblical Greek has a different word for *cousin*, which is *anepsios*. **My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin (anepsios) of Barnabas (Colossians 4:10).** It is true that there is another general Greek word for *relative*. **Even Elizabeth your relative (suggenes) is going to have a child in her old age, and she was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month (Luke 1:36).** But, neither of the words *cousin* or *relative* are used here.

At best, it is bad scholarship; and at worst, it is a blatant attempt to twist the Scriptures to fit their preconceived theology.⁷⁰⁹

Messiah replied: My mother and brothers are those who hear God's word and put it into practice (Luke 8:21). Does **Jesus** have anything to say about dealing with difficult relatives? Is there an example of **Christ** bringing peace to a painful family? Yes, there is. **His** own. It may have surprised you to know that **the Lord** had a family at all. You may have not been aware that **Messiah** had **brothers and sisters**, or that **His** family was less than perfect. **They** were. If your family doesn't appreciate you, take heart, neither did **Yeshua's**.

Yet **He** didn't try to control **their** behavior, nor did **He** let **their** behavior control **His** behavior. **He** didn't demand that **they** all agree with **Him**. **He** didn't sulk when **they** insulted **Him**. **He** didn't make it **His** mission in life to please **them**.⁷¹⁰ **They** were sinners (yes even **Mary**), and **they** had the freedom to accept **Him** or reject **Him** just like everyone else.