

Q.27 Did Mary Bear Other Children After Jesus?

People often quote the following passages in the Bible literally to suggest that the Blessed Virgin Mary had other children besides Jesus:

*“Your mother and your **brethren** are standing outside, desiring to see you.”* (Luke 8:20)

*“Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not his mother called Mary? **And are not his brethren James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And are not all his sisters with us?**”* (Matt 13:55-56)

*“But I saw none of the other apostles except **James the Lord’s brother.**”* (Gal 1:9)

*“Do we not have the right to be accompanied by a wife, as the other apostles and the **brethren of the Lord ...**”* (1 Cor 9:5)

Yet same Matthew who wrote the second passage above, summarizing the prodigies that occurred at the death of Jesus on the cross clearly states that the two brothers mentioned above (James and Joseph) were born of another Mary other than Mary the Mother of Jesus:

*“There were also many other women there, looking on from afar, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him; among whom were Mary Magdalene, and **Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.**”* (Matt 27:55-56)

Elsewhere in another account of the event described above, the Bible describes Mary the mother of James and Joseph as a sister to the Mother of Jesus:

*“But standing by the cross of Jesus were **his mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Cleopas, and Mary Magdalene (4 Marys in all).**”* (John 19:25)

From these accounts, there were obviously four Marys present on Calvary on the day of crucifixion of the Lord: Mary the Mother of Jesus, Her sister – Mary the mother of James and Joseph, Mary the wife of Cleophas and Mary Magdalene. From the above accounts of the same event, it is clear that James and Joseph were maternal cousins to Jesus, while the other “brothers” and “sisters” were also his cousins or close paternal relations.

There are numerous instances in the New Testament where the word “brother” was used by people who were clearly not related: Ananias called Saul (later Paul) brother (Acts 9:17). Paul called the following people brother yet they were all unrelated to him: Timothy (2 Cor 1:1), Epaphroditus (Phili 3:25), Philemon (Phile 1:7) and Onesimus (Col 4:9).

Now consider this: Jesus dying on the cross entrusted His Mother to the care of John the Beloved Apostle:

*“When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, ‘Woman, behold, your son!’ Then he said to the disciple, ‘behold, your mother!’ **And from that hour the disciple took her to his own house.**” (John 19:26-27)*

Jesus did this precisely because **He was Her only Child**, and He knew that Mary had no other children to cater for Her. Christ could not have commended His Mother to the care of John who **“from that hour ... took her to his own house”** if She had other children who could cater for Her. The Bible did not tell us that Joseph, who was most probably dead at this time, visited Mary in John’s house to ... God knows what!

The idea that Mary had other children is disrespectful to the Holy Spirit Who claimed and sanctified Her as His Spouse. It is even unthinkable that a womb in which God Himself dwelt in holy pregnancy could house a mere human afterwards. The Scripture alluded to this fact by referring to Mary’s womb as an “opened and shut gate.” (Eze 44:2)