

Question:

A lot of “ Christians” say that Jesus had brothers and sisters.

My question is: **What does Scripture say about this?**

- About **Ten instances** in the New Testament where “**brothers**” and “**sisters**” of the Lord are mentioned:
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Matt. 12:46;13:55;

Mark 3:31–34; 6:3;

Luke 8:19–20;

John 2:12; 7:3, 5, 10;

Acts 1:14;

1 Cor. 9:5.

Matthew 13:55-56



55 Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? 56 And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?

MARK 6:3



**“Is not this the
carpenter, the son of Mary,
And brother of James and Joses and Judas and
Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?”
AND THEY TOOK OFFENCE AT HIM.**


THEN JESUS' MOTHER AND
BROTHERS CAME TO SEE
HIM, BUT THEY WERE
UNABLE TO REACH HIM
BECAUSE OF THE CROWD.

- LUKE 8:19



**They all joined together
constantly in prayer,
along with the women
and Mary the mother of
Jesus, and with his
brothers.**

~ Acts 1:14 NIV



**And knew her not till she
had brought forth her
firstborn son: and he
called his name JESUS.**

—Matthew 1:25

**This passage a
primary source
of the
contention**

Those who said Jesus had siblings claim;

That Joseph did not touch Mary “**until**” she gave birth to Jesus but did after that.

When they refer to Mary as “virgin,” they mean she was a virgin only until Jesus’ birth. But not after.

They believe that she and Joseph later had children whom Scripture refers to as “the brethren of the Lord.”

However, in the Bible..

If you mean “brother” and “sister” in the **traditional bloodline sense**, as if Mary the Blessed Mother had other children besides Jesus. It is a NO

The Old Testament shows that “brother” had a wide semantic range of meaning and could refer to kinsmen such as cousins.

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Genesis 13:8, 14:14 : **brother** is used to describe the relationship between **Abraham** and **Lot**, who were **uncle** and **nephew**

Gen. 29:15: Jacob is called the “brother” of his uncle Laban

2 Samuel 1:26: I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother; you were very dear to me

1 Chr. 23:21–22- The sons of Kish and daughters of Eleazar are called “brethren” even though they are cousins

2 Kgs. 10:13–14 mentioned the 42 **brethren** of King Azaria, referring to his kinsmen

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Hebrew and Aramaic did not have a word for “cousin,” and so cousins were referred to as brothers and sisters.

Or they would use a circumlocution, such as “the son of my uncle”, “ the daughter of my sister.”

But circumlocutions are clumsy, so the Jews often used “brother.”

The writers of the New Testament **were brought up** using the Aramaic equivalent of “brothers” to mean both direct siblings and cousins plus other relatives and even non-relatives.

When they wrote in Greek, they used the word “**adelphos**” which means “brother” as they knew to use in Hebrew and Aramaic.

However, Unlike Hebrew or Aramaic, Greek has a separate word for cousin, ***anepsios***.

But the inspired writers kept and used the original language of the time with its intended original cultural meaning

In English..

This same usage was employed by the writers of the New Testament and passed into English translations of the Bible.

To determine what “brethren” or “brother” or “sister” means in any one verse, we have to look at the original context intended by the original inspired writers of the bible.

This was never an Issue for about 1,500 years

Even at the time of the Protestant Reformation, John Calvin, Martin Luther and others defended Church teaching in this regard.

"When Matthew says that Joseph did not know Mary carnally until she had brought forth her son, it does not follow that he knew her subsequently; on the contrary, it means that he never did know her . . . This babble [about Mary having multiple children]. . . is without justification . . . he has neither noticed nor paid any attention to either Scripture or the common idiom."

- Martin Luther, 1523 AD
That Jesus was Born a Jew



When Catholics call Mary the “Blessed Virgin,” they mean she remained a virgin throughout her life as proven in the bible.

“**Until**” : In the Bible, this means **only** that some action did not happen up to a certain point; **it does not imply that the action did happen later.**

Other Women Named **Mary** in the NT

Matt. 27:56 and ***Mark 15:40***

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

Mark 15:40

“There were also women looking on from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, **Mary the mother of the younger James and of Joses, and Salome..”**

John 19:25

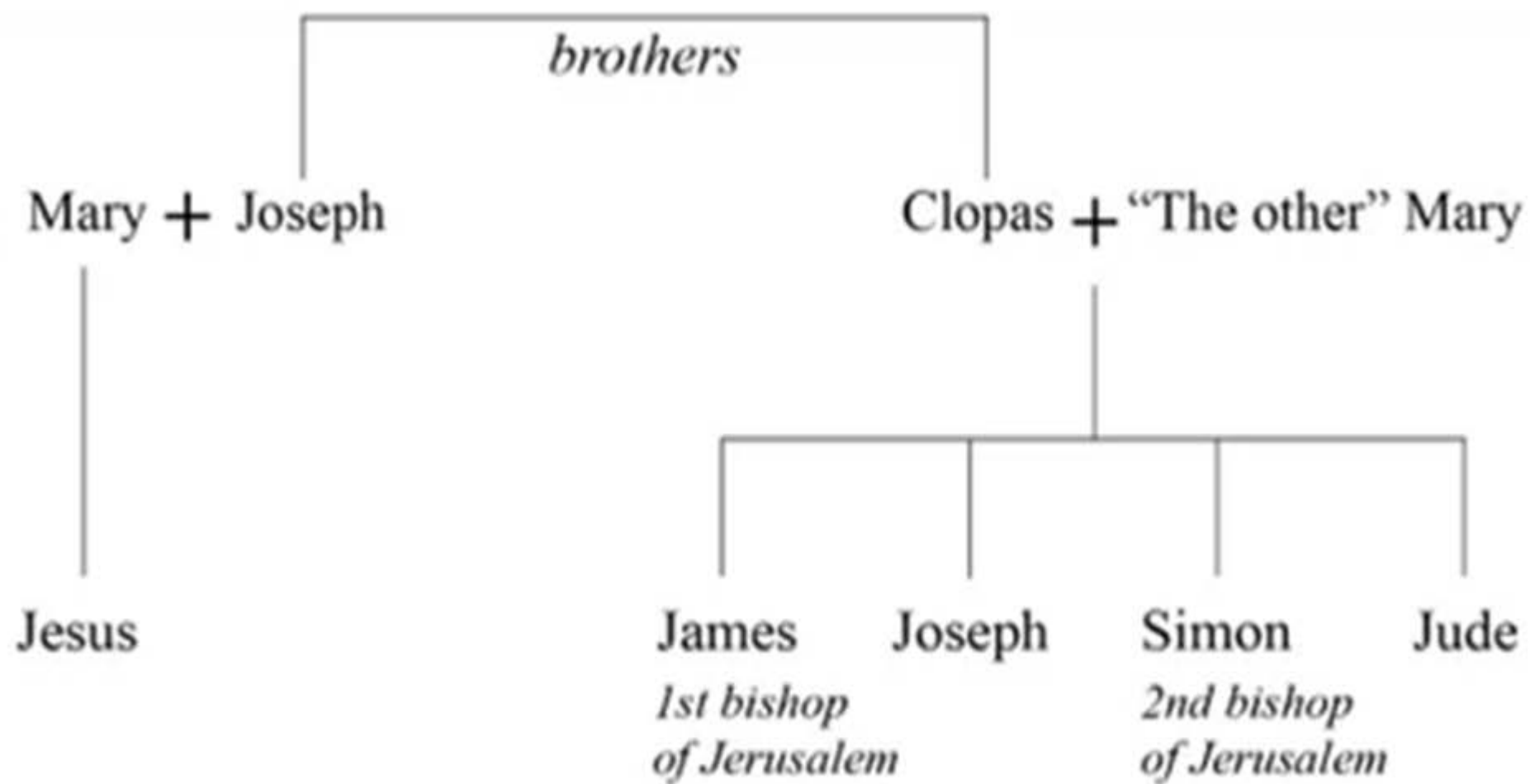
“Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother’s sister, **Mary the wife of Clopas**, and **Mary Magdalene**”.

Clopas:

Luke 24:13–27 – One of the two to Emmaus

Brother of Joseph The Carpenter

The Aramaic name for **Alphaeus** could be rendered in Greek either as Alphaeus or as **Clopas**.



John 7:3-4

“Jesus' brothers said to him, "Leave Galilee and go to Judea, so that your disciples there may see the works you do”

The attitude taken by these “berthers” implies they are older than Jesus

In ancient Eastern societies, older sons gave advice to younger, but younger seldom gave advice to older—it was considered disrespectful to do so. If these “brethren” gave advice to Jesus, they could only have been older than him.

And if they are older than Jesus and Jesus is Mary's first born son, that eliminates them as BVM children and his biological brothers.

What happened at the foot of the cross

John 19:26–27

When he was dying, Jesus **entrusted his mother to the apostle John**

It is hard to imagine why Jesus would have disregarded family ties and made this provision for his mother if these four were also her sons.

It would have been considered an abomination in the Jewish culture



Consensus of the Early Church

The earliest explanation of the “brothers” of the Lord is found in a document known as the **Protoevangelium of James**, which was written around A.D. 150.

It speaks of **Mary as a consecrated virgin**: “*How can this be since I know not a man?*” (Luke 1:34). Mary’s question was taken to mean that she had made a vow of lifelong virginity, even in marriage.

and of **St. Joseph as an elderly widower with children who was chosen to be Mary’s spouse for the purposes of guarding and protecting her while respecting her vow of virginity.**

Though this document is not on the level of Sacred Scripture, it was written very early, and it may contain accurate historical traditions.

Jesus grew up in Nazareth, and the people of Nazareth referred to him as “**the** son of Mary” (Mark 6:3), not as “**a** son of Mary.”

Others in the Gospels are never referred to as Mary’s sons, not even when they are called Jesus’ “brethren.”