

## Did Jesus Have Brothers?

Our Lord told us that one of the five major sins that offends Our Lady's Immaculate Heart in our time is the terrible crime of blasphemy, of speaking against Our Blessed Mother's Perpetual Virginity. Sometimes this sin is committed by people who claim to love Jesus. They are deceived and blind people who are falling into the pit of hell by their sins. To help you recognize these sins and to not be deceived by these false interpreters of the Bible, we give here proper biblical understanding about the "brothers of Jesus".

by John Vennari

When Our Blessed Mother asked for the Five First Saturdays of Reparation, Jesus explained that the Five First Saturdays are to atone for the five principal blasphemies against Our Lady.

The second of these five blasphemies is "Blasphemies against Her Perpetual Virginity".

Many Protestants, and alas some modern Catholics, partake of this blasphemy by claiming that Our Lord Jesus Christ had brothers. According to this false position, Our Lady cannot be "*Blessed Mary Ever-Virgin*", since the Bible refers to the "brethren" of Jesus.

The truth of the matter, as faithful Catholics know,

is that Our Blessed Mother did not have any other children besides Our Lord Jesus Christ. This was clearly recognized by Saint Jerome in the 4th Century, who pointed out that it was the Jewish custom to call near relations "brothers".

Abraham, speaking of Lot — his nephew — said, "Let there be no quarrel, I beseech thee, between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen, for we are brethren." (*Gen. 13:8*)

Later in Genesis, Labon calls Jacob "brother", even though Jacob is his nephew: "Because thou art my brother, shalt thou serve me without wages?" (*Gen. 29:15*)

In Leviticus, Moses calls his second cousins (Nadad and

Adiu) "brethren". (*Lev. 10:1*)

These are clear instances that the term "brother" or "brethren" in Scripture does not necessarily mean a biological brother.

It also must be noted that when the Bible mentions James, Simon and Jude — the "brethren" of the Lord — it never speaks of these men as sons of Mary and Joseph. It uses the word "brethren" in the wider sense, as cousin or near relative. For example, Saint James the Less, who is called the "brother of Our Lord" was the son of Cleophas and Mary (Our Lady's cousin). He was not the son of Mary and Joseph.

Protestants then often retort that St. Luke's Gospel says that St. Joseph "knew Her not *until* She brought forth Her first-born son. They claim this indicates Saint Joseph and Mary conducted themselves as a normal married couple after the birth of Christ; and that Jesus was the *first-born Son*, indicating that other sons were born to Mary and Joseph afterwards.

Yet the word "till" — or "until" — in Scripture does not necessarily mean a change of circumstances after a given event takes place.

For example, in Psalm 109 we read, "The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at My right hand *until* I make Thy enemies Thy footstool."

Does this mean that after God the Father makes the enemies of God the Son His footstool that the Son no longer sits at the Father's right hand? By no means.

We read also in 2 Kings 6:23: "Therefore, Michal the daughter of Saul had no child *until* the day of her death."

Does this mean that the woman gave birth to a child after she died? Of course not.

Also, we know that the Jewish ritual for the *first-born* was simply that — the first born. In Exodus 13:2, Our Lord commands: "Sanctify unto Me all the firstborn." Again, Saint Jerome, who we see answered Protestant errors 11 centuries before Martin Luther betrayed Christ's one true Church, pointed out that the Scriptures frequently employ the term "first-born" to denote a mother's first child, no matter if the child is followed by more children or not.

Even some Protestant commentators recognize that the term "first-born" when used in Scripture does not neces-

sarily mean, "First of more children." It only means that there were not previous children.

Finally, we well know that Our Lord had no brothers, and that Our Blessed Mother had no other biological children from a central event during Our Lord's Passion.

Years ago, I was visiting a married couple, both of whom were Ph.D.'s — professors at an Ivy League university in Pennsylvania. The husband was Anglican and the wife was Jewish.

The Anglican began to argue that Jesus had brothers, because the Bible refers to the "brethren" of the Lord.

I responded with the question: "If Jesus had brothers, then when Our Lord was dying on the Cross, why did He commit the care of His Mother to John — an outsider — and not one of Jesus' alleged brothers? For Jesus to commit His Mother to the care of a non-family member would have been *unthinkable* for a Jew."

At that point, the Jewish wife rose up to her full height in her chair, her eyes widened. "That's right", she said with dead seriousness "it would be *unthinkable* for a Jewish son to

commit the care of his mother to a non-family member if he had any brothers."

In fact, to do so would not only be to dishonor His Mother — something Our Lord could never do — but it would dishonor His brothers. It would have violated the rights of His brethren to give His Mother over to one who was not a member of the family.

Thus we can see clearly that Our Blessed Mother had no other children. "*Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign. Behold a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and His name shall be called Emmanuel.*" (Is. 7:14)

Here, Isaiah prophesied that a Virgin shall conceive and give birth to a Son.

This means that Our Lady's virginity remains intact at conception, during childbirth and after childbirth. Our Blessed Mother retained Her holy virginity until the end of Her life. This is a dogma of the Catholic Church as taught in the Lateran Council of 649 and the Sixth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople in 680.

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*Continued on page 35*

They are also a constant admonition to us; either by placing vividly before us one of the truths of religion, or exhorting us to imitate the example of the saint.

The work of the artist does indeed often prove more influential than the words of the preacher, for the impressions we receive through the ear have less impact upon the mind than those which we receive

through the eye.

St. Gregory the Great calls pictures the books of the unlearned.

In the Middle Ages, before there were any printed books, pictures were widely disseminated among the people. From those times we date the Christmas Crib, the holy sepulcher, the Stations of the Cross, and other holy images. **FC**

## Conclusion

**So we must remember not to be fooled by the false reasoning of heretics and scoffers who attack our Catholic Faith for the pious use of sacred statues and images. We must remember to make reparation for sins against the Immaculate Heart of Mary. We must make reparation for those sinners who attack Our Lady in Her sacred statues and images.**

### **Did Jesus Have Brothers?**

*Continued from page 32*

We thus better appreciate how Our Blessed Mother's visitations at Fatima reiterate the key dogmas of the Faith, especially those dogmas that have come under attack in

the second half of the 20th Century into the present. By asking for reparation of the "blasphemies against Her Perpetual Virginity", as part of the Five First Saturday devotions, Our Lady once again shows Herself to be "conqueror of all heresies". **FC**