

# Encounters with Jesus

## The 'Blood' Family of Jesus

### Important people today and their family

To get us into the swing of family life with Jesus, I would like to start by briefly glimpsing at the family life of 2 well known figures:

**Isaac Newton** was born on Christmas Day, 1642

Lincolnshire, England. He was born three months after the death of his father, a prosperous farmer named Isaac Newton.

Born pre-ma-tur-ely, he was a small child; his mother Hannah Ays-cough said that he could have fit inside a quart mug. When Newton was three, his mother married the Reverend Barnabus Smith, leaving her son in the care of her mother, Margery Ays-cough.

The young Isaac disliked his stepfather and maintained some hostility towards his mother for marrying him. This is derived from the list of sins he compiled before he was 19:

A sin in the list reads:

"Threatened my father and mother Smith to burn them and the house over them."

Newton's mother had three children with the Reverend Smith.

Newton never married, although it was claimed that he was once engaged.

The second family situation I wish to briefly look at is that of Jan-dal-i

Jan-dal-i's response

to being called the "father of invention" was:

"My daughter, Mona is a famous writer,

and my biological son is the chief executive of Apple.

The reason Steve was put up for adoption was because my girlfriend's father was extremely conservative and wouldn't let her marry me.

When I was asked to do a talk on people who had encountered Jesus I thought for a bit of all the possible characters I could research What would I find interesting that would interest the class?

And when I consider my life and the life of others

I can't get pass the influence love and losses that my family has on my life.

So what about Jesus's life?

Surely his family life had a great impact on him.

And because I hardly know anything about his family, I thought I would be interesting to look into this.

I just hoped there would be enough information I could glean, and I wasn't found wanting.

To begin, let's spend the next few minutes collecting those 3 new testament bible verses that reveal Jesus's family life before his crucifixion

## The Family of Jesus Worksheet

1. Mark 6 v1-6 (also parallel in Matt 13v53-58)
2. Mark 3v20-21
3. John 7v4
4. Acts 1v14
5. 1Cor 9v5
6. 1Cor 15v7
7. Acts 12v17
8. Gal 1v19
9. Acts 15v13-19
10. Acts 21v18
11. Luke 21v20-21
12. Luke 21v12-13

1) Mark 6, 1-6 (Mark was the original) also an account in Matt 13:53-58.

<sup>2</sup> On the Sabbath, Jesus taught in the synagogue.

And many were astonished, saying,

“What wisdom is this?

And such miracles are performed by His hands!

Isn't he the carpenter, (*carpenter's son in Matt*)

the Son of Mary,

and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon?

And aren't His sisters here with us?”

<sup>4</sup> Jesus said to them,

“A prophet has

**no** honour in his own country,

**No** honour among his own relatives,

And **no** honour in his own house.”

2) Mark 3:20<sup>20</sup> Then Jesus entered a house. Such a crowd had gathered, he and his disciples were unable to eat.

<sup>21</sup> When his family heard about this, they came to take Him away,

And said, “He is out of his mind.”

3) John 7<sup>4</sup> Jesus's brothers said to Jesus “Leave Galilee and go to Judea, .....show yourself to the world.”

<sup>5</sup>for they did not believe in him.

**So how did Jesus's family see him?** Jesus's family gave him no respect, and saw him as a lunatic not to be believed.

Now let's look at 2 accounts about Jesus's siblings after the resurrection

#### 4) Acts 1-14

At Pentecost: <sup>14</sup> they all joined together constantly in prayer, with the women, Mary his mother, and his brothers.

#### 5) 1Cor 9v5

Don't we have the right to take a believing wife along with us,  
as do the other apostles and the Lord's brothers and Cephas<sup>(Peter)</sup>?

(Jesus's apostles, brothers and Cephas (Peter) took wives with them on their preaching adventures). Jesus's brothers were evangelists)

*Do these 2 accounts above suggest a change of heart after the resurrection?*

Answer:

Yes, the brothers seem to be joining in with prayer and fellowship and preaching about Jesus.

They would have been humbled by the experience and extremely grateful for the privilege to have been such an eyewitness.

*Do you find this thought provoking that they changed their ideas about Jesus?*

*Who else changed their negative ideas to positive?*

Answer: The apostles at the crucifixion, ran away, then returned to preach.

Peter denied 3 times

Paul turned from persecuting the church to being a great evangelist.

*Let's have a closer look at the brothers of Jesus*

*What do we know about Jesus's brothers?*

*There is James*

*Joses? (Which is a shorten form of Joseph, his father)*

*Simon*

*Judas*

Let's briefly look at the youngest? Judas

There are other Judas's in the bible

*Can you tell me of the other Judas's around Jesus?*

2 of the 12 apostles are called Judas.

Thaddaeus (son of James) is also known as Judas

And there is Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus.

(See Luke 6v12, Acts 1v13, Matt 10v2, Mark 3v18)

*Now remember, the siblings were probably feeling unworthy of being associated with such a great person and were truly sorry for the way they had treated Jesus with hatred. They really learnt to tame the tongue in a huge way.*

*They found it difficult to brag that they were his fleshly ½ brothers. They felt guilty about scoffing at his ministry; and so they humbled themselves and confessed Him as their master.*

The epistle of Jude is thought to be written by Jesus's brother

Look at the introduction: "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James" (Jude 1:1)

Brother of James.....mmmmmm

There was James, Jose, Judas , Simeon- Jesus's brothers – James was the elder brother.....

Apart from James his brother,

2 other James's were Jesus's apostles:

James, son of Zebedee, also known as the brother of John

This James is murdered by Herod in Acts 12v2. This is where Peter also nearly suffers the same fate but is instead thrown into prison.

The third James is James, son of Alphaeus.the other apostle named James.

*Concerning the Lord brother, James-*

The ancient historian Eusebius recorded ancient writings of Clement of Alexandria -

whosays James the brother of Jesus was called

James the Just (because of his outstanding virtue).

“James the brother of the Lord, surnamed the Just,”

and "James the Righteous,"

and "James of Jerusalem".

6) 1Cor 15v7 –there is a special mention that Jesus appears to James his brother after the resurrection.

7) Further on in Acts 12v17 (just 15 verses after the murder of the apostle James and the imprisonment of Peter), Peter miraculously escapes and needs to tell James of the whole ordeal. This emphasizes the James importance.

8) Gal 1v19 After Paul's conversion he mentions seeing James "the Lord's brother", and Peter, in Jerusalem.

9) In Acts 15 v13-19, it is James who declares that Gentiles should not be forced to do the Jewish rituals.

10) In Acts 21v18, Paul goes and sees James and the elders.

When Peter left Jerusalem, James became the principal authority and was held in high regard by the Jewish Christians. James became the first bishop in Jerusalem. He-ge-sip-pus records that James the brother of Jesus was executed by the Sanhedrin in 62

**He-ge-sip-pus** “And so they brought him to the temple, and they asked him to denounce Jesus. Instead, he defended Jesus and looked forward to his coming kingdom.

So they threw him down off the temple mount, but he was still alive!

A laundryman came along, and he had a club they used for beating laundry, and clubbed [James] over the head, and that's what finally killed him.”

When James fell to his death, he left the church in Jerusalem without a leader.

The local believers got together to elect a new bishop and once again, they decided to keep it in the family.**(He-ge-sip-pus)**

“The second bishop of the church was Simeon, who was Jesus' first cousin,” says Maier. “Let me explain that. Joseph (Jesus' earthly father) had a brother named Clopas.

Clopas had a son named Simeon, and so this was Jesus' first cousin and the second bishop of the church.”

In Luke's gospel, Clopas is named as one of the disciples

who walked with Jesus on the road to Emmaus after his resurrection.

Early church writers say this man was the brother of Joseph the carpenter, which means that he was also Jesus' uncle.

Clopas' son, Simeon, became the bishop of Jerusalem at a dangerous time.

In A.D. 66, the Jewish War with Rome had just begun,

and the city was under siege, just as Jesus had prophesied three decades earlier:

*(Luke 21:20-21)*

*“When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then you will know that the time of its destruction has arrived.*

*Then those in Judea must flee to the hills.*

*Let those in Jerusalem escape.”*

Simeon remembered the words of his brother/cousin Jesus, and waited for the right moment to leave the city.

In November, the Roman army oddly retreated from Jerusalem for a few weeks, a military blunder historians would later call “disastrous.”

But to Simeon, this so-called “blunder” was a miracle.

He persuaded his congregation to flee Jerusalem, and they escaped with just the clothes on their backs.

Simeon led them to safety in a gentile city called Pella in the hills of modern-day Jordan.

“We don't know why Pella specifically was chosen, except for the fact that it's across the Jordan River,” says Maier.

“It was primarily peopled by gentiles in the area, and therefore it was quite a logical place of refuge if you want to get away from anything controlled by Jerusalem.”

Simeon and his congregation spent the next four years safely in Pella, while back in Jerusalem, the Romans murdered more than a million Jews and took another 97 thousand as slaves.

When the war was over, many of the believers returned to Jerusalem and settled on Mount Zion, near the upper room where they had first received the Holy Spirit and where Jesus had celebrated the Last Supper with his disciples.

They built a new Judeo-Christian synagogue on the site where the upper room had once stood.

Simeon served as the bishop of Jerusalem until A.D. 106,

when he was arrested and tortured by the Romans.

Then, like Jesus, Simeon was crucified. He was 120 years old.

A few decades earlier,

two more of Jesus' relatives had caught the attention

of the Roman emperor Domitian,

who carried out one of the greatest Christian persecutions in history.

“The last record we have of any of Jesus' family would,

I think, be the grandsons of Jude,” says Maier.

“Now Jude had a son, and we don't know his name,

and he had sons

-- Jesus' grand nephews.

The grandsons of Jude were arrested

and brought before the emperor Domitian in Rome

because they were of the house of David,

therefore the royal dynasty,

therefore they might be candidates to the Jewish throne.”

Decades earlier, Jesus had predicted the persecution of his followers.

*(Luke 21:12-13 NLT)*

*"You will be accused before governors and kings.  
This will be your opportunity to tell them about me."*

With this prophecy in mind,

the grand nephews of Jesus went boldly to Rome.

They were taken to the palace of Domitian,

where the emperor asked them a series of questions.

Domitian decided these don't look like royal types to me,

and so at that point, he let them go,

and he stopped the persecution of the church.

The family of Jesus became known as the *desposyni*,

which means "Belonging to the Lord" in Greek.

These people were very big in the church after that."

Several years later,

the two brothers were martyred under a different Roman emperor, Trajan.

For the next few decades,

members of Jesus' family continued to lead the church in Jerusalem.

Nothing is known of them, except their names, which were preserved in early church records.

The last known relative of Jesus was Judah Kyriakos,

a Greek name that means "Judah of the Christ."

He was the great grandson of Jesus' brother Jude, and the last Jewish bishop of Jerusalem.

In A.D. 130, the Roman emperor Hadrian levelled the city of Jerusalem.

On its ruins, he built a new city dedicated to the Roman god Jupiter.

The records of Jesus' family disappeared, along with the old city of Jerusalem.

“After that, we lose track,” says Maier.

**So why aren't we aware of Jesus's brothers ministry?**

**Why don't we realise that James the brother of Jesus lead the church and wrote the Epistle of James?**

**Why is this information so difficult to piece together?**

**What happened to the family tree after the birth of Jesus?**

**Where did the lineage go, and is it important?**

Followers of the Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox traditions, as well as some Anglicans and Lutherans,

accept the doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary

and therefore reject the claim that Jesus had blood siblings.

They class his siblings as either cousins or children of Joseph from a previous marriage.

Also it is thought the negative view of Jesus' family

may be related to the conflict

between Paul the Apostle and the Jewish Christians lead by James.

**We find in Titus 3v9 and 1Timothy 1v4 Paul has some stern words about genealogies. (This could be an indication he is not that supportive of the family of Jesus).**

A.N. Wilson suggests that the **negative** relationship

between Jesus and his family was placed in the Gospels

(especially the Gospel of Mark) to deter early Christians

from the Jesus cult organised by Jesus' family. (Jeffery Butz and other scholars).

According to Robert Funk, the Gospel of Mark shows that Jesus' mother and brothers were at first sceptical of Jesus's ministry,

but later became part of the Christian movement.

James, "the Lord's brother", presided over the Jerusalem Church

after the apostles dispersed.

Other kinsmen probably were leaders among the Christians

until Emperor Hadrian built on the ruins of Jerusalem

and banished all the Jews (c. 135). This resulted in Jerusalem Christians becoming entirely Gentile.

The relatives of Jesus kept their genealogies.

But Herod, burned all the genealogical records,

thinking he might appear of noble origin if no one else were able to qualify.

Nevertheless the Desposyni (connected with the family of Jesus) drew the genealogy from memory.

Also there were records safe with Eusebius who preserved work by Hegesippus (c. 110–c. 180). This collection records that two Desposyni became *leaders of the churches*.

What do we know about Joseph, Jesus's earthly father?

We do not hear of him at all past his childhood.

It is thought that Joseph must have died early as he is not mentioned past the 12 yr old Jesus event in the temple (some even say he was not the parent here)

What was the tradition in the Jewish community when the husband dies childless? (as Jesus was not Joseph's son, remember?)

Wasn't the widow to marry the unmarried brother?

It is recorded in church history that Joseph had a brother

His name was Clopas.

Clophas appears in early Christian writings (such as 2<sup>nd</sup> century writers Papias and Hegesippus as the brother of Joseph, the husband of Mary, who was the mother of Jesus and the father of Simeon, who became the 2<sup>nd</sup> bishop of Jerusalem.

There is one additional point about Clophas that supports this interpretation.

His name comes from the Hebrew root *chalaph*

and means to "change" or to "replace."

It is where we get the English term "caliphate,"

referring to a dynastic succession of rulers.

So this is likely not his given name, but a type of "nickname."

He is the one who *replaced* his brother Joseph, who died childless.

Clophas is mentioned elsewhere

by the Greek form of the same name—*Alphaeus*.

His firstborn son was regularly known as "James son of Alphaeus"

or "James the younger"

to distinguish him from James son of Zebedee the fisherman,  
brother of the apostle John.

Given this information

rather different but historically consistent

a clear picture begins to emerge.

Jesus was born of God the father, not the son of Joseph.

Joseph died without children,

so according to Jewish law “Clophas” or “Alphaeus”

became his “replacer,” and married his widow Mary, mother of Jesus.

His firstborn son, James, the brother who succeeds Jesus,

legally becomes known as the “son of Joseph”

after his deceased brother in order to carry on his name.

This would mean that Jesus had four half-brothers and at least two half-sisters,

all born of his mother Mary but from a different father.

This is a plausible reconstruction of the evidence.

There are things we can never know with certainty.

Clophas is mentioned only once in the entire New Testament (John 19:25).

If he and his brother Joseph, were much older than Mary,

it is likely that neither was alive when Jesus was an adult.

This is further indicated in the gospel of John

when Jesus the eldest son in the family, just before his death,

handed his mother over to the care

of a mysterious “beloved disciple”

that John prefers not to name (John 19:26).

Whoever it was, Jesus’ giving his mother into the care of another indicates she was a widow.

It is truly a tangled tale of political intrigue and religious power plays with the stakes destined to shape the future of the world’s largest religion. What we can say with some degree of certainty is the following:

- Joseph was not the father of Jesus
- Mary’s pregnancy by God was “illegitimate” by social norms
- Jesus had 4 half brothers and 2 half sisters
- All children of Mary were of a different father to Jesus, whether Joseph of Clopas, we do not know.
- Jesus by the age of 30 was the head of the household.

Another interesting idea I came upon while researching the family of Jesus

**Joseph of Arimethea: Oops! Now, it's about to really hit the fan.**

**“James being the eldest of Jesus brothers -- born CE 1)**

**was the designated “the Joseph”to honour his father**

**he was the Joseph *ha Rama Theo*, (of the highest, a priestly title)**

**which became linguistically corrupted to Joseph of Arimethea .**

**Joseph of Arimethea emerges, then, as Jesus' own brother James.**

**Consequently, it comes as no surprise**

**that Jesus was entombed in a sepulcher**

**that belonged to his own family.**

**Neither is it surprising that Pilate should allow Jesus' brother**

**to take charge of the post-crucifixion proceedings**

**nor that the women of Jesus' family**

**should accept the arrangements made by Joseph (James) without question.”**

**The James the Just and Joseph of Arimethea controversy gets even stranger**

**when you consider each of their job descriptions.**

**James, [or Jim, as his friends liked to call him (but never to his face)]**

**has later been described as the first Bishop of Jerusalem.**

**He is believed to have been the author of the Epistle of James in the New Testament**

**[despite rumours of ghost writers].**

**He was believed to have been, a High Priest in Jerusalem.**

**This would make sense if we consider his ancestors were Zadoks, Patriarchs, and his wife, Anna, who descended directly from a line of High Priests / Maccabees.**

**Also curious is the fact that while Catholics assume James the Just as the First Bishop of Jerusalem, they made Peter who fled from Jerusalem, the first Pope of the Church... yet Peter had entrusted James with the care of the local faithful.**

### **Who was the Mysterious “Disciple Whom Jesus Loved?”**

Who was the unnamed intimate who “lay close to the breast of Jesus” at the last supper, the one to whom he passes on the care of his mother Mary, just before his death, and the “eyewitness” source that lies behind the traditions now embedded in the Gospel of John?

In my book *The Jesus Dynasty* (Simon & Schuster, 2006) I offer my reasons for the mysterious figure in the Gospel of John, described as “the disciple whom Jesus loved,” or more commonly, the “Beloved Disciple,” is none other than James the brother of Jesus.

Today there are several dozens of books suggesting various alternative identifications. Ben Witherington and others have suggested Lazarus. In the gospel the sisters send word to Jesus, “Lord, he whom you love is ill” (John 11:3). Mary Magdalene has also become a suggested candidate. Most recently it has been suggested that an unnamed “son” of Jesus. Some scholars have viewed the “beloved disciple” as a literary construction representing the “ideal disciple,” with no specific identity. The apostle Thomas has also been considered.

Based on texts I would make the following points:

1. Since Mary Magdalene arrives at the tomb and then runs to tell Peter and this “other disciple” whom Jesus loved, the news of the empty tomb, “he” cannot be Mary Magdalene.

2. Anyone mentioned by name in the Gospel of John in the latter chapters, 13-21, is likely to not be the Beloved Disciple, for his identity is being veiled. That means we can eliminate those mentioned- Philip, Andrew, and Judas Iscariot, also Lazarus.

3. If we accept the reference in John 18:15 as referring to the Beloved Disciple they seem to have *priestly connections*. He is able to get Peter into the courtyard of the High Priest’s house, and knew the woman at the door. James the brother of Jesus is also known for his priestly orientation, through his mother’s Davidic genealogy (Luke) Historian He-gi-sip-pus tells us that *James wore the white linen of the priest, and a mitre of some type*, and was allowed to enter the inner sanctuary of the Temple—perhaps as a representative of the Nazarenes.

4. The Beloved Disciple takes Jesus’ mother Mary into his care, when Jesus dies and the next brother is officially designated as the “son” meaning that he is now to carry on the caretaker function.

5. The Beloved Disciple is present at the last supper. The description of this disciple “lying close to Jesus’ breast” at the Last Supper indicates an honoured place of proximity and intimacy. Jesus loves all his disciples but this particular one has a special place.

If we eliminate those mentioned by name, Lazarus, Simon Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, Philip, Andrew, the two sons of Zebedee, and Judas Iscariot, who is left?

-the “other” James, the “other” Jude, the “other” Simon, and Matthew.

Jesus has four brothers: James, Simon, and Jude, as well Joseph. There might be some evidence as address in *The Jesus Dynasty*, that Matthew is another brother, possibly even the one otherwise known as Joseph. This silence seems deliberate.

Given these factors it seems to me that James the brother of Jesus surfaces as the best candidate for the one that Jesus loved. He is the one who takes over leadership. James is the clear head of the Jerusalem community (Acts 15:12-21).

To have some other individual such as Lazarus, or the fisherman John, now functioning as caretaker over the family, just makes no sense at all with James present and functioning as leader of the community.

*James the brother of Jesus also is known for his priestly orientation, though his mother's Davidic genealogy (Luke).*

Historian He-gi-sip-pus tells us that *James wore the white linen of the priest, and a mitre of some type*, and was allowed to enter the inner sanctuary of the Temple—perhaps as a representative of the Nazarenes.