

The Greatest Life Ever Lived

A Study in the Incarnate Life of Jesus Christ and An Exposition of the Four Gospels

LESSON LIII : THE "BUSY DAY" PART 2: THE SIGN OF JONAH / CHRIST'S FAMILY COME TO TAKE HIM AWAY

Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	related passages
12:38-50	3:31-35	8:19-21		

○ This lesson immediately follows the last, part of what has been called "the Busy Day". "This 'Busy Day' is just one of many such days in the Master's Ministry. See for instance the last day of His public ministry in the temple of Jerusalem. Observe Jesus in the *forenoon* teaching a crowded audience (Mk 3:19), some of whom insult and blaspheme Him and others demand a sign, and at length His mother and brethren try to carry Him off as insane (cp Mk 3:21); in the *afternoon* giving a group of most remarkable parables, several of which He interprets; towards night crossing the Lake in a boat, so tired and worn that He sleeps soundly amid the alarming storm; then healing the Gadarene demoniacs, and returning by boat, apparently the same evening. What a day of toil and trial." [Robertson, *Harmony*]

○ I think it worth mentioning again **the impossibility of producing a pure harmony**. On the whole I have been following A. T. Robertson's *Harmony* when the ones I am using differ. In the last lesson the harmonies tended to parallel the passages in Matthew || Mark || Luke. Robertson didn't, but in this very next lesson he adds the account of Luke's as being parallel to the other accounts. I find this inconsistent since the narratives follow each other in each of the gospels. I am not trying to fault Robertson and am certain he had reasons for making the separations. I am however pointing out **the Lord never intended a pure harmony to be produced from the life of His Son. What Jesus did and said is the important thing, not when and in what order.**

The Sign of Jonah

Matt 12:38 Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from Thee. : "The Pharisees must have resented their total defeat. Jesus had shown that the report which they were spreading about Him was both wicked and absurd. Also, He had called them 'offspring of vipers.' So now the Pharisees, who somewhat earlier had allied themselves with the Herodians (Mk 3:6) seek the help of those whom they so highly admire (at least pretended to admire), namely, the scribes, the acknowledged expounders and teachers of the Old Testament and of the traditions that had become linked with it." [Hendriksen, *Matthew*]

How the Pharisees addresses Jesus may be taken in a couple different manners. Hendriksen and many others believe they came at least with the pretense of courtesy and respect, addressing Him as Teacher or Master, "*we would see, we wish to see, we would like to see.*" Wuest: "*Teacher, we are desiring to see an attesting miracle from you.*" Some however take the request to be more of a demand, which would not be unlikely since Jesus had just greatly offended them. Lenski takes the address to be abrupt, "*we want from thee*", and the NAV follows, "*we want to see.*"

Note the implication in what they were saying. **By requesting (demanding ?) a sign, they were saying none of the marvelous works of healing which Jesus had so performed was sufficient to show that it was done through the power of the Holy Spirit. They had a different explanation (Matt 12:24).** At the very least their request was insulting and impudent. "How hopeless had the religionists of that age become! Nothing would convince them. They manifest their hate of the Lord Jesus, by ignoring all the wonders He had wrought. What further signs could they seek than those He had already given? Pretty inquirers these! They treat all the miracles of our Lord as if they had never occurred." [Spurgeon, *Matthew*]

Matt 12:39,40 But He answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. : Far from being deceived, Jesus discerns their true motives of trying to curb His influence with the people. By returning His address to *an evil and adulterous generation* Jesus was speaking to not only the Pharisees but their followers as well.

adulterous = unfaithful to their rightful husband, in the Jews' case to Jehovah (Isa 50:1; Jer 3:8; 13:28; Ezek 13:32, 35; Hos 2:1; etc). "A very strong and graphic expression, founded upon the familiar Hebrew representation of the relation of God's people to Him under the figure of marriage. See Ps 73:27; Isa 57:3; 62:5; Ez 23:27. Hence idolatry and intercourse with Gentiles were described as adultery; and so here, of moral unfaithfulness to God." [Vincent, *Word Studies*] "Well might the Lord call them 'evil and adulterous' since they were so given to personal lasciviousness, and were spiritually so untrue to God. We have those among us now who are so uncandid as to treat all the achievements of evangelical doctrine as if they were nothing, and talk to us as if no result had followed the preaching of the gospel. There is need of great patience to deal wisely with such." [Spurgeon, *Matthew*]

"This leads to the inquiry, **Does Christ address them with such harshness of language, because they wished to have a sign given them?** For on other occasions God manifests that He is not so much displeased on this account. Gideon asks a sign (Judg 6:17) and God is not angry, but grants his request; and though Gideon becomes importunate and asks another sign, yet God condescends to his weakness. Hezekiah does not ask a sign, and it is offered to him, though unsolicited (Isa 38:7,8). Ahaz is

severely blamed for refusing to ask a sign as the prophet had enjoined him to do (Isa 7:11). **It is not solely, therefore, because they ask a sign, that Christ makes this attack upon the scribes, but because they are ungrateful to God, wickedly despise so many of His wonderful works, and try to find a subterfuge for not obeying His word. What a display was this, I do not say of indifference, but of malice, in shutting their eyes against so many signs! There was, therefore, no proper ground for this annoyance; and they had no other object in view than to appear to have a good reason for rejecting Christ.**" [Calvin, *Commentary*]

It is not surprising therefore the Lord would not give in to their pretense; indeed, if He had, would they have bowed their knee? What was the result at the raising of Lazarus? Through the power of the Spirit many magnified the Lord, but the hardened Pharisees merely took this as another proof that He had to die (Jn 11:47-54). Miracles in and of themselves do not produce faith (Lk 16:31).

The sign Jesus said would be given is that of the prophet Jonah. **Christ's resurrection is THE sign of the reality of His mission: Jesus Christ our Lord ... declared to be the Son of God with power ... BY THE RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD.**" (Rom 1:3,4) "The great sign of our Lord's mission is His resurrection, and His preparing gospel of salvation for the heathen. His life-story is well symbolized by that of Jonah. They cast our Lord overboard, even as the sailors did the man of God. The sacrifice of Jonah calmed the sea for the mariners; our Lord's death made peace for us. Our Lord was a while in the heart of the earth as Jonah in the depth of the sea; but He rose again, and His ministry was full of the power of His resurrection. As Jonah's ministry was certified by his restoration from the sea, so is our Lord's ministry attested by His rising from the dead. The man who had come back from death and burial in the sea commanded the attention of all Nineveh, and so does the risen Savior demand and deserve the obedient faith of all to whom His message comes." [Spurgeon, *Matthew*]

whale's belly: "whale: a general term for a sea-monster." [Vincent, *Word Studies*] Wuest: "*just as Jonah was in the gullet of the sea-monster three days and three nights...*" "It is well known that the throat of a whale is capable of admitting little more than the arm of an ordinary man; but many of the shark species can swallow a man whole, and men have been found whole in the stomachs of several. Every natural history abounds with facts of this kind. Besides, the shark is a native of the Mediterranean Sea, in which Jonah was sailing when swallowed by what the Hebrew terms *a great fish*; but every body knows that whales are no produce of the Mediterranean Sea." [Clarke, *Commentary*]

three days and three nights: whether these three days and three nights were entire days and nights, seventy-two hours in all, or if the days were only parts of the days is not certain. The "importance" of the discussion concerns the day Christ died:

- some believe Jesus died on **Wednesday** with the three days / nights to be full days / nights. Jesus was crucified on Wednesday, in the grave Thursday night / day = 1 day (the Jewish day went from sundown to sundown); Friday night / day = 2 days; and Saturday night / day = 3 days. Christ then arose Saturday evening with the witnesses coming to the grave Sunday morning. This verse is critical to this interpretation.
- others believe Jesus died on **Thursday**: Jesus dies on Thursday with that day as being the first day; Friday night / day = first night and second day; Saturday night / day = the second day and the third day; then Sunday being the third night. Christ then arose Saturday morning prior to the witnesses coming to the grave. One difficulty with this is the apparent contradiction necessary: they oppose the "Friday crucifixion" because it requires the use of a portion of a day to mean a day, but they require the same since only a portion of Thursday afternoon must equal one of their days.
- others believe Jesus died on **Friday** which requires the "days / nights" here to be any portion of a day. Friday would be the first portion of the day, Saturday would be the second, then Sunday would be the third portion of day. This is the interpretation with which I am most comfortable. "To say that in order to do justice to Matt 12:40 Jesus must have been in the grave three entire days plus three entire nights is unreasonable. It is contrary to Jewish usage of such terms." [Hendriksen, *Matthew*] Support for this is as follows:

- Jesus was crucified prior to the Sabbath meaning most naturally Friday, the day prior to Saturday (Lk 23:54-56). Opponents get around this by stating there was a Holiday Sabbath due to the Passover. I believe the most natural reading of the Luke passage requires the Sabbath to be Saturday since the women returned after the Sabbath to finish anointing the body, being stated to be the first day of the week (Sunday, Lk 24:1).
- Esther asked the Jews to fast for her entrance into the king for "three days and three nights" (Esther 4:16). She then came into the king "on the third day" (Esther 5:1) which would be impossible if the scripture meant full days and nights. If the Jews fasted three full days and nights, the earliest Esther could have come into the king was the fourth day, "after" the third day and not "on" the third day.
- in regard to a portion of a day meaning an entire day, it must be remembered we cannot push our culture into the days of the NT. For example the ancients typically would say "heaven and earth" to mean the entire universe. Why would it be so difficult to accept that "one day and one night" to mean one time unit, one day unit. "Our Lord rose from the grave on the day but one after His crucifixion: so that, in the computation in this verse, the part of the day on which He was crucified, and the part of that on which He rose again, are severally estimated as an entire day.... Three days and three nights, according to Jewish method of reckoning, included any part of the first day; the whole of the following night; the next day and its night; and any part of the succeeding or third day." [Clarke, *Commentary*]

An important side item to be recognized is the fact **Jesus accepted the OT account as a historical fact.**

Matt 12:41,42 *The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here. :* The import of what Christ continued with the parallel of Jonah is those less privileged and less enlightened repented under much aggravated circumstances. **The lesson is one which had been taught before: privilege brings responsibility.** This is the curse of modern America. Having been so blessed, we of the entire earth are the most responsible and have neglected our responsibilities for ease and comfort.

the Ninevites	the scribes and Pharisees
<i>it was a minor prophet who preached to them</i>	<i>it was the Son of God Himself who addressed them again and again to repent</i>
<i>Jonah was a sinful, foolish, rebellious prophet (Jonah 1:3; 4:1-3,9)</i>	<i>Christ was completely sinless, filled with wisdom and compassion</i>
<i>Jonah's message was one of doom, the emphasis was on "forty days and Ninevah will be overthrown" (Jonah 3:4)</i>	<i>Christ's message was one of grace and pardon, the offer of a free salvation</i>
<i>there were no miracles or other authenticating signs to confirm Jonah's message (other than the ride in the belly of the fish)</i>	<i>Christ's message was continually being fortified by the miracles He performed</i>
<i>Jonah's message was addressed to those without the advantages the Jews had enjoyed</i>	<i>Christ's message came to a people who enjoyed many spiritual advantages</i>

{ adapted mainly from Hendriksen, *Matthew* }

In conjunction and agreement with the men of Ninevah is the Queen of Sheba who traveled a great distance to hear earthly wisdom (1 Kings 10:1-13; 2 Chron 9:1-9) while a greater than Solomon stood before the Pharisees. Several legends have been connected with that visit, some of which point to the origin of an ancient tribe of Jews in Ethiopia (see Hendriksen, *Matthew* for some of the legends).

the Queen of Sheba	the scribes and Pharisees
<i>braved the hardships of a lengthy journey over difficult terrain, her trip possibly covering twelve hundred miles</i>	<i>for them truth was within reach and at hand</i>
<i>she came to hear wisdom "in connection with the name of the Lord" even though the truth concerning God was very imperfectly reflected in Solomon</i>	<i>they had access to one wiser, better, and greater by far than Solomon</i>
<i>she gave Solomon of her treasures</i>	<i>they gave nothing but rather even plan to take away His life</i>
<i>she had merely heard reports</i>	<i>they enjoyed many religious advantages</i>
<i>no known invitation to her had been given yet she came on her own</i>	<i>they had been invited and even urged to accept the truth and Jesus</i>

{ adapted mainly from Hendriksen, *Matthew* }

Shall rise up: "RSV, *stand up. Come forward as witnessed.* There is no reference to rising from the dead." [Vincent, *Word Studies*]

A greater: "Literally, *something more.*" [Vincent, *Word Studies*] Wuest: "*behold, something more than Jonah is here ... something more than Solomon is here.*"

The Parable of the Empty House

Matt 12:43-45 *When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation. :* that this is contextually tied with the preceding is obvious by v45: *so shall it be unto this wicked generation.*

I find it difficult to know the exact contextual application of Jesus' narrative. The typical application is of one who experiences a moral reformation but rejects salvation, something which is perhaps far too common. **Men being sinners desire the blessings of salvation and morality without having to accept the holy Sovereign with which the blessings are associated.** Man therefore "cleans up his act" while the demon leaves. There is nothing which prevents the demon's return however and when it returns it finds a clean swept place, so nice it would be a good place for him and all his friends. The end result is the man that "turns over the new leaf" without the power of the Holy Spirit soon finds himself not just back in the same situation but a situation even worse

than before. “If Satan quits a man of his own will, he is sure to return just when it suits his purpose. Only the divine force which ejects him can secure his non-return. Reformations which are not the work of conquering grace are usually temporary, and often lead up to a worse condition in after years.” [Spurgeon, *Matthew*]

One lesson which may be derived is Satan and his demons find “comfort” while possessing of humans. Jesus’ intent here is not a full discourse in demonology but some do believe demons originally had corporate bodies which were taken away in their fall. This is used to explain their desire for possessing humans. “The evil spirit is, however, uneasy when he is not ruling a human mind. He wanders seeking rest and finding none He finds nothing to cheer him on this earth, or in heaven, or in hell; these are all dry places to him. Within the sinful heart he was at home, and found some little content; but outside in nature he finds a desert for his unclean desires.” [Spurgeon, *Matthew*]

dry places: it is again difficult and possibly incorrect to place too much emphasis on the fact that once they left the body they “walk through dry places”. Good angels are typically linked with order, beauty and fulness of life. It would be natural to link evil spirits with regions of disorder, desolation and death.

Jesus’ Family Attempts to “Rescue” Him

Matt 12:46,47 While He yet talked to the people, behold, His mother and His brethren stood without, desiring to speak with Him. Then one said unto Him, Behold, Thy mother and Thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with Thee.

Mark 3:31,32 There came then His brethren and His mother, and, standing without, sent unto Him, calling Him. And the multitude sat about Him, and they said unto Him, Behold, Thy mother and Thy brethren without seek for Thee.

Luke 8:19,20 Then came to Him His mother and His brethren, and could not come at Him for the press. And it was told Him by certain which said, Thy mother and Thy brethren stand without, desiring to see Thee.

Christ’s earthly family shows up about this time with the intent of taking Him back with them. Hendriksen gives the reason as Christ’s friends thinking Him on the verge of insanity and His family, while not sharing in that opinion, come for His own good. To my knowledge, Hendriksen seems in the minority with his interpretation although Calvin at least partially would be in agreement. Most of the commentators of which I am familiar agree the family thought Jesus was unstable and that is the reason for their coming, howbeit for His own good. I have always held that interpretation and see no reason to change. “The members of His family had come to take Him, because they thought Him beside Himself. No doubt the Pharisees had so represented His ministry to His relatives that they thought they had better restrain Him, lest He should procure His own destruction by His zealous preaching. **Friends may be a good man’s greatest hindrance.** They intruded upon His holy service ‘while He yet talked to the people.’ A mark of wonder is put before this record: ‘Behold’. How dare they act in this manner? By the request of His mother and His brethren He is called away from the pressing engagement of teaching the people, which was His urgent lifework; but the call had no power over Him. What ailed Mary that she joined in this transaction? **Many a nervous mother has been ready to hold back her consecrated son when his courage has defied danger. Our Lord did not allow His love to His mother to turn Him aside.**” [Spurgeon, *Matthew*]

Much has been written as to the identity of **“His mother and His brethren.”** Suggested have been the cousins of Jesus, half-brothers of Jesus from a former marriage of Joseph, and the half-brothers of Jesus with Mary and Joseph being the natural parents, Jesus having the same mother but a different Father. I maintain the most natural reading of this and other passages in the NT is that Joseph and Mary had natural marital relations after the birth of Jesus and these brothers were the natural brothers of Christ. The only reason to argue otherwise is to defend the perpetual virginity of Mary, a non-biblical doctrine which does not deserve defense. {For more information, see the study appended to this lesson. While incomplete, the material given should be enough to provoke thought.}

His family was **“outside”**, most likely a reference to Jesus being inside a house at the time. This is supported by Matt 13:1 which describes Him as going *out of the house*. Such a crowd had arisen that they could not get in to see Him and sent others to beckon Him.

A difficult lesson to be gleaned from this is **the importance of interruptions.** “Again and again during His earthly ministry Jesus was interrupted; namely, in His speaking to a crowd (Mk 2:1), conversing with His disciples (Matt 16:21; 26:31; Lk 12:12), traveling (Matt 20:29), sleeping (Matt 8:24,25), and praying (Mk 1:35). **The fact that none of these intrusions floor Him, so that for the moment He would be at a loss what to do or what to say, shows that we are dealing here with the Son of Man who is also the Son of God! What we would call an ‘interruption’ is for Him a springboard or take-off point for the utterance of a great saying or for the performance of a marvelous deed, revealing His power, wisdom, and love. What for us would have been a painful exigency is to Him a golden opportunity.**” [Hendriksen, *Matthew*]

Matt 12:48,49 But He answered and said unto Him that told Him, Who is My mother? and who are My brethren? And He stretched forth His hand toward His disciples, and said, Behold My mother and My brethren!

Mark 3:33,34 And He answered them, saying, Who is My mother, or My brethren? And He looked round about on them which sat about Him, and said, Behold My mother and My brethren!

Far from embarrassing Jesus in any way, it is seized by Him as a spiritual opportunity. The import of what He is saying is **neither**

Mary nor His family must be permitted to divert Him from His appointed task. Spiritual ties are more important than family ties. “He does not reject the tender ties of His human nature, but He exhibits their true position as secondary to the spiritual bonds which united Him to the spiritual family. Those who were related to Him by the bonds of discipleship had in this the truest union with Him. He pointed to ‘his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!’ All believers in Jesus are of the royal family, princes of the blood, brothers of the Christ. See how He owns the affinity, and bids all know it. ‘He is not ashamed to call them brethren.’ In this instance His method of acknowledging them was singularly striking; He even set them before His earthly mother and brethren.” [Spurgeon, *Matthew*]

It is interesting who is those to whom Jesus pointed: they had left all to follow Him yet were men of little faith, often at a loss as to what to do or say, sometimes envious and jealous of the others, and one day left Jesus as the soldiers came. Yet Jesus says *He is not ashamed to be called their brother* (Heb 2:11).

Matt 12:50 For whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother.

Mark 3:35 For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is My brother, and My sister, and mother.

Luke 8:21 And He answered and said unto them, My mother and My brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it.

The “for” connects this with the preceding: “these disciples belong to My family because they are members of that larger group that consists of all those who do the will of My Father in heaven.” **“Note the inclusiveness of this ‘whoever’. It means black and white, male and female, young and old, rich and poor, bond and free, educated and unlettered, drawn from the world of the Jews or from that of the Gentiles. Yet, note also the exclusiveness: those, and those alone, who do the Father’s will!”** [Hendriksen, *Matthew*]

“Although these words seem to imply that Christ has no regard to the ties of blood, yet we know that in reality He paid the strictest attention to human order, and discharged His lawful duties towards relatives; but points out that, in comparison of spiritual relationship, no regard, or very little, is due to the relationship of the flesh. **Let us therefore attend to this comparison, so as to perform all that nature can justly claim, and, at the same time, not to be too strongly attached to flesh and blood.**” [Calvin, *Commentary*]

APPENDIX: The Family of our Lord

There are 3 main viewpoints concerning the immediate family of our Lord, each with its strengths and difficulties. The question concerns the identity of James, Josés (Joseph), Simon, and Judas as found in Mt 13:55 and parallels. The theories are as follows:

- **Helvian Theory** (AKA ‘the brother theory’, “Protestant theory”) : They were the younger brothers / sisters of Jesus by Mary and Joseph. Strengthening this is the fact that Jesus is called Mary’s τὸν πρωτότοκον “the firstborn” (Mt 1:25; Lk 2:7). This cannot be used conclusively, however, as J. Gresham Machen points out, the term ‘firstborn’ was a technical term and could apply to an only child (Machen, *Birth*, p144). Combined with what follows, that Joseph knew her not until she had her Son, the implication is natural that other children followed Jesus. Boettner finds a natural fulfillment of the prophetic utterance of Ps 69:8 “I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother’s children” in the attitude of Christ’s brothers towards Him. (Boettner, *Catholicism*, p157) [compare Ps 69:4,8,21,25 with Jn 15:25; 2:17; Rom 15:3; Mt 27:34; Acts 1:20] Another point to present is the Greek has another word translated cousin or nephew, ὁ ἀνεψιὸς in Col 4:10, as well as συγγένεια translated three times “kindred” and another form συγγενής translated ten times “kin, kinsfolk(s), kinsman, kinsmen” and twice “cousin(s)”. The word used to refer to the people in question is ἀδελφός, used over 330 times in the NT and always translated “brother, brethren”, etc. As H.E. Jacobs has expressed it, **“Even though each particular, taken separately, might, with some difficulty, be explained otherwise, the force of the argument is cumulative. There are too many items to be explained away in order to establish any other inference.”** (ISBE, p519)

Some arguments against this theory are as follows: in Jewish custom, it would not be appropriate for Jesus’ younger brothers to take a superior position in attempting to rebuke Jesus; but those who follow an unjustifiable course is not always consistent in their actions. Secondly, Jesus committed the safe-keeping of His mother to John, implying there were no younger brothers which could care for their mother. In reply, it is apparent that His brothers did not understand Jesus, and probably not their mother to a degree, whose life was probably wrapped up in her firstborn. Even if their mother was accepted in their sight, Jesus would probably be more comfortable leaving the care of His mother to the disciple which He loved, John being able to console her loss with memories and words of comfort, encouragement.

According to Jacobs (ISBE, p519), this view is not the most ancient and may be traced back to Tertullian, and is more developed by Belvidius, an obscure writer of the fourth century. According to Carroll, as Rome began to come into power, it began to attack this theory (about 383 AD). Advocates include B.H. Carroll, Dr. Broadus, William Hendriksen, J. Gresham Machen, Loraine Boettner, Douglas Moo, Robert D. Culver. David Brown states this theory best explains the verses in which the brothers are referred, but hedges due to the fact that Jesus left His mother in the care of John, leaving the question unanswered (JFB, *Matthew*, p83). He does however state the ones listed in Mt 13:55 are not the same as those named in the apostolic band. Interestingly enough, Andrew Fausset much more confidently believes the brothers were near-relatives of Jesus, being the sons of Alpheus. (JFB, intro to *James*, p41)

● **Epitheanus Theory** : These were children of Joseph by a previous marriage and therefore half-brothers of the Lord, Mary being Joseph's second wife. There is no mention of Joseph after the temple visit when Jesus is twelve, and Mk 6:3 implies to some that Mary was a widow long before Jesus' earthly ministry had reached its culmination. The apocryphal gospels report Joseph to be over eighty years old at his second marriage, but even Dr. Lightfoot (which supports this theory) believes these are "pure fabrications". (ISBE, p519)

Variants of this theory is that the children were Joseph's by a levirate marriage with the widow of his brother Clopas. Others regard them as nephews of Joseph, taken in when his brother Clopas died and raised by Joseph and Mary. Jacobs submits that these theories (as the RC theory below) finds its origins in the interest of the perpetual virginity of Mary.

According to Jacobs (ISBE, p519) this was the prevalent view in the first three centuries. Advocates include Dr. Lightfoot, Greek Catholic Church, Origen, Eusebius, Gregory of Nyssa, Ambrose, Epiphanius, Matthew Poole, Andrew Fausset. Matthew Henry says they are probably Joseph's children by a former marriage, but adds "whatever their relation was to him, they seem to have been brought up with him in the same family". (Henry, p195) John Gill states they are either Joseph's by a former marriage or cousins (Gill, p129), and that the brethren in Jn 7:5 were distant relatives of Jesus' since all His "brothers" were believers and some were members of the apostolic band (ibid, p665).

● **Hieronymian Theory** (AKA "Roman Catholic Theory") : These were cousins of Jesus, the children of Mary who was a sister of Mary the mother of Jesus. This theory understands the word "brother" in the general sense of "kinsman" and makes the following to be the same persons: James the brother [cousin] of our Lord is James the son of Alphaeus, included in the list of the twelve apostles. Jude, author of the epistle, is Judas, another apostle (but not Iscariot). Simon mentioned in Mk 6:3 was also an apostle. This theory therefore claims that three of the Lord's brothers [cousins] were apostles. This theory makes the kinsmen in question to be sons of Alphaeus (AKA Clopas Jn 19:25) and the sister of Mary. This Mary is the mother of James the less and Joseph (Mt 27:56) and Salome (Mk 15:40). Advocates of this theory equate the James, Jude, and Simon found in both the apostle's listing and the list of Jesus' "brothers", stating it would be a remarkable coincidence they would refer to different persons and that two sisters named Mary would name their children the same names. Advocates also state that the name "James the less" implies there were only two James in close circles with Jesus. Advocates believe that after the death of Joseph, Mary moved in with her sister Mary and therefore it would not be difficult to understand the attendance and presence of Mary's nephews.

This theory was first propounded by Jerome and followed by Augustine, the Roman Catholic writers generally, and even was carried over to some protestant groups during the Reformation. It was accepted but not urged by Luther, Chemnitz, Bengel.

The object of this theory is to prove the perpetual virginity of Mary. Nowhere is His brothers mentioned except in contradistinction from the apostles (Carroll, p3). [Note as examples Mt 12:46-50 where Jesus' mother and brethren are "standing without", as distinguished from the disciples there with Him. Another instance is Jn 2:12 where His mother, His brothers, and His disciples are all mentioned. In Acts 1:13,14 the disciples are gathered in the upper chamber along with the brothers of Jesus. In 1 Cor 9:5 the apostles are again distinguished from the apostles. As Jacobs puts it, the "crowning difficulty" of this hypothesis is John's record of Jesus' brothers being unbelievers during His earthly ministry (Jn 7:3-5).] Jacobs points out that the equating of Cleophas and Alphaeus cannot be established, resting "upon obscure philological resemblances of the Aramaic form of the two names" (ISBE, p519), and at the most is only a mere possibility. The identity of Mary the sister of Mary established; Jn 19:25 could equally be interpreted to mean there were four at the cross: Mary the mother of Jesus, the sister of His mother, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. According to Jacobs, if the verse is written to present two pairs, "it would not be a construction without precedence in the NT, and it would avoid the difficulty of finding two sisters with the same name — a difficulty greater yet than that of three cousins with the same name." (ISBE, p519) Jacobs: In reference to James the less, in the Greek it is not used in the comparative sense but rather to mean "James the little", probably referring to his physical stature.

(the following are notes taken from the introduction of Jude but never incorporated into the body of this study):

IDENTIFICATION OF JAMES: Fausset identifies this James to be the son of Alphaeus (being the Greek name, Cleopas being the Hebrew name; Lk 24:13-18; Mk 15:40; Jn 19:25). Alphaeus was married to Mary, the sister of Mary the wife of Joseph. Mary, Alphaeus' wife, was the mother of James the less (Mk 15:40). According to Fausset, James the Lord's brother is present at the last supper, making him the same person as James the apostle (from the Gospel according to the Hebrews, quoted by Jerome). Stating James is the Lord's brother would be equivalent to mean the cousin of the Lord, the terms being held more loosely in Biblical times. (Fausset, *Jude*, pxi) [Awaiting Pentecost, James the apostle is distinguished from the brothers of the Lord (Act 1:13,14). But Fausset quotes Gal 1:19 to make James the apostle the same as the brother (cousin) of the Lord.]

IDENTIFICATION OF JUDE: John Owens, in his translation of Calvin's commentary, recognizes this Jude as the author, but rather than being the half-brother of the Lord and a son of Joseph and Mary, he states him to be the son of Alphaeus or Cleopas and Mary, probably a cousin of Mary the mother of Jesus. He takes 'brother of the Lord' to mean a near-relative, "as the word brother is often in scripture". (Calvin, *Jude*, p vi) Fausset agrees with this, taking Mary the mother of James and Jude to be the sister of the virgin Mary and the wife of Alphaeus (see above, identification of James). (Fausset, *Jude*, p lix)

EXTERNAL EVIDENCE: Clement of Alexandria (in the Adumbrations) says the letter was written by Jude the brother of James the Lord's (half-) brother.

Epiphanius also states Jude as the author, the brother of James, the Lord's half-brother, but also calls him an apostle

other church fathers also states Jude was an apostle (Origen, Athanasius, Jerome, Augustine); but possibly the Lord's (half-) brothers were known loosely as apostles, as evidenced by Gal 1:19

{ Note: most of the works used in this study referenced the following. I think it important prior to coming to a conclusion on this that these books be used. } : *Galations* by Lightfoot; *Epistle of James* by Mayor. Other good references: *Galations* by Eadie; *Early Days of Christianity* by Farrar; *Intro to NT* by Zahn

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