

HANDOUT: The Gospel of John chapter 7

In chapter 6 there were three stumbling blocks which prevented many Jews from coming to Christ:

- 1) the desire for a “political” Messiah to ease their earthly sufferings
- 2) the inability to accept the deity of Jesus, God made man
- 3) the refusal to believe in the Real Presence of Christ the Living Bread come down from heaven.

These are the same 3 stumbling blocks that prevent many people from coming to Christ today.

Did Jesus have brothers and sisters?

The word used in the Greek for brothers is *adelphoi*, which means “from the womb” and literally means brothers who are born from the same mother. Unfortunately this word has been misunderstood to mean that Joseph and Mary had a marriage relationship after Jesus’ birth that resulted in brothers and sisters. This has never been a teaching of the Church. All the Fathers of the Church maintained that Mary remained a virgin all of her life. The problem is that the sacred writers of the New Testament were writing in Greek but thinking in Hebrew/Aramaic. There is no separate word for “cousin” in Hebrew or Aramaic. The only way to designate a “cousin” was to indicate that a certain person was the son of your mother’s brother, etc. In Hebrew and Aramaic thought any kinsman, or a countryman, was a “brother.” This peculiarity of the Hebrew language is evident in other passages in the New Testament that are clearly not speaking of blood relationships. In Acts 1:14 and 16 Peter addresses the 120 disciples [men and women] of Jesus and calls them *adelphoi*. In Peter’s great homily at the Feast of Pentecost he preaches the risen Christ to the Jewish crowds and calls them *adelphoi* [Acts 2:29,37]. Later when Peter preaches to the Jew at the Temple he also calls them *adelphoi*.

Throughout Acts and all of Paul’s and James’ and John’s letters to the Church the New Covenant believers are all referred to as *adelphoi* [the plural form can be used to indicate both sisters and brothers / male and female kinsman]. The point is, in the New Testament the Greek word *adelphoi* is being used in the Hebrew sense of kinsman/ kinswoman, or Covenant brother or sister. We know from the Bible and other sources that Jesus had several kinsmen who became prominent in the Jerusalem New Covenant Church. Both James and Simon became Bishops of Jerusalem [according to tradition they were a stepbrother and a cousin to Jesus]. Both Jesus’ kinsmen James and Jude wrote books of the New Testament that bears their names. If Mary had other sons it would have been inconceivable that Jesus would have left her in the care of John at the foot of the cross instead of telling John to make sure that another son cared for her. It is clear that these men are kinsmen of Jesus’ family who know of and have seen His miracles. [For more information on this subject I recommend Karl Keating’s book Catholicism and Fundamentalism, pages 282-289. Also see This Rock Magazine, September 2003 “Bad Aramaic Made Easy: There is No Word for ‘Cousin’ , pages 18-22].

These passages parallel the Temptation of Jesus by Satan

Expectations for Jesus in John 6:15-7:3	Temptation of Jesus in Matthew & Luke
6:15: The people want to make Jesus king	Satan offers Him the kingdoms of the world [Matthew 4:8-10; Luke 4:5-8]
6:31: The people ask for miraculous bread	Satan invites Jesus to turn the stones into bread [Matthew 4:3-4; Luke 4:3-4]
7:3: The kinsmen of Jesus want Him to go to Jerusalem to show His power.	Satan takes Jesus to Jerusalem and invites Him to display His power by jumping from the pinnacle of the Temple [Matthew 4:5-7; Luke 4:9-12]

These are the same temptations, more subtly presented, but still the same. Once again Jesus successfully resists.

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