

The Virgin Mary



Debate over whether Mary, the mother of Jesus, was a virgin remains heated even today. But a virgin bearing a child is, like the miracles Jesus performed, a phenomenon that violates the laws of nature. One factor behind this irrational and unscientific claim was an error in translation. “In connection with Isaiah’s prophecy, the Hebrew original reads, ‘Behold, the young woman is with child.’ If Isaiah had intended to speak of a virgin or a miraculous conception, he would have used different Hebrew. When Isaiah 7:14—where the Hebrew ‘*almâ*’ means ‘young woman’—was rendered into Greek, the translator used *parthenos*, which can mean a young girl or a virgin. Then the author of Matthew, quoting Isaiah, consulted not the Hebrew but the Greek, and inadvertently used the word ‘virgin,’ thereby triggering the whole controversy.” 1)

In 2 Samuel 13:18, the adjective “virgin” is also interpreted as “unmarried.” Since Mary was betrothed but not yet married, she was simply one among the “unmarried” women. In the Old Testament, a “maiden/virgin” may denote one not yet betrothed (Exod 22:16), not yet given in marriage (Lev 21:3), or not a widow, a divorced woman, or a prostitute (Lev 21:14).

Scientifically, if Jesus were a man born of Yahweh and Mary, he would have to possess a Y chromosome. Mary, biologically, has only X chromosomes; without Yahweh's Y chromosome, no matter what the two might attempt, the probability of producing a male child is **zero**. Had Jesus been born female, one might at least posit a hypothesis like the cloning of the sheep Dolly—that Jesus was a clone of Mary. But since Jesus was male, that possibility collapses. In the Old Testament, Yahweh is at times referred to in worldly terms as a king; angels are portrayed like high officials or military officers—judges and governors.

Matthew 13:55–56 says, "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James, Joseph [KJV: Joses], Simon, and Judas? And are not all his sisters with us?" Mark 6:3 reads, "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joseph [KJV: Joses] and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?" John 2:12 adds that Jesus "went down to Capernaum, with his mother and his brothers and his disciples." Taken together, Jesus had four brothers and multiple sisters.

One cannot help but ask: with whom did Mary have sexual relations to bear Jesus' brothers and sisters? The New Testament says the Holy Spirit caused Mary to conceive Jesus; but if, before or after that, Mary bore children by her husband Joseph or by another man, then the expression "the Virgin Mary" is inappropriate, and the supposed mystery of Jesus' birth becomes doubtful. It also raises the question of whether Catholic veneration of Mary as "Holy Mother" is fitting.

"Joseph died before Jesus entered public life." 2) "We do not know who Jesus' father was, but it was not Joseph. Joseph died childless; under Jewish levirate custom, 'Clopas'—also called 'Alphaeus'—became his 'substitute' and married the widow Mary, the mother of Jesus. Her first son by him, James—Jesus' immediate younger

brother—was legally 'son of Joseph,' to carry on the dead brother's name. This means that, though Jesus was born of his mother Mary, he had four younger half-brothers by another father, and at least two half-sisters." 3)

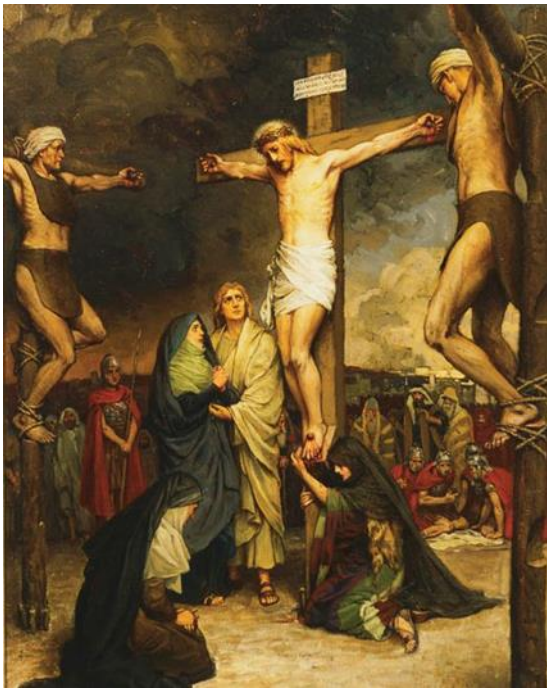
The Jesus Dynasty claims Jesus' siblings were Clopas's children; yet John 19:25 lists those present at the crucifixion as "his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene." By that claim, "Holy Mother Mary" would appear twice. To distinguish him from James the son of Zebedee, Mark calls Jesus' brother "James the Less" (15:40); and in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Acts he appears as "son of Alphaeus."



James son of Alphaeus

Some biblical scholars argue that in the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke) Mary (the Holy Mother) does not appear at the crucifixion site. I do not think ignorance can explain her absence: if Mary was staying in the Jerusalem temple precincts with the disciples who had betrayed Jesus, she would naturally have been informed of the time and place of his crucifixion. If she did not appear, she would be a heartless mother. Other women were present at her son's execution; that Mary, his mother, would be absent is unimaginable. Those who claim she was not there

may hesitate because, once it is admitted that Mary is James’s mother, they would also have to accept that she remarried Alphaeus and bore many other children.



	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Witnesses at the crucifixion	Mary Magdalene; Mary the mother of James and Joses (the Holy Mother); the wife of Zebedee	Mary Magdalene; [Mary the mother of James the Less and Joses (the Holy Mother)]; Salome + many women	Acquaintances of Jesus and the women who had followed from Galilee; Mary Magdalene; Joanna (wife of Herod's steward Chuza); Mary the mother of James (the Holy Mother)	Mary Magdalene; (the Holy Mother) Mary; Elizabeth (mother of John the Baptist); Mary the wife of Clopas + the disciple whom Jesus loved (19:26)

It is plausible to infer that Alphaeus was Joseph's brother and, under the levirate law, took Mary as his wife in Joseph's stead and fathered Jesus' brothers and sisters—beginning with James. Yet one puzzle remains: among the disciples, the figure sometimes called Matthew or Levi is identified in Mark 2:14 as "the son of Alphaeus," but this name does not appear when Jesus' brothers are listed. Why?

If Mary's second son by another man (presumed Alphaeus) was named Joseph—note that in the KJV Mary's first husband is *Joseph*, while the second son is *Joses*—it suggests Alphaeus named the boy after Mary's first husband to honor the deceased. In that case, James and Levi—named in the New Testament as sons of Alphaeus—could have been sons Alphaeus had by a previous wife. Since James emerges very soon after Jesus' death as leader in Jerusalem, he may have been older than Jesus.

The author of Matthew, I believe, deliberately adopted the persona of "Levi," but, ignorant of Jesus' family affairs and driven solely by the aim of tying the story to the Old Testament, composed his Gospel to achieve that purpose. John's Gospel openly calls Jesus "the son of Joseph." Therefore, so long as John remains within the canon, the phrase "the Virgin Mary" cannot stand.

Matthew and Luke both trace Jesus' lineage back to David by listing the ancestors of Joseph—who would later become Mary's husband but cannot be called Jesus' biological father. This is bizarre and unconvincing. In Matthew, Jesus' grandfather—Joseph's father—is named Jacob; in Luke, he is named Heli. One wonders who Jesus' real grandfather was.

To deify Mary, Catholicism went so far as to teach that “the birth of Mary, preserved from the stain of original sin, is called the ‘Immaculate Conception.’ This Marian birth myth was proclaimed as official dogma of the Roman Catholic Church by Pope Pius IX on December 8, 1854. About a hundred years later, on November 1, 1950, Pope Pius XII announced the next stage of the Marian myth: the bodily Assumption of the Virgin Mary. Thanks to the Immaculate Conception Mary could escape fallen humanity; through her bodily Assumption she could escape the penalty of original sin.” 4) The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception is also taken to mean that Mary’s hymen remained intact both at conception and at birth—an astounding miracle indeed.

Sources

1. <https://www.ncronline.org/news/media/lo-virgin-shall-conceive-or-not-depending-translation>
2. Ernest Renan, **The Life of Jesus**, BiblioLife, 1863, p. 101.
3. **The Jesus Dynasty**, James D. Tabor, Daehan Textbook (Korean trans.), 2006, pp. 55–56.
4. John Shelby Spong, (*Korean title*) **Anachronical Violence in the Bible** (details as provided).