

THE FOREST HILL NEWS



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Jesus Christ - A Family Portrait (Part 2) Wayne Jackson

There was an intriguing incident near the commencement of Jesus' public ministry. Mary and Jesus along with his disciples, were in attendance at a wedding in Cana of Galilee. When the wine ran out, Mary approached her son and suggestively said, "They have no wine." What was the motive behind her request? Clearly she wanted her son to ameliorate the embarrassing situation.

But was there more? Did she want him to demonstrate supernatural power? She had not seen such before (John 2:11), but is it not possible that she was aware of Old Testament prophecy relating to the Messiah's miraculous powers (Isa. 29:18-19, 35:5-6). There is no question but that she was subtly suggesting that her son **do** something, and one must reverently note that she was out of order—as indicated by the Lord's response: "Woman, what have I to do with you?"

In the Greek Testament the language is obscure. Literally it is: "What of me and you?" Or, more to our mode of expression: "What do you and I have in common regarding this matter?" He politely but firmly rebuked her. Lovely as she was, she had stepped beyond her place. She realized it; hence, meekly said to the servants: "Do whatever he tells you" (John 2:5). Surely this was a defining point in Mary's thinking.

Misdirected Family Members

Later in his ministry, Jesus was teaching near the Sea of Galilee (Mark 3:7). Because of his miracles, a great crowd followed him, After a private time, during which he selected the twelve apostles, he entered a nearby house; but the crowd so thronged the residence that they could not even take time for food (v. 20). The older translations follow with this rendition: "And when his friends heard it, they went out to lay hold on him" (v. 21a). Of special interest is the term "friends." The original text has three words—*hoi par autou*, literally, "the beside him ones." This expression was used in several senses; in this case almost certainly for "family" (cf. NIV;ESV) or his "own people" (NKJB). This seems firmly supported by the subsequent context which references Mary and Jesus' brothers (vv. 31ff).

They attempted to "lay hold on him" because they said, "He is beside himself"—or "he is out of his mind" (ESV; note the word's contrast with a "sound mind" in 2 Cor. 5:13). It seems that Mary and her other children (cf. Mat. 13:55) wanted to save Jesus from himself! Did they believe he had lost his balance due to his increasing popularity? Whatever their motive, they revealed a lack of appreciation for the urgency of his mission, and they were fueled by a misguided zeal. The Lord's evaluation of the effort was most revealing (vv. Mark 3:31-35).

(continued on page 2)

Jesus Christ - A Family Portrait (continued from page 1)

Unbelieving Brothers

The events of the seventh chapter of John's Gospel transpire in the autumn prior to the Savior's death the following spring (7:2). The Lord was teaching in Galilee, for it was not safe in Judea; the Jews there were plotting his fate. He knew he soon must die, but his "hour" was not yet come.

The feast of tabernacles was approaching and there would be vast crowds in Jerusalem. The step-brothers of Jesus therefore took it upon themselves to challenge him to go into Judea. The purpose would be "so that your disciples also may behold the works you are doing" (v. 3). John unhesitatingly reveals that "his brothers did not believe on him" (v. 5). The verb is an imperfect tense, suggesting that their unbelief was ongoing. Moreover, that chilly and distant "your disciples" clearly implied they were not in that category. What, therefore, was their motive in this dare that he not remain "in secret," i.e., in the move obscure Galilee; rather, he should advance "openly" into Judea?

Some suggest these brothers wanted to put the Lord to the test for their own spiritual benefit. "If" he truly could perform the "works" which he claimed, and of which others spoke, let him "manifest" himself in the most public way. Note that hypothetical "if" (v. 4b). Thus, if he could demonstrate his miraculous works on the **Judean** public, these brothers likewise would be constrained to believe and therefore be counted among the disciples.

Others suggest that the motive was more crass and grandiose. Though they did not endorse his Messianic claim, clearly crowds thrust themselves upon him wherever he went. Why not then go where the greatest concentration of the populous would be—at Jerusalem for the coming feast? Perhaps he would be proclaimed as a great political leader of sorts, just as had been attempted a few months earlier (John 6:15). If so, as brothers, they might share in the resultant benefits of royalty.

Whatever the motive, it appears to have been less than noble, illustrating the Savior's earlier observation that a prophet is not honored in "his own house" (Mat.13:57). At least, however, they had not disowned him. There still was hope, as later events would demonstrate.

Lenski makes an important observation when he addresses the testimony of the brothers' unbelief. A fabricator of the narrative certainly would have

eliminated such an embarrassing fact as this, or modified it in some way, so as to nullify this rather negative detail in the ministry of Jesus. The fact that it appears in its unvarnished frankness is strong evidence of the integrity of the sacred narrative (1943, 532).

When the disciples met in the upper room following the ascension of Christ, both Mary and Jesus' brothers were present (Acts 1:13-14), and the whole company was in "one accord," and in prayer. Clearly the brothers had **abandoned** their unbelief. What could have effected such a dramatic change? Obviously the Lord's **resurrection** from the dead! (cf. 1 Cor. 15:7). James later became a prominent influence in the Jerusalem church (Acts 15:13, 19), and composed the epistle that bears his name (James 1:1). Another brother, Judas (Jude), penned the next-to-last book of the New Testament.

At the Cross

Of all the family members, Mary alone was at the cross when her son died. No sons stood by to embrace a sobbing mother; no daughters to encourage a pierced heart (cf. Luke 2:35). Only a sister, Salome, and a nephew, John. (There are three lists of the women who were at the cross [Mat. 27:56; Mark 15:40; John 19:25]. A comparison of these leads to the probable conclusion that Mary's "sister" is to be identified as Salome, the mother of James and John [Barclay 1959, 29-30].) But of the **inner** family, only Mary was rugged enough to go all the way. What a tough woman of fortitude she had become!

Significantly, the Lord did not commend the subsequent care of his precious mother to his brothers, which is perfectly understandable in view of their lack of faith thus far (cf. John 7:5). Surely this is one of those undersigned coincidences that stamps the biblical record with the ring of authenticity.

Thus we have it. In a rather abbreviated fashion is a biographical portrait of the family of Jesus Christ. As one inspects the linguistic imagery, he is filled with amazement and joy at the details revealed.

Sources/Footnotes

- Barclay, William. 1959. *The Master's Men*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon.
 Geldenhuys, Norval. 1956. *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
 Lenski, R. C. H. 1943, *The Interpretation of John's Gospel*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg.

(from www.christiancourier.com)

NORTH SIDE GREETERS

Harold and Carol Mangrum (Front)
Thaxter and Martha Hodum (Side)

April 2009

SOUTH SIDE GREETERS

(Front) Jim and Edwyna Woody
(Side) David and Mallory Barnes

Coordinating Elder: Greg Mangrum

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			<i>1 April Curry</i> <i>Matthew Rodgers</i> LECTURESHIP	<i>2</i> <i>Dean Pipkin</i> LECTURESHIP	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i> <i>John Riley</i>
<i>5</i>	<i>6</i> <i>Dawn Trull</i>	<i>7</i> <i>Randall Collum</i> <i>Robert Jeter</i>	<i>8 Evan Kirby</i> <i>Perry Lamb</i> <i>Travis Cooper</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i> <i>Leah White</i>	<i>11 EGG HUNT</i> <i>Deborah Watson</i> <i>Anne-Marie Martin</i>
<i>12</i> <i>Danny Braddock</i> <i>Austin McDade</i>	<i>13</i> <i>Katie Dawson</i>	<i>14 Men's Class</i> <i>Jean Lee</i> <i>Ryan McAlister</i>	<i>15</i> <i>Billy Chandler</i> <i>Jim Woody</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>17</i> <i>Gabe Collins</i> <i>David Peacock</i>	<i>18</i> <i>Tom Jacobs</i> <i>Marion Maund</i>
<i>19 Dan Dawson</i> <i>Barry Gilreath</i> <i>Cecil Sowell</i>	<i>20</i> <i>Daniel Fairley</i>	<i>21 Bessie Berry</i> <i>Volene Godwin</i> <i>Christian Fife</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>25</i> <i>John Manning</i> <i>Alexandria Owens</i>
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****Birthdays are in Italics**

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