



**WIN Program: Witnessing in Neighborhoods
Advanced Class on Catholicism**

Week Four

**Summary of Roman Catholic Teachings about Mary
Some of the Many Titles of Mary
Did Mary Have Other Children?**

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Summary of Roman Catholic Teachings about Mary

[By Matt Slick](#)

Mary holds a very high position in the Roman Catholic Church, so much so that she is like a goddess. Even though Roman Catholics will not agree with the statement of goddess-like abilities, the fact remains that Mary is highly exalted.

According to Roman Catholicism, Mary is "the all-holy ever-virgin Mother of God" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, hereafter referred to as "CCC" 721), the "Queen over all things" (CCC 966), our "Advocate, Helper, Benefactress, and Mediatrix" (CCC 969), who is "full of grace" (CCC 722), the "Mother of God and our mother" (CCC 2677), the "new Eve" (CCC 726), and the "seat of wisdom" (CCC 721). She had no original sin (CCC 508), and never committed sin (CCC 493). She is second only to her Son" (Vatican II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, par. 66) and sits "on the right hand of the majesty on high" (Pope Pius X, Ad Diem Illum Laetissimum, 14). In fact, "no man goeth to Christ but by His Mother" (Pope Leo 13th, Octobri Mense). It was Mary who "crushed the poisonous head of the most cruel serpent and brought salvation to the world" (Pope Pius IX, Ineffabilis Deus). It is she who "delivers our souls from death" (CCC 966), and "continues to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation" (CCC 969). "Mary, by her spiritual entering into the sacrifice of her divine son for men, made atonement for the sins of man," (Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma⁴, Ott, page 213). Therefore, we can "entrust all our cares and petitions to her" (CCC 2677), "give ourselves over to her now" (CCC 2677), "pray to her" (CCC 2679), and have devotion to her (CCC 971). She was "taken up body and soul into the glory of heaven" (CCC 974). When speaking of the Church, "we can find no better way to conclude than by looking to Mary," (CCC 972). In her, the church is holy (CCC 867). "Mary is the Church's model of faith and charity" (CCC 967). Finally, in paradise the church gathers "around Jesus and Mary" (CCC 1053).

The Bible says,

"Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that in us you might learn not to exceed what is written, in order that no one of you might become arrogant in behalf of one against the other." ([1 Cor. 4:6](#)).

Has the Roman Catholic Church exceeded the scope of scripture with its teaching about Mary? Absolutely, yes!

Some of the Many Titles of Mary

1. "The mother of the members of Christ" (par. 963).
2. Advocate, Helper, Benefactress, & Mediatrix (CCC 969)
3. "Queen over all things" (par. 966).
4. Spouse of the Holy Spirit (www.vatican.va)
5. Mary Queen of the Apostles
6. Queen of angels
7. Queen of prophets
8. Holy Mother of God
9. Mother of the Church
10. Mother of divine grace
1. Mirror of justice
2. Seat of wisdom
3. Mystical rose
4. Tower of David
5. Morning star
6. Gate of heaven
7. Queen of peace
8. Queen of the universe
9. Cause of our joy
10. Glory of Israel
11. Ark of the covenant
12. Refuge of sinners

Works of Mary

- By Mary's prayers, she delivers souls from death (par. 966).
- ". . . when she [Mary] is the subject of preaching and worship she prompts the faithful to come to her Son . . ." (Vatican Council II, p. 420). Quote in Context.
- "This mother . . . is waiting and preparing your home for you" (*Handbook for Today's Catholic*, p.31).

Other

- She remained a virgin after the birth of Christ (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, paragraph 510).
- "The liturgical feasts dedicated to the Mother of God and Marian prayer, such as the rosary, are an epitome of the whole Gospel," (par. 971).
- Mary, ". . . when the course of her earthly life was completed, was taken up body and soul into the glory of heaven . . ." (par. 974).
- "Mary has by grace been exalted above all angels and men to a place second only to her Son" (Vatican Council II, p. 421).
- "Preserved free from all stain of original sin" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, par. 966).

As you can see, Mary holds an exalted position in Catholic theology. Because of her exalted position in heaven, she is able to approach the Son with requests and petitions from her followers. She is prayed to, adored, and sought by millions of devotees.

Mary is Most Blessed Among Women

Mary is undoubtedly blessed among women ([Luke 1:42](#)). But, is it appropriate to attribute to her such titles as "Our Queen, Our Mother, Our Life, Our Sweetness, and Our Hope"? I cannot see

how it is. Was she sinless? It would seem not since she said she needed a savior in [Luke 1:47](#), "And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior." Did she remain a virgin after the birth of Jesus? Again, it seems not since [Matt. 1:25](#) says that Joseph, ". . . kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus." Does she mediate and intercede for sinners? Again, the scriptures seem to contradict this when it states that Jesus is the only mediator between God and man ([1 Tim. 2:5](#)). Is she exalted above all angels? There is no scripture stating so. Can she simultaneously hear the prayers of countless people all over the world in different languages? Again, there is nothing in God's word to lead us to believe this.

Please understand that CARM is not attacking Mary or her wonderful position in history. Rather, it seeks to examine her position according to biblical revelation and answer the questions just posed. Hopefully, faithfully, and according to God's word, we can look at Scripture to find the answers.

[By Matt Slick](#)

Did Mary Have Other Children?

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One of the more controversial teachings of the Catholic church deals with the perpetual virginity of Mary. This doctrine maintains that Mary remained a virgin after the birth of Jesus and that biblical references suggesting Jesus had siblings are really references to cousins (Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraph 510).

As the veneration of Mary increased throughout the centuries, the vehicle of Sacred Tradition became the means of promoting new doctrines not explicitly taught in the Bible. The virginity of Mary is clearly taught in scripture when describing the birth of Jesus. But is the doctrine of her continued virginity supported by the Bible? Did Mary lose her virginity after Jesus was born? Does the Bible reveal that Mary had other children--that Jesus had brothers and sisters?

The Bible does not come out and declare that Mary remained a virgin, and that she had no children. In fact, the Bible seems to state otherwise: (All quotes are from the NASB.)

- [Matthew 1:24-25](#)--"And Joseph arose from his sleep, and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took as his wife, and kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus."
- [Matthew 12:46-47](#)--"While He was still speaking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers were standing outside, seeking to speak to Him. And someone said to Him, "Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You."
- [Matthew 13:55](#)--"Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary, and His brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas?"
- [Mark 6:2-3](#)--"And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the synagogue; and the many listeners were astonished, saying, "Where did this man get these things, and what is this wisdom given to Him, and such miracles as these performed by His hands? "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, and Joses, and Judas, and Simon? Are not His sisters here with us?"
- [John 2:12](#)--"After this He went down to Capernaum, He and His mother, and His brothers, and His disciples; and there they stayed a few days."
- [Acts 1:14](#)--"These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers."
- [1 Cor. 9:4-5](#)--"Do we not have a right to eat and drink? Do we not have a right to take along a believing wife, even as the rest of the apostles, and the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas?"
- [Gal. 1:19](#)--But I did not see any other of the apostles except James, the Lord's brother."

An initial reading of these biblical texts seems to clear up the issue: Jesus had brothers and sisters. But such obvious scriptures are not without their response from Catholic Theologians. The primary argument against these biblical texts is as follows:

In Greek, the word for brother is adelphos and sister is adelphe. This word is used in different contexts: of children of the same parents ([Matt. 1:2](#); [14:3](#)), descendants of parents ([Acts 7:23](#), [26](#); [Heb. 7:5](#)), the Jews as a whole ([Acts 3:17](#), [22](#)), etc. Therefore, the term brother (and sister) can and does refer to the cousins of Jesus.

There is certainly merit in this argument; however, different contexts give different meanings to words. It is not legitimate to say that because a word has a wide scope of meaning, that you may then transfer any part of that range of meaning to any other text that uses the word. In other words, just because the word brother means fellow Jews or cousin in one place, does not mean it has the same meaning in another. Therefore, each verse should be looked at in context to see what it means.

Lets briefly analyze a couple of verses dealing with the brothers of Jesus.

- [Matthew 12:46-47](#), "While He was still speaking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers were standing outside, seeking to speak to Him. And someone said to Him, "Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You."
- [Matthew 13:55](#)--"Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary, and His brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas?"

In both of these verses, if the brothers of Jesus are not brothers but His cousins, then who is His mother, and who is the carpenter's father? In other words, mother here refers to Mary. The carpenter in [Matt. 13:55](#) refers to Joseph. These are literal. Yet, the Catholic theologian will then stop there and say, "Though carpenter's son refers to Joseph and mother refers to Mary, brothers does not mean brothers but "cousins." This does not seem to be a legitimate assertion. You cannot simply switch contextual meanings in the middle of a sentence unless it is obviously required. The context is clear. This verse is speaking of Joseph, Mary, and Jesus' brothers. The whole context is of familial relationship: father, mother, and brothers.

Psalm 69, A Messianic Psalm

There are many arguments pro and con concerning Jesus siblings. But the issue cannot be settled without examining Psalm 69, a Messianic Psalm. Jesus quotes [Psalm 69:4](#) in [John 15:25](#), "But they have done this in order that the word may be fulfilled that is written in their Law, they hated Me without a cause."

He also quotes [Psalm 69:9](#) in [John 2:16-17](#), "and to those who were selling the doves He said, "Take these things away; stop making My Fathers house a house of merchandise." His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Thy house will consume me."

Clearly, Psalm 69 is a Messianic Psalm since Jesus quoted it in reference to Himself two times. The reason this is important is that what is written between the verses that Jesus quoted.

To get the whole context, here is [Psalm 69:4-9](#), "Those who hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of my head; Those who would destroy me are powerful, being wrongfully my enemies, What I did not steal, I then have to restore. ⁵O God, it is Thou who dost know my folly,

And my wrongs are not hidden from Thee. ⁶May those who wait for Thee not be ashamed through me, O Lord God of hosts; May those who seek Thee not be dishonored through me, O God of Israel, ⁷Because for Thy sake I have borne reproach; Dishonor has covered my face. ⁸I have become estranged from my brothers, and an alien to my mothers sons. ⁹For zeal for Thy house has consumed me, And the reproaches of those who reproach Thee have fallen on me."

This messianic Psalm clearly shows that Jesus has brothers. As [Amos 3:7](#) says, "Surely the Lord God does nothing unless He reveals His secret counsel to His servants the prophets." God's will has been revealed plainly in the New Testament and prophetically in the Old. Psalm 69 shows us that Jesus had brothers.

Did Mary have other children? The Bible seems to suggest yes. Catholic Tradition says no. Which will you trust?

Of course, the Catholic will simply state that even this phrase "my mother's sons" is in reference not to his siblings but to cousins and other relatives. This is a necessary thing for the Catholic to say; otherwise, the perpetual virginity of Mary is threatened, and since that contradicts Roman Catholic tradition, an interpretation that is consistent with that tradition must be adopted.

The question is, "Was Jesus estranged by His brothers?" Yes, He was. [John 7:5](#) says "For not even His brothers were believing in Him." Furthermore, [Psalm 69:8](#) says both "my brothers" and "my mother's sons." Are these both to be understood as not referring to His siblings? Hardly. The Catholics are fond of saying that "brothers" must mean "cousins." But, if that is the case, then when we read "an alien to my mother's sons," we can see that the writer is adding a further distinction and narrowing the scope of meaning. In other words, Jesus was alienated by his siblings, His very half-brothers begotten from Mary.

It is sad to see the Roman Catholic church go to such lengths to maintain Mary's virginity-- something that is a violation of biblical law to be married and fill the earth.