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**Jesus' mother and brothers came to speak to him while he was teaching. The disciples caught his attention and he replied, "Who is my mother and brothers?" (Matthew 12:48, Luke 8:21, Mark 3:34-35)**

Jesus' question may appear out-of-place, but there is a backstory that shines a full spectrum light on his response.

God's writing style prompts the reader to search for the complete story. It is always all there, but often overlooked.

Matthew recorded only the last portion of this story.

"Someone told Him, 'Look, your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you.' But Jesus replied, 'Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?' Pointing to His disciples, He said, '**Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother**'" (Matthew 12:47-50).

Mark recorded a single verse that opened the door to the greater story.

"When **his family heard about this, THEY WENT TO TAKE CHARGE OF HIM**, for they said, '**He is out of his mind**'" (Mark 3:21). This verse reveals a pressure pushed upon Jesus' family to stop him and "take charge of him." Translators have used a variety of words to transcribe exeste: "lost his senses," "beside himself," "insane," "gone mad," "crazy" and "lunatic."

Indeed, to the carnal mind, the word of God truly does not make sense to them. Jesus was teaching about topics that they considered strange, impossible, too much for them to comprehend. Having the spirit of hatred, it works always to control the narrative and to promote its own agenda.

The Pharisees had teamed up with the Herodians to plot the death of Jesus because he was teaching and doing things that were contrary to their beliefs. They professed to keep the commandments of God and punished those who failed, but the commandment “Thou shalt not kill” was illusive to them as they plotted and schemed. They were consumed by the spirit of hatred and solely focused on the destruction of Jesus.

These malicious religious leaders lashed out and accused Jesus of being possessed with Beelzebub. Using faulty logic, they declared, “By the prince of demons he is driving out demons” (Mark 3:22b).

Jesus replied, “How can Satan drive out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand” (Mark 3:23b). He left his accusers speechless, but they were not done. They went to Jesus’ family and pressured them to stop Jesus.

“Then Jesus’ mother and brothers came. They stood outside and sent a person in to tell Jesus to come out. Many people were sitting around Jesus. They said to him, ‘Your mother and brothers are waiting for you outside.’ Jesus asked, ‘Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?’ Then Jesus looked at those people sitting around him. He said, ‘These people are my mother and my brothers! **My true brother and sister and mother are those people that do the things God wants**” (Mark 3:31-35).

Despite Jesus’ mother knowing that Jesus is the Son of God and future king of all Israel, she allowed her sons and the towns people to bully her into working against him.

“The angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to **give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end**” (Luke 1:30-33).

Mary was humbled and honored. “I am the Lord’s servant,” she answered. Elizabeth, her cousin, pregnant with John the Baptist said, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear... **Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished!**” (Luke 1:43, 45)

Jesus understood the problem. All of the writers of the gospels recorded it:

- “No prophet is accepted in **his home town**” (Luke 4:24).
- “And they took offense at Him. But Jesus said to them, ‘Only in **his hometown and in his own household is a prophet without honor**” (Matthew 13:57).
- “Then Jesus told them, ‘A prophet is **without honor only in his hometown, among his relatives, and in his own household**” (Mark 6:4).
- “Now He Himself had testified that **a prophet has no honor in his own country**” (John 4:44).

When Mary and her sons went to seize and stop Jesus, he likely did not speak with them then, but replied to the disciples, “My mother and brothers are those who hear the word of God and carry it out” (Luke 8:21). His family were not hearing the word of God, rather they were opposing it. Jesus’ own brothers did not believe in him (John 7:5), until after he was resurrected.

Jesus’ journey on earth has been one of continual opposition. The spirit of hatred that flows out of wickedness covers the whole earth and is being overthrown one battle at a time.

Jesus made it clear to his disciples who his true family is: “Whoever **does God's will** is my brother and sister and mother” (Mark 3:35). The doers of God’s will are his family.

Mary was there at her son’s crucifixion. “When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your son!” (John 19:26) Mary’s husband must have died; she was a widow. Jesus gave her care to his loved disciple, John.

It is relieving to learn that after Jesus’ resurrection, his mother and the brothers who attempted to “take charge” of him, repented of their weakness and disbelief and turned to worship Almighty God. “After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid them from their sight... Then they returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives... they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. **They all joined together constantly in prayer**, along with the women and **Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers**” (Luke 1:9, 12, 13-14).

The prophecy carefully woven in the end of the story, is the revelation of Mary and her sons repenting and turning to worship God. It pictures the house of Judah coming to accept Christ as their Savior and his mother church standing up for her son—the Son of God.

Some family conflicts will only be resolved in the Millennium during the reign of Christ. In the meantime, those who form the family of the faithful on earth during this evil age, are those who are **both the hearers and DOERS of the word of God**.

“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. **Do what it says**” (James 1:22).

Dealing with contentious people during this evil age is tricky. It will take an abundance of God’s wisdom to establish a level of peace. God recommends coming daily to Him for His wisdom, then speaking to correct without breaking or attacking, and vow to never create a situation that hinders a family member. Finally, those who acknowledge their sins and repent will receive mercy from God, the offended and all who witnessed the event.

“The Sovereign LORD has given me **HIS words of wisdom**, so that I know how to comfort the weary. Morning by morning he wakens me and opens my understanding to his will” (Isaiah 50:4).

**“A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver”** (Proverbs 25:11).



**“A man takes joy in a fitting reply—and how good is a timely word!”** (Proverbs 15:23)

“Therefore, let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather **decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother**” (Romans 14:13).

“Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but **he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy**” (Proverbs 28:13).

The second and most significant point of Jesus’ experience with his family was knowing that he will suffer attacks from his opposers, but he will not compromise. He didn’t come expecting to be accepted—to have peace; he knew he would have to come with a sword.

“So, everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven. But **whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father in heaven**. Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. **I have not come to bring peace, but a sword**. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. **A man’s enemies will be the members of his own household. Anyone who loves his father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me**” (Matthew 10:32-36).

Families will be divided over beliefs. Christ did not come to compromise. He will bring God’s people and all of mankind into the ONE faith, ONE belief—the ONE theology of God with his sword of truth. Those who follow Christ wherever he goes, will stand in God’s word separated from the family members who refuse to overcome. In their duress, they will call out to God for His wisdom to stand without compromise, yet “gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will” (II Timothy 2:25-26). Such is the imagery of apples of gold in settings of silver.

*Compiled by Janette Andrejowich*