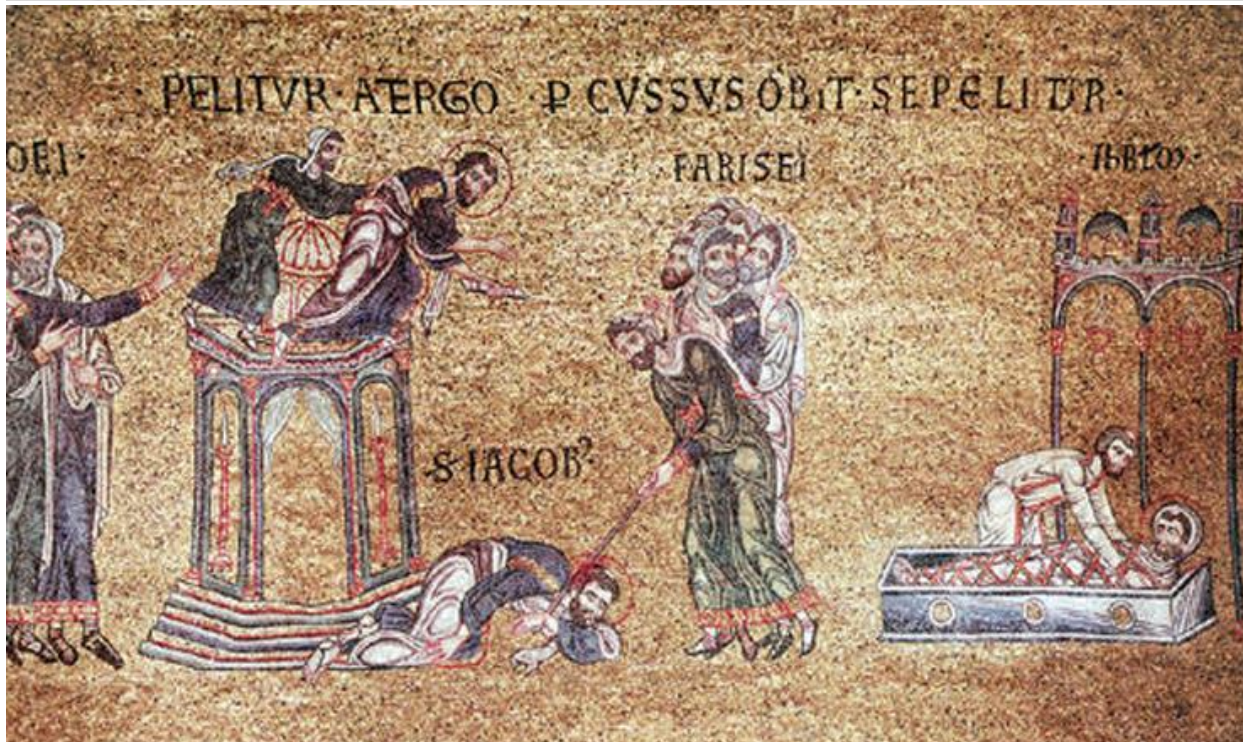


# Jesus' Sibling *James The Just* Is Hurlled From The Temple Pinnacle

by **David Lee Burris**

**Stand Above The People & Disown Christ, he's told.**



## **Contrary To The Catholic Doctrine Of Perpetual Virginity Of Mary - Jesus Had Brothers & Sisters**

**..✠ And knew her not  
till she had brought  
forth her firstborn  
son: and he called his  
name JESUS. Matthew  
1:25**



**MARK 6:3**

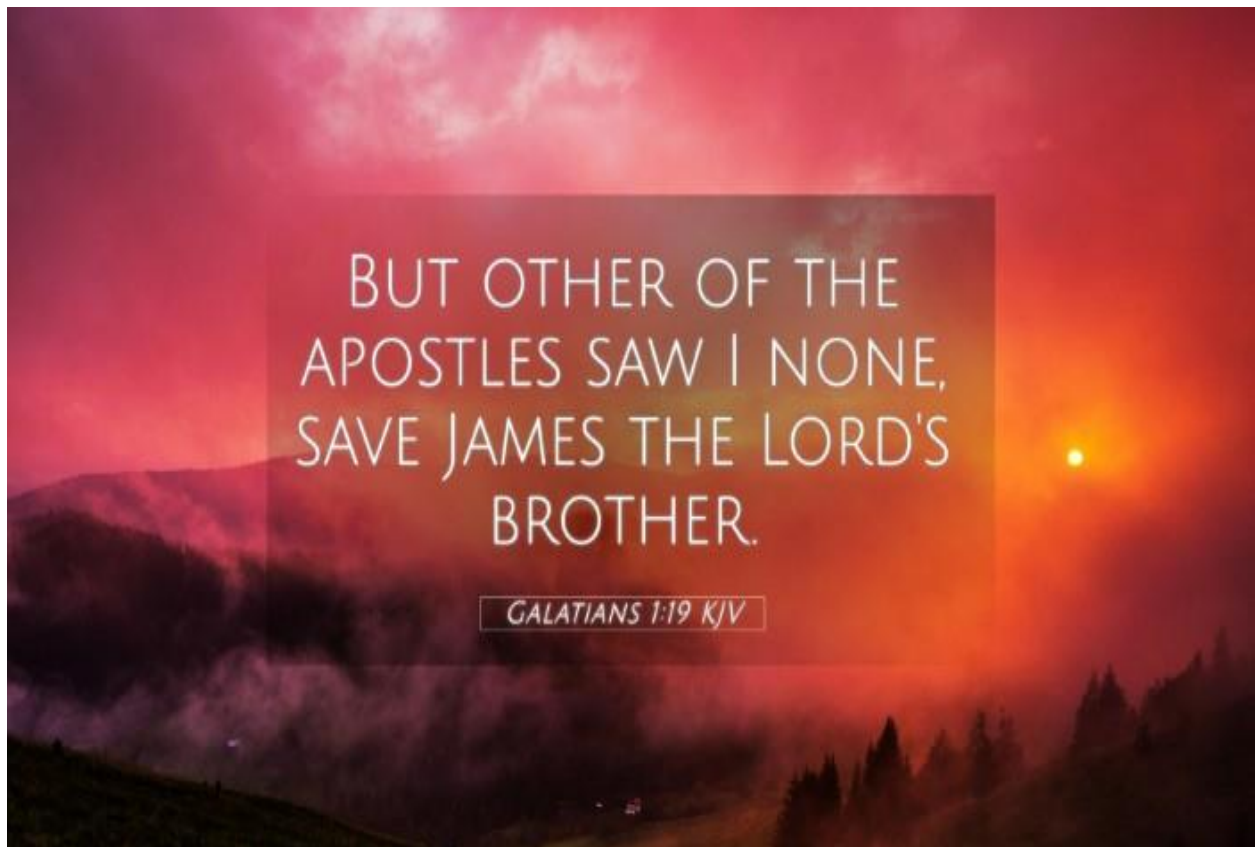


**“Is not this the  
carpenter, the son of Mary,  
And brother of James and Joses and Judas and  
Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?”  
AND THEY TOOK OFFENCE AT HIM.**



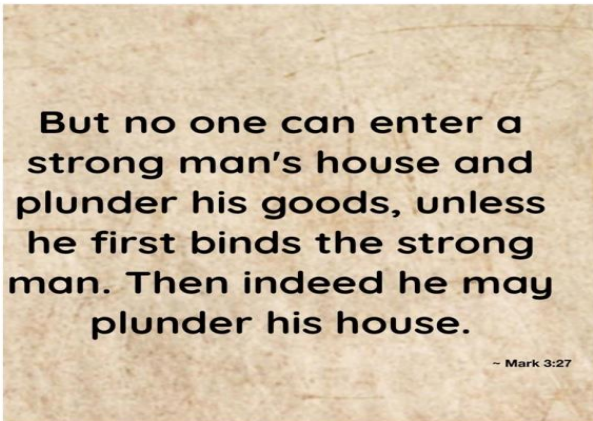
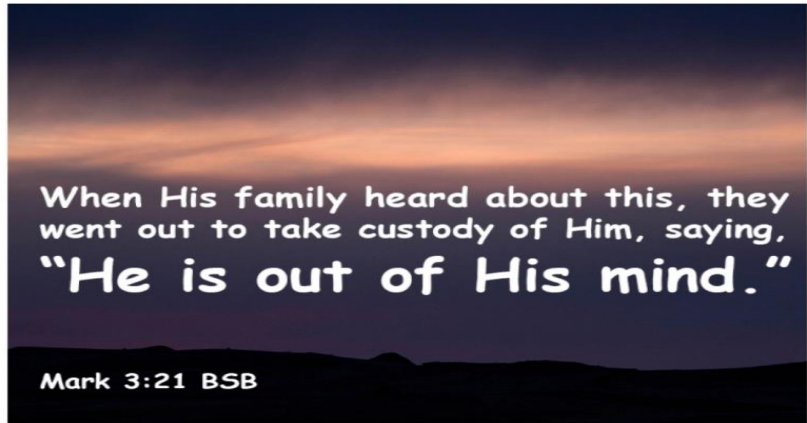
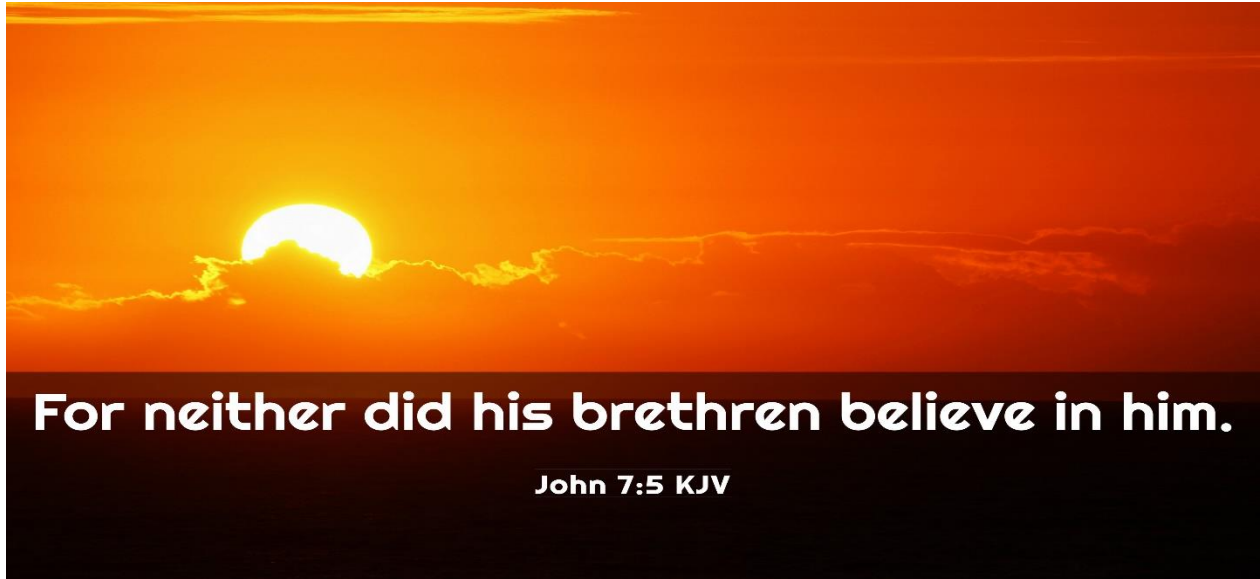
“In A.D. 62, there occurred in Jerusalem, nominal capital of Christianity, a dramatic public death that would foreshadow the ancient city’s future catastrophe.

James, brother of Jesus, a man revered as a model of Jewish piety & commitment to God by most Jews, whether followers of Jesus or not, was sentenced to death by an illegally constituted trial. Now an old man, he died, as had Jesus, forgiving the people who had condemned him. He was known as ‘The Just One.’




When the imprisonment of Peter failed – it did drive all the apostles from Jerusalem - leaving James the Just as the leading figure left in charge of the Jerusalem church. James stayed behind, a center of fierce controversy, because he believed and preached Jesus as messiah. At least one attempt may have been made on his life. . .

# Jesus' Siblings Not Now Skeptic



# Jesus' Family Became Followers

A decorative graphic consisting of several overlapping, semi-transparent blue triangles of varying shades, pointing towards the right, located in the upper left quadrant of the page.

But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother (ἕτερον δὲ τῶν ἀποστόλων οὐκ εἶδον εἰ μὴ Ἰάκωβον τὸν ἀδελφὸν τοῦ Κυρίου); **but no one besides of the apostles saw I, unless it were James the Lord's brother.** The words, "unless it were," are here proposed as a rendering of εἰ μὴ, as betokening a certain degree of hesitancy on the apostle's part as to the perfect justness of the exception which he makes. The reason of this will appear if we consider that "James the Lord's brother" was not really one of the apostles; but nevertheless, through the position which he held in the Church of Jerusalem, and through various circumstances attaching to him, **stood in general estimation so near to the revered twelve, that St. Paul felt he was required, in connection with his present statement, to make this reference to him.**

Citation Continues. . .

But few doubted his devotion to God. Some called him ‘the Man With the Callused Knees’ because he spent whole days in the Temple, praying for the city and for its people. ‘He was holy from his mother’s womb,’ reports the Christian historian Hegesippus, who wrote late in the first century, and whose work has survived in the writings of Eusebius. ‘He drank no wine or strong drink, nor did he eat flesh. No razor came upon his head; and he did not anoint himself with oil.’

While some Jews accepted Jesus as a prophet, some merely as a gifted teacher and the Temple Rulers denounced him as ‘the Great Blasphemer,’ James persuaded so many to become fully committed to Jesus that he alarmed the Temple authorities. ‘When many, even the rulers, believed,’ says Hegesippus, ‘there was a commotion among the Jews leaders and scribes and Pharisees, who said there was a danger the whole people would be looking to Jesus as the Messiah.’

The Jewish historian Josephus implies another explanation for the move to rid the Temple of the old man. James championed the cause of the poorer priests against prosperous members of the high priestly household who ran the Temple and formed the core of the Sadducean party.

James’s opponents, however, faced a legal difficulty. Though Judea at this time was formally under the rule of a Jewish king, Agrippa II, great-grandson of Herod the Great, executions required the ratification of the Roman governor, whose authority superseded the king’s. And the governor, a usual, was inclined to oppose anything the Temple rulers favored.

But in A.D. 62, the Roman governor Festus died in office. A successor, Albinus, was en route to Jerusalem when King Agrippa was persuaded to name a new high priest, one Ananus, whom Josephus describes as ‘a bold man in temper and very insolent.’ Josephus notes also that Ananus was an active Sadducee, the party ‘who were very rigid in judging offenders, far more so than Jews.’

Acting in the break between the two governor’s rule, Ananus called into session the Sanhedrin of the Judges, the high court of Judaism, something he had no authority to do without the governor’s approval. The Sanhedrin summoned James to appear before it. Hegesippus takes up the story from there. They told the old man (James) they knew he had great influence over the people, and they themselves recognized him as a just man. However, too many were ‘going astray’ as regards this Jesus, and they could not let that continue.

Now the Passover is coming, they said, and thousands of people would be assembled in Jerusalem. They therefore directed him to stand far above the crowd at the “pinnacle” of the Temple, to publicly repudiate Jesus, and to urge the people not to be led astray by him.

Though this is not in the text, historians surmise that the council had reached a further conclusion. If James refused to do this, he stood condemned under a section of the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy that provides the death sentence by stoning for anyone convicted of ‘leading the people astray.’ **A modification of this penalty allowed the victim to be first cast down from a great height, then be stoned if still alive.**

So, James knew exactly what was coming. But he also knew that they had provided him, in his last years, with a superb opportunity to bear witness to the whole assembled people on the occasion of their most sacred feast. Thus, he agreed and was taken to the pinnacle above the crowd. ‘Now tell them,’ ordered his accusers, ‘what is the Gate of Jesus’ – meaning where Jesus was leading them. James’s response rang out to the hushed crowd below:

*‘Why are you asking me concerning Jesus, the Son of Man? He sits in Heaven at the right hand of the Great Power, and is about to come upon the clouds of Heaven.’*

The crowd became frenzied, yelling, ‘Hosanna! Hosanna! Hosanna to the Son of David!’ It was the very same cry Jerusalem had heard thirty-some years before, when Jesus had entered the city on the back of a donkey, symbolizing that he came in peace.

Realizing that they had bungled the job, Hegesippus recounts, Ananus’s servants hurled James from the parapet. The populace must be shown, they reasoned, that this kind of defiant conduct does not pay.



People rushed to the spot where he had crashed to the floor below. They found him still alive and echoing the prayer of Jesus: 'I entreat thee, Lord God our Father, forgive them, for they know not what they are doing.'

In response, one of his condemners took a club which was used for beating the water out of washed clothes, and bashed him to death. One version says they placed a stone on him, and bore down on it, crushing him.

Thus perished James the Just, kinsman of Christ, who emulated him in life and death. 'The fruit of righteousness is sown in the peace of them that make peace.'

The troublemakers, however, were about to produce a very different kind of harvest. For the moderates in the Temple, what Ananus had done was intolerable. They sent a protest to the new governor, Albinus, by now in Alexandria, who dispatched a warning to Ananus that he had acted outside the law.

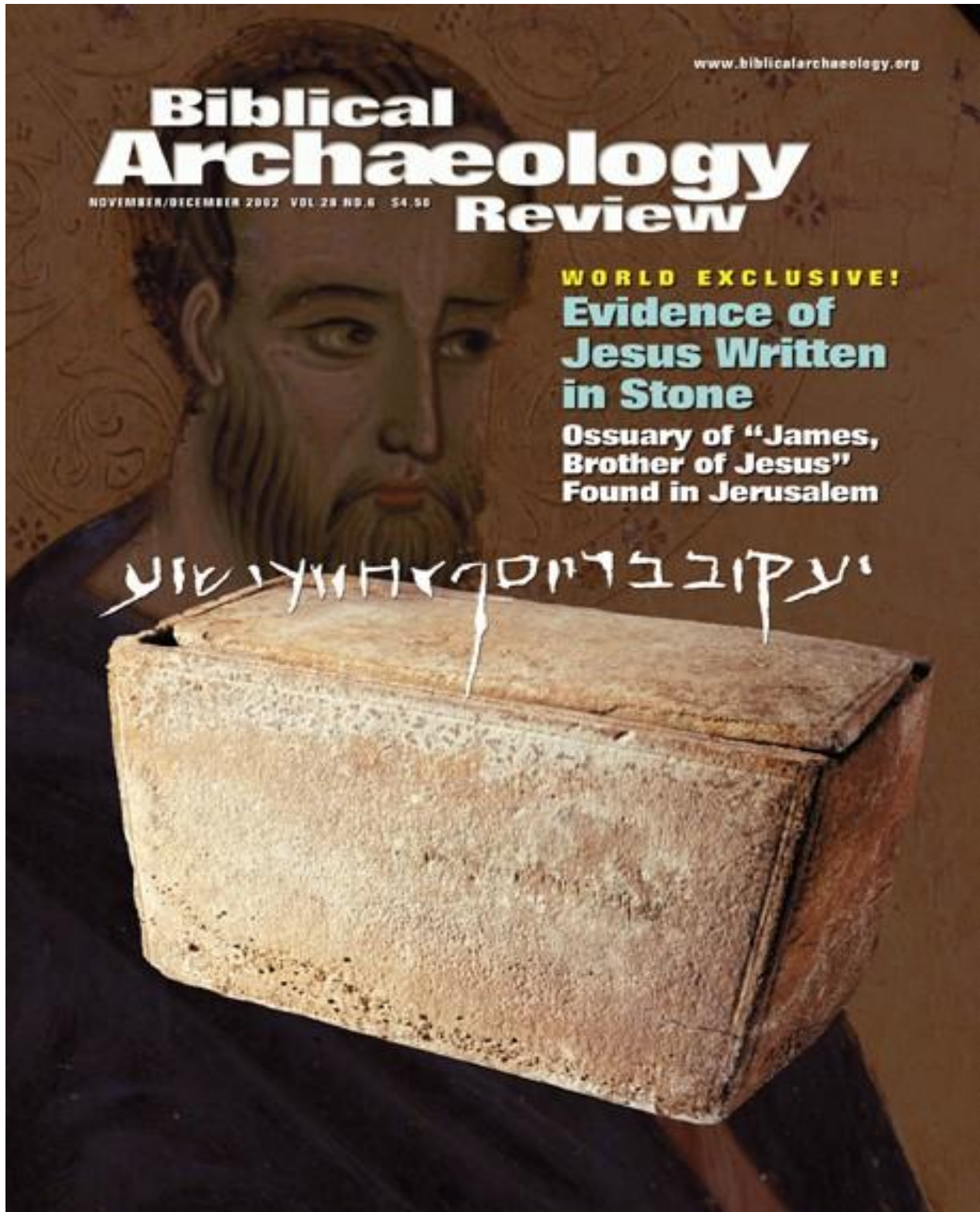
Hearing this, King Agrippa promptly fired the new high priest after only three months in office. Ananus became one of the first to perish in the coming city catastrophe – a catastrophe that the events surrounding James's bold testimony and death had made inevitable."

- The Veil Is Torn, Volume One, The Christians Series



**Matthew 24:2 - “Not One Stone Shall Be Left Here!”**





# Ossuary of James the Just: The First Archaeological Evidence of the Existence of Jesus of Nazareth?

## One of the Most Incredible Cover-ups in History

In the twelve years of the trial, the media, both on TV, press and on the web, disseminated incorrect information explaining how the ossuary had now been unmasked as a well-made forgery and the counterfeiters now close to conviction.

Yet, more and more scholars over the years, and these are the best specialists in the world, following tests and scientific investigations, have been convinced that the prosecution had no basis to support the thesis of the well-made forgery.

To find out the truth, I again contacted professor Lemaire, who wrote to me: **"(...) the ossuary is absolutely authentic but there are political and religious forces interested in making the find disappear." A cover-up of unprecedented proportions, whose drama took place right before our eyes.**

At the end of the trial the suspects of the Oded Golan group were acquitted, the court dropped one charge after another as more and more clarifying evidence emerged.

On June 24, 2009, while my novel *IL SETTIMO SEPOLCRO* was about to be published in Italy, the plot of which revolves around the James Ossuary, Oded Golan invited me to call him in Israel: I phoned him and he told me with extreme kindness how things really were.



While some scholars initially supported the prosecution's thesis, now all the scientists were in agreement: the patina deposited on the **inscription** had been found to be authentic by a chemical analysis. In addition, a microorganism was found on the inscription and on the ossuary, a fungus that takes at least a hundred years to expand by a few inches.

It covered a vast area of the ossuary and in particular its presence was **detected** over the entire inscription. This meant that its dating had to be forcibly backdated to many centuries ago, approximately to the 1st century AD, and the same applies to the entire epigraph.



*In testing the James Ossuary, a fungus was discovered proving the ancient artifact was authentic. (ActsNewsNetwork / **YouTube Screenshot** )*

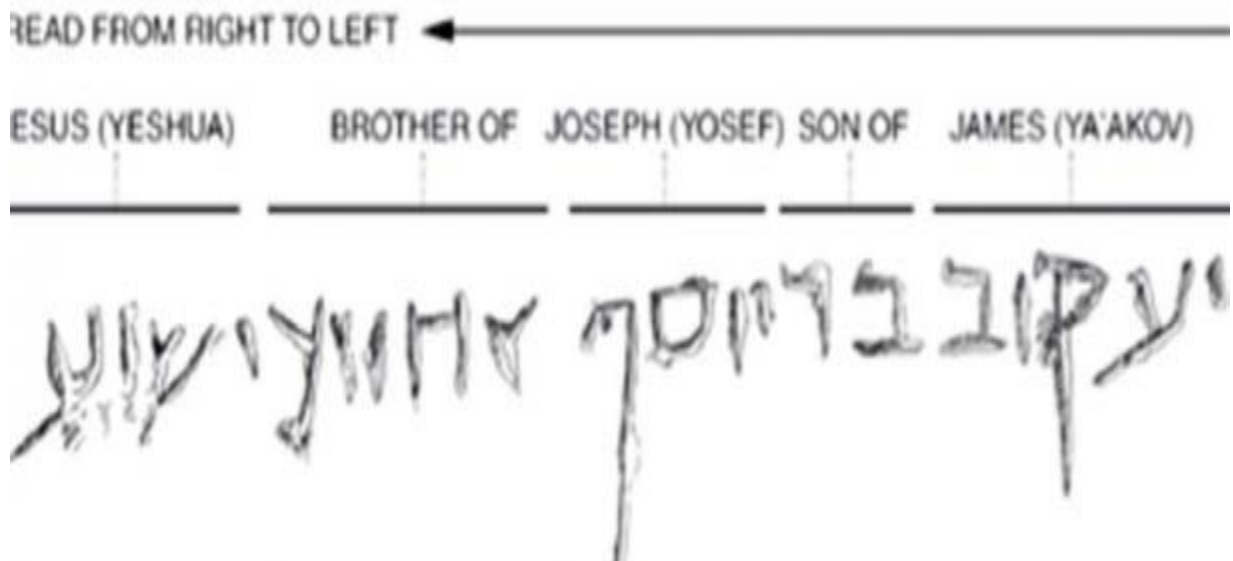
I asked Golan the same question that I posed at the time to Lemaire, why there was so much opposition to the ossuary, and he gave me the same answer as the French specialist: "(...) **This is a very delicate question because the Vatican does not admit the existence of brothers of Jesus.** Moreover, the IAA and the government that had supported its parties had raised such a fuss that now a real question of image had been created: the IAA lobby is very powerful and admitting a resounding mistake would have been detrimental to its public credibility.

In addition, several scholars at first were afraid to go against the highest authority for the control of archaeological heritage and then decided at first to support the assessments. But now everything is clear, the trial goes on and the court is less and less convinced of the initial theses. The trial could be over in a few months, but the IAA and the Israeli government do not want to lose face and continue undaunted a battle they have already lost."

**An extraordinary mystery under the eyes of all: in time the truth has come out clearly and clearly, except for most of the big audience, influenced by the view offered by the media, totally wrong about the issue, the find has remained a fake.** Only recently has some of the online encyclopaedias updated the information concerning the Ossuary of James, definitely closing the case.

The fundamental problem is that everything on the topic remains specialized information reserved to a very selected and restricted audience, that of the specialists of biblical archaeology, however you can see the latest news here on the magazine BAR ( [Bible Archaeology Review](#) ).

The magazine BAR, in its many articles dedicated to **the trial of the century**, has always consistently argued the Ossuary of James is not a fake: **the judge has definitively closed the trial by stating that "the find is authentic.** The certification is now verified and out of any reasonable doubt. Oded Golan is acquitted of all charges."



*The Ossuary of James and inscription was found to be authentic.  
(syyenergy7 / [YouTube Screenshot](#) )*

Recently I had the opportunity to contact professor Lemaire again and he told me that he had always remained of the same opinion: I perceived clearly from his words a strong bitterness, probably due both to the **lack of interest on the part of the media** and the strong opposition received while over the years he supported his thesis which finally was proved to be correct. Anyway, as often happens in history, one of the most important archaeological finds ever, **the only evidence of Christ's existence, disappears into a curtain of silence, in the effective fog of misinformation and fake news.**

### **Who Was James the Just?**

Son of Joseph and **Mary**, and flesh brother of Jesus, James was the writer of the Book of James. At the beginning of Jesus' ministry he seems to be one of his nonbelieving brothers when they commented: "He has gone out of his mind." (Mr 3:21) However, after the death of Jesus and prior to Pentecost 33 AD, James is told to be with his mother, brothers, and the apostles in an upper chamber in Jerusalem to pray.

**Jesus** appeared personally to James, as reported at 1 Corinthians 15:7, thus convincing this onetime nonbeliever that he was indeed the **Messiah**. James eventually became a highly respected member of the church of **Jerusalem**, being regarded as an apostle, or one sent forth, a disciple personally taught and trained by Jesus, with an important leading role in the Christian congregation.

The Acts and the Letters of **Paul** give us as a clearer view of the man James several years later, as an elder of the Jerusalem congregation and part of the Governing Body of the Christians. Paul implies in his letter to the Corinthians, written about the year 55 AD, that James was married, as most of the apostles and elders (1Co 9:5).

James is known also as James the Just, referring to his known way of life. Unfortunately we do not have much news about James' life and even less about his death: only Josephus reports in his *Jewish Antiquities*, XX, 200 (ix, 1) that James' death occurred during the interval between the death of Governor Festus, about 62 AD and the arrival of his successor Albinus.

The passage reads: "(...) High priest Ananus (Ananias) convened the judges of the Sanhedrin and brought before them a man named James, the brother of Jesus who was called the Christ, and certain others. He accused them of having transgressed the law and delivered them up to be stoned".

## The Brothers and Sisters of Jesus and The Dogma of the Eternal Virginity of Mary

On 1 November 1950 **Pope** Pius XII, Eugenio Pacelli, who as representative of the Vatican had signed the Concordat with Hitler (1933), established a new dogma that the believers should accept as a mystery of faith, not demonstrable, the so-called dogma di Maria sempre vergine (dogma of Mary always virgin). It defined the state of perpetual virginity of the Mother of Jesus even after her marriage to Joseph.

The explanation given by the Catholic authorities to support the dogma, does not coincide with the testimonies of the Gospels. The Greek term for brothers and sisters of Jesus used in the Gospels (even in subsequent translations where there was an original Aramaic/Jewish) never indicates cousins or relatives in the generic sense, as the Church teaches, but indicates fleshly brothers from of the same uterus or same mother.

Moreover Matthew 1:24,25 clearly states: "Then Joseph woke up from sleep and did as the angel of Jehovah had told him and brought his wife **home**. But he did not have sexual relations with her until she gave **birth** to a son and named him Jesus."

Then, after the birth of Jesus, Joseph had a normal sexual life with his wife that led to the birth of several children. The four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles and two of Paul's letters mention the "brothers of the Lord", "the brother of the Lord", "his brothers", "his sisters", indicating by name four of these "brothers": James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas. (Mt 12:46; 13:55, 56; Mr 3:31; Lu 8:19; Jn 2:12; Acts 1:14; 1Co 9:5; Gal 1:19).



Scholars generally agree that the family of Jesus was composed of two parents and at least four brothers and sisters, all-natural sons of Joseph and Mary, maybe more.

During the ministry of Jesus, the Gospels tell us that "his brothers did not exercise faith in him", and this certainly excludes that they were his brothers in the spiritual sense. (Jn 7:3-5): as we have seen before, James was among these. **The Catholic thesis that the word brother has broader meaning of cousin is not correct as we consider the syntactic evidence of the Greek New Testament: when in the Gospels one speaks of the flesh brothers of Jesus it is used the Greek adelfòs (son of the same mother), while in the case of a relative the term syggenòs is used, or in the case of a cousin anepsiòs.** Ultimately there is no doubt, Jesus had several brothers and sisters, sons and daughters of Joseph and Mary.

**FACT OR FRAUD?**

A Roman-era burial box inscribed "**James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus**" was reprinted from the scrapheap of history when a Jerusalem judge completely exonerated an Israeli antiquities collector who had been accused of forging it.

*Scholars dealing with such antiquities have dated the ossuary to the first century pointing out that Jews in Jerusalem, primarily Pharisees, used ossuaries only from roughly 20 B.C. to A.D. 70.*

**ACQUITTED OF 44 COUNTS OF FRAUD.**

...to the scripture.org/monothel/james.html

# The Alleged Perpetual Virginity of Mary

By **Wayne Jackson**

•

A few months ago, the world was stunned by the report of a limestone ossuary (bone box), discovered in Jerusalem, bearing the inscription, "James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus." A number of prominent scholars believe this box once contained the bones of James, half-brother of Jesus, who is so prominently mentioned in the New Testament (cf. Mt. 13:55-56; Acts 15:13ff; 21:18-19; Gal. 2:9). For a brief discussion of the evidence, see the article elsewhere on this web site, "The "Jesus" Inscription", October 21, 2002).

Aside from the obvious importance of this discovery as such relates to the historicity of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the inscription has rekindled the controversy concerning the alleged "perpetual virginity" of Mary. Both the Greek Orthodox Church, and the Roman Catholic Church (along with a few Protestant scholars), contend that Mary and Joseph, even after the birth of the Lord, remained celibate for life.

The Roman Catholic Church alleges that Mary's parents presented her in the temple when she was but three years old, and that "the child herself mounted the Temple steps, and that she made her vow of virginity on this occasion" (Maas, 464F). This would suggest that at the tender age of three, Mary had considerable knowledge of human anatomy. It further hints that she understood the intricacies of sexual union. Moreover it indicates that she likely foreknew the fact that she would bear the Christ child, and that she perceived somehow that it would be inappropriate for her ever to engage in honorable intimacy with a legitimate husband.

This theory of Mary's "perpetual virginity" became official dogma at the Council of Chalcedon in A.D. 451, and thus is binding upon both the Greek and Roman segments of the Church (Pelikan, 14.1000).

## The Historical Roots of the Dogma

What is the biblical evidence for this dogma? There is none —*absolutely none*. As one scholar quaintly noted, the doctrine “is a matter of dogmatic assumption unmixed with any alloy of factual evidence” (Sweet, 3.2003).

The theory had its roots in the pagan environment of the post-apostolic period when there was a strong emphasis upon celibacy within certain heathen religions. In that day, sexual intercourse, even within marriage, sometimes carried the suspicion of sin.

Alexander Hislop has shown a remarkable concurrence between the Vestal Virgins of pagan Rome, and the propensity for virginity that evolved in the digressive church of the post-apostolic period (Hislop, 223, 236-238, 250).

The idea thus evolved that it was inconceivable that Mary should have engaged in normal marital relations. It is a baffling mystery how a Church, that holds marriage to be a “sacrament,” can entertain such a misdirected viewpoint (see Heb. 13:4).

A progressively deteriorating church (cf. 2 Thes. 2:1ff; 1 Tim. 4:1ff; 2 Tim. 4:1ff), therefore, was ever attempting to accommodate “Christianity” to paganism, in order to provide a “comfort zone” that would attract the heathen to the religion of Christ. This is an historical reality that not even Catholic scholars deny (see Attwater, 363). For an historical survey of this phenomenon, see Edward Gibbon’s famous work, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (Chapter XXVIII). Gibbon concludes this chapter with these words:

“The most respectable bishops had persuaded themselves that the ignorant rustics would more cheerfully renounce the superstitions of Paganism, if they found some resemblance, some compensation, in the bosom of Christianity” (II.70).

Hence the baseless notion was foisted upon the biblical records that Mary remained a virgin for life. And all biblical evidence that suggests otherwise is rationalized away with less-than-imaginative textual manipulations.

**There is, however, a compelling case *against* the Catholic view.**

## New Testament Evidence

There are a number of passages in the New Testament that argue against the dogma of Mary's perpetual virginity. Note the following:

(1) Matthew affirms that Mary was found to be with child "before [she and Joseph] came together" (Matthew 1:18). The term "came together" (from *sunerchomai*) includes the idea of sexual intimacy (1 Cor. 7:5; see Danker, 970). The implication clearly is that ultimately, they "came together." H.L. Ellison comments that the construction is "incompatible with the doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary" (1188).

(2) Matthew declares that Joseph "knew not" (i.e. was not sexually intimate with; Gen. 4:1) Mary "until [heos hou] she had given birth to a son" (1:25). While the expression *heos hou* does not absolutely demand that Joseph and Mary were intimate after Jesus' birth, that would be the normal conclusion, unless contextual considerations indicated otherwise (cf. 2 Sam. 6:23). In fact, "elsewhere in the New Testament (17:9 24:39; John 9:18) the phrase (*heos hou*) followed by a negative always implies that the negated action did take place later" (Lewis, 1.42). There is no valid reason why Matthew 1:25 should be the exception.

(3) In Luke 2:7, Jesus is called Mary's "firstborn" child. While the term *prototokon* does not demand unequivocally that Mary had other children, this term "most naturally suggests" that she did (Geldenhuis, 103). If the sustained virginity of Mary is such a crucial theological point, why did not Luke simply say she brought forth her "only" son? That certainly would have settled the issue.

(4) There are several passages that mention the siblings of Jesus (Mt. 12:46ff; 13:55-56). Catholic apologists appeal to the fact that the term "brother" (*adelphos*) is sometimes used in a broader, kindred sense, e.g., "cousins." While *adelphos* (which literally means, "out of the same womb") is employed loosely on occasion in some literature, in the New Testament *adelphos* is never used for a "cousin." The word *anepsioi* signifies that relationship (cf. Col. 4:10).



Moreover, Jesus is said to have had “sisters” (Mt. 13:56 – adelphe). Why should it be assumed that Matthew’s use of “mother” was literal, but that the terms “brothers” and “sisters” were used figuratively? If “sister” is literal in Acts 23:16 (Paul’s sister), what would compel one to view the same term in a *different* sense in Matthew 13:56? Terry notes: “It is an old and oft-repeated hermeneutical principle that words should be understood in their literal sense unless such literal interpretation involves a manifest contradiction or absurdity” (159).

(5) The alleged perpetual celibate state of Joseph and Mary’s relationship is contrary to the divine ideal. Marriage, as designed by God, was intended to bring a man and woman together as “one flesh” (Gen. 2:24; cf. Mt. 19:5-6). Subsequent to the initial physical bonding is the responsibility to “render” to one another what is “due” —these terms expressing a sacred obligation (1 Cor. 7:3). If there is to be abstinence, it is to be by mutual concession, and that only temporarily (v. 5).

## The Defense

The Catholic defense for the dogma of Mary’s “perpetual virginity” is as barren as one will ever encounter in religious controversy. James Cardinal Gibbons, in his apologetic for the concept, did not introduce a solitary scriptural argument in its favor. Rather, he appealed solely to the creeds of the post-biblical age (Apostles’ Creed and Nicene Creed), which are bereft of divine authority (Gibbons, 168). There is, perhaps, nothing so revealing as this “no-evidence” line of approach. The few passages that sometimes are employed in a defense of the dogma don’t even approach the borders of the territory.

But the reality of the matter is this: the Catholic clergy believes it needs no authority — save that of its own pontificating voice. It creates its own dogma, writes its own rules, has become its own “god” (cf. 2 Thes. 2:4; see Jackson, 106). It is a sad reality that numerous people, quite noble in many respects, should sincerely, though uncritically, follow an autocratic system that stands so adverse to divinely revealed truth. The doctrine of Mary’s perpetual virginity is bereft of any reasonable evidence. It is an ancient superstition that has been thrust upon sincere souls who have been taught to never question the voice of the Church.

## Is the Inscription to Jesus of Nazareth?

My bottom line is simply this: There is no reason to doubt the authenticity of the inscription on the James Ossuary. Whether it refers to Jesus of Nazareth remains a question.

A prominent statistician of Tel Aviv University, Professor Camil Fuchs, has attacked this problem,<sup>3</sup> but the problem with statisticians is that they never give you a plain or easy answer. They talk only about probabilities expressed in percentages. As Fuchs tells us, a yes/no dichotomy is “beyond the purview of statistics.” He can give us only “an estimate of the ‘likely’ number of such individuals” named James with a father Joseph and a brother Jesus. And even these estimates are based on a number of assumptions.

Let me begin by giving you Fuchs’s (simplified) answer: **There is a 38 percent chance that this is the only instance of a James with a father named Joseph and a brother named Jesus in Jerusalem at this time. There is a slightly smaller chance (about 32 percent) that there were two such men named James in Jerusalem at this time. What’s the chance that there were three such people? Only 18 percent. Beyond three, there’s only a minute chance. In layperson’s language there were probably one, two or possibly three people with this name at this time. Expressed another way, with a confidence level of 95 percent, we can expect there to be 1.71 individuals in the relevant population named James with a father named Joseph and a brother Jesus.**

Fuchs's methodology is similar to that used in DNA testing: For each site on the DNA, the investigator determines the relative frequency of the specific allele in the relevant population.

A number of assumptions underlie Fuchs's estimates in addition to the size of the population of Jerusalem at this time. First, however, what is "this time"? Based on the published research regarding the period of time in which reinterment in ossuaries was practiced, Fuchs assumes it is the period between 6 and 70 A.D. (He always, as here, assumes "conservative" numbers.)

Fuchs assumes the ossuary came from Jerusalem because almost all known stone ossuaries were found there and Oded Golan says the antiquities dealer from whom he bought the ossuary said it came from Silwan, a village that is part of Jerusalem. The next step is to estimate the population of Jerusalem at this time (38,500 in 6 A.D., growing to 82,500 in 70 A.D.). Fuchs reduces this number because we're interested only in males; none of the women can fit the name profile we are looking for. Next, the James whose bones were placed in this ossuary was obviously a grown-up; therefore, eliminate children who will not reach manhood from the population pool.

Two other overlapping characteristics are statistically relevant: Someone in the family must have been literate; otherwise, why inscribe a name (or three names) on the ossuary? (Fuchs assumes a conservatively high literacy rate of 20 percent, more than the accepted figures in highly urban areas, to reflect the unique status of the city of Jerusalem at that time.)

Also, they must have been fairly well-off to be able to afford an ossuary (and a burial cave in which it would be placed). The distribution of the number of children in the families in that period of time was also factored in the equations.

All these factors figure in Professor Fuchs's computations of probability, often more subtly and in greater detail than I suggest. Fuchs also depends on some of the assumptions derived from L.Y. Rahmani's catalog of ossuaries in the state collection.<sup>4</sup> Of the approximately 900 ossuaries in the catalog, only 230 are inscribed. Moreover, as Rahmani points out, this "seemingly high proportion of inscribed ossuaries is, in many respects, misleading since plain and uninscribed ossuaries were either discarded by the site excavators or excluded from the catalogue." Fuchs then estimates that no more than 15 percent of all ossuaries bore inscriptions.

A number of reasons account for the inscriptions on ossuaries—to express pride in the social standing of the family or the deceased, to console the bereaved or to allow later burial parties to identify the ossuary of the deceased when placing others in the burial cave. **But why include the name of a brother? Only one other ossuary in the catalog lists a brother. Another single ossuary inscription mentions the son of the deceased. As Fuchs sensibly observes, "There is little doubt this was done only when there was a very meaningful reason to refer to a family member of the interred deceased, usually due to his importance and/or fame."**



Fuchs's computations also depend on the frequency of the three names in the inscriptions in Rahmani's catalog. Among the 241 male names on the ossuaries in the catalog are 88 different names. "James" (*Yaakov*) appears 5 times or 2.15 percent of the time; "Joseph" appears 19 times or 7.9 percent of the time; and "Jesus" (*Yeshua* in Hebrew) appears 10 times or 4.1 percent of the time. **Based on the frequency of these names among the 241 male names on the ossuaries in the Rahmani catalog, the statistical probability of the three names appearing together is 0.006787 percent.**

Fuchs concludes that the estimate for the relevant population includes 7,530 men, and the likelihood of someone named James with a father named Joseph and a brother named Jesus in this local population is 0.0227 percent. That is, the estimate of the number of individuals in that population who bear the three names with this relation is 1.71. Expressed another way, there is a 38 percent chance that only one individual had this combination, a 32 percent chance two individuals had this combination, an 18 percent chance that three individuals had it & an 8 percent chance four individuals had it. And Fuchs can state this with 95% confidence.

That's about as simple an answer as statistics can give us.

