

GOD CHANGES FAMILIES

Question: “What family in the Bible do you think about when you hear that God changes families?”

When I heard this question, my mind went immediately to the Philippian jailer in Acts 16:12, 22-40. However, the Bible is full of examples starting with the first family in the Book of Genesis.

Today’s lesson is about the one family in the Bible that you might think would NEVER need for God to change – the natural family of Jesus. **How much do you know about the natural family of Jesus?**

Our lesson will study six aspects of the natural family of Jesus and how and why God changed them.

1. The natural family of Jesus is mentioned in the messianic prophecy of Ps.69:8-9.

“I have become estranged from my brothers, and an alien to my mother’s sons. For zeal for Thy house has consumed and the reproaches of those who reproach Thee have fallen on Me.”

Ps.69:9 is quoted as messianic by Paul in Rom.15:1-6 – “For zeal...”

Ps.69:8 is fulfilled in **John 7:5** – “**For not even His brothers were believing in Him.**” – “I have become estranged from my brothers, and an alien to my mothers sons.” (Ps.69:8)

Most Christians are familiar with the parents of Jesus but not with His siblings. Four of His brothers and His sisters are mentioned in Matt.13:55-56 – “Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not His mother called Mary, and His brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this man get all these things?”

Some Bible scholars think that one of His sisters was named Salome who was present with His mother at the crucifixion and resurrection (Mark 15:40; 16:1).

2. The parents of Jesus raised their children in the spiritual customs of orthodox Jewish religion.

“And when they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city of Nazareth. And the Child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him. And His parents used to go to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of Passover.” (Luke 2:39-41)

“And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and His mother treasured all these things in her heart.” (Luke 2:51)

His family was in attendance when Jesus performed His first miracle and was very familiar with His Galilean ministry (John 2:1-12). “After this he went down to Capernaum, He and His mother, and His brothers, and His disciples; and there they stayed a few days.” (John 2:12)

At one time during the ministry of Jesus, they became concerned about the rumors of Jesus state of mind and went to check him out (Mark 3:21-22, 31-35).

3. I suppose growing up with the impeccability of Jesus made His early religious activity less spectacular to the natural family of Jesus.

They knew that He was always a very conscientious religious person, even by the very young age of twelve. (Luke 2:46-47)

“He made Him **who knew no sin** to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” (2 Cor.5:21)

They didn’t seem to be that impressed with Him until His solo death, burial and resurrection from the dead. “And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.” (1 Cor.15:17)

It was then that they understood this important doctrinal principle – “And you know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin.” (1 John 3:5)

“He who was delivered up because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification.” (Rom.4:25)

4. But like everyone else, they had to come to a personal faith in His messianic death, burial and resurrection in order to be saved.

None of them could get saved by just being the mother, father, brother, or sister of the messianic Savior of the world. Like their religious leaders, they too had to be “born again.” (John 3:1-16)

It is interesting that like so many religious people of their day, it took a personal faith in the historical death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ in order for them to get saved (John 7:1-9; 1 Cor.15:3-8).

“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.” (Acts 1:14)

“Then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles.” (1 Cor.15:7)

5. Paul mentions that the brothers of Jesus were engaged in Christian ministries and were married

“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?” (1 Cor.9:5)

6. Jesus’ brother James became an apostle and the first pastor of the First Christian Church of Jerusalem (Acts 15:6, 13; 21:17-18).

“Then three years later I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas, and stayed with him fifteen days. But I did not see any other of the apostles except James, the Lord’s brother.” (Gal.1:18-19)

He was NOT one of the Twelve disciples of Jesus (Matt.10:1-4). Some Bible scholars think that James the less or the little was the brother of Jesus (Mark 6:3; 15:40; 16:1; Matt.27:56).

Biblical historians believe that James was beaten and stoned to death by the religious Jews at the age of 94.

“**My brethren, if (3cc) any among you strays from the truth, and one turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death, and will cover a multitude of sins.**” (James 5:19-20) These last 2 verses of his book are words to leave by tonight.