

QUESTION:

Since you've brought up the subject of Jesus' family perhaps it won't be too far off the subject to ask this question.

Mythicists are forced by their arguments to deal with Paul's encounter with Peter and James in Galatians 1:18-20. They claim that when Paul refers to James as "The Lord's brother" he does not mean that James is Jesus' biological brother (which of course would mean that Jesus actually lived) but that he was using the word "brother" in the sense that all the disciples were "brothers" i.e., metaphorically.

What about this? Is the word translated as "brother" in English that ambiguous in the original Greek? Can it be other than a biological relationship? Elsewhere I believe Paul uses the word "brothers" to describe fellow believers. Does he use the same Greek word?

Thanks for the clarification.

RESPONSE:

Great question! I've dealt with the issue in my book [Did Jesus Exist](#). I think this is one of the real deal-breakers for the mythicist position - that Paul was personally acquainted with Jesus' own brother. (There are a number of other deal-breakers as well; but this is a good one.) What follows is what I discuss in my book about the issue. At this point of the book I have just finished talking about how Paul also knew Jesus' right-hand man, Peter, another big problem if Jesus never existed! Then I start talking about the brothers, as follows:

Even more telling is the much noted fact that Paul claims that he met with, and therefore personally knew, Jesus' own brother James. It is true that Paul calls him the "brother of the Lord," not "the brother of Jesus." But that means very little, since Paul typically calls Jesus the Lord and rarely uses the name Jesus (without adding "Christ," or other titles). And so, In the letter to the Galatians Paul states as clearly as possible that he knew Jesus' brother. Can we get any closer to an eyewitness report than this? The fact that Paul knew Jesus' closest disciple and his own brother throws a real monkey wrench into the mythicist view that Jesus never lived.

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