

HANDOUT: The Gospel of John chapter 7

**In chapter 6 there were three stumbling blocks which prevented many Jews from coming to Christ:**

- 1) The desire for a “political” Messiah to ease their earthly sufferings
- 2) The inability to accept the deity of Jesus, God made man
- 3) The refusal to believe in the Real Presence of Christ the Living Bread come down from heaven.

These are the same 3 stumbling blocks that prevent many people from coming to Christ today.

**Did Jesus have brothers and sisters?**

The word used in the Greek New Testament for brothers is *adelphoi* which means “from the womb” and literally means brothers who are born from the same mother, but in the New Testament it is the only word used for “brothers” in the Hebrew sense of kinsmen or covenant “brothers” (see Acts 1:14, 16; 2:29, 37). Unfortunately this word and Jesus’ title as Mary’s “firstborn” have been misunderstood to mean that Joseph and Mary had a marriage relationship after Jesus’ birth that resulted in brothers and sisters (Lk 2:6). This has never been a teaching of the Church. All the Fathers of the Church maintained that Mary remained a virgin all of her life. The problem in interpretation stems from a misunderstanding of Jewish/Israelite cultural traditions and the failure to take into account that the sacred writers of the New Testament were writing in Greek but thinking in Hebrew/Aramaic. It has always been a teaching of the Church that the “brothers and sisters” of Jesus mentioned in the Gospels are the children of Joseph by a previous marriage or were cousins. It is a dogma (truth) of the Catholic Church that Jesus’ birth “did not diminish his mother’s virginal integrity but sanctified it” (CCC 499). For more information on this subject see the document “Did Jesus have Brothers and Sisters” in the Documents section of the website.

These passages parallel the Temptation of Jesus by Satan:

<b>Expectations for Jesus in John 6:15-7:3</b>	<b>Temptation of Jesus in Matthew &amp; Luke</b>
6:15: The people want to make Jesus king	Satan offers Him the kingdoms of the world [Matthew 4:8-10; Luke 4:5-8]
6:31: The people ask for miraculous bread	Satan invites Jesus to turn the stones into bread [Matthew 4:3-4; Luke 4:3-4]
7:3: The kinsmen of Jesus want Him to go to Jerusalem to show His power.	Satan takes Jesus to Jerusalem and invites Him to display His power by jumping from the pinnacle of the Temple [Matthew 4:5-7; Luke 4:9-12]

These are the same temptations, more subtly presented, but still the same. Once again Jesus successfully resists.