

Dear Joseph,

Wednesday, April 1, 33 (Year of Me)

You were a pretty good stepdad to me over the years so I think it is time I told you the truth—the truth about my father. As you know, you're not my father. But what you don't know, and what none of my followers know, is that God is not my father. My mother was no more a virgin than David or Solomon's concubines when I was conceived!

And my father, Yahweh? More like no way. But I think you knew that, you must have known that I have a real father. How could you not? I mean, what's more likely, that a young girl would lie about the circumstances of her pregnancy when the penalty for her promiscuity is death or that the laws of nature were suspended in a feed trough in some backwater barnyard in Bethlehem? C'mon!

Mom told everyone that God knocked her up because she didn't want to die. If Mom admitted I was a bastard, she would be admitting that she was a harlot, a whore, or an adulterer. We know what happens to those women, it's right there in our law:

But if this thing be true, and the tokens of virginity be not found for the damsel: Then they shall bring out the damsel to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her with stones that she die: because she hath wrought folly in Israel, to play the whore in her father's house: so shalt thou put evil away from among you. Deut. 22:20-21.

Not to mention the fact that, as a bastard, I would not be a proper Jew: "No one born of a forbidden union may enter the assembly of the LORD. Even to the tenth generation, none of his descendants may enter the assembly of the LORD." Deut. 23:2. Bastards like me, "illegitimate children," are "not sons." Heb. 12:8.

So we lied. Well, she lied, I was just a baby. But I joined in whole-heartedly when I was old enough. Who wouldn't readily agree that they were the son of God? I even learned a bunch of tricks from those Magi guys who were at the stable when I was born. They came back a few years later when you were selling furniture in Galilee and taught me something called "sleight of hand." I use it to make people think I have special powers. I've even been teaching the tricks to some of my fraternity brothers and sometimes we use the tricks to haze the new guys. Sometimes a brother will act like a sick, blind, or maimed stranger and then I pretend to heal them. I almost convinced myself that I was special with these tricks, but Mom finally told me the truth when I was 29 years old.

She sat me down and told me I wasn't the son of God. I'm not godly, holy, or special; when I die, I'll be dead just like everyone else (although the brothers and I are working on a fun "sleight of hand" for that too. We tried it out with our buddy Z, you remember Lazarus right? Well, it worked great. We may try it again this weekend!) Anyway, Mom claimed she heard one of those schismatic, itinerant beggars on a street corner say, "We're all God's children," and that was where she got the idea that I was literally God's son. She stuck to that story for almost 30 years. When she finally told me the truth I was too used to thinking myself a God amongst men to take that news well. My holy wrath flowed through me and I stormed out.

For a while I thought maybe you were my biological father and you and Mom were in on the whole hoax together—trying to make me into some child star, like "Pageant Parents" or something weird like that. So I had this Greek guy do something with one of your hairs and then with one of my hairs—I don't normally hold to all that science-y stuff but he was pretty sure that you're not my Dad. And anyway, if you were my real Dad you would have just admitted it and none of this virgin birth stuff would have been necessary in the first place. When I got the results from the Greek I confronted Mom again. This time, she admitted everything to me.

Look Joe, the truth is, my real father was a Roman soldier, Naughtius Maximus. I was so mad at Mom for begatting me with a Roman soldier that I publicly disowned her. Matt was there and he wrote about it. Our law is explicitly against any breeding and intermarriage with any but the chosen people:

"Make no treaty with them, and show them no mercy. Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons, for they will turn your children away from following me to serve other gods, and the Lord's anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you. This is what you are to do to them: Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones, cut down their Asherah poles^(b) and burn their idols in the fire. For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession.."

Still I don't think you should be mad at Mary (although I typically recommend this sort of thing, families are such a burden.) By our law Naughtius was supposed to compensate Grandpa for taking Grandpa's property, my mother's maidenhead:

"When a man finds a girl who is a maiden, who is not engaged, and he seizes her and lies with her, and they are found out, then the man who lay with her shall give to the girl's father fifty pieces of silver, and she is to be his wife because he has humbled her. He is not allowed to put her away all his days." Deut. 22:28-29.

But when Mom told that to Naughtius, he replied with typical Roman arrogance: "Pay you? I'm a Lord of Rome, your son would be lucky to have one of us Romans for a father, our men are like gods! He could be king of your people with Roman blood in him." (You remember my buddy Luke? He told me not to worry about this story, he would "fix it up." I read a draft of his account and he did do a pretty good job of twisting this around; he even changed Naughtius into the angel Gabriel!)

So don't be mad at Mom. You still have my nine half brothers and sisters to be proud of. You two should stick it out. Anyway Joe, I'm sorry that I didn't tell you this sooner. You are a good stepdad as far as stepdads go. I'm camped in the Garden at Gethsemane right now; we just had a great feast for Passover. Maybe next year I'll have Passover with you and Mom? Anyway I hear some people coming so I'd better go see what's up. Hopefully Judas is coming back with that keg of wine we told him to go get. Maybe we'll dress up like Naughtius and have a toga party, it's been a while since our little Frat threw a good kegger. I need a stiff drink after dinner with all twelve of those clingy sycophants—they can never agree on anything, especially Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Love,

Josh
aka: Jesus; aka: The Christ; sbka: The Bastard