



The Jesus Family Tomb: The Discovery, the Investigation & the Evidence That Could Change History

Simcha Jacobovici , Charles Pellegrino , James Francis Cameron (foreword)

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The Jesus Family Tomb tells the story of what may very well be the greatest archeological find of all time: the discovery & investigation of the Jesus family tomb. The tomb in question houses ossuaries (bone boxes) with inscriptions bearing the names of Jesus of Nazareth, the Virgin Mary, Mary Magdalene & Judas, the son of Jesus. This crypt had been overlooked & ignored for years & exists today under a patio just outside of Jerusalem. The authors have tracked down the location & been granted unequaled access to inspect the findings within the tomb. The artifacts were found, recorded & catalogued by professional archeologists in a controlled setting. There's no question of their authenticity.

A fascinating combination of history, archeology & theology, the revelations inside the book will change the way we think about god, religion & everything 'known' about the life & death of Jesus.

The Jesus Family Tomb: The Discovery, the Investigation & the Evidence That Could Change History Details

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From Reader Review The Jesus Family Tomb: The Discovery, the Investigation & the Evidence That Could Change History for online ebook

Lesley Webb says

Mind blowing to me was how they stumbled on it in the first place...

jcg says

I was pleasantly surprised by this book. I thought it was going to be one of those books that sensationalizes a trivial discovery, but the evidence and the arguments, admittedly a little rough around the edges, are quite compelling.

Is this the Jesus family tomb? I have no idea. It would be great fun if it was. But the discovery will never be taken seriously because, as the authors document, of political intrigues. Christians don't want anything to do with it because it fundamentally challenges belief in the resurrection.

I hope that some serious scholars take on the investigation and treat this as an important archaeological and historical discovery.

Sarah - All The Book Blog Names Are Taken says

I so want all of this to be true, and the odds are laid out right there, literally. I love biblical archaeology and a find like this, Jesus tomb or not, is impressive. But if it truly IS the final resting place of Jesus, it would be beyond impressive. It would be life-altering for many.

Full review to come. Maybe. I have to do more research - this usually involves long conversations with my pastor and me asking about a million questions while he patiently tries to answer every single one.

Keith Akers says

I read this book over four years ago, after watching the Discovery Channel DVD on the same subject. While the DVD is very good, this book fills in a lot of additional details that you don't pick up just from the DVD. They talk about the James ossuary, discovered separately in 2002 but now connected to the "Jesus Family Tomb" through the patina, which to me is actually one of the most convincing arguments in favor of the tomb's authenticity. The book just published, *The Jesus Discovery: The New Archaeological Find That Reveals the Birth of Christianity* now gives some additional interesting details about this tomb, in connection with another tomb discovered nearby with early Christian symbols.

The thing I like about this book is the awareness of the key controversies which surround the whole idea of a

tomb of Jesus. They cut to the chase; it's pretty well written. To me, the Jesus tomb is quite plausible not because it is shocking but because it actually doesn't add that much to our knowledge, but confirms what we already knew. The main controversial implication is that Jesus had a son! The early Christians believed in the resurrection, but had a different concept than that of the orthodox. This book is well written and intelligent.

Patricia Walker says

I'm not into orthodox religion but even I found the evidence given here clear and concise. It amazes me how people can hold onto a dream against tremendous odds and hostility and still come out with evidence that would appear to be irrefutable. A definite read for anyone who has a passing interest in the story of a man who was remarkable for his time. A man who would still be causing huge eruptions across many of our academic disciplines 2000 yrs after his time. Far from being dull and boring the authors have brought the evidence and factual findings down to a laymans level in the hope that anyone who wants to know will find their answers here. I would heartily reccomend this read to everyone from serious scholar to the interested bystander

Shannon says

Oh, please! It would have been a bit less annoying had it been better written. Curse my obsessive need to finish any book I start!!!

Melanie says

In 1980 while blasting the hills of Talpiot in preparation for development, an ancient tomb was discovered.

Archaeologists entered and discovered 10 ossuaries (bone boxes) in a traditional burial chamber. These ossuaries were catalogued, photographed and measured before being moved to the Israel Antiquities Authorities storeroom.

6 of these 10 ossuaries had inscriptions. These inscriptions included 'Jesus, son of Joseph,' "Maria" and "Mariamne."

This discovery went virtually unnoticed for 25 years.

25 years later it was discovered that Mariamne was the Greek form of Mary and was the name used for Mary, Magdalene.

This prompt the idea that Mary, Magdalene would have had to be related to Jesus to be buried in the family tomb. Was she his sister or wife?

DNA was used to test the patine of the ossuaries and any bone fragments in the bone boxes. DNA indicated that Jesus and Mary, Magdalene were not related, therefore the idea of marriage was strong.

Another interesting factor in this idea is the inscription of an ossuary found that contained "Judah, son of Jesus."

I found this book very interesting, not just for the archeological detail of ancient burial tombs but for the detailed DNA information.

Michael McClelland says

Interesting account of the discovery (and rediscovery) of a tomb in Jerusalem containing remains that indicate a family with remarkable similarity to the genealogy described (and further hinted at) in canonical and non-canonical Christian gospels regarding Jesus Christ, was laid to rest within it. Neither of the authors are writers foremost, nor especially unbiased in the beliefs, and the book suffers somewhat as a result.

Despite this the investigation and evidence is a mix of the compelling, entertaining, informative, statistically awful and (admittedly) wildly speculative.

The narrative push is the production of a documentary ("The Lost Tomb of Jesus") chronicling the discovery and the investigation (both historical/cultural and scientific) of the tomb and its contents.

The schedule of the documentary (or perhaps it's bureaucratic obstacles from Israeli authorities) seems to negatively impact the study of the tomb: why stop with "proving" that Jesus and Mariamne/Mary Magdalene are husband and wife? It would surely be more compelling to prove that any remains in the ossuary marked "Judah, son of Jesus" are also related to Mariamne!

Taken at any level, the book documents an important discovery that has the potential to (as the cover suggests) "change history forever". Whether this is change is on a personal scale, or a global one, is a matter not yet determined by this book.

Hamdi Hassan says

Petra says

This book contains interesting ideas and information. I learned a lot about ossuaries and some more on the history of the beginnings of Christianity. However, the book is geared towards the Discovery Channel documentary on this subject. Most of this book is the telling of the lead-up into the investigation into this family tomb, the filming, the testing, the secrecy of the project. There are some interesting speculations, some interesting DNA results and lots of history and documentation to suggest that many of the claims are possible.

The evidence as told is compelling but with plenty of uninvestigated areas and that leaves a lot of questions. With a discovery such as this that could/would change many outlooks, it's important to get the science and evidence together in a strong way. In this way, this book fails. It starts looking at the evidence but then doesn't seem to follow through entirely. Throughout the book, I wondered why more interest and more detailed testing wasn't and isn't being done. In the scientific world, one would think that interest in these ossuaries and bones would be phenomenal but the opposite seems to be true.

In Isreal's system of archeological finds, it seems that the bones in an ossuary are removed for reburial at the time of discovery. Where were the bones of these ossuaries buried? Why is DNA testing not done on these bones? Or is this something that will be happening in the near future? The statistical evidence is interesting (individually the names on the ossuaries are common but as a family group they are rare). The preliminary DNA testing done on material in the ossuaries is compelling enough to delve deeper.

One chapter was pure speculation. Thankfully, the authors stated that it was speculation. Throughout the book there are plenty of "if", "could be", "is possible" statements, which take away from the validity of the evidence but a find like this should be investigated to the full extent of the science available.

If this tomb is truly the tomb of Jesus and his family, this could change many views, through many factions. Wouldn't we all like to know the truth of these ossuaries and bones?

This was an interesting read but not one of solid evidence. It did, though, have interesting facts and history of ossuaries, Jerusalem and early Christianity and pre- Christianity.

Aaron says

This book is not written for serious scholars of religion or history. In fact, there is very little in the way of citation in the book. In order to examine the manuscript claims of the book, you would have to have a good bit of knowledge of the field already, since the book gives no direction for those who wish to interact with the material at a reasonable level. If, for example, you were already familiar with the provenance of the "Acts of Phillip" or had read the work, you would know that using it to discover the "real" name of Mary Magdalene is an exercise in crypto-archaeology. There is no point at which the Acts of Phillip mentions Mary Magdalene, nor is there any point at which Mary Magdalene is called "Mariamne" in ancient texts. Plus, the idea that a fourteenth century manuscript can tell us the *real* name of someone testified to in first-century documents is the acme of silliness. Ancient texts are mishandled throughout the book. Take, for example, this citation from page 98:

As recorded in the Gospel of Thomas, Simon and [sic] Peter, in sayings 22 and 114, eventually rose and spoke out against Mary Magdalene... And jesus replied, with more than a hint of wry humor, "Behold! I shall guide her as to make her male, that she too may become a living spirit like you men..."

Let's catalogue the errors in this very brief example:

- Simon and Peter are two names for one man, "Simon Peter." The fact that neither the authors nor anyone on their editing team knew this does not speak well for their understanding of the text in question.
- The Gospel of Thomas is a "sayings gospel"-- unconnected sayings (attributed to Jesus) with no apparent chronology. There is no "eventuality" to be inferred.
- Simon Peter does not speak in saying 22.
- Saying 114 seems to reflect exactly what an Egyptian gnostic group might believe. The authors read humor into the text.
- The authors append the end of saying 22 to the middle of saying 114, and cite the amalgam as "Gospel of Thomas, saying 114".

Factual errors are actually the least of the problems. The *claims about* the facts are worse, for here, the authors treat their wild fancies as necessary conclusions. Speculations about the Knights Templar become "explanations" of the "facts" of the Talpiot tomb. The Biblical gospels are dismissed in favor of speculation *when their contents are inconvenient*, but paraded as evidence wherever they can provide support. A plain ossuary which was catalogued but subsequently lost is claimed to have been the so-called "James ossuary," a magnificently-ornate box whose measurements do not match those of the plain one. The claims of experts appear without context so that they cannot be examined. On top of that, several of the experts have revealed that their statements were taken out of context and that their work does not allow for the conclusions of the authors!

The book identifies two groups, the Ebionites and the Nazarenes, as early Jewish followers of Jesus, citing Irenaeus for the name, but supplying an invented history of the groups. Suddenly, they are "the original [Jesus] movement" who "lost its power base and disappeared from official histories" when a new group, the Gentile Christians, took over (p. 36). No shred of evidence is supplied.

All of this occurs without even the slightest hint that there might be contrary evidence. The authors completely neglect the testimony of Amos Kloner, who actually discovered and catalogued the tomb in favor of his erstwhile colleague, James Tabor. Jacobovici has said in interviews that he's just presenting the facts for others to evaluate, but you'd never know it by reading the book-- you'd think he had an agenda.

I have no doubt that this book will sell well in the current market, which is a shame, but don't let "true believers" try to convince you that these men have proven anything aside from the fact that they have no case at all.

Kimber says

In 1980, a discovery was made under the rubble of a construction site in Jerusalem--a tomb containing the ossuaries of Yeshua, Mary, Mary and Joseph, as well as "Judah, son of Yeshua"....Could this be the tomb of Jesus and Mary Magdaline? and if so they must have been married and had a son.....This should be the story of the century and perhaps the documentary is better written. It's the writing style that really ruined this book for me. The authors were overly-dramatic and dazzled by their subject matter when archaeology is something to be taken seriously and it would have been enough if they could have stood behind their science and let the story sparkle on its own. Even though they did do DNA testing, science demands MORE testing. They have shown that their hypothesis is POSSIBLE that this was the tomb of Jesus and Mary and that he did not rise from the dead as is taught in Sunday School.....but they didn't scientifically prove it. And on top of everything else, the writing was simply a bore.

Todd says

Imagine stumbling upon the final resting place of Jesus the Christ and his family. This seems something out of speculative fiction or mythology yet that is what the authors purport to have found.

A construction crew working in the Talipot suburb of Jerusalem in the 1980's accidentally uncovered a tomb that has been dubbed the tomb of 10 ossuaries, which in and of itself is not miraculous as this occurs frequently.

But what is unusual were the names inscribed on the ossuaries. The grouping would indicate that this was the final resting place of Jesus, Joseph, Mary, at least one of his brothers and a mysterious Mirianne, who later would be potentially identified as Mary Magdalene (she was known by her Greek name, Mirianne). There is even a mysterious box of bones containing a Judas (or Judah) son of Jesus.

In all fairness Charles, the statistician does admit it is a 2.2 million to 1 long shot that the tomb is really the Jesus of Legend. Certainly Israeli archeologists dismissed such a connection due to the commonality of the names. One researcher remarked you could shout the name, "Mary" in a 1st century Palestinian marketplace and a thousand women would turn their heads so common was the name.

However, our stalwart statistician will tell us that as common as the names were the grouping they are found in at Talipot is rare. In fact it would take the populations of 4 Jerusalems before that pattern would be repeated.

The story told in this book, a companion piece for the Discovery Channel documentary, is interesting and fun only the very credulous of readers would conclude that this is the final resting place of Jesus and company.

Yet it is still a pretty compelling argument and one that will challenge traditional concepts of Jesus death and resurrection. Perhaps he was nothing more than a local messianic teacher (a failed one at that by Jewish standards) upon which later generations would overlay a story of the resurrected God-Man

The authors touch upon the short lived practice of secondary burial in 1st century Jerusalem and the significance of ossuary usage. They also give some insight into the Israeli Antiquities Authority and the antiquities business in general.

The book is destined to be controversial given the large number of people that believe in the physical or bodily resurrection of Jesus and his ascension into heaven as well as the bodily assumption of the Virgin Mary. The finding of mortal remains would cast doubt over many long time cherished traditions.

The writing is lively

Dorene says

Wonderful. It blew my mind!!!

Speesh says

The problem with this kind of book nowadays, post-Dan Brown anyway, is that many people will dismiss them out of hand as being *Da Vinci Code*-like. Still, even if the 'real' Jesus turned up nowadays, most Christians wouldn't believe he was the real Jesus. Neither would the archaeologists and/or biblical scholars who have made a very nice living thank you very much out of their view of things being the view. A bit like how Christianity became after Paul. More on that sort of thing at a later date. So, to come from another background than dusty academia, you better have all your scholarly ducks in a row. So, that is what a lot of this book is about. There is the premise, that they have found the tomb of the family of Jesus and then there is the background for that reasoning. To try and head critics off at the pass, they basically play devil's advocate with themselves, the whole time, to try and back up their findings before others try and tear them down.

It works very well, all in all. I'm not sure how respected James Cameron is in these circles, but I maybe would have left him as a shadowy backer, I'd suspect '*the director of Titanic*' wouldn't carry much weight in scholarly circles. That the majority of objections come from Jewish scholars, is also good, as I'd assume they'd be more objective (I can't recall, but I think that Simcha is Jewish as well). I think too, that the title, second part, would refer to the fact that it would have been easier, less disruptive to their lives, if they had 'overlooked' the discovery. Maybe so. There is of course, a lot of background to the times when they say the tomb is from and about current Jewish laws and feelings, which is fascinating and equally as strong as the actual arguments for their hypothesis for me.

I used to and have read a lot of '*this sort of thing*' in the past and this is perhaps one of the best, most open and non-sensational books I've read on the subjects.

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