



The Jesus Family Tomb?

Think again...

“...there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in false opinions. They will even deny the Master who bought them...” 2 Peter 2:1

Basically this is old news with a new interpretation. We have known about this tomb since it was discovered in 1980. There are all sorts of reasons to see this as much ado about nothing much:

- 1) The statistical analysis is of course only as good as the numbers that were provided to the statistician. He couldn't run numbers he did not have. And when you try to run numbers on a combination name such as 'Jesus son of Joseph' you decrease the statistical sample dramatically. In fact, in the case of 'Jesus son of Joseph' you decrease it to a statistically insignificant number! Furthermore, so far as we can tell, the earliest followers of Jesus never called Jesus 'son of Joseph'. It was outsiders who mistakenly called him that! Would the family members such as James who remained in Jerusalem really put that name on Jesus' tomb when they knew otherwise?
- 2) There is no independent DNA control sample to compare to what was garnered from the bones in this tomb. By this I mean that the most the DNA evidence can show is that several of these folks are inter-related. Big deal. We would need an independent control sample from some member of Jesus' family to confirm that these were members of Jesus' family. We do not have that at all. In addition mitochondrial DNA does not reveal genetic coding or XY chromosome make up anyway. They would need nuclear DNA for that in any case. So the DNA stuff is probably thrown in to make this look more like a real scientific fact. Not so much.
- 3) Several of these ossuaries have very popular and familiar early Jewish names. As the statistics above show, the names Joseph and Joshua (Jesus) were two of the most common names in all of early Judaism. So was Mary. Indeed both Jesus' mother and her sister were

named Mary. This is the ancient equivalent of finding adjacent tombs with the names Smith and Jones.

4) The historical problems with all this are too numerous to list here:

A) the ancestral home of Joseph was Bethlehem, and his adult home was Nazareth. The family was still in Nazareth after he was apparently dead and gone. Why in the world would he be buried (alone at this point) in Jerusalem? It's unlikely. B) One of the ossuaries has the name Jude son of Jesus. We have no historical evidence of such a son of Jesus, indeed we have no historical evidence he was ever married; C) the Mary ossuaries (there are two) do not mention anyone from Migdal. It simply has the name Mary-- and that's about the most common of all ancient Jewish female names. D) we have names like Matthew on another ossuary, which don't match up with the list of brothers' names.

E) By all ancient accounts, the tomb of Jesus was empty-- even the Jewish and Roman authorities acknowledged this. Now it takes a year for the flesh to desiccate, and then you put the man's bones in an ossuary. But Jesus' body was long gone from Joseph of Arimathea's tomb well before then. Are we really to believe it was moved to another tomb, decayed, and then was put in an ossuary? It's not likely. F) Implicitly you must accuse James, Peter and John (mentioned in Gal. 1-2-- in our earliest NT document from 49 A.D.) of fraud and coverup. Are we really to believe that they knew Jesus didn't rise bodily from the dead but perpetrated a fraudulent religion, for which they and others were prepared to die? Did they really hide the body of Jesus in another tomb? We need to remember that the James in question is Jesus' brother, who would have known about a family tomb. This frankly is impossible for me to believe.

From the website of Ben Witherington:

<http://benwitherington.blogspot.com/2007/02/jesus-tomb-titanic-talpiot-tomb-theory.html>

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