

**I. Introduction: The biblical account of Jesus' resurrection is (again) under attack.**

- A. *The Discovery Channel* has aired "The Lost Tomb of Jesus" in which James Cameron and Simcha Jacobovici claim to have found the remains of Jesus in a Jerusalem ossuary (bone box).
- B. How do they support their claim?
1. In 1980, ten limestone bone boxes (ossuaries) dated to the first century were discovered in an excavated tomb in the Jerusalem suburb of Talpiot.
  2. Six inscriptions were discovered with names similar to or the same as some of Jesus' family: Jesus, son of Joseph; Maria; Mariamene e Mara; Matthew; Jofa; and Judah, son of Jesus.
  3. They suggest Mariamene is Mary Magdalene and that she and Jesus had a son.
  4. DNA analysis from the bone fragments of *Jesus* and *Mariamene* indicate they were not related, raising the possibility they may have been husband and wife.
  5. The probability of the name cluster found in the tomb belonging to a different family is 600 to 1, implying strong odds in favor of Jesus being buried there.
- C. How credible is their claim?
1. Thousands of such tombs and ossuaries have been found in Jerusalem.
  2. The inscriptions themselves are not clear.
  3. The names Jesus, Mary, and Joseph were extremely common in the first century.
  4. Calculations of probability are based upon unsound assumptions.
  5. The 600 to 1 odds are that a family in those days would have such a combination of names, which means there would have been many such combinations.
  6. There is no credible evidence that Mary Magdalene was called Mariamene.
  7. The DNA evidence proves nothing other than the fact that two of the bodies (the only two tested) from the tomb were not maternally related.
  8. Our Lord was known as Jesus of Nazareth, not Jesus of Jerusalem. Mt. 2:23 21:11 26:71 Mark 1:24 Luke 2:39 4:16,34 18:37 John 1:45 Acts 10:38 26:9
  9. The family tomb in Jerusalem was for an upper middle class family. Jesus' family was poor. Luke 2:24 9:58
  10. Why didn't Jesus' enemies expose the tomb during the first century? Mt. 27:11ff
  11. Why would Jesus' family and followers bury Him in a family plot and then turn around and preach that He had been raised from the dead?
  12. The vast majority of archaeological scholars sharply disagree with Cameron and Jacobovici's conclusions.
  13. This theory was put forth in a way which would maximize publicity and profit, as opposed to submitting to scientific scrutiny.
- D. Why would these men want to *fill* the tomb of Jesus?
1. "Science" is not necessarily neutral. Many "scientists" have an agenda.
  2. If they have found the bones of Jesus, then Christianity is a myth. I Co. 15:12-19
  3. How do we respond to such attacks upon our faith? II Cor. 10:3-5

**II. God has given us ample proof that Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead.**

- A. The tomb of Jesus is empty. Luke 24:1-3
1. Jesus' enemies did everything possible to secure the body. Mt. 27:62-66
  2. Those who during the first century tried to disprove the resurrection, failed to produce a body. Mt. 28:11-15

- B. We have the testimony of hundreds of eyewitnesses. I Cor. 15:1-8**
- 1. Which would be more acceptable in a court of law: vague circumstantial evidence collected nearly 2000 years after the events, or the testimony of eyewitnesses whose words were recorded at the time? I John 1:1ff *What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life...***
  - 2. A thorough investigation was conducted by a man of science shortly after Jesus' death and resurrection. Luke 1:1-4 24:6 *In as much as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order... so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught.***
  - 3. Eyewitnesses testify that the risen Jesus appeared to them on several occasions.**
    - a. Mary Magdalene. John 20:10-18**
    - b. Other women. Matthew 28:8-10**
    - c. Cleopas and another disciple on the road to Emmaus. Luke 24:13-22**
    - d. Eleven disciples and others. Luke 24:33-49**
    - e. Ten apostles without Thomas. John 20:19-23**
    - f. Thomas and the other apostles. John 20:26-30**
    - g. Seven of the apostles. John 21:1-14**
    - h. The disciples. Mt. 28:16-20**
    - i. The apostles at the Mount of Olives before His ascension. Lu. 24:50f Acts 1:4f**
  - 4. They repeatedly gave bold public testimony. Acts 2:23-24 3:15 10:41 13:31**
- C. The truth of the resurrection is proven by the transformation which took place in those who met the risen Jesus.**
- 1. Those who had been skeptical about Jesus' resurrection believed when they saw Jesus. John 20:25-29 7:5 Luke 24:11-12 Acts 9: 1ff I Cor. 15:7-10**
  - 2. The disciples, who had previously dispersed in despair and fear, devoted their lives to boldly spreading the news of the risen Christ. Mt. 26:56,69ff**
  - 3. The eyewitnesses were willing to die for their testimony.**
- D. Jesus' resurrection fulfills prophecies made centuries before. Ps. 16:8-11 Is. 53:10-12 Luke 24:26-27,44-46 Acts 2:25ff Mt. 12:38-42 17:22-23**
- E. People continue to testify to the risen Jesus today. Rom. 6:3-7 II Cor. 5:17**
- F. Jesus ascended to heaven from where He will return in glory. Acts 1:9-11**

**III. What is the significance of the resurrection for each of us?**

- A. The resurrection proves Jesus is Who He says He is. John 2:19-22 Rom. 1:4 *He was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead.***
- B. The resurrection demonstrates that Jesus has successfully accomplished redemption, the forgiveness of sins through His sacrificial death. Romans 4:25 8:34 *He was delivered over because of our transgressions and was raised because of our justification.***
- C. We Christians are united with Jesus in the power of His resurrection unto a newness of life. Rom. 6:3-5 II Co. 5:17**
- D. One day we shall be raised and glorified, just as He is. I Cor. 15:50-57,21-28,18 6:14 I Th. 4:13 I Jo. 3:2 Phil. 3:20-21**
- E. Our hope of resurrection transforms our present lives. Co. 3:1-2 I Jo. 3:3 II Pe. 3:11**

**IV. Conclusion: The evidence for the resurrection demands a verdict. Acts 17:30-31**

### Discussion questions

1. Why doesn't the DNA evidence prove Jesus' bones were found in the Talpiot tomb?
2. Why doesn't statistical evidence prove Jesus is buried in the Talpiot tomb?
3. Why would people want to suggest they have found Jesus' body?
4. How should Christians respond to such attacks upon our faith?
5. What proof does the Bible offer for the resurrection of Jesus?  
Why is this evidence superior to that offered by the *Discovery Channel* documentary?
6. How would you answer those who say the resurrection of Jesus was a hallucination?
7. How would you answer those who say Jesus just fainted and never died?
8. How would you answer those who say Jesus rose spiritually but not physically?

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