The 'secret' tomb of Jesus: Is it bigger than a bread box?

by Charita M. Goshay

For 2,000 years, the world's premier archeologists, theologians and historians have sifted through the sands of time in search of evidence supporting the life, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth.

So, who claims they may finally have incontrovertible proof? The guy who brought us "The Terminator." Three times.

Hollywood filmmaker James Cameron has produced a documentary that claims that the "Lost Tomb of Jesus" has been unearthed in Jerusalem. The tomb in question contained three, small, stone containers called ossuaries, which Cameron believes may have, once upon a time, contained the remains of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, and their "son," Judah.

Cameron and the researchers with whom he worked are basing their theory primarily on the age of the ossuaries and the names "Jesus," "Mariamene" and "Judas, son of Jesus," which are carved on the ossuaries.

HAS JESUS LEFT THE BUILDING?

It should be noted that all three names were extremely common in first-century Israel. It also should be noted that the tomb and the ossuaries were found, well, empty.

Where have we heard that plotline?

At least it didn't contain an empty beer bottle, like Al Capone's vault.

Cameron's theory, of course, chips at the very cornerstone of Christianity, that Jesus physically rose from the dead three days after his crucifixion.

The documentary doubtless will provide more fodder for those faithful who already are convinced that the world is out to get them.

Guess what? It is.

So what?

Don't let the numbers fool you. True religion has never been popular. People don't like their shortcomings and hypocrisies exposed, which is partly what religion does.

POPULARITY ISN'T THE POINT

Jesus never promised his followers they would win homecoming queen. In fact, just the opposite. Ten of his 12 his original disciples were murdered.

One could say that bad religion has caused more chaos, carnage, tears and torture on this planet than any thing else (See: Iraq), so why would people readily embrace it?

True Christianity is a strange faith, one that requires people to do the opposite of what comes naturally. Though he's known as a harbinger of peace, Jesus had a pesky habit of making people angry and uncomfortable, frequently saving his best jabs for the most religious.

He wasn't killed because it was Friday.

Although many Christians seem to be taking Cameron's theory with the same grain of salt as "The DaVinci Code," others are going to the mattresses, dispatching critical e-mails at DefCon speed and all but crowning Cameron as Satan's advance man.

NOT SEEING IS BELIEVING

Challenges to Jesus' story are older than the Scriptures themselves. Religion reporters frequently receive press releases announcing that Jesus is in India, or Puerto Rico ... or in the lobby.

But true religion is not incumbent upon the physical. It bears its own evidence by the difference it makes in

the world. If your faith requires constant defending, if it is as wobbly as a drunk on stilts, why bother?

Nothing should be able to unravel your belief, and it shouldn't matter what James Cameron, or even King James, says about it.

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