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A Weekly Devotional from the
South Green Street Church of Christ

Burial Box of James, Jesus' Brother Discovered?

by Steve Higginbotham

One of yesterday's more interesting news stories which has stirred a great deal of excitement among many biblical archaeologists, is the possible discovery of an ossuary (a burial box) which at one time, would have contained the remains of James, the brother of Jesus. Engraved on this stone box is the inscription in Aramaic, "James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus."

According to the scholars, from all appearances, this box seems to be genuine. The greatest criticism is that "Joseph," "James," and "Jesus" were fairly common names in the first century like "Tom," "Dick," and "Harry." However, naming the brother as well as the father on an ossuary is very unusual. In fact, there's only one other known example of this in Aramaic. Thus, it is likely that this "Jesus" must have had some unusual role or fame for him to be included in the inscription.

Now here's the point of this writing. Suppose it can be proven that this is indeed is an ancient artifact verifying the life of Jesus, and the testimony of Scripture (Matthew 13:55). Do you think that suddenly churches will be filled to overflowing with people clamoring to surrender their lives to Jesus. Or what about the highly publicized searches for Noah's ark. Suppose it did survive the centuries and was discovered. Would preacher's hands be puckered from baptizing so many people? I think not.

The Bible was written to make believers (John 20:30-31). It contains sufficient evidence to convince one of the genuineness of Jesus' claims. If God's word can't prick the heart and bring about conviction, an ancient relic isn't going to do the job either. The power of conversion and the basis for faith is the Word of God, not the artifacts of the past. Keep preaching the Word, for it is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16).