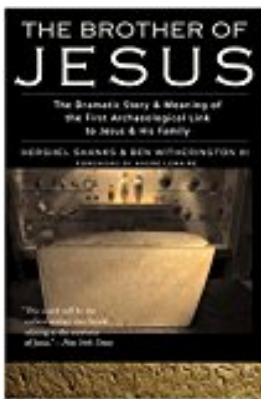


[PDF] The Brother Of Jesus: The Dramatic Story & Meaning Of The First Archaeological Link To Jesus & His Family

Ben Witherington III, Hershel Shanks - pdf download free book



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Description:

Before lay readers can grasp the significance of this book, they'll need a little historical reference. In the time of Jesus, the Jews of Jerusalem often buried their dead in tombs. After a year, when the flesh had disintegrated, it was customary to gather the bones and place them in a small limestone chest called an ossuary. Sometimes the name of the deceased would be inscribed onto the outside of the box. Flash forward to the spring of 2002 when Andre Lemaire, a specialist in ancient texts, was asked to read the Aramaic inscription on an ossuary that was owned by a collector in Israel. When Lemaire translated the inscription--"James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus"--he knew he had just stumbled upon an artifact in the same caliber as the lost Ark of the Covenant.

Just as this artifact is now in safe hands, so is the amazing story of its discovery. Co-authors Hershel Shanks () and Ben Witherington III () are esteemed scholars as well as riveting storytellers. They expertly recount the exciting moments of discovery and the darker moments of despair (at one point the ossuary is improperly shipped and breaks into five pieces). They build a convincing case against its forgery and offer a flourishing finish in which they delve into the life of James, who was a linking force between the Jews and Christian of the first millennium, and could possibly continue that role into the second millennium. --*Gail Hudson*

From Publishers Weekly Last October, biblical archaeologists stunned the world with news that a limestone ossuary with the inscription "James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus" had surfaced in Palestine and may have once contained the bones of James, the early church leader and brother of Jesus of Nazareth. While it may seem a startling claim for the unassuming and unadorned 20-inch box, numerous scholars who have examined the ossuary now vouch for its first-century origins, if not its theological significance. Jews employed ossuaries for a relatively brief historical period (approximately 20 B.C. to A.D. 70), which fits with the textual evidence of James's martyrdom around A.D. 62. This book is the first full-length treatment of the ossuary, and is written by a couple of big guns: Shanks is the editor of the *Biblical Archaeology Review* (which first broke the story), and Witherington is a seminary professor and author of a score of books on the Bible. Their collaboration is a well-argued and truly fascinating study of the ossuary and its importance. The opening chapters tell of the box's discovery and authentication, while the later chapters discuss its potential relevance and describe what is at stake if the ossuary is genuine. Particularly interesting is the book's discussion of what the ossuary does for Jewish-Christian relations: James, the bishop of Jerusalem, was known for encouraging Christians to retain aspects of their Jewish heritage instead of jettisoning that heritage as Paul had. This engaging book invites readers to ponder the numerous questions and possibilities raised by the ossuary's discovery.

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