

Announcement of James Tabor's book, "The Jesus Dynasty"

Faculty scholarship is frequently of interest to other researchers in the field, but it rarely draws a national media spotlight. University of North Carolina at Charlotte Professor James D. Tabor's new book, *The Jesus Dynasty*, is an exception.

Because of the release of this high-profile book on April 4, Tabor, chair of the Department of Religious Studies, is going to be prominently featured in the local and national news. The book is published in the United States by Simon & Schuster and in the United Kingdom by HarperCollins.

On April 7, Tabor is kicking off an international tour in which he will be giving interviews, delivering lectures and attending book-signings, starting with coverage on three ABC News shows – "Good Morning America," "20/20" and "Nightline" – all airing Friday.

Tabor will begin the tour at home in Charlotte on April 11 with a talk and book-signing at the Joseph-Beth Bookstore at Southpark Mall. Earlier that day, he will be a guest on WFAE-FM's "Charlotte Talks," interviewed by host Mike Collins. A review of *The Jesus Dynasty* ran in *The Charlotte Observer* on April 1, and the newspaper is also planning a feature on Tabor and his work for later in the month.

Dr. Tabor will be using earned vacation leave from the University when promotional activities associated with publication of the book will take him away from assigned University responsibilities.

Nationally, Tabor and his publisher, Simon & Schuster, anticipate that the book will draw a considerable amount of further media attention, with media interviews scheduled for Atlanta, Chicago, San Francisco, Seattle, Portland, Philadelphia, Boston, and other American cities, as well as in Canada and the United Kingdom.

In addition to the appearances on ABC, coverage of Tabor and the book will also be part of an article in an upcoming issue of *US News & World Report*, and Tabor has already been scheduled to appear on WAGA-TV's "Good Day Atlanta" (Fox, Atlanta), KRON-TV's "News Weekend" (independent, San Francisco), and WIP-AM's "Conversations with Peter Solomon" (Philadelphia) – all later in the month.

Why is one book drawing all this attention? Nationally prominent as a biblical scholar and biblical archaeologist, Tabor has written a speculative scholarly book re-interpreting

the life of Jesus Christ from a strictly historical perspective. Tabor bases his conclusions on biblical scholarship and archaeological evidence, rather than theology.

The resulting book is an intriguing look into the history of Jesus and his times, but is sure to be controversial. Tabor bases his historical hypotheses on a purely human Jesus and on evidence of family and political dynamics outside the accepted doctrines of most Christian sects.

Simon & Schuster offers the following summary of the book:

“Based on 20 years of intense archaeological studies and analysis of the Dead Sea Scrolls, Tabor argues that Jesus, a descendant of the royal house of David, proclaimed himself to be a kingly leader of the Jews and established a royal dynasty to lead a movement of spiritual, political and social change. Rather than founding a new religion, Jesus—together with kinsman John the Baptist—had a national agenda to return the nation of Israel to God, overthrow the earthly powers that be, and bring peace and justice to all nations.

The Jesus Dynasty, which passed after his death first to his brother James, then to his brother Simon, was intended to follow the royal bloodline of the Jesus family and bring redemption to the enslaved nation of Israel. It was not until the apostle Paul, who never knew Jesus prior to his crucifixion by the Romans, broke with the Jesus Dynasty that a new religion – what we today know as Christianity – was born. Jesus became a figure whose humanity was obscured; John the Baptizer became merely a forerunner of Jesus; and his brother James and the others in the dynasty were all but forgotten.”

Though he knows his thesis is a sensitive topic, Tabor is not trying to provoke or offend Christians, but to provoke thought and discovery. As the publisher again notes: “Much of *The Jesus Dynasty* will be controversial, but Tabor is a historian and not a theologian; his quest is to learn about the historical Jesus...*The Jesus Dynasty* brings to life the world in which Jesus lived and died.”

At last report, advance sales for the book (now available at bookstores) have been very brisk. The book will appear later this year in Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Spanish and more other languages.

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