

Responding to *The Jesus Dynasty: The Hidden History of Jesus, His Royal Family and the Birth of Christianity*
by James Tabor
(Talking points for Pastors)

A Summary by Daniel L. Akin

- 1) James Tabor is a liberal and speculative religious professor who heads the Religious Studies Department at UNC Charlotte.
- 2) He has or will make appearances on “Nightline,” Good Morning America and “20/20.”
- 3) Tabor argues Jesus was a member of an important Jesus family and along with John the Baptist, a Messiah for the Jewish people.
- 4) Following his death, James the Lord’s half-brother attempted to continue the Jesus Dynasty. However, his efforts are likewise cut short by his martyrdom.
- 5) Paul is to be blamed for transforming the Jewish Jesus movement into a Christian mission to the Gentiles. Breaking with James and Jerusalem, Paul preached a message based on his own revelations that would become Christianity.
- 6) As a result of the efforts of Paul, Jesus becomes a person whose humanity is obscured; the Baptist merely a forerunner; James and other Jewish followers basically forgotten.
- 7) Mary is no virgin, having sex with not one but three men.
- 8) Jesus’ father was actually a Roman soldier names Pantera, thus reviving an anti-Jesus polemic advocated by Celsus in the patristic era. As he said on Nightline, “I think all humans have a human father.”
- 9) Jesus was actually a disciple of John the Baptist from whom he learned a great deal.
- 10) The beloved disciple was actually James, Jesus’ brother, not the apostle John.
- 11) All of Jesus’ brothers were among his early followers who were akin to his cabinet as he shaped his provisional government.
- 12) “Rather than a church, or a new religion, Jesus established a royal dynasty.” He expected to inaugurate an earthly kingdom, ala Albert Schweitzer’s view.
- 13) The tomb of Jesus was empty on Easter morning because his followers reburied him, possibly in the family tomb. Tabor therefore denies both the virgin birth and the bodily resurrection.
- 14) Tabor is guided and driven by an antisupernatural bias and rules out the divine or miraculous *de facto*.
- 15) Tabor therefore begins with the errancy and fallibility of the Bible.
- 16) Tabor puts undue importance on the hypothetical gospel document known as *Q* (*Quelle*), calling it “our most authentic early Christian document.” In this he aligns himself with a key affirmation of the infamous “Jesus Seminar.”
- 17) Tabor’s method, though at points rooted in solid historical facts, is highly speculative and inconsistently selective. He will read one text as literally true, but reject the next as unreliable. Such an arbitrary method tells one more about Tabor than Jesus!
- 18) Tabor is to be respected as a capable and hardworking archeologist.

- 19) A resurrected Jesus needs no successor to carry on His dynasty. He is the dynasty, the King, eternal who reigns forever!
- 20) The conclusions of James Howell, pastor of Myers Park United Methodist Church in Charlotte, NC, are surely on target, *“Though Tabor has much hard evidence, he builds on facts with a hypothesis, then a guess, a few more facts, then another two hypotheses, an artifact that admits of multiple interpretations, another fact, then a guess- then he connects all these dots in one of dozens of possible ways. The feel in this marvelously well-written volume is that he is building a structure of facts toward his conclusion, and the reader may easily forget that a hypothesis is merely a hypothesis, and a string of them become guesswork.”*