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4300 Marsh Ridge Road • Suite 114 • Carrollton, TX 75010
972.267.1111 • 972.267.3535 (fax) • www.alarryross.com

FOR INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Steve Yount 972.267.1111, X 205

steve@alarryross.com

Lauren Williams 972-267-1111, X 224

lauren@alarryross.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Documentary Sheds Light On Everyday Life in Biblical Times:

National Geographic Channel Airs 'Living in the Time of Jesus' Dec. 21

TORONTO, Dec. 10, 2010 – If you've ever wondered what life was like in biblical times or even tried to imagine the circumstances of Jesus' birth more than 2,000 years ago, a new documentary will transport you to the Holy Land of Christ's day this Christmas season. "Living in the Time of Jesus," a three-part documentary, will air beginning at 8 p.m. ET Dec. 21 on the [National Geographic Channel](#).

"Most Christians know the Bible stories, but they don't know Jesus' world," says Simcha Jacobovici, one of the executive producers of "Living in the Time of Jesus" and a three-time Emmy Award winner. "How did people make a living? What did they eat? What did they wear? And what happened when they got sick or broke the law?"

"These are the questions we set out to answer, and I think viewers will find that the documentary gives them a whole new understanding of the story of Jesus this Christmas season."

"Living in the Time of Jesus," made by Associated Producers Ltd., received the prestigious stamp of approval from the Dove Foundation.

The first episode, "Making a Living," examines typical professions of the day, such as carpenter, fisherman and weaver. Interestingly, Dr. James Tabor of the University of North Carolina-Charlotte, who appears in the film, says it is more likely that Jesus was a stone mason than a carpenter.

He points out that in the Bible's ancient Greek, the word "tekton," meaning artisan or builder, is used to describe Jesus. "So it could be any kind of builder," Tabor says. "You notice there's not a lot of wood in a [Judean] home, but more stone."

"Living in the Time of Jesus" features a wide range of experts, many from the world of academia but also everyday people, including a 90-year-old Bedouin midwife who explains what delivery procedures may have been like in Jesus' day in the second

episode, "Healing the Sick."

The documentary also reveals that the average woman had six children, and that infant and child mortality were in the 50 percent range. Virtually everyone had lost a child, or a brother or sister. The average man lived about 31 years; the average woman 28. Even a mild ailment, like a cut on your hand or a tooth abscess, could become life-threatening. Therefore, experts tell us that individuals in biblical times were more familiar with death than we are today. In their world, miracle workers like Jesus were celebrities.

The host of "Living in the Time of Jesus" is Arne Kislenko, Associate Professor of History at Ryerson University in Toronto. He goes to great lengths to help viewers understand Christ's world. To demonstrate the primitive nature of health care in biblical times, he has his "bad blood" extracted by a sucking leech and gets covered in mud for medicinal purposes at the Dead Sea.

In the third episode, "Crime and Punishment," he allows himself to be gently whipped by a Jewish rabbi and dons the armor and clothing of a Roman soldier. The overall result for viewers should be a vivid understanding of the tension between Jewish traditions and Roman law, providing the context for the crucifixion.

The first century was a period of political strife in Judea. During Passover, Jerusalem, normally a small city, swelled to hundreds of thousands of people because of the influx of pilgrims. Riots became more likely, and Roman governors, like Pontius Pilate, often came to Jerusalem to help maintain order.

Kislenko interviews a former Israeli commando, an arrest specialist, to gain insight into how the Romans may have planned Jesus' arrest in Gethsemane.

The documentary concludes not at Golgotha, the site of the crucifixion, but at Masada, a mountain fortress. Forty years after Jesus' death, more than 900 Jewish rebels committed suicide rather than being captured by the Romans, who turned out to be the ultimate losers in the conflict.

"Their empire, their power did not last," Kislenko says in concluding the documentary. "But the Jewish group whose leader was arrested at Gethsemane ended up becoming the biggest religion in the world - Christianity".

Please visit <http://channel.nationalgeographic.com/channel/> or check your local listings for more information.