

Lessons on The DaVinci Code

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Introduction

Two weeks ago, my wife and I went to Applebee's Restaurant for dinner. In the booth next to us sat a young couple, discussing the DaVinci Code over their meal.

Last week, we vacationed in Montana. While there, we went to see the DaVinci Code movie. I had read the book, but wanted to see if the movie was any different. (It was different, by the way, in that it not only put forth the same errors as in the book, but also tried to defend them against the criticism that has arisen around the book.) The point of interest now, though, is that there were people milling about outside the theater, and they were all discussing the DaVinci Code. "What did you think?" seemed to be a prevalent question in the air.

On the return flight from Montana I sat next to a middle aged woman. As we taxied down the runway for takeoff, she removed a maroon paperback book from her carry-on bag - The DaVinci Code. She was engrossed in the book throughout the flight.

For weeks now, there have been specials on the Discovery Channel, the History Channel, the Learning Channel, ABC, CBS, and NBC, all purporting to explain the truth behind The DaVinci Code.

This book has sold millions of copies and is the talk of the world.

DISCUSSION - Before we go further, let me do some level setting. How many of you have read the book, "The DaVinci Code?" How many have seen the movie? Can someone explain to the class in just a sentence or two the subject matter of the book / movie?

The basic premise of the book is that Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene, had a child, and upon His death Mary and the child were spirited away to France where they were protected from the evil church which wanted to kill them. Down through history secret societies such as Opes Dei and the Priory of Scion have kept the secret of the true holy grail (which was Mary Magdalene, not a cup, but a person who contained the bloodline of Christ) until such a time as it could safely be revealed. The church, down through history, has attempted to suppress this truth. Certain people, such as Leonardo DaVinci, were privy to the truth and included clues about it in his works. The Last Supper painting figures prominently in the story, supposedly containing the actual picture of Mary Magdalene. According to Dan Brown and the DaVinci Code, Jesus wanted Mary to be the head of the church, not the apostles. The idea of the "sacred feminine" figures prominently throughout the book.

Several weeks ago, when I heard that a movie was soon to hit the big screen, I was of the opinion that this is a subject we need to address. Based on the buzz surrounding it, I still think that is true. We need to be able to defend our faith. Much of the silliness in the book revolves around issues pertaining to Catholicism, and as such may not seem relevant to you and I. However, again, we need to be able to defend the faith. Although Catholicism is a corrupt branch of Christendom, it is, in the world's eyes, Christianity. Can you provide an answer when the lost world or an uninformed babe in Christ asks questions about this stuff?

So, I would like to suggest two main reasons why we should look into this material:

1. To EQUIP ourselves to defend the faith. If people ask you about it, you need to be able to provide an answer. This book is a direct attack against the Word of God and Christianity when it says things like:

"What I mean," Teabing countered, "is that almost everything our fathers taught us about Christ is false."¹

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: - (1 Peter 3:15)

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for

the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. - (Jude 1:3-4)

2. To ENCOURAGE one another in the faith. When these kind of blatant attacks against the faith come out, it is easy to become discouraged. Understanding the truth of the matter, however, provides great encouragement. *Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. (John 8:31-32)*

Toward that end, let's delve into The DaVinci Code. We will start with the general topic of whether we can trust our Bibles or not. Everything else in the book hinges on this question - if the Bible is true, then the DaVinci Code is false, and if the DaVinci Code is true, then the Bible is false. There is no middle ground. It is not intellectually possible to believe the claims of both books. One or the other is true, and one or the other is a lie.

Once we've established the reliability of scripture, we will address a few of the more ridiculous claims Dan Brown makes in his book. Some of the topics we'll look at include:

1. Was Jesus' divinity an invention of the Catholic church? Is it true that the apostles never believed Jesus was the Son of God?
2. Were the 66 books in our Bibles chosen by a pagan emperor who was trying to suppress the truth? Are there other gospels that were intentionally left out of our Bibles because of somebody's political and religious agenda?
3. And of course, was Jesus married to Mary Magdalene, and did He father a child by her.

For sake of time, we will not address all of his nonsensical ideas, however, we ignore them only for sake of time, not because they are difficult to address. If there is a particular issue you would like to discuss, please mention it and we'll include it in the study. Every single thing in the DaVinci Code can be explained away. There is no support for the book's claims, and there is a multitude of support for the truth.

Is Our Bible Accurate and Reliable?

DISCUSSION - The real issue that the Davinci Code brings to the surface is this - Is the Bible the Word of God or not? Remember the quote I read a minute ago? "What I mean," Teabing countered, "is that almost everything our fathers taught us about Christ is false."² How would you respond to a question about that quote in the book? How would you answer somebody who wants to know why you believe the Bible is the Word of God?

Let's re-examine some of the reasons why we know the Bible is the Word of God. Several key passages will help us.

READ - 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:16-21 (I especially like what Peter says in vs. 16 - *we did not follow cunningly devised fables*. It's almost like he was writing knowing the DaVinci Code would come out with all its fables!

These verses are what we would call "internal evidence" about the Bible. It says it is the Word of God. That is enough for me, because as a saved man, the Holy Spirit of God dwells within me and convinces me of the truth of the Bible. We'll look at some more of this internal evidence momentarily. For the unsaved person, though, who truly wants to understand, there is an amazing amount of evidence to back up what the Bible says. Let's notice some of that.

1. Historical evidence - The argument of preservation - the Bible stands

SONG - The Bible Stands:

The Bible stands like a rock undaunted
'Mid the raging storms of time;
Its pages burn with the truth eternal,
And they glow with a light sublime.

The Bible stands like a mountain towering
Far above the works of men;
Its truth by none ever was refuted,
And destroy it they never can.

The Bible stands though the hills may tumble,
It will firmly stand when the earth shall crumble;
I will plant my feet on its firm foundation,
For the Bible stands.

The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever. (Psalm 12:6-7)

For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven. (Psalms 119:89)

The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever. (Isaiah 40:8)

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. (Matthew 24:35)

But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you. (1 Peter 1:25)

Many have attempted to destroy the Bible:

Diocletian, emperor of Rome, in 303 A.D. issued a decree calling for the destruction of all the scriptures of the Christians. Despite his best efforts, we still have the Bible today.

Then there was Voltaire, the French infidel, who died in 1778. He said that within 100 years of his time, Christianity and the Bible would be swept away from existence and pass into the obscurity of history. Yet 50 years after his death, the Geneva Bible Society used his house and printing press to produce stacks of Bibles.

There are plenty of other illustrations - book burnings during the Nazi and communist regimes come to mind. Many have tried to destroy the Word of God, yet amazingly, it stands. Many today, even in our beloved America are trying to destroy the Bible, yet it stands.

Last eve I paused before a blacksmith's door
and heard the anvil ring the vesper chime.
And looking in, I saw old hammers on the floor,
Worn by the beating years of time.

"How many anvils have you had," said I,
"To wear and batter all these hammers so?"
"Just one," said he, then with a twinkle in his eyes,
"The anvil wears the hammers out you know."

And so I thought, the anvil of God's word,
For ages skeptic blows have beat upon.
Yet though the noise of falling blows was heard
The anvil is unharmed - the hammers gone!

Source Unknown

The Bible is the Word of God - its indestructability is evidence of that fact.

2. Manuscript evidence - the argument from historical texts.

I'll mention this briefly, as it is touched on in the book, and then we'll deal with it more fully in another lesson.

Simply stated, there is more historical manuscript evidence of the truths in our Bibles than of any other truth of history, period.

"Homer's *Iliad* is far more reliable than other texts of antiquity. It is supported by 643 manuscript copies in existence today, with a mere 400-year time gap between the date of composition and the earliest copies we have available for examination today. But that standard pales in comparison to the New Testament.

Using the accepted standard for evaluating the textual reliability of ancient texts, the New Testament stands alone. It has no equal. No other book of the ancient world can even approach the reliability of the New Testament. Nearly 25,000 manuscripts of the New Testament repose in the libraries and universities of the world. The earliest of these is a fragment of John's gospel currently located in the John Rylands Library of Manchester, England; it has been dated to within 50 years of the date when the apostle John penned the original!

Based on the evidence of history, no other book compares to the Bible in manuscript authority and attestation (and, contrary to the fictitious and erroneous statements in *The DaVinci Code*, discoveries like the Dead Sea Scrolls have only added to that authority)."³

The Bible is the Word of God - It's indestructability provides evidence to that fact. The historical manuscripts provide overwhelming evidence to its authenticity.

3. Structural evidence - the argument from the construction of the document itself.

We've talked about this before - viewed from any angle, the Bible is an amazing book.

QUESTION - How many books are there in our Bibles? (66)

QUESTION - How many in the Old Testament? (39) New Testament? (27)

QUESTION - We believe (based on scriptures we read earlier) that God is the author of all 66 books, but how many human authors did He use to write these books? (about 40)

QUESTION - What language was the Bible written in? (Actually, there were 3 languages - Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.)

QUESTION - What is the oldest book? (many say it is Job - which may be as old as 6000 years old) The newest book? (Revelation - written approximately 96 AD)

Note that even if the dating of Job is incorrect, and it should actually be dated closer to the time of the exile (which some believe), the 66 books were still written over a period of at least 1500 years, by at least 40 different authors, in 3 different languages.

QUESTION - How many themes are there to the Bible? (ONE - Jesus Christ)

QUESTION - What is the likelihood that 40 different people who for the most part did not know each other, lived in different areas, lived as much as 1500 years apart, and wrote in different languages, could come up with a single book that has one coherent theme from beginning to end? (Impossible - only God could do such a thing.)

The Bible is the Word of God - It's indestructability provides evidence to that fact. The historical manuscripts provide overwhelming evidence to its authenticity, and its very structure is a miracle.

4. Eyewitness evidence - those who had the best view were willing to die for it.

An eyewitness is extremely valuable. In a courtroom, far more credence is given an eyewitness than someone whose testimony is based on heresy. In sports, the final judgement is almost always given to the umpire or referee, because they are right there, and are EYEWITNESSES of what happens in the game.

ILLUS - Recently, I got pulled into a discussion of *The DaVinci Code* with an unsaved friend. This person considered the paintings of Leonardo DaVinci to be good evidence of the true history of what happened in the first century, but completely dismissed the fact that the apostles provided EYEWITNESS accounts of those facts, and that is the greatest evidence there is! To believe the DaVinci Code over the Bible, you have to dismiss the testimony of hundreds of eyewitnesses.

There were eyewitnesses of the truths of scripture, and they so believed it that most of them died for that truth.

There were twelve apostles, all of whom were eyewitnesses to the things they preached and wrote. History and tradition tell us that all but one of them (John) were martyred for their faith in the Word of God.

For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were EYEWITNESSES of his majesty. (2 Peter 1:16)

The Bible is the Word of God - It's indestructability provides evidence to that fact. The historical manuscripts provide overwhelming evidence to its authenticity, and its very structure is a miracle. Those who had the best view believed it with all their heart.

5. The Evidence of the Martyrs

Those in the very next generation after the apostles are commonly referred to as the church fathers. Many of them were martyred as well. "The Martyrdom of Polycarp," an ancient text describing how this Christian was burned alive in Rome, is a fascinating read.

Down throughout history, men and women have given their lives for these truths. While not conclusive evidence (you only need to look at Islam to see that people sometimes do die for a lie.), when viewed alongside the other forms of evidence, it lends strong support to the idea that we can trust our Bibles.

The Bible is the Word of God - It's indestructability provides evidence to that fact. The historical manuscripts provide overwhelming evidence to its authenticity, and its very structure is a miracle. Those who had the best view believed it with all their heart, and down through history men and women have given their lives for this truth.

6. Internal evidence - The Bible calls itself the Word of God.

It CALLS ITSELF the WORD OF GOD

Remember the verses we mentioned earlier?

All scripture is given by inspiration of God... (2 Timothy 3:16)

For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. (2 Peter 1:21)

There are plenty of other times the Bible claims divine origin for itself:

God told His prophets to write down His Words: *Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah, even unto this day. (Jeremiah 36:2)*

Over and over we have statements that the Lord is speaking: *The word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was there upon him. (Ezekiel 1:3)*

Peter said the Old Testament prophecies were Scripture: *Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. (Acts 1:16)*

The Bible is the Word of God - It's indestructability provides evidence to that fact. The historical manuscripts provide overwhelming evidence to its authenticity, and its very structure is a miracle. Those who had the best view believed it with all their heart, and down through history men and women have given their lives for this truth. The Bible contains verse after verse proclaiming divine authorship and authority - internal evidence that it is the Word of God.

7. Personal evidence - it changes lives!

The DaVinci Code presents evidence that came, not from the mind of Dan Brown, but rather from the mind of our real adversary, Satan. And Satan is a brilliant adversary. I have been a student of the Bible for many years, and when people first presented some of this evidence to me I didn't know how to answer them. (How do you answer somebody when they hit you with something like, "history proves that Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene and Leonardo DaVinci knew it and put clues in his paintings about it"?) I was unprepared, and that was one of the reasons I wanted to do this study. It was a good opportunity to study the Bible some more!

There will always be times when the questions the devil poses are ones for which we have no immediate answer. However, we can always turn to this last piece of evidence. We can always remind ourselves and remind our adversary that we believe the Bible is the Word of God - we believe it is accurate and reliable, because it has changed our lives.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. Romans 1:16

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Hebrews 4:12

When evangelist John Wesley (1703-1791) was returning home from a service one night, he was robbed. The thief, however, found his victim to have only a little money and some Christian literature.

As the bandit was leaving, Wesley called out, "Stop! I have something more to give you." The surprised robber paused. "My friend," said Wesley, "you may live to regret this sort of life. If you ever do, here's something to remember: - The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin!" (NOTE that this is a quote from 1 John 1:7) The thief hurried away, and Wesley prayed that his words might bear fruit.

Years later, Wesley was greeting people after a Sunday service when he was approached by a stranger. What a surprise to learn that this visitor, now a believer in Christ as a successful businessman, was the one who had robbed him years before!

"I owe it all to you," said the transformed man.

"Oh no, my friend," Wesley exclaimed, "not to me, but to the precious blood of Christ that cleanses us from all sin!"

The Bible is the Word of God - It's indestructability provides evidence to that fact. The historical manuscripts provide overwhelming evidence to its authenticity, and its very structure is a miracle. Those who had the best view believed it with all their heart, and down through history men and women have given their lives for this truth. The Bible contains verse after verse proclaiming divine authorship and authority - internal evidence that it is the Word of God. And there is personal evidence - it changes lives, yours and mine.

SUMMATION - Why do we believe that the Bible is the Word of God, true and accurate and effective in our lives, in spite of the trash talk of *The DaVinci Code* which says, "almost everything our fathers taught us about Christ is false"? We've looked at 7 reasons. There are plenty more, but this is a good start:

1. Historical Evidence - the argument of preservation
2. Manuscript Evidence - the argument from historical texts
3. Structural Evidence - the argument from the structure of the Bible itself
4. Eyewitness Evidence - those with the best view believed it the most
5. The Evidence of the Martyrs - those who believed were willing to die for it.
6. Internal Evidence - The Bible claims divine authorship for Itself.
7. Personal Evidence - the Bible changes lives, mine included.

In the next couple of weeks we will study some of the specific DaVinci Code claims, but in this first lesson we set out to EQUIP and ENCOURAGE. The battle lines are drawn in this satanic book, and the first step in preparing for battle is opening up the arsenal - God's Word. Every silly idea in *The DaVinci Code* crumbles beneath the Word of God. And so, I encourage you to study these issues in the Bible, and be equipped to defend your faith against these attacks. When you do that, you know what will happen? You'll also be encouraged as the Lord reminds you of the truth of His Word.

What then of Dan Brown's specific claims?

It is true that the Bible is the Word of God, and that if we will accept that truth, nothing presented by *The DaVinci Code* matters. However, people today are seldom that clear in their thinking. People today often affirm their belief in the Bible, but then betray their real thinking which is a mishmash of worldliness. Consider something Darrell Bock posted on his blog recently, telling about "...a young woman who said the movie was fiction but that its ideas needed to be considered seriously."⁵ Now think about that for a minute! It's nuts, but it's also the mindset of our age. Bock sums it up by saying, "Here is the schizophrenia the movie produces..."⁶

So, I want to address some of the more outlandish claims Dan Brown makes in the book, just in case you or someone you know needs to be assured that these ideas are bogus.

Outlandish Claim # 1 - Constantine declared Jesus as the Son of God.

Many of the errors that exist in *The DaVinci Code* are the result of a lack of respect for historical truth.

Note: It is true, by the way, that our faith is built not only on spiritual truth, but on sound HISTORICAL truth. Never fear to look into the historical sources, for the deeper you dig, the more evidence you find!

Instead of looking at the evidence from reliable historical sources, Dan Brown chooses, as many do today, to disregard reliable history and make things up instead - virtual reality, if you will.

"As seemingly pretty and appealing as virtual reality can be, it is not historical reality."⁷

One of the historical errors that Dan Brown promotes in *The DaVinci Code* is the idea that Jesus Christ was merely a man - not deity. He does so by suggesting that in a gathering of men, overseen by Emperor Constantine of Rome, decisions were made that defined various aspects of Christianity, including whether or not Jesus was to be viewed as a mere man, or as the Son of God. At this great meeting, held in 325 A.D., and known to history as The Council of Nicaea, a vote was supposedly held to decide whether or not Jesus was the Son of God. Here is how *The DaVinci Code* puts it:

"Indeed," Teabing said. "... During this fusion of religions, Constantine needed to strengthen the new Christian tradition, and held a famous ecumenical gathering known as the Council of Nicaea."

"At this gathering," Teabing said, "many aspects of Christianity were debated and voted upon - the date of Easter, the role of the bishops. The administration of sacraments, and of course, the divinity of Jesus."

[Sophie] "I don't follow. His divinity?"

"My dear," Teabing declared, "until that moment in history, Jesus was viewed by His followers as a mortal prophet - a great and powerful man, but a man nonetheless. A mortal."

"Not the Son of God?"

"Right," Teabing said. "Jesus' establishment as 'the Son of God' was officially proposed and voted on by the Council of Nicaea."

"Hold on. You're saying Jesus' divinity was the result of a vote?"

"A relatively close vote at that," Teabing added.⁸

Now before we delve into the details of this, let me give credit where credit is due, and point out that there are a couple of grains of truth in that section of the book. For example, there WAS a meeting called the Council of Nicaea and it WAS held in 325 A.D.. There WAS also a man named Constantine who was emperor in Rome at the time. Nothing else from this *DaVinci Code* excerpt is true.

DISCUSSION - What was the Council of Nicaea? Who was Constantine? What role did Constantine play in Christian history?

DISCUSSION - If you found yourself in a discussion with somebody who had recently read or watched *The DaVinci Code*, how would you answer questions about this - that Jesus' divinity was a result of a vote at the Council of Nicaea?

What was the Council of Nicaea, and what exactly happened there?

The Council of Nicaea was "a church council convened in A.D. 325 primarily to discuss the definition of the deity of Christ and the doctrine of God. The primary figures at Nicaea were Athanasius, who argued for the full deity of Christ, and Arius, who argued that Jesus was the greatest created being. The position of Athanasius prevailed at the council."⁹

The Council of Nicaea had nothing to do with declaring the deity of Jesus Christ. On the contrary, it was convened primarily to refute the claims of Arius, who took the

opposite position - Jesus was only a man. So the real purpose of the council is directly opposite to that stated in The DaVinci Code! At this council, the prevailing, already held position of the church was CONFIRMED - Jesus Christ is indeed the Son of God.

By the way, there was a vote at Nicea on whether to endorse the Nicean Creed - the statement of faith that was drafted during that council meeting. Teabing, in The DaVinci Code, commented that it was "a relatively close vote." In reality, it was 300 to 2 - not close at all.

So, The DaVinci Code is simply wrong in its teaching about what happened at Nicea. It is also wrong about what the early church believed.

What did the disciples and apostles believe?

DISCUSSION - What did the early church believe about Christ? Did they believe He was merely a man (as The DaVinci Code teaches), or that He was the Son of God? Can you provide evidence to support your answer?

Here are some examples of what the early believers thought about Jesus Christ:

Martha - *Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world. (John 11:24-27)*

Peter - *When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some [say that thou art] John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. (Matthew 16:13-16)*

Thomas - *And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, "reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. (John 20:26-28)*

John - *In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word WAS GOD. (John 1:1)*

Paul - *For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. (Colossians 2:9)*

Paul - *Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen. (Romans 9:5)*

Paul - *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. 9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:5-11)*

Note: That last reference is an example of substitution - Paul took a statement from the Old Testament (*Isaiah 45:23*), which was plainly about God, and applied it to Jesus Christ.

Paul - *Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; (Titus 2:13)*

Remember, ALL of these writings pre-date the Council of Nicea by a couple hundred years.

What did the church fathers believe?

All the following lived and died BEFORE the Council of Nicea ever occurred.

Ignatius of Antioch (30-107 A.D.)

"Jesus Christ our God"; "who is God and man"; "received knowledge of God, that is, Jesus Christ"; "for our God, Jesus the Christ"; "for God was manifest as man"; "Christ, who was from eternity with the Father"; "from God, from Jesus Christ"; "from Jesus Christ, our God"; "Our God, Jesus Christ"; "suffer me to follow the example of the passion of my God"; "Jesus Christ the God" and "Our God Jesus Christ."

Polycarp (69-155 A.D.)

He possibly spoke of "Our Lord and God Jesus Christ."

Justin Martyr (100-165 A.D.)

He wrote of Jesus, "who... being the firstbegotten Word of God, is even God." In his Dialogue with Trypho, he stated that "God was born from a virgin" and that Jesus was "worthy of worship" and of being "called Lord and God."

Tatian (110-172 A.D.)

This early apologist wrote, "We do not act as fools, O Greeks, nor utter idle tales when we announce that God was born in the form of man."

Irenaeus of Lyons and Rome (120-202 A.D.)

He wrote that Jesus was "perfect God and perfect man"; "not a mere man...but was very God"; and that "He is in Himself in His own right...God, and Lord, and King Eternal" and spoke of "Christ Jesus, our Lord, and God, and Saviour and King."

Tertullian of Carthage (145-220 A.D.)

He said of Jesus "Christ is also God" because "that which has come forth from God [in the virgin birth] is at once God and the Son of God, and the two are one...in His birth, God and man united." Jesus is "both Man and God, the Son of Man and the Son of God."

Hippolytus (170-235 A.D.)

He said, "[it is] the Father who is above all, the Son who is through all, and the Holy Spirit who is in all. And we cannot otherwise think of one God, but by believing in truth in Father and Son and Holy Spirit.... For it is through this Trinity that the Father is glorified.... The whole Scriptures, then, proclaim this truth." And, "the Logos is God, being the substance of God."

Gregory Thaumaturgus of Neo-Caesarea (205-270 A.D.)

He referred to Jesus as "God of God" and "God the Son."

Origen of Alexandria (wrote ca 230 A.D.)

He stated that Christ was "God and man." And, "Jesus Christ...while he was God, and though made man, remained God as he was before."

Athanasius (293-373 A.D.)

This keen defender of New Testament teaching against the early Arian heresy, which taught that Jesus Christ was not God, declared of Jesus, "He always was and is God and Son," and "He who is eternally God,... also became man for our sake."¹⁰

The fact is, it was common knowledge that the Christians believed Jesus was the Son of God! Even non-Christian testimony from the second century demonstrates that Christians believed in Christ's divinity. Pliny the Younger wrote to Emperor Trajan, around A.D. 112, that the early Christians "were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day... when they sang... a hymn to Christ, as to a god."¹¹

Summary

"Again, The DaVinci Code is broken and found wanting. The idea that Jesus was divine did not result from a vote three hundred years after the time of Jesus. To suggest that the view of Jesus' divinity came so late, as Teabing does in the novel (p. 233), is to advance pure fiction and bad history. The view has clear expression in the books written within generations of the time of Jesus and has its roots in His closest followers."¹²

By the way, there is an opportunity here, as well as in all the errors presented by this book, in that if we can learn to defend against this error, we may find opportunities for witnessing. When your friends and co-workers want to point out these erroneous views taught in The DaVinci Code, you can turn the conversation into a discussion of Who Jesus really is - the Son of God!

Outlandish Claim # 2 - The books that make up our Bible were picked by Constantine

Again, quoting from The DaVinci Code:

[Sir Leigh Teabing]:

"More than eighty gospels were considered for the New Testament, and yet only a relative few were chosen for inclusions - Matthew, Mark, Luke and John among them."

"Who chose which gospels to include?" Sophie asked.

"Aha!" Teabing burst in with enthusiasm. "The fundamental irony of Christianity! The Bible, as we know it today, was collated by the pagan Roman emperor Constantine the Great."¹³

Let's make certain that we understand what Dan Brown is claiming in his book:

1. Constantine, who Brown describes as a pagan, DECIDED which books to include in the New Testament, based to a large degree on political motivations.
2. Constantine REJECTED and DISPOSED OF many other, "more accurate" writings which contradicted his purpose, and which "should have been included" in our Bibles. These were supposedly alternative documents about Christ and Christianity.

BOTH OF THESE CLAIMS ARE COMPLETELY FALSE.

DISCUSSION - How did we get the 27 books that make up our New Testament? (by the time period discussed in The DaVinci Code, the 39 books of the Old Testament were not in question.) Who decided which books to include in the list? How did they decide? Can you explain to a questioning friend WHY you believe these 27 books are the Word of God, but other books such as those mentioned in The DaVinci Code are not?

The canon, and how it came to be

First, Dan Brown is once again wrong about the facts. He is wrong about the number of gospels that existed. Quoting from Darrell Bock:

First of all, there weren't 80 gospels out there. We don't even have 80 gospels today. We have maybe 15 or 16. Now, when you add in other books that don't have the name gospel that discuss Jesus, to one degree or another in terms of these post-resurrection alleged dialogues, we might get up to 25. But in the first century, there wasn't much to choose from. You had your four Gospels. You might have had "Thomas" toward the end of that period or the beginning of the second century. And then the rest of these books trail on much, much later. So there was no choice to be made.¹⁴

Secondly, Brown is wrong in asserting that Constantine had anything to do with selecting the books of the New Testament. Such is simply not the case.

The historic view concerning the assembly of the New Testament canon (a word that simply means standard - the standard set of Biblical documents) is that God superintended it, just as He did the inspiration of those documents in the first place. The early church did not DECIDE which books they wanted to include. Rather, they DISCOVERED and CONFIRMED which books they believed God wanted included. In other words, God made the list, the church just figured out what was on the list.

Since the Holy Spirit superintended this exercise, we cannot discount the spiritual aspect of it. However, there was a method that seems to have been followed.

Dr. Norman Geisler says that five foundational questions were considered during this discovery process:

- [1] Was the book written by a prophet of God?
- [2] Was the writer confirmed by acts of God?
- [3] Does the message tell the truth about God?
- [4] Did it come with the power of God? and
- [5] Was it accepted by the people of God?

¹⁵

When these 5 criteria are applied to the 4 gospels in our Bibles, they pass with flying colors. When the same criteria are applied to the "gospels" that Dan Brown claims are "more reliable," they fail miserably. It was this failure that prompted the early church to discount these other documents, not some political motivation. The documents did not measure up to the standard of the Word of God. They did not ring with "Thus saith the Lord." Matthew, Mark, Luke and John did meet the criteria, and consequently were considered the word of God from the beginning - long before Constantine supposedly assembled the canon.

One only needs to review the history of the 4 gospels to see that the early church, from the very beginning, accepted these as the Word of God (contrary to Dan Brown's assertions).

ILLUS - Irenaeus (2nd century church father) wrote a famous text entitled "Against Heresies" in which he defended the faith against various heretical beliefs of the time. In his text, he defended the 4 gospels, and even went so far as to state that there were 4 gospels - no more and no less. He mentions Matthew, Mark, Luke and John by name as the 4 gospels which are inspired by God. He says, "It is not that the gospels can be either more or fewer in number than they are."¹⁶

ILLUS - Origin (185-254) said, "I know a certain gospel which is called 'The Gospel according to Thomas' and a 'Gospel according to Matthias,' and many others have we read - lest we should in any way be considered ignorant because of those who

imagine they possess some knowledge if they are acquainted with these. Nevertheless, among all these we have approved solely what the church has recognized, which is that only the four gospels should be accepted." ¹⁷

Historical evidences such as these serve to show that the church discovered, accepted, and canonized the gospels and other writings, long before Constantine and the Council of Nicea.

Other books, gnostic and otherwise - what of them?

DISCUSSION - What about the so-called gnostic writings then? Can somebody explain what they were, and what value they have to Christianity today? What did the gnostics believe?

It would be helpful to define some major terms. In discussions such as these, invariably the Dead Sea Scrolls are mentioned. The Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in eleven caves along the northwest shore of the Dead Sea between the years 1947 and 1956. These scrolls contained Essene (an ascetic religious sect contemporary with the Pharisees and Sadducees mentioned in our Bibles) writings, and copies of many of the books of the Old Testament. For example, Isaiah was found, almost in its entirety. You can view that scroll in the Shrine of the Book in Israel today. However, it is vital to understand that the Dead Sea scrolls contained nothing related to the New Testament, nothing related to Jesus, and no gospels of any kind.

The Nag Hammadi library is another set of documents referenced by those who preach the Dan Brown message. "The Nag Hammadi Texts, are named after the place they were found on the west bank of the Nile in 1945. A library was found containing forty-five texts written in the Coptic language. These were written from the early second century to the fourth century AD. Examples of texts included The Gospel of Thomas, The Gospel of Philip, The Acts of Peter and others. These texts were Gnostic in character and found in a library of Gnostic works..."¹⁸

Just who were these gnostics, and what did they believe?

As a very brief explanation, gnostics believed that Jesus was a man, not the Son of God. They rejected all things supernatural - the virgin birth and the resurrection included (just as Thomas Jefferson did, by the way in the Jefferson Bible), and they believed that the way to God was through enlightenment and advanced knowledge - secret knowledge that only the intelligent class could understand.

ILLUS - Recently the "Gospel of Judas" was in the news. It purports that Jesus gave Judas a secret mission, and that he really wasn't a bad guy at all, because he was simply acting on secret knowledge that only he had. This is gnosticism.

There is nothing new about the gnostic writings. The early church knew about them and rejected them, because they contain false teaching. Several times in our New Testament we find warnings against gnostic teachings. For example, Paul said in *Colossians 2:8-9*, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Paul was directly addressing the false teaching of the gnostics in those verses.

DISCUSSION - Why did the early church reject the gnostic gospels and writings?

ANSWER - They did not pass the test we discussed earlier. For example, they were NOT written by apostles or prophets, even though they claimed to be. Additionally, many of these writings are dated long after the 27 books of our New Testament were already complete.

Erwin Lutzer recently made the following comments on the validity of the gnostic gospels: "Now there are two reasons why the Gnostic Gospels are fraudulent. They were known to the Early Church to be fraudulent, and we know them today to be fraudulent. Why? Number one, because of spurious authorship. Not a person that I know actually believes that Thomas wrote the book of Thomas; and then there's the

Book of Philip. Nobody believes that the Book of Philip was written by Philip. My own Gnostic Bible, which was not written by evangelical Christians, says that it was written in the year 250 in Syria. We're talking about 200 years after the time of Jesus. So, whose description of Abraham Lincoln would you believe? Somebody who knew Abraham Lincoln, or somebody who lived 150 years after?"

Another interesting way to look at this can be seen in the following illustration provided by Jeff Miller:

We will look at some of the dates of the Nag Hammadi, the Gospel of Philip, and the Gospel of Mary. I thought I would give an illustration. If Jesus were born in the year 1900, then what would be the chronology of what we have in the New Testament, versus these secret, unaltered texts that Brown is referencing here? If Jesus were born in the year 1900, then Jesus, as a boy, would have visited Jerusalem when he was about twelve years old - at about the time the Titanic sank. His death and resurrection would have been in the year 1930. The first New Testament books would have been written about 1945, around the close of World War II. The first New Testament gospel (probably the Gospel of Mark) would have been written around 1960 - thirty years after Jesus' public ministry, death, and resurrection. The last New Testament gospel would have been written fourteen years ago, in 1990, by the apostle John, the youngest of the apostles. The Gospel of Thomas - that is one we often hear about, and Brown does not discuss this in his book since there is nothing for him to discuss - was one of the earliest non-biblical gospels. That gospel would have been written in about 2030, still twenty-six years from this year. The earliest non-canonical gospel outside of the New Testament, if Jesus were born in 1900, still would not be written today. It would not be written yet for another twenty-six years. Was Thomas, who allegedly wrote it, really one of the apostles, and he just happened to live to be one hundred fifty years old? Or - was it written by someone else? The Gospel of Mary will be written in about the year 2050. So again, is this really Mary Magdalene? These are not debated dates. Believers, liberals, and nonbelievers all agree to these dates. One hundred fifty years after Jesus was born is the earliest that the Gospel of Mary would have been written. Clearly, it would not have been written by Mary, even though the person who wrote it claimed it to be so. The Gospel of Philip would be written in 2170. That is not a typo. That would be one hundred sixty-six years from now. That is about when the Gospel of Philip would have been written. Do you think that was written by the Philip who evangelized to the Ethiopian on the road in the books of Acts? I don't think so.

It brings up the term "pseudepigraphical," false writing. The author is writing under a fictitious name. Why would someone do that? Why would someone not named Thomas write as though he were the Doubting Thomas of the gospel? It puts you instantly on the best-seller list if people believe it. Why would someone write under the name of Mary Magdalene if they really were not Mary Magdalene, or under Philip's name, or under Peter's name? To do so gives them an audience. ¹⁹

And so, the gnostic documents are not alternative documents related to Christianity at all. They are more recent, they are contradictory to the Bible, and they were often written by people who claimed to be someone they were not. They are no different than the writings of Joseph Smith (Mormonism), Mary Baker Eddy (Christian Science), the Jehovah's Witnesses, or any other cult. False teaching is false teaching, whether its current today or 2000 years old. Gnosticism was and is false teaching.

DISCUSSION - What, then, could be the possible appeal to gnosticism today? Why are people drawn to these "new" discoveries, and why do people want to believe something like the DaVinci Code when it is so plainly contradictory to the Bible? (NOTE - May need to review the beliefs of the gnostics to spur this discussion)

Erwin Lutzer again provides some insight. The following quote is from a conversation between John Ankerberg and Erwin Lutzer on a recent radio broadcast:

... let me tell you why [people are attracted to gnosticism]. Because if you go the Gnostic route, you can pretty well believe whatever you want to believe. Like one scholar says, that when you go the Gnostic route, you can take and you can pick and choose; you don't have to believe in the virgin birth, you don't believe in the resurrection, you don't believe in the uniqueness of Jesus. Everybody can have their own experience. So, Gnosticism is really the religion of the day here in America. Dan Brown, capitalizing on that, has taken the route that these Gnostics have more credibility than the New Testament. Let every person listening to this program today hear me when I say, just simply consider the evidence rationally, based on good principles of history, and you will end up being overwhelmed by the power and the validity of the New Testament documents, and see these others for the straw that they really are.²⁰

Summary

Constantine DID NOT DECIDE about our Bibles - he did not choose which books to include, nor did he decide which to reject. He had absolutely nothing to do with that.

The early church DID NOT DECIDE about our Bibles, either. They simply DISCOVERED and ACCEPTED which books they believed God had provided.

The gnostics were a heretical group, rejected by the early church, and to be rejected by the church today. Their writings were false writings then, and they are false writings now.

Outlandish Claim # 3 - Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene.

This, of course, is the major gist of The DaVinci Code, and certainly qualifies as its most spectacular claim. Let me share some more of the book with you:

"As I mentioned," Teabing clarified, "the early Church needed to convince the world that the mortal prophet Jesus was a divine being. Therefore, any gospels that described earthly aspects of Jesus' life had to be omitted from our Bible. Unfortunately for the early editors, one particularly troubling earthly theme kept recurring in the gospels. Mary Magdalene." He paused. "More specifically, her marriage to Jesus Christ."

"I beg your pardon?" Sophie's eyes moved to Langdon and then back to Teabing.

"It's a matter of historical record," Teabing said, "and DaVinci was certainly aware of that fact. The Last Supper practically shouts at the viewer that Jesus and Magdalene were a pair."

"As I said earlier, the marriage of Jesus and Mary Magdalene is part of the historical record." He began pawing through his book collection. "Moreover, Jesus as a married man makes infinitely more sense that our standard biblical view of Jesus as a bachelor."

"Why?" Sophie asked.

"Because Jesus was a Jew," Langdon said, taking over while Teabing searched for his book, "and social decorum during that time virtually forbid a Jewish man to be unmarried."²¹

This is a very interesting topic, and one that we can look at in three ways.

What the Bible says about Jesus being married

DISCUSSION - Let's make this one a discussion topic - what does the Bible say about Jesus being married? What does it say about Him being single?

Nothing directly - actually it makes no direct statements about Him being single, either.

What The DaVinci Code claims about Jesus being married

Dan Brown bases much of his claims upon supposed symbolism and hidden meanings in Leonardo DaVinci's painting of The Last Supper. According to one source:

Note: Display Powerpoint slide of The Last Supper

"Leonardo da Vinci was already a well known artist when he created his masterpiece The Last Supper. He painted it on the back wall of the dining hall at the Dominican convent of Sta Maria delle Grazie in Italy. The reason the painting is laid out the way it is is that Leonardo was trying to "extend the room", to make it look like Jesus and his apostles were sitting at the end of the dining hall."²²

The painting took him four years to complete - 1495 to 1498. We could spend a lot of time on this painting and the extensive comments that Brown makes in his book, but consider this. We already discussed the fact that our Bibles are reliable and true, and that the documentation behind our Bibles is dated very early, and that we have reliable historical documentation. If we accept these truths, then how can they be changed by something painted 1400 years later by an Italian artist?

Based on DaVinci's notes, most people agree that the twelve disciples are represented in the painting.

Note: Display Powerpoint slide of The Last Supper, with the disciples names overlaid, for a couple of minutes so people can take it in, and then put the original slide back up.

However, here is Dan Brown's take on this painting. Quoting from his book:

"Hold on," Sophie said. "You told me the Holy Grail is a woman. The Last Supper is a painting of thirteen men."

"Is it?" Teabing arched his eyebrows. "Take a closer look."

Uncertain, Sophie made her way closer to the painting, scanning the thirteen figures - Jesus Christ in the middle, six disciples on His left, and six on his right. "They're all men," she confirmed.

"Oh?" Teabing said. "How about the one seated in the place of honor, at the right hand of the Lord?"

Sophie examined the figure to Jesus' immediate right, focusing in. As she studied the person's face and body, a wave of astonishment rose within her. The individual had flowing red hair, delicate folded hands, and the hint of a bosom. It was, without a doubt... female.

"That's a woman!" Sophie exclaimed.

Teabing was laughing. "Surprise, surprise. Believe me, it's no mistake. Leonardo was skilled at painting the difference between the sexes."

Sophie could not take her eyes from the woman beside Christ. The Last

Supper is supposed to be thirteen men. Who is this woman? Although Sophie had seen this classic image many times, she had not once noticed this glaring discrepancy.²³

DISCUSSION - How do you respond to this? Is that a woman?

Note: Display Powerpoint slide of an enlargement of John, for a couple of minutes so people can take it in, and then put the original slide back up.

If it is a woman, it doesn't matter. It is just a painting. As we have already discussed, the evidence for Christianity goes all the way back to the first century. A painting completed in the fifteenth century cannot trump that evidence. Besides that, Leonardo was known to paint men in an effeminate way, sometimes. John, especially, was often painted by artists of that era in an effeminate way. However, if this is a woman, then a glaring problem arises with the painting - where is John? Why would Leonardo leave this important disciple out of the painting all together?

Dan Brown also uses a quote from the Gospel of Philip. Again, quoting from his book:

"These are photocopies of the Nag Hammadi and Dead Sea Scrolls, which I mentioned earlier," Teabing said. "The earliest Christian records. Troublingly, they do not match up with the gospels in the Bible." Flipping toward the middle of the book, Teabing pointed to a passage. "The Gospel of Philip is always a good place to start."

Sophie read the passage:

"And the companion of the Savior is Mary Magdalene. Christ loved her more than all the disciples and used to kiss her often on the mouth. The rest of the disciples were offended by it and expressed disapproval. They said to him, 'Why do you love her more than all of us?'"

The words surprised Sophie, and yet they hardly seemed conclusive. "It says nothing of marriage."

"Au contraire." Teabing smiled, pointing to the first line. "As any Aramaic scholar will tell you, the word companion, in those days, literally meant spouse."

Langon concurred with a nod.

Sophie read the first line again. "And the companion of the Savior is Mary Magdalene."²⁴

Brown claims that Jesus kissing her on the mouth (as he translates this section) is an indication that they were married. He further states that the word "companion" used here of Mary Magdalene, means wife. He says this is the actual translation of the word in Aramaic. So based on these 2 thoughts - Jesus kissing Mary, and her being called His "companion" (wife), they were married.

DISCUSSION - Anybody want to take a stab at debating his points?

A couple of comments about this "evidence".

First, the Gospel of Philip was found in the Nag Hammadi library, which we discussed earlier. It was written in the Coptic language, not in Aramaic, so the comment about the aramaic translation of "companion" is completely bogus. Companion means companion and nothing more.

Second, the word "mouth" or "face" in the passage about Jesus kissing Mary does not exist. The document is very old and has parts missing, as do many of the ancient

manuscripts. In this case, there is a blank there. The scroll literally reads "he kissed her often on the _____." Now you can fill in that blank as well as anybody else. He might have kissed her on the face, the mouth, the hand, the cheek, the forehead, etc. And of course, any reading of this text needs to be undertaken with the understanding that it is not the inspired Word of God, was written by someone who lied about their name, and might be a complete fabrication. So there is simply no way to read that passage and conclude that it describes a romantic relationship between Jesus and Mary Magdalene.

Third, we must remember that in the middle eastern culture kissing is a form of greeting between both men and women. Consider Paul's admonition to the early church to "*Greet one another with an holy kiss.*" (1 Corinthians 16:20)

Fourth, if Jesus and Mary were married, why in the world would the other disciples be offended at Him kissing or showing affection to His wife? That interpretation of the passage doesn't even make sense.

So, the Bible makes no direct statement about Jesus being married, OR single, and the only evidence presented in *The DaVinci Code* is completely fabricated. Based on these facts alone, there is no reason to conclude that Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene. It is a fabrication. However, I believe we can go further, and provide evidence from our Bibles that Jesus was not married.

Biblical reasons why I believe Jesus was not married

First, consider the evidence of Jesus' stated purpose and mission.

Jesus came to earth with a purpose, and everything about His life revolved around that purpose. Taking a wife would be inconsistent with that purpose.

Bible study - *Matthew 20:28; Luke 4:43; 19:10; John 3:17; 10:10; 18:37*

Even as a child, Jesus was single-mindedly fixed on His purpose, to the exclusion of all else, "*And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?*" (Luke 2:49)

Second, consider the evidence of Jesus' abject poverty.

And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. (Luke 9:58)

This is not the description of a married man. Certainly it is not the description of a responsible married man. If Jesus treated His wife this way, He was a poor husband, and it is not possible for me to accept Jesus as being anything but perfect at anything He undertook to do.

Third, consider Paul's argument about married leadership in the church.

Paul was unmarried:

I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. (1 Corinthians 7:8)

And yet he argued that it was perfectly right and proper for church leadership to be married:

Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas? (1 Corinthians 9:5)

Wouldn't Paul have used his best examples to prove this point? If Jesus, the founder and leader of the church had a wife, wouldn't Paul have mentioned it here?

Fourth, consider Jesus' words from the cross to John.

BIBLE STUDY - *John 19:25-27*

Jesus, in His dying moments, in the manner of the first-born son, remembered to provide for the care of His mother. Mary Magdalene was standing beside her at the time, but Jesus provided nothing for her. Wouldn't He have provided for His wife, if He had one?

Finally, consider that the Bible DOES talk about Christ's bride!

Jesus' bride is not a person, but rather the Church.

Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready (Revelation 19:7) (See also Revelation 21:2; 22:17)

Summary

Dan Brown's claims that Jesus and Mary Magdalene were married is fascinating fiction, but false history. Nothing about the claim is true.

The Bible teaches that Jesus, both during His earthly ministry, and even now, loves only one bride - His church.

Conclusion

The DaVinci Code is not historical fact, even though it claims to be, and when it does point to historical "sources" to bolster its fanciful claims, it distorts that history, or worse, lies about it.

So, don't fear to read the book, nor to engage others in discussion about it. Truth is on the side of the Christian and the Bible.

The lip of truth shall be established for ever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment. (Proverbs 12:19)

Glossary and Notes

D

Dead Sea Scrolls

According to The DaVinci Code, the Dead Sea Scrolls, found in the 1950s, contained "gospels" that were suppressed by Constantine.

In truth, the Dead Sea Scrolls, found in 1947, were Essene writings which contained passages from the Old Testament among other things, but absolutely nothing that resembled a "gospel" or anything about Jesus.

G

Gospel

a word of Anglo-Saxon origin, and meaning "God's spell", i.e., word of God, or rather, according to others, "good spell", i.e., good news. It is the rendering of the Greek *_evangelion_*, i.e., "good message." It denotes (1) "the welcome intelligence of salvation to man as preached by our Lord and his followers.

(2.) It was afterwards transitively applied to each of the four histories of our Lord's life, published by those who are therefore called 'Evangelists', writers of the history of the gospel (the evangelion).

(3.) The term is oftend used to express collectively the gospel doctrines; and 'preaching the gospel' is often used to include not only the proclaiming of the good tidings, but the teaching men how to avail themselves of the offer of salvation, the declaring of all the truths, precepts, promises, and threatenings of Christianity." It is termed "the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24), "the gospel of the kingdom" (Matt. 4:23), "the gospel of Christ" (Rom. 1:16), "the gospel of peace (Eph. 6:15), "the glorious gospel," "the everlasting gospel," "the gospel of salvation" (Eph. 1:13). (From Easton's Bible Dictionary, 1897)

K

Knights Templar

The DaVinci Code states that the Knights Templar was a military group founded by the Priory of Sion to protect the secrets of the Sangreal Documents. The Templars basically used the possession of the secret documents to blackmail the Catholic Church and become quite wealthy and powerful. Pope Clement then pressured King Philippe IV of France to eliminate the Templars and their threat to the church.

The truth is that the Knights Templar was a military group created after the first crusade to protect Christian pilgrims traveling to the Holy Land. They existed in Palestine until the last crusader fortress in Acre fell to the Muslims in 1291. King Philippe of France influenced the Pope to allow him to eliminate the Templars, which he did in 1314, killing most of them and taking all their money and land.

P

Priory of Sion

According to The DaVinci Code, the Priory of Sion is a European secret society founded in 1099 whose long history is supported by some parchments called "Les Dossiers Secrets" recently discovered in 1975. The Priory (or Knights Templar) discovered the "Sangreal Documents" during the Crusades, which expose the marriage between Jesus and Mary Magdalene, their child, as well as a sacred bloodline which exists to this day. The Priory has guarded the secret and has used it to blackmail the Catholic Church and gain wealth and power.

The truth is, though, that there is no proof of the existence of the Priory of Sion prior to 1956. "Les Dossiers Secrets" were exposed as a fraud in the 1990s by a series of French books and a BBC documentary. A co-conspirator of Pierre Plantard, founder of the Priory of Sion, admitted to helping him fabricate these documents and plant them in Paris's Bibliotheque Nationale (National Library). In

addition, Pierre Plantard has been revealed by the New York Times to be an anti-Semite with a criminal history of fraud. The real Priory is a small social group in France.

S

Sangreal Documents

According to *The DaVinci Code*, the Sangreal Documents were supposedly secret documents, found by the Knights Templar under the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. These documents supposedly exposed Jesus and Mary Magdalene's marriage and child which then created a "sacred bloodline" of Jesus which exists today.

The truth is, though, there is no proof whatsoever that any secret documents were ever found by the Knights Templar under the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. The Sangreal Documents are pure speculation and fiction.

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