

Cracking the DaVinci Code, Part 1

1 Peter 3:15 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:

With 46 million copies in print and a movie version releasing worldwide in less than two weeks, the impact of the novel "The DaVinci Code" is huge by anyone's standards. Controversy rages. Christians have released an extraordinary flood of material criticizing and combating the book. Scholars and historians are worried about the influence that this single wrong source will have on the faith. Bart Ehrman, religion chair at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, says that the novel's impact on religious ideas in popular culture is "quite unlike anything we've experienced in our lifetimes."

A senior Vatican official, Archbishop Angelo Amato, has called for a boycott of the film, saying it contains slanderous offenses against Christianity. The conservative Roman Catholic group Opus Dei, portrayed as villainous in the story, is among those asking Sony Corporation to at least issue a disclaimer with the film. And even liberal thinkers like Harold Attridge, dean of Yale's Divinity School, says author Dan Brown has "wildly misinterpreted" early Christianity.

BUT IT'S JUST A NOVEL! Well, yes and no. It IS just a novel, but with astounding impact. One-third of Canadians who have read the book think that Jesus has physical descendants on earth today. One-half of Americans who have read the book say it has helped them in their spiritual life. Critiques of Christianity come and go, but at least they have to rise or fall on the quality of their research. But not The DaVinci Code – Dan Brown flies "under the radar" with this "historical novel," claiming that his characters and action are fictional, but that "all descriptions of artwork, architecture, documents and secret rituals in this novel are accurate." And a gullible, Biblically-illiterate public is buying it!

The suspenseful novel begins with the murder of a French museum curator, Jacques Sauniere. A scholarly Harvard professor and a beautiful French cryptologist are commissioned to decipher a message the curator left just before his death. The message turns out to reveal the most profound conspiracy in the history of mankind – a cover-up of the true message of Jesus Christ by a secret arm of the Roman Catholic Church.

According to the plot, the curator had evidence that could disprove the deity of Christ and although the church tried for centuries to suppress the evidence, great thinkers and artists have painted clues everywhere, even in paintings such as the Mona Lisa and the Last Supper by DaVinci.

Brown reveals the "conspiracy" through the book's fictional expert on these matters, British royal historian Sir Leigh Teabing, who is presented as a wise old scholar and an ultimate authority on the coverup.

VIDEO CLIP # 1

The book's main claims run like this: Jesus' disciples knew he was just human, but the Roman Emperor Constantine conspired to declare him divine in the third century to solidify his empire. Constantine personally selected the books we have in the New Testament, but the vast majority of the gospel accounts were banned by men to suppress women. Why? Because Jesus and Mary Magdalene were secretly married and had a child, and Jesus wanted Mary to lead his church after his death. Because the ancient Jews and Christians practiced goddess worship and ritualistic sex. Because thousands of secret documents disprove Christianity. Because Jesus has physical descendants walking around on the earth today. Because the entire foundation of Christianity rests on a lie.

Quotes:

- "Almost everything our fathers taught us about Christ is false."
- "The New Testament is based on fabrications ... Every faith in the world is based on fabrication. That is the definition of faith – acceptance of that which we imagine to be true, that which we cannot prove."
- "The early Jewish tradition involved ritualistic sex."
- "Early Jews believed that the Holy of Holies in Solomon's Temple housed not only God but also His powerful female equal, Shekinah."
- "The legend of the Holy Grail is a legend about royal blood. When Grail legend speaks of 'the chalice that held the blood of Christ' ... it speaks, in fact, of Mary Magdalene – the female womb that carried Jesus' royal bloodline."
- "Jesus was the original feminist. He intend for the future of His Church to be in the hands of Mary Magdalene."
- "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."
- "The New Testament is false testimony."
- "Constantine commissioned and financed a new Bible, which omitted those gospels that spoke of Christ's human traits and embellished those gospels that made Him godlike. The earlier gospels were outlawed, gathered up, and burned."
- "Nothing in Christianity is original. The pre-Christian God Mithras – called the Son of God and the Light of the World – was born on December 25, died, was buried in a rock tomb, and then resurrected in three days. By the way, December 25 is also the birthday of Osiris, Adonis, and Dionysus."

- “Jesus’ establishment as the ‘Son of God’ was officially proposed and voted on by the Council of Nicea ... a relatively close vote at that.”
- “More than eighty gospels were considered for the New Testament, and yet only a relative few were chosen for inclusion.”
- “The modern Bible was compiled and edited by men who possessed a political agenda ... to solidify their own power base.”
- “The Last Supper practically shouts at the viewer that Jesus and Magdalene were a pair ... The marriage of Jesus and Mary Magdalene is part of the historical record.”
- “The rock on which Jesus built His church ... was not Peter ... It was Mary Magdalene.”
- “The Bible is a product of man ... not of God. The Bible did not fall magically from the clouds. Man created it as a historical record of tumultuous times, and it has evolved through countless translations, additions, and revisions. History has never had a definitive version of the book.”
- “Those who truly understand their faiths understand the stories are metaphorical ... Religious allegory has become a part of the fabric of reality. And living in that reality helps millions of people cope and be better people.”

If Dan Brown’s assertions are correct, then WE are the ones living in a fictional novel! Do you see yet why we need to be concerned?

Many good books are available that refute each of these false claims in detail, and to present an exhaustive study is not our purpose today. Suffice it to say that Dan Brown’s novel is not “historical fiction” at all – it is just grossly distorted history mixed with fiction.

For example, he says that Leonardo DaVinci called one of his paintings the “Mona Lisa” because he was promoting goddess worship and presenting “the divine union of male and female” in two Egyptian deities – the god Amon (“Mona”) and the goddess Isis (“Lisa”). But Leonardo didn’t even name this painting! Giorgio Vasari later catalogued and named it after the most likely subject – Lisa Gherardini del Giocondo, or “Madame (Mona) Lisa.” He also says that the Last Supper painting clearly identifies Jesus and Mary Magdalene ... but there is absolutely no evidence in Leonardo’s writings or in art history to collaborate this!

VIDEO CLIP # 2

British Justice Peter Smith, who recently backed Brown against plagiarism charges (against the author of yet another conspiracy book!), perhaps best summed up the situation in his decision:

"Merely because an author describes matters as being factually correct does not mean that they are factually correct. It is a way of blending fact and fiction together to create that well known model 'faction.' The lure of apparent genuineness makes the books and the films more receptive to the readers/audiences. The danger of course is that the faction is all that large parts of the audience read, and they accept it as truth."

The lies behind The DaVinci Code are not new; they are similar to the same tired arguments that have been dragged out in hundreds of articles, books, movies, etc. over the years. But the gullible public is further removed from any sense of absolute truth than ever before, so they are buying this hook, line and sinker. **Like everyone else, author Dan Brown attacks the two key pillars of Christianity – the authority of the Bible, and the divinity of Jesus Christ.**

Why is there so much interest in The DaVinci Code? First of all, it’s a great suspense novel, and secondly, people love conspiracy theories and figuring out secret codes. But there is a more subtle, sinister reason:

The DaVinci Code presents another Jesus who is not God, another Bible that is not the Word of God, and another gospel that has no power to save anyone! It brings Christianity down to the level of fiction, in effect telling people there is no “absolute” way to get to Heaven. In other words, your belief system is just as good as anyone else’s. That is the oldest lie in the book! Because it does matter what you believe!

2 Peter 1:16 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.

Many years ago, a beautiful painting was done featuring a large anvil, around which lay many shattered and smashed hammers on the floor. The caption below the picture was a phrase from 1 Peter 1:25 – **"The word of the Lord endures forever."** More than one poet has been inspired by this very image, as Samuel Valentine Cole wrote, **"Hammer away, ye hostile hands, your hammers break, God's anvil stands."** Or, as an unknown modern poet has penned ...

Last eve I passed beside a blacksmith's door and heard the anvil ring the vesper chime; When looking in, I saw upon the floor, old hammers worn with 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 said with twinkling eye, "The anvil wears the hammers out, you know."

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

God, in a supernatural way, has sustained His Word down through the centuries against all kinds of attacks. Numerous **tyrants** have attempted to smash the anvil of God with the hammer of government power, but they are gone and it remains! In the last two centuries, while the "**higher critics**" have been sitting in stuffy libraries spinning their theories that the Bible is an unreliable, unhistorical and mythological book, modern **archaeologists** have stood by the hundreds on the soil of Bible lands and held the cold hard facts of history in their hands, undeniably proving God's Word! (over 25,000 sites have been discovered in Bible lands!)

25 years ago, **Time** magazine stated, "After more than two centuries of facing the heaviest scientific guns that could be brought to bear, the Bible has survived – and is perhaps better for the siege."

Over 100 years ago, **Charles Spurgeon** observed, "If you want to be thought very wise today, but look very foolish in about fifty years, attack the Bible. Point out all the errors. But if you're willing to be thought foolish now, but believing that in fifty years you will be vindicated, stand with the Bible."

The Bible has been examined more than any other book in the history of the world. Every word, syllable and letter has been scrutinized by hostile critics for centuries. And still it stands!

More than 100 years ago, Harvard scholar and Russian-born mathematician Dr. Ivan Panin began fifty years of extensive mathematical research on the original Bible texts. Since every Greek and Hebrew letter carries a numerical value, every word has a definite mathematical sum. It is a well-known fact that seven is God's perfect number, found throughout the universe and the Bible itself. What is not so well-known is that God has contained an amazing mathematical phenomenon of sevens in the very words of Scripture!

Dr. Panin found that in any self-contained passage (such as the genealogy of Christ in Matthew 1), in any book of the Bible individually, or in the Bible as a whole, the following features are divisible by seven: total number of words, words beginning with a vowel, words beginning with a consonant, total number of letters, number of vowels, number of consonants, words occurring more than once, words occurring only once, words occurring in more than one form, words occurring in only one form, number of nouns, number of non-nouns, number of proper names, number of male names, number of female names, number of words beginning with each of the letters of the respective alphabets (Hebrew or Greek), number of words not found in any other book, numerical value of the total vocabulary, and numerical value of each of the various alphabetical groups of words.

Dr. Panin discovered that there were no such features of seven in any other writings or in the Apocryphal books – but the pattern stops at Malachi and picks up without a break at Matthew!

At his death, the Nobel Research Foundation took 43,000 sheets of his calculations and has continued his research. Dr. Panin challenged any man to write one paragraph of 300 words intelligently and produce just a few of these numeric phenomena – no one has ever been able to do it, even with the aid of the computer. And yet the Bible has 66 books, 1,189 chapters, 31,102 verses and 775,693 words! It was written by 40 authors over a period of 1600 years! And ALL of these features appear throughout every line of the Bible! No man could ever duplicate such an absolute miracle!

What about these amazing structures that lie hidden beneath the surface of the Bible text? Do they validate my belief in God's Word? NO! My belief in God's Word was validated when I took Him at His Word and He changed my life! **Panin's Theomatics are absolutely amazing, but that is hardly a "new revelation."** It is merely another small facet of something I already knew a long time ago:

2 Peter 1:21 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.

Luke 21:33 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

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

Another amazing proof of the Bible's inspiration lies right on the surface of God's Word! In the Old Testament alone, there are over 2000 prophecies that have already come to pass. Nothing vaguely resembles this in any other book in the world. Among other religions, 26 volumes that are claimed to be divine scriptures have no specific prophecies whatsoever, and many other books are laughable for their erroneous predictions.

What a contrast to the Bible! The Old Testament contains 333 prophecies concerning just the coming of Christ, which include 456 specific details. And they were penned by many different writers between 1500 and 400 BC – hundreds of years before Christ was born!

Mathematician Peter Stoner had his graduate students calculate what the odds would be of any one person fulfilling just eight of these prophecies. He found the chance was 1 in 10^{17} – or 1 in 100 quadrillion. Stoner gives an analogy to attempt to explain this:

Take 10^{17} silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas. They will cover all of the state two feet deep. Now mark one of these silver dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly, all over the state. Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say that this is the right one. What chance would he have of getting the right one? Just the same chance that the prophets would have had of writing these eight prophecies and having them all come true in any one man, from their day to the present time.

If that isn't amazing enough, Stoner had his graduate students calculate the odds that any one person would fulfill 48 of these prophecies. The odds were 1 in 10^{156} – but Jesus Christ fulfilled 333 specific prophecies! Isaiah's detailed predictions of Christ's suffering in Isaiah 53 were written 700 years before the event – that's like trying to predict what will happen in an election in AD 2700!

Without doubt, however, the most amazing proof of the Bible's authenticity is the change God's Word makes in a human heart!

Psalm 119:11 Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

Psalm 119:28 My soul melteth for heaviness: strengthen thou me according unto thy word.

Psalm 119:105 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

Psalm 119:114 Thou art my hiding place and my shield: I hope in thy word.

Psalm 119:116 Uphold me according unto thy word, that I may live: and let me not be ashamed of my hope.

Psalm 119:133 Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.

Psalm 119:160 Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever.

Psalm 119:162 I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil.

Hebrews 4:12 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.