

Cracking the DaVinci Code, Part 2

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:

The novel has 46 million copies in print in a variety of formats, and the movie version releases worldwide this Friday. By anyone's standards, the impact of "The DaVinci Code" by Dan Brown is enormous.

Publisher's Weekly: "An exhaustively researched page-turner about secret religious societies, ancient cover-ups and savage vengeance."

Library Journal: "A compelling blend of history and page turning suspense. A masterpiece that should be mandatory reading!"

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" and a gullible, Biblically-illiterate public is buying it!

Not only religious scholars and church leaders, but art and archaeology historians have taken it upon themselves to call Dan Brown to task for his inaccurate and ridiculous claim that "all descriptions of artwork, architecture, documents and secret rituals in this novel are accurate." But following good advice from his agent and publisher, Dan Brown simply stopped giving interviews and has refused to recant his statements, obviously preferring marketing savvy to academic integrity.

Sony Corporation is interested in creating controversy as a catalyst for box office success, so if we only approach "The DaVinci Code" from the perspective of a boycott we have already lost (!). However, if Christians can be wise in their reaction, it will be possible to shift thousands of conversations from "Leonardo DaVinci" to "Jesus Christ" – and we win in those conversations every time, because Jesus Christ can hold His own!

Dan Brown is only capable of passing fiction off as fact because most Christians don't know their faith – what and why they believe. And that is not Mr. Brown's fault! If the millions of readers and viewers of "The DaVinci Code" knew the reality of the Christian faith, the author would be unable to muddle fact and fiction in the irresponsible way he has.

Dan Brown uses fictional characters and a suspenseful tale to call into question two fundamental pillars of the Christian faith – **the authority of the Bible and the divinity of Jesus Christ.**

He does this by claiming the Gospels are part of a conspiracy theory by the apostles to create a male-dominated, patriarchal Church that would stamp out the "sacred feminine" (goddess worship). Brown says Jesus' true intentions were to leave His church under the charge of Mary Magdalene, with whom he maintained a romantic relationship and fathered children. In Brown's pseudo-historical novel, the emperor Constantine seconded the apostles' selfish quest for power some 300 years later by outlawing any competing gospels that might reveal the true story of who Jesus was. Thus, the Christian faith is founded upon a lie. **But none of this is even remotely true! In fact, it is easily proved that much of Dan Brown's "research" is blatantly BOGUS!**

A primary case in point is the **Priory of Sion**, an organization that is at the very heart of Brown's story, and which, if proven to be based on bogus history, undermines the entire infrastructure of Brown's theory. This organization is said to guard the secret of Jesus' marriage to Mary Magdalene. It is claimed to have been founded in Jerusalem in 1099 by a French King. The organization is believed to be watching over Jesus and Mary's descendants, and waiting for the perfect time to reveal its secret to the world. Because of constant threat of danger from the Roman Catholic Church, the organization has allegedly hidden its message in literature, paintings, and even architecture such that only learned people can decipher the meanings.

"FACT: The Priory of Sion—a European secret society founded in 1099—is a real organization. In 1975 Paris's Bibliotheque Nationale discovered parchments known as Les Dossiers Secrets, identifying numerous members of the Priory of Sion, including Sir Isaac Newton, Botticelli, Victor Hugo, and Leonardo da Vinci."

These parchments allegedly prove that Jesus married Mary Magdalene, had a baby named Sarah, and, following Jesus' death on the cross, Mary relocated to a Jewish community in France, and their descendants became French royalty. **But these parchments are completely bogus!** In 1953 a Frenchman named Pierre Plantard spent time in jail for fraud. In 1954 he founded a small social club named the Priory of Sion to call for low-income housing in France. The organization dissolved in 1957, but Plantard held on to the name. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Plantard put together a number of bogus documents which "proved" the Jesus–Mary Magdalene theory, with French royalty being their descendants. Plantard claimed that he himself was one of the descendants of this couple. Some time later, a friend of the French president found himself in legal trouble and Plantard ended up being called to testify in the case. While under oath, the judge asked him about these documents about Jesus and Mary Magdalene, and he admitted he made the whole thing up. All of this has been documented by several French books and a BBC special. **Hence, Dan Brown's claim that his book is based on actual historical secret societies is an outright lie!**

The DaVinci Code is nothing less than a blatant attempt at character assassination – of Jesus Christ, Mary Magdalene, the Apostles, the Emperor Constantine, and even Leonardo DaVinci himself!

There are so many blatant errors in Dan Brown's "research" that it would take a solid week to enumerate them all – so we have chosen to deal with just two of the main issues, his attacks on the Bible and on Jesus.

We began to talk last week about the first pillar of the Christian faith – the authority of the Bible. We shared proofs that the Bible is the Word of God, and that its authorship is not of human origin. In particular, we talked about Dr. Ivan Panin's 50-year study of the numerical structures in the Scriptures built around God's perfect number seven.

History and archaeology are also friends to Christianity, because they unanimously prove the Bible's accuracy and reliability (over 25,000 sites discovered and still counting!). There is not a single case on record where an archeological discovery has contradicted a biblical fact.

Another amazing proof of the Bible's inspiration is prophecy. 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! For example, Isaiah's (ch. 53) detailed predictions of Christ's suffering in were written 700 years before the event – that's like predicting what will happen in an election in AD 2700! These are indisputable proofs that the Bible was produced by something far more powerful than a human mind!

Dan Brown declares that the Bible has evolved through countless translations, additions, and revisions. Is that really true?

There have been numerous translations of the Bible into a variety of languages, but each translation utilizes the same basic set of Hebrew and Greek manuscript copies of the original writings of the Bible. There are more than 5,000 partial and complete manuscript copies of the New Testament. These manuscript copies are very ancient and they are available for inspection now.

There are also some 86,000 quotations of the New Testament in the writings of the early church fathers and ancient Lectionaries. Even if we did not have a single manuscript copy of the Bible, scholars could still reconstruct all but 11 verses of the entire New Testament from these materials written within 150 to 200 years from the time of Christ!

It is true that there are variations between these manuscripts – in fact, there are some 200,000 variants. However, over 99% hold virtually no significance whatsoever (i.e. missing letters or insignificant words, or reversing the order of two words). Only about 40 out of 200,000 variants have any significance – and none affect any Christian doctrine at all.

Dan Brown declares that Constantine effectively chose the books of the New Testament for political purposes. Is that really true?

Such a view is nonsense! History is very clear regarding the activities of Constantine, and one thing he had virtually nothing to do with was the canon of Scripture. Four-fifths of the New Testament was probably accepted as "inspired" before the New Testament was even finished! The other one-fifth of the books (Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, 2 & 3 John, Jude, and Revelation) took some time to be accepted because they were all written a bit later in the first century. Each of them had a small "issue" to be resolved; for example, the writer of Hebrews was unknown. And remember that there was no instant communication in the first century, so it took time for these books to be circulated and "approved" anyway.

The New Testament certainly believes itself to be inspired by God!

For example, in 1 Timothy 5:18 the Apostle Paul says that Luke 10:7 is "Scripture," placing it on the same level as Deuteronomy 25:4 (Old Testament Scripture) less than five years after it was written!

1 Timothy 5:18 For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.

Peter and Paul both believed that Paul's writings were also "Scripture" ...

1 Peter 3:15-16 And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

1 Corinthians 14:37 If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.

What's the point? All of this happened 250 years before Constantine or the Council of Nicea, regardless of what The DaVinci Code portrays!

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.

Today, we also want to talk about the second pillar of the Christian faith, the divinity of Jesus Christ.

VIDEO CLIP # 1 (Jesus' Divinity)

Dan Brown declares that Jesus was not considered divine until the fourth century at the Council of Nicea. Is this really true?

The author has assaulted the character of Christ by saying that the church made up His deity, His virgin birth, His sinless life, and His resurrection nearly 300 years after He lived! But how soon did Jesus' followers actually believe He was divine? Was it really 300 years later? **NO!** All 27 books of the New Testament can be dated to the first century and each one of them references the deity of Christ in some manner. It is one thing for Dan Brown to reject the divinity of Christ, but it is quite another thing for him to claim that first century Christians did so as well. Either he is totally ignorant of the substance of the New Testament or he is intentionally misrepresenting the facts.

Look no further than the gospel of John in the first century ...

John 1:1, 14 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God ... And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

John 6:68-69 Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

John 20:27-28 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.

The Bible said that Jesus was the Son of God 700 years before His birth!

Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Jesus was worshipped as God many times according to the Gospel accounts, and He always accepted it as perfectly appropriate (it was appropriate!). He was worshipped by Thomas (John 20:28), the angels (Hebrews 1:6), some wise men (Matt. 2:11), a leper (Matt. 8:2), a ruler (Matt. 9:18), a blind man (John 9:38), an anonymous woman (Matt. 15:25), Mary Magdalene (Matt. 28:9), and the disciples (Matt. 28:17).

Dan Brown declares that Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene and wanted her to lead His church. Is this really true?

Based on the "Gospel of Philip," Brown asserts that "the companion of the Savior is Mary Magdalene. Christ loved her more than all the disciples and used to kiss her often on her 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?" (TDC, p. 246)

The gospel of Philip (and the gospels of Mary Magdalene, and Thomas, and Judas) is a forgery written using a pseudonym up to 250 years after the time of Christ. Plus, it says nowhere that Jesus was married. Plus, the parchment is tattered with many phrases missing – like "on her mouth" among others (!). This obscure reference is probably nothing more than the first century custom of greeting with a kiss. Plus, if Jesus had indeed been married, wouldn't the disciples question "why do you love her more than all of us?" have been a bit ridiculous?!

There is no mention of Jesus being married prior to the beginning of His three-year ministry. There is no mention of Jesus being married during His three-year ministry. There is no mention of Jesus being married at the crucifixion. There is no mention of Jesus being married at His burial. There is no mention of Jesus being married at His resurrection. In other words, there is no mention of a wife anywhere!

A *Newsweek* magazine article summarizing leading scholars' opinions concluded that the theory that Jesus and Mary Magdalene were secretly married has absolutely no historical basis. There is just as little support for the ridiculous notion that she was supposed to lead His church! Jesus was not married to Mary Magdalene, but He does want to be married to you ... He wants you to be in the church, His Bride!

Revelation 19:7-9 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. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb ...

VIDEO CLIP # 2 (Dr. Erwin Lutzer)

The real significance of Mary Magdalene in the gospel accounts is that she was a hopeless, filthy, lost sinner ... and Jesus saved her. Mary Magdalene is ME ... Mary Magdalene is YOU ... we need a SAVIOR!

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! Why? Because a "human Jesus," a "flawed Bible" and an "optional gospel" make us comfortable in our sin! But I don't want to be comfortable – I WANT TO BE SAVED!