

The Da Vinci Code Myth

Intro:

We live in a day when Christ and Christianity is being attack more than at any time in history. In Muslim countries Christians are beaten and killed for their faith. In Communist countries they are arrested and even executed because of their belief in Christ. In democratic countries there is a slanderous attack that never would have been tolerated fifty years ago. The Associated Students of the University of Oregon (ASUO) has refused to apologize for an obscene anti-Christian assault in the campus newspaper *Insurgent*. The March edition of the *Insurgent* ran one of the strongest attacks on Christianity I have seen. **The paper ran graphics depicting Jesus as a homosexual.**

1 Peter 3:15

(1 Pet 3:15 NIV) But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,

One of the greatest subtle threats, however, may be *The Da Vinci Code*. *The Da Vinci Code* by Dan Brown is more than just a book. It's more than a movie. It's a phenomenon, a commentary on our times.

Da Vinci Code resume

- 40 million hardback copies sold. Ten million paperback copies have been sold in a few weeks.
- Translated into 44 different languages
- Record-breaking international best seller
- Victor in two unsuccessful intellectual property lawsuits
- Major film release, May 19, 2006, starring Tom Hanks and directed by Ron Howard
- Time Magazine has named Dan Brown as one of the world's 100 most influential people.

But intrigue alone doesn't explain the propulsion of *The Da Vinci Code* to the top of the book heap. The fuel boosting Dan Brown's rocket is the same idea that drove the box office success of *The Matrix*: our most unquestioned beliefs are lies.

In *The Matrix*, *everything* was a lie. The entire world was a dream fabricated to keep believers unquestioningly complacent. Of course, we say, *The Matrix* was merely a movie. It made for fun after-dinner philosophizing, but not much else. On the other hand, Dan Brown's target is more specific, and the suspicions he raises strike closer to home. In *The Da Vinci Code*, organized Christian religion is a lie. The Bible is a sham, the church is a conspiracy, and the grandchildren of Jesus walk among us. And Dan Brown has the clues to prove it.

The Da Vinci Code raises several important questions that have a huge impact on the truthfulness of Christianity. *The Da Vinci Code* raises questions such as: Is Jesus God? Did He marry? Is the Bible reliable? Did the Church cover-up the truth? Did Christianity suppress women?

The Plot

The Da Vinci Code is an action packed, mystery thriller that takes place in Paris, London and other parts of Europe. The story opens with the murder of the Louvre's fictional curator, Jacques Sauniere, whose body is found thirty yards from Leonardo Da Vinci's painting, *The Mona Lisa*. Robert Langdon, fictitious Harvard symbologist is awakened from his sleep at the Hotel Ritz by Lieutenant Jerome Collet and taken to the Louvre.

Near the body, the police found a baffling cipher. In his quest to solve the mystery, Langdon is joined by a French cryptologist, Sophie Neveu. They discover that the cipher leads to ingeniously hidden clues by Leonardo in his works of art. They also learn that the late curator, who is also Sophie's grandfather, was involved in the Priory of Sion, a secret society whose members included Sir Isaac Newton, Botticelli,

Victor Hugo and DaVinci. The curator has given his life to protect the Priory's most sacred trust: the location of a vastly important religious relic, hidden for centuries.

In their desperate race through cathedrals and castles across Europe, Langdon and Neveu match wits with a faceless powerbroker who appears to work for Opus Die, a clandestine, Vatican-sanctioned sect believed to have long plotted to seize the Priory's secret. The secret is an astonishing truth, concealed for centuries is now unveiled.

The code, the race, and the truth all center on the revelation that Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene, and that the two had a daughter named Sarah, eventually issuing in the bloodline of the Merovingians, a French royal dynasty.

It's just a novel, one says. Why all the fuss over fiction? Everyone knows that novels embellish the truth.

The Claims:

***The Da Vinci Code* is fiction based on fact.**

After a long list of acknowledgement, Brown gives a "Fact" page in which he states, "All descriptions of artwork, architecture, documents, and secret rituals in this novel are accurate."

Almost everything the Church teaches about Jesus is false.

One of the book's main characters is Robert Langdon, a fictional Harvard professor of religious symbology. Claiming years of research, the professor maintains that for 1,700 years, the church has been covering up the real truth about Jesus. His views are later echoed by a fictional British royal historian referred to as Sir Leigh Teabing who says things like, "almost everything our fathers taught us about Christ is false" (*The Da Vinci Code*, p.235) [255].

Jesus was not God but only human and no one claimed he was God until the fourth century.

"...until that moment in history (4th century), 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... Jesus' establishment as the 'Son of God' was officially proposed and voted on by the Council of Nicaea." *The Da Vinci Code*, p. 253.

Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene.

"...One particularly troubling earthly theme kept recurring in the gospels. Mary Magdalene... More specifically, her marriage to Jesus Christ." *The Da Vinci Code*, p. 264

Mary was pregnant when Jesus was crucified.

Their offspring were the royal French line of the Merovingians.

Their offspring are alive today, a secret kept by the *Priory of Sion*.

The title of the book comes from the claim that Leonardo Da Vinci—along with other notables like Sir Isaac Newton and Victor Hugo—was a member of a secret society entrusted with the truth about Jesus. The secret of this group (The Priory of Sion) is that Jesus had a daughter by Mary Magdalene. Mary, according to the Priory, was the true Holy Grail who bore the royal bloodline of Jesus on earth. This, according to the professor, is a fact the church will kill to suppress.

What many readers fail to keep in mind is that *The Da Vinci Code* is fiction. Worse yet, the story rests not on careful research, but on a documented fraud passed off as truth. The idea that Leonardo was a member of The Priory of Sion is based on a document proven by a French court

of law to be a forgery and a hoax (*The Truth Behind The Da Vinci Code* by Richard Abanes, Harvest House Publishers, pp.48-57).

Mary Magdalene appears in Leonardo Da Vinci's *The Last Supper*.

"...the figure to Jesus' immediate right...The individual had flowing red hair, delicate folded hands, and the hint of a bosom. It was, without a doubt ... female

Mary is the "Holy Grail," the cup Jesus used at the Last Supper and Joseph of Arimathea used to collect the blood of Christ.

"*The Holy Grail is a woman...*

"*This is the woman who singlehandedly could crumble the Church?*

"Who is she?" Sophie asked.

"That, my dear," Teabing replied, is Mary Magdalene."

"*The Last Supper* practically shouts at the viewer that Jesus and Magdalene were a pair."
The Da Vinci Code p. 264

The early Christians worshiped the divine feminine which was later suppressed by the Church.

Mary Magdalene is divine.

The bones of Mary Magdalene are buried under the Louvre Pyramid.

The *Mona Lisa* is the goddess Isis.

The four canonical Gospels are false and the 80 other gospels tell the real story.

"More than *eighty* gospels were considered for the New Testament, and yet only a relative few were chosen for inclusion – Matthew, Mark, Luke and John among them." *The Da Vinci Code* [251].

Constantine invented a new Bible.

"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." *The Da Vinci Code* p. 254.

The Da Vinci Code's "alternative view of history" also falsely states that Jesus was not regarded as a God until the fourth century when the Roman emperor Constantine decided it was in his own political interests to unite the empire by giving Jesus "an impenetrable cloak of divinity" (*The Da Vinci Code*, p.233) [253]. According to Brown Constantine deified Jesus, collated the Bible and destroyed the competing gospels in order to eliminate the real story about Jesus.

To make the claim plausible, fictional historian Teabing says, "The most profound moment in Christian history" occurred when "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" (*The Da Vinci Code*, p.234).

Man invented original sin not God.

"It was *man*. Not God, who created the concept of 'original sin,' whereby Eve tasted of the apple and caused the downfall of the human race. Woman, once the sacred giver of life, was not the enemy." [p. 258]

Historical Errors in *The Da Vinci Code*:

- 1. Myth: The chief murderer is an albino monk** from the Catholic group Opus Dei.

Fact: Opus Dei which is Latin for the Work of God, a real org founded in 1928 has no monks which is contrary to their purpose which is to help catholic laypersons

2. Myth: The Priory of Sion is an organization from medieval times dedicated to preserving the secret of Jesus and Mary Magdalene.

Fact: The Priory of Sion was created in 1956 by a French con man, Pierre Plantard
Brown claims that 1975 documents in the Bibliotheque Nationale allegedly prove that the Priory was organized in 1099 and that Leonardo Da Vinci, Isaac Newton, and other illuminaries secretly were members. These documents were proven as fakes.

On September 1993, Pierre Plantard admitted to French Judge Thierry Jean-Pierre that he made up the Priory of Sion. The documents are a hoax and not historical at all.

3. Myth Brown's references to art

Brown's "Fact" page p. 1

"All descriptions of artwork, architecture, documents, and secret rituals in this novel are accurate."

Brown constantly refers to Da Vinci as Da Vinci. But no artist ever referred to him as Da Vinci. He is always referred to as Leonardo, i.e. "Leonardo Lives, The Codex Leicester and Leonardo da Vinci's Legacy of Art and Science," Trevor Fairbrother and Chiyo Ishikawa.

To find him you always look under "L" not "D" because da Vinci means from Vinci, the village in Tuscany where Leonardo grew up.

***The Da Vinci Code* claims that the Mono Lisa is a self portrait of Leonardo in drag.** Leonardo was not known for his painting of Christian art. He did 17 Christian art works.

***The Da Vinci Code* claims that John is not next to Jesus in Last Supper, but it is Mary Magdalene.**

There is no evidence anywhere that Leonardo suggested that John was Mary Magdalene. Because of John's youth he is often portrayed as feminine to the 21st century eye. This is seen in portraits of him in stained glass in cathedrals and other places by many artists not just Leonardo.

Claim that Mary Magdalene seated to the right of Jesus:

Where is John?

***The Da Vinci Code* Claims there are encoded secret messages in his art**

So what! All that would prove is that Leonard himself believed the bizarre theory contained in this novel. It would tell us nothing about the first century facts themselves.

4. Myth: The fact page

The Da Vinci Code begins with a lengthy list of acknowledgments and then a "fact page" designed to leave the impression that the novel is based on careful research of little-known facts. The fact page states: "All descriptions of artwork, architecture, documents, and secret rituals in this novel are accurate."

So the average reader with little background in theology, history, or art is likely to come away from the book believing that the Christian Church, out of a hatred for all things feminine, has deliberately been hiding the truth about Jesus' identity and His relationship with Mary Magdalene.

Later Brown alludes to two works by Da Vinci:

Tiebing asks Sophie do you know Da Vinci's beliefs on the New Testament? He then quotes Da Vinci's *Notebook on Polemics and Speculation*. "Many have made a trade of delusions and false miracles deceiving the stupid multitude."

He then quotes from another of Leonardo's writings, "Blinding ignorance does mislead us. O! wretched mortals, open your eyes!" *The Da Vinci Code* p. 250.

When you look up the two quotes neither one have anything to do with the New Testament and the second isn't even from the source Brown identifies. So much for the confidence of Brown's historical reliability.

5. Myth: History is always written by the winners

"History is always written by the winners. When two cultures clash, the loser is obliterated, and the winner writes the history books – books which glorify their own cause and disparage the conquered foe. As Napoleon once said, 'What is history, but a fable agreed upon?'...By its very nature, history is always a one-sided account." *The Da Vinci Code* [276]

One of the great dangers of *The Da Vinci Code* is that Brown gives about ten or twenty percent truth and the rest fiction. History can certainly be slanted by the winners, but there are numerous factors historians take into account to determine bias.

Dr. Paul Maier, noted historian and professor of ancient history at Western Michigan University says: First, are there "**multiple attestations**," or different authors writing about the same events? There are three accounts of the great fire of Rome in AD 64. They may differ on the extent of the fire but they attest to the fact that Rome did burn.

He lists secondly, "**the criterion of embarrassment**." One can often learn more from a hostile source than a friendly one. The friendly source might exaggerate to prove his case, but when a hostile source concludes something it is more believable. Therefore, the integrity of the witness is all important.

Thirdly, he mentions **archaeology**. The Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus writes about the siege of Masada. I know Masada is true because I have been to Masada. I have climbed the Roman ramp and even scaled the Northern Palace wall with a professor from Jerusalem University and the Hebrew University.

In historical fiction the foreground may be fiction but the background is fact. In all the historical fictions about World War II, some of the characters may be fictional, but Hitler always loses and the allies always win. To point out how Brown so distorts the facts about Jesus Christ, Maier gives an analogy.

He says, "Imagine that someone were to write a novel about George Washington, the nation's founder, rather than Jesus Christ, the church's founder. At the start, the author assures the reader that all his material is based on fact, then goes on to present the following scenario:

While doing research at Mount Vernon into the life of the father of our country, a veteran scholar is murdered. While dying, he leaves a long trail of intricate clues for his granddaughter and a friend so that they might avenge his death. After solving the clues despite their Byzantine complexity, the two finally learn an awful truth: George Washington was really a member of a secret society that worshiped King George III of England and his queen, Charlotte Sophia. In fact, the reason for the American reverses early in the Revolutionary War was that Washington, a

true but clandestine Tory, was secretly communicating Colonial war plans to the British via Benedict Arnold, Washington's secret illegitimate son. At Yorktown, while awaiting a British support fleet, Washington was preparing to surrender to Cornwallis, but when De Grasse arrived with his fleet of French ships to aid the American side, Washington had to accept Cornwallis's surrender instead.

At the end of his life, Washington's conscience got the better of him, and he wrote a confession that was buried with him in his tomb at Mount Vernon. The scholar who discovered it was then murdered by the CIA, who feared that his find would destroy the patriotic mystique of America's founding father and demoralize the country. When the FBI and CIA learn that the granddaughter and her friend know the awful truth, an all-points bulletin is issued for the pair. After a harrowing series of misadventures, the two escape capture. But no, they will not reveal the 'truth' about Washington either."

Maier concludes, "Readers with only a smattering of knowledge about American history but a great appetite for conspiracy might well buy into such worthless madness, since it contains just enough tangential truth – real people, real places, real situations – to be credible...Dan Brown has accomplished a very similar hoax, successful largely because so many today have 'only a smattering of knowledge' about Jesus and Christianity." Hank Hanegraaf and Paul Maier, *The Da Vinci Code: Fact or Fiction*. P. 38-39.

Evaluation by historical experts:

Margaret M. Mitchell, chair of the Department of New Testament and Early Christian Literature at the University of Chicago

"This is a good airplane book, a novelistic thriller that presents a rummage sale of accurate historical nuggets alongside falsehoods and misleading statements. The bottom line: The book should come coded for 'black light,' like the pen used by the character Sauniere to record his dying words so that readers could scan pages to see which 'facts' are trustworthy and which patently not." Margaret M. Mitchell, chair of the Department of New Testament and Early Christian Literature at the University of Chicago, quoted from Lee Strobel and Garry Poole, *Exploring the Da Vinci Code*.

Sandra Miesel, *Crisis Magazine*

"So error-laden is *The Da Vinci Code* that the educated reader actually applauds those rare occasions where Brown stumbles (despite himself) into the truth." Sandra Miesel in *Crisis Magazine*

Richard Abanes, *The Truth Behind The Da Vinci Code*

"*The Da Vinci Code* clearly contains many historical errors covering a wide variety of issues: church architecture, religious symbolism, the Roman Empire, ancient Israel, and different spiritual belief systems. If Brown cannot be relied upon to accurately recount the most basic of historical facts, then how can he be trusted to correctly explain more complex subjects?" Richard Abanes, *The Truth Behind The Da Vinci Code*

Why do so many people believe a myth?

Fifty years ago *The Da Vinci Code* would never have sold. People could think then. Ideas were examined and validated. If proven false they would never have gotten a hearing. But today in this post-Christian and post-modern society all ideas are relative. There is no absolute truth to post-modern society. The attitude is, "That's may be true for you, but not for me." As a result, many will not accept the truth even when the alternative is totally irrational.

Even Christians have become so entertainment oriented and influence by emotion that many don't use their minds. They justify their sin because they reject divine truth. They would rather feel good that use their minds. Paul said,

(Phil 2:5 KJV) Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

The evangelical church must stop compromising with society in order to win the culture. God has always used the faithful, anointed, systematic preaching of the Word of God as His means of changing hearts.

(Isa 28:10 KJV) For precept *must be* upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, *and* there a little:

(1 Cor 1:18 KJV) For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

So because people don't think they will fall for anything.

The Effects of the Da Vinci Code

National Geographic did a survey in Canada of the people who read the book and believe that it is true 32%.

MSNBC states, "Readers of Dan Brown's blockbuster novel are twice as likely to believe Jesus Christ fathered children and four times as likely to think the conservative Catholic group Opus Dei is a murderous sect. A British research organization, Opinion Research Business, found that 60 percent of those who had read *The Da Vinci Code* believed Jesus had children by Mary Magdalene compared with just 30 percent of those who had not read the book (<http://msnbc.msn.com/id/12815760>).

A reviewer from Book Sense says, "This is one of those rare books that comes along and makes you question everything you thought you knew about religion, art, and what you were taught in school. It's fast-paced, enthralling, and simply impossible to put down."

Edwin Lutzer, in his book tells of a waitress who said, "After reading *The Da Vinci Code* I will never be able to go to church again because I know that the church is based on lies."

The Biblical Prediction

Prophetic prediction of last days – 2 Tim. 3:1-7; 2 Peter 3:3-14

(2 Tim 3:1-7 NIV) But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. {2} People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, {3} without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, {4} treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God-- {5} having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them. {6} They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over weak-willed women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires, {7} always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth.

(2 Pet 3:3-14 NIV) First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. {4} They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." {5} But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. {6} By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. {7} By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. {8} But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. {9} The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting

anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. {10} But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. {11} Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives {12} as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. {13} But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. {14} So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.

Everyone has a choice:

The Gospel truth or the Da Vinci Myth
Jesus said, "I am the truth."