

# The Da Vinci Code: Is Christianity True? #1

## Introduction:

- A. Tonight we want to talk about the mega best-seller book, *The Da Vinci Code*, by Dan Brown.
1. "... published in 2003 (3/18/03) by Doubleday Fiction. It is a worldwide bestseller with more than 60.5 million copies in print (as of May 2006) and has been translated into 44 languages. It is thought to be the sixth biggest selling book of all time."  
– [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Da\\_Vinci\\_Code](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Da_Vinci_Code)
    - a. *The Barna Group*, May 15, 2006: "Dan Brown's novel, *The Da Vinci Code*, has sold more copies than any other fictional work in U.S. history."
  2. Recently made into a major motion picture produced by Ron Howard and starring Tom Hanks.
    - a. It too has been a big hit.
    - b. Nikki Finke, of the *LA Weekly*, wrote on June 11, 2006: "...*Da Vinci Code* is still red hot overseas and set another benchmark: passing *The Passion of the Christ* globally with \$642 million compared to \$623 million, making Sony's religious thriller the 26th biggest all-time hit. ... *Da Vinci* added another \$22 mil internationally, making it the #1 movie for the fourth week in a row and putting its foreign take at over \$453 million. In the U.S., *Da Vinci* mustered 6th place with slightly less \$10.3 mil for a domestic cumulative of \$189.0 mil, which is still far less than Mel Gibson's religious homage took in from American moviegoers. But *Da Vinci*'s \$189 mil domestic/\$453 mil foreign winning formula proved enough to surge past *Passion*'s \$370 mil domestic/\$253 mil foreign."  
– <http://www.deadlinehollywooddaily.com/da-vinci-code-passes-passion-worldwide/>
- B. *The Da Vinci Code* is a fictional novel that I understand is a real "page-turner."
1. The theme of the book and movie is the search of the Holy Grail.
    - a. According to legend the cup from which Jesus drank at the Last Supper and the one then used by Joseph of Arimathea to catch the blood of Jesus as He hung on the cross.
      - 1) No Biblical foundation for such at all.
  2. Only the Holy Grail is not the cup but is the proof Jesus and Mary Magdalene were married.
  3. They also are said to have produced a child whose descendants have remained to this day and are alive, having been hidden in France.
    - a. That is the "Holy Grail" – the bloodline of Jesus.
    - b. The evidence for all this was said to have been discovered under the ruins of Solomon's Temple by the Knights Templar of the Crusades and has, supposedly, since been kept guarded by a secret organization of these Knights called the Priory of Sion, who are keeping the secret from the world until the time is right to reveal it.
  4. Meanwhile, the Roman Catholic Church has worked with all its authority and power to prevent this information from ever getting out, for it would totally change the face of Christianity.
    - a. The church of the fourth century, under Emperor Constantine, not only attempted to destroy all evidence of the marriage of Jesus and Mary and their having a child, but also created the "myth" that Jesus was divine.
  5. But wait, there's more!
    - a. According to the book, before that time (325 A.D.), women were not only equal in authority in the church, but actually the church was founded on the rock of Mary Magdalene, who is a goddess to be worshiped.
  6. Feminists love this book, for to find the Holy Grail is to restore this lost understanding of the "sacred feminine," to give women the power and honor that the male dominated church supposedly took from them.
    - a. In order to do all this though, the Bible has to be completely discredited.
  7. As the story goes, this supposedly ancient secret society, the Priory of Sion, has guarded the Holy Grail – which consists of four trunks of ancient documents proving the true, original view of Christianity and which are stored in the hidden tomb of Mary Magdalene.

- a. The Grand Masters of the Priory of Sion included many famous men such as Isaac Newton and Leonardo Da Vinci.
  - b. These men, many who were famous artists, while keeping the secret until the time is right, filled the world with clues of the sacred feminine – clues hidden in the architecture and artwork of old European Cathedrals, famous paintings and even in Disney movies such as *Cinderella*, *Sleeping Beauty* and *The Little Mermaid*.
  - c. And hence, *The Da Vinci Code* is a reference to the coded messages left by Da Vinci in some of his paintings pointing to these “facts.”
8. One of the main characters of the story, Leigh Teabing, an Oxford Scholar of History, tells us how the true story of Christ is found not in the New Testament but in the Gnostic writings, such as the Nag Hammadi scrolls discovered in 1945.
9. The book is promoting ancient Gnosticism – which rejects “orthodox” Christianity in favor of secret “knowledge” of spiritual things.
- a. Such secret knowledge can only be found by rejecting the New Testament scriptures and replacing them with the gnostic gospels.
10. All of this misinformation is packaged into an exciting story line somewhat similar to the old *Indiana Jones* movies.
- C. **The plot is that Christianity is a big lie** – that its claims for the divinity of Jesus are a fabrication of the Roman Catholic Church for the purpose of covering up the true worship of the Divine Feminine and to give men the power to oppress women.
- D. We will consider the claims of *The Da Vinci Code* in five steps:
1. Why bother examining this?
  2. Is Jesus Divine?
  3. Was Jesus married?
  4. Is the Bible a fraud?
- E. Let’s begin by considering...

## I. Why Bother Examining This?

- A. **Supposed historical fact thinly veiled as fiction**
1. To say, “It’s only fiction. Lighten up” is a very naive response.
  2. Actually, if you open the book to its first page past the cover page, it says in large, bold print:
    - a. **“FACT:”**
      - 1) “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.”
      - 2) “The Vatican prelature known as Opus Dei is a deeply devout Catholic sect that has been the topic of recent controversy due to reports of brainwashing, coercion, and a dangerous practice known as ‘corporal mortification.’ Opus Dei has just completed construction of a \$47 million National Headquarters at 243 Lexington Avenue in New York City.”
      - 3) “All descriptions of artwork, architecture, documents, and secret rituals in this novel are accurate.”
        - a) That would include descriptions of N.T. documents, the Gnostic gospels, and even descriptions of how we got the Bible.
  3. In other words, the author claims that everything in the book is true except the story line and characters.
    - a. On ABC’s *Good Morning America* (11/3/03):
      - 1) **Charlie Gibson:** “This is a novel. If you were writing it as a non-fiction book, how would it have been different?”

- 2) **Dan Brown:** "I don't think it would have. I began the research for *The Da Vinci Code* as a sceptic. I entirely expected, as I researched the book, to disprove this theory. And after numerous trips to Europe, and about two years of research, I really became a believer. It's important to remember that this is a novel about a theory that has been out there for a long time."
  - b. On NBC's *Today Show* (10/10/05):
    - 1) **Matt Lauer:** "How much of this is based upon reality, in terms of things that actually occurred? I know you did a lot of research for the book."
    - 2) **Dan Brown:** "Absolutely all of it! Obviously Robert Langdon is fictional, but all of the art, architecture, secret rituals, secret societies – all of that is historical fact."
  - c. The *Chronicle*, interview with Mary Richardson:
    - 1) **Dan Brown:** "I like to learn. I've been a student my whole life and I've been a teacher and my dad's a teacher – I like to learn. And for me the most interesting books are the ones that you learn from. And so I wanted to write a book that, you know, while it entertained, at the same time you closed that last page and you go 'Wow! Do you know how much I just learned? That's fascinating.' Now that was really what I set out to do."
  4. The book is written in such a way that to the uninformed, it has the ring of truth to it.
    - a. It all sounds so plausible (that, actually, is the mark of a good piece of fiction).
  5. He has fooled even major book reviewers:
    - a. The *New York Daily News* said that his research is impeccable.
    - b. *Publisher's Weekly* called it, "an exhaustively researched page-turner."
    - c. *USA Today* stated, "Code's popularity shows that readers are clamoring for books which combine historic fact with a contemporary story line."
    - d. The *Chicago Tribune* called it, "A thundering, tantalizing, extremely smart fun ride transmitting several doctorates' worth of fascinating history and learned speculation; brain candy of the highest quality."
    - e. The *Library Journal* calls it, "a compelling blend of history and page-turning suspense."
  6. The author puts most of the claims discrediting the Bible and Christianity in the mouth of the fictional Oxford historian, Leigh Teabing (whose name, btw, is an anagram based on the names of the authors of the 1984 book, *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*, by Baigent and Leigh).
    - a. Putting all the historical info, which is supposed to be true, into the mouth of a highly respected historian, even if he is fictional, gives it all the more credibility.
- B. It is an attempt to rewrite history, discredit the Bible and destroy our faith in Christianity.**
1. If the things taught in the book are true then the Bible is a complete and total fraud!
  2. So Dan Brown's attempt to teach us some things is an attempt to totally undermine our faith.
  3. Listen to what Michael Baigent, one of the authors of *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*, which is where Dan Brown got his ideas for TDVC, said in an interview with *Dateline NBC*:
    - a. **Sara James**, Dateline correspondent: "You believe that much of what we think we know about Jesus is a lie?"
    - b. **Michael Baigent:** "It's a lie. It's an obvious lie."
    - c. **James:** "So basically, you're asking anybody who is a Christian to question their fundamental beliefs?"
    - d. **Baigent:** "Absolutely."
    - e. **James:** "Some might call your position heresy."
    - f. **Baigent:** "I should hope they would."
  4. Their stated aim is to teach us something.
    - a. What?
    - b. That the Bible cannot be trusted and, therefore, we've all believed a lie.
  5. Rom.1:25– "for that they exchanged the truth of God for a lie ..."

**C. Popularizing Gnosticism.**

1. What this novel is doing is popularizing the ancient views of Gnosticism.
2. It not only calls into question almost everything you ever believed as a Christian, it takes the more pseudo-scholarly works on Gnosticism and recasts them for a wider audience
  - a. Certain Gnostic “scholars” are attempting to make the Gnostic writings the true, authentic view of pure Christianity.
3. So we need to examine TDVC to counter Gnosticism, which is fast becoming a central part of the new, post-modern spirituality of our time.
  - a. The New Age movement has evolved more into a Gnostic movement today.
  - b. We need to be able to recognize it and refute it – 1 Thess.5:21; 1 Pet.3:15; 1 Jn.4:1.

**D. Because it is having a great impact!**

1. We’ve already mentioned the popularity of the book and movie.
2. Polls show Dan Brown is being successful as a teacher of perverted doctrines.
  - a. *The Barna Group*, May 15, 2006:
    - 1) “According to the Barna research, *The Da Vinci Code* has been read ‘cover to cover’ by roughly 45 million adults in the U.S. – that’s one out of every five adults (20%). That makes it the most widely read book with a spiritual theme, other than the Bible, to have penetrated American homes.”
    - 2) “Among the adults who have read the entire book, one out of every four (24%) said the book was either ‘extremely,’ ‘very,’ or ‘somewhat’ helpful in relation to their ‘personal spiritual growth or understanding.’ That translates to about 11 million adults who consider *The Da Vinci Code* to have been a helpful spiritual document.”
    - 3) “‘On the other hand,’ the researcher continued, ‘any book that alters one or more theological views among two million people is not to be dismissed lightly. That’s more people than will change any of their beliefs as a result of exposure to the teaching offered at all of the nation’s Christian churches combined during a typical week.’”
    - 4) “Barna noted that if the movie has a similar level of influence on movie-goers as the book has had on adult readers, then about a half-million adults could be expected to change one or more of their religious beliefs based upon the movie’s content.”
3. Why are so many flocking to the movie and book?
  - a. What has fueled its incredible success is that TDVC reinforces and teaches what people really want to believe about Jesus and the Bible.
  - b. The idea that Jesus was just a good man and a great teacher and nothing more is exactly what many are interested in.
    - 1) Who wants a divine Jesus who is nothing less than God and demands my obedience?
  - c. Further, saying the Bible was put together by men to advance a certain ideology again plays right into what so many desire.
    - 1) That means the Bible is not authoritative.
    - 2) It doesn’t need to be studied, understood, or obeyed.
  - d. Finally, there is a clear bias against organized religion today and so an author that demonizes one of the largest organized religions in the world (Roman Catholicism), charging it with hypocrisy, greed, and suppressing women, is again going to find a ready audience.
    - 1) I will not and cannot defend Catholicism, but Brown’s unwillingness to distinguish Christianity from Catholicism just helps his readers apply his charges to whatever “version” of Christianity they wish to, unfortunately including even New Testament Christianity.

E. Consider: Col.2:8; 1 Pet.3:15.

## II. Is Jesus Divine?

- A. Dan Brown first has his nutty professor, Leigh Teabing, compliment Jesus as a teacher:
1. "Jesus Christ was a historical figure of staggering influence, perhaps the most enigmatic and inspirational leader the world has ever seen." – TDVC, page 231
- B. Then, just 2 pages later, Teabing argues that before a vote at the Nicean Council in 325 AD, arranged by Emperor Constantine, Jesus was not considered by anyone to be Divine.
1. "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.*"
  2. "I don't follow. His divinity?" [Sophie Neveu]
  3. "My dear," Teabing declared, "until that moment in history [i.e. Constantine in 325 AD], Jesus was viewed by His followers as a mortal prophet ... a great and powerful man, but a man nonetheless. A mortal."
  4. "Not the Son of God?"
  5. "Right," Teabing said. "Jesus' establishment as 'the Son of God' was officially proposed and voted on by the Council of Nicea."
  6. "Hold on. You're saying Jesus' divinity was the result of a vote?"
  7. "A relatively close vote at that," Teabing added. "Nonetheless, establishing Christ's divinity was critical to the further unification of the Roman empire and to the new Vatican power base. By officially endorsing Jesus as the Son of God, Constantine turned Jesus into a deity who existed beyond the scope of the human world, an entity whose power was unchallengeable. This not only precluded further pagan challenges to Christianity, but now the followers of Christ were able to redeem themselves only via the established sacred channel – the Roman Catholic Church."
  8. Sophie glanced at Langdon, and he gave her a soft nod of concurrence.
  9. "It was all about power," Teabing continued. "Christ as Messiah was critical to the functioning of Church and state. Many scholars claim that the early Church literally *stole* Jesus from His original followers, hijacking His human message, shrouding it in an impenetrable cloak of divinity, and using it to expand their own power. I've written several books on the topic."  
– TDVC, page 233.
  10. So he is arguing that this was all done to establish an exclusive and unchallengeable power base for the Roman Catholic Church by having it's main figure (Jesus) be divine.
- C. Teabing went on to explain the need for a new Bible to explain this new divinity of Jesus:
1. "The twist is this," Teabing said, talking faster now. "Because Constantine upgraded Jesus' status almost four centuries *after* Jesus' death, thousands of documents already existed chronicling His life as a *mortal* man. To rewrite the history books, Constantine knew he would need a bold stroke. From this sprang the most profound moment in Christian history." Teabing paused, eyeing Sophie. "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." – TDVC, page 234
- D. Teabing further makes this comment:
1. "What I mean," Teabing countered, "is that almost everything our fathers taught us about Christ is *false.*" – TDVC, page 235.
- E. Is it true that Jesus never claimed to be God and that no one believed he was God prior to the fourth century A.D.?
- F. Note the following N.T. passages:
1. Jn.1:1-3,14.
  2. Jn.5:18; 10:33–The Jews understood Jesus' statements as claims of being divine.
  3. Jn.8:58– Jesus deliberately takes the sacred name of God, the I Am (Ex.3:14), and applies it to Himself.
  4. Matt.16:16– Peter understood that Jesus was God's Son.

5. Col.2:9– “9 for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily,”
  6. Mk.15:39– The Roman soldier standing by the cross concluded from the events of the day that Jesus surely was the Son of God, divine.
  7. Heb.1:8– Quoting from Psa.45:6 the Hebrew writer says this reference to “O God” is a reference to Jesus, the Son of God.
  8. Rom.1:4– His resurrection was proof positive He was the Son of Almighty God.
- G. Consider these affirmations of Jesus’ deity in the writings of the pre-Nicene church fathers.
1. In the early second century, Ignatius of Antioch wrote of “our God, Jesus the Christ.”<sup>35</sup>
  2. Similar affirmations can be found throughout these writings.
  3. There’s even non-Christian testimony from the second century that Christians believed in Christ’s divinity.
    - a. 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.”<sup>36</sup>
    - b. <sup>35</sup>Ignatius of Antioch, “Ephesians,” 18:2, cited in Jack N. Sparks, ed., *The Apostolic Fathers*, trans. Robert M. Grant (New York: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1978), 83.
    - c. <sup>36</sup>Pliny, *Letters*, transl. by William Melmoth, rev. by W.M.L. Hutchinson (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1935), vol.II, X:96, cited in Habermas, *The Historical Jesus*, 199.
  4. [Section copied from PDF by Michael Gleghorn. From <http://www.probe.org/>]
- H. Clearly Jesus IS divine and has been from day one.
1. The claim He was not declared to be divine until 295 years after His death is completely false.
- I. NOTE: The Council of Nicea did debate the Arian heresy that Jesus was not divine by nature, but was created in ages past by God.
1. Constantine was sympathetic to the Arians, not to the “divinity” of Jesus.
  2. Indeed it was a close vote – close to a unanimous vote, that is.
    - a. Jesus’ divinity won 316 to 2!

Conclusion:

- A. Next Sunday evening we will continue by considering the claims that Jesus was married and had children, and also the charges that the Bible itself was tampered with by Emperor Constantine.
- B. As we saw, Dan Brown is trying to teach us something in his novel.
  1. The nature of what he is trying to teach us seems to be clear – he believes Christianity is a fraud, that the claims of the Bible are false.
- C. Do you agree with him?

(This outline has leaned heavily on outlines by another preacher, but I have lost both his name and where I obtained them from. I am thus unable to give due credit.)