

The Da Vinci Code: Is Christianity True? #2

Introduction:

- A. Last Sunday evening we began a short examination of some of the claims made by Dan Brown in *The Da Vinci Code*.
- B. Remember Dan Brown's expressed purpose in writing the book:
 1. The *Chronicle*, interview with Mary Richardson:
 - a. **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."
 2. His aim in the book is to teach us all something.
 - a. What?
 - 1) That among others the Louvre Museum in Paris houses the paintings of one "Leonardo da Vinci?"
 - 2) Or that it is possible to leave encrypted messages for others to find and decipher?
 - b. He is seeking to convince us of some things pertaining to the Bible.
 - c. We saw last Sunday evening his assertion, through his nutty professor Teabing, that Jesus was not Divine until after Emperor Constantine made him Divine at the counsel of Nicea in 325 A.D.
- C. The book and movie have had and will continue to have an influence on the spiritual thinking of a great many in our society.
 1. I recently heard it said that what most people know about the Bible they learned from movies like the 1956 Cecil B. DeMille movie, *The Ten Commandments*, starring Charlton Heston.
 - a. I don't know if such is true, but certainly movies have a strong impact on the way we think about things.
 - b. Will TDVC be viewed in a similar fashion?
- D. We continue to investigate the claims of Mr. Brown tonight by considering the things said about Jesus and Mary Magdalene.

I. Dan Brown Claims Jesus and Mary Magdalene Were Married.

- A. Claim (from page 244 of TDVC):
 1. When Teabing reveals to Sophie the picture of the Last Supper and helps her to realize the person to the right of Jesus is not the apostle John but rather Mary Magdalene, her immediate shock is expressed with the words, "The prostitute?"
 2. Teabing drew a short breath, as if the word had injured him personally. "Magdalene was no such thing. That unfortunate misconception is the legacy of a smear campaign launched by the early Church. The Church needed to defame Mary Magdalene in order to cover up her dangerous secret – her role as the Holy Grail."
 3. "Her *role*?"
 4. "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 the 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."
 5. "I beg your pardon?" Sophie's eyes moved to Langdon and then back to Teabing.
 6. "It's a matter of historical record," Teabing said, "and Da Vinci was certainly aware of that fact. *The Last Supper* practically shouts at the viewer that Jesus and Madgalene were a pair."
- B. Leonardo's *The Last Supper*:
 1. Earlier in the book/movie a "Pentacle" was explained to represent the unity and harmony of the male and female halves of the world.

2. Brown argues that *The Last Supper* pictures not John to Jesus' right was Mary Magdalene.
3. The open "V" shape between them is said to be the symbol of the female.
4. Also, the shape of the letter "M" around "Mary" and Jesus is also said to suggest "married" or "Mary Magdalene."
5. The Italian artists of the time painted young men in a feminine way for some reason.
6. But there are only 13 people in the painting – so if one is Mary, which apostle did he leave out?

II. Who was Mary Magdalene?

A. She's always possessed a certain mystique.

1. In the 1960's she was a key figure in musicals about Jesus, such as *Godspell*, *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *The Last Temptation of Christ*, which all delve into Mary and a relationship she supposedly had with Jesus.
2. Part of the reason for this is because there is so little data about her.
 - a. So folks want to round out the picture with speculation.
 - b. But Teabing's suggestion that the Bible contains a recurring troubling theme of a marriage between Mary and Jesus is utterly absurd.

B. What the Bible has to say:

1. Can get a little confusing, because there are seven "Mary's" in the Bible.
 - a. Mary the mother of Jesus – cf.Matt.1.
 - b. Mary of Bethany, sister of Martha and Lazarus – Jn.11:1.
 - c. Mary the mother of James, not the Lord's brother – Matt.27:56.
 - d. Mary the wife of Clopas – cf.Jn.19:25.
 - e. Mary the mother of John Mark – cf.Acts 12:12.
 - f. One unidentified Mary – Rom.16:6.
 - g. Mary Magdalene (from Magdala) – Lk.8:2.
2. Notice that nearly all are connected with a male of some sort, except for Mary Magdalene.
 - a. This was common Jewish practice at the time.
 - 1) When naming a female, they connected her to some male in her life.
 - b. This Mary, however, is connected to where she was from, Magdala.
3. A Common Confusion of three women:
 - a. Luke's "sinful woman" (Lk.7), Mary Magdalene (Lk.8) and Mary of Bethany (Jn.12).
 - b. Mary Magdalene was not a prostitute, at least as far as we know.
 - c. Truth of how people began to confuse Mary Magdalene with the sinful woman:
 - 1) Sinful woman who wet Jesus' feet – Lk.7:36-50.
 - 2) Followed immediately by the mention of Mary Magdalene – Lk.8:1-3.
 - 3) "Mary" (of Bethany) also wet Jesus' feet – Jn.12:3.
 - a) She is neither the sinful woman or Mary Magdalene, but sister of Martha and Lazarus.
 - d. The confusion arose when Pope Gregory I of the 6th Century confused all 3 as one person.

C. What do we know about Mary?

1. She was from Magdala and seven demons had been cast out of her.
2. She was one of several woman who traveled with and supported Jesus and His disciples.
 - a. cf.Lk.8:1-3– above; Mk.15:40,41.
3. She probably was not married, since she is not connected to any male like the rest.
4. She was present at the cross along with the other women who traveled with Jesus – Matt.27:55,56; Mk.15:40,41; Jn.19:25.
5. She, along with other women, went to the tomb when they buried Jesus – Matt.27:61; Mk.15:47.
6. She, along with other women, went back to the tomb first thing on Sunday morning – Matt.28:1; Mk.16:1.
7. An angel appeared to her, and the other women – Matt.28:1-7, and instructed them to tell the others He was risen – Lk.24:10,11.

- a. Jesus appeared first to Mary Magdalene – Mk.16:9.
- b. John's gospel confirms this – Jn.20:11-18.
 - 1) This is the only place in the Bible where we see Jesus and Mary Magdalene alone – Jn.20:17.
 - a) She was "clinging to him" but He told her to let go.
- 8. That's it.
 - a. That's all we know about Mary Magdalene.
 - b. No evidence she had any kind of relationship with Jesus beyond what the other women had.

III. Was Jesus Married?

- A. Dan Brown claimed it to be historically beyond dispute.
 - 1. "It's a matter of historical record" – TDVC, page 244.
 - 2. "The royal bloodline of Jesus Christ has been chronicled in exhaustive detail by scores of historians" – TDVC, page 253.
- B. **Alleged Biblical evidence for the marriage of Jesus:**
 - 1. **Mary traveled with Jesus and was not connected to another man, which would have been highly unusual in Jewish culture; thus she must have been married to Jesus.**
 - a. Many women traveled with Jesus – Mk.15:40,41; Lk.8:1-3.
 - b. They were not connected to Jesus either.
 - 1) None of the passages links Mary exclusively with Jesus.
 - 2) If they had been married, why didn't the writers simply link her with Jesus as they linked the others with the men in their lives?
 - 2. **Such a public display by the sinful woman of Luke 7:36-ff would be offensive to first century Jews, unless she was His wife.**
 - a. As we saw earlier, there is no proof that Luke 7 was Mary, even if it was Jesus' wife.
 - b. It was offensive to the host, Simon – Lk.7:39.
 - 1) If this was His wife, why would it be offensive?
 - 3. **The argument is that the scriptures are silent in order protect Mary from persecution.**
 - a. Arguments from the silence of scriptures prove nothing – except that the scriptures are silent about Jesus and Mary being married.
 - b. The scriptures never tried to protect anyone else from persecution.
 - 1) Why not hide the identity of Jesus' mother to protect her?
 - 4. **If Jesus was married, there was plenty of opportunity for the Bible writers to say so.**
 - a. Gospels mention Jesus' mother, brothers and sisters, so why not his wife? Matt.13:55,56.
 - b. At the cross, Jesus showed concern for His mother, but said nothing of Mary Magdalene, who was likewise present – cf.Jn.19:26,27.
 - c. Paul had a perfect opportunity to speak of it – 1 Cor.9:5,6.
 - 1) Paul appealed to the wives of Peter and Barnabas and even Jesus' brothers in order to prove the right to be supported of the gospel.
 - 2) Why didn't he appeal to the example of Jesus?
 - 3) This would have sealed his argument.
- C. **Early Church Fathers.**
 - 1. We'll look exhaustively at everything that the "church fathers" had to say about it.
 - 2.
 - 3. Doesn't take long, since their testimony is the same as the four gospels – not one comment or shred of evidence of it at all.
- D. **Gnostic gospels.**
 - 1. These Gnostic gospels are NOT inspired.
 - a. They were all written 150+ years AFTER Christ died.
 - b. They WERE NOT written by the person whose name is attached to them.

2. **The Gospel of Philip** – Jesus kissing Mary:

- a. On page 245 of TDVC Teabing takes down a large copy of *The Gnostic Gospels* and says:
 - 1) “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.”
 - 2) Sophie read the passage:
 - a) And the companion of the Saviour 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?”
 - b) [Couple of paragraphs later]
 - c) “As any Aramaic scholar will tell you, the word *companion*, in those days, literally meant *spouse*.”
- b. What professor Teabing doesn’t tell you is that there are several holes in the manuscript, leaving a great deal of doubt as to what the passage actually says.
 - 1) And the companion of the [...] Mary Magdalene. [...] loved] her more than [all] the disciples [...] kiss her [often] on her [...]. The rest of [the disciples ...]. They said to him, “Why do you love her more than all of us?”
- c. Where did Jesus kiss Mary: On the forehead, cheek or mouth?
- d. Another question concerns the term “companion.”
 - 1) Brown wants us to consult a scholar of Aramaic to arrive at what was meant by the word.
 - 2) But it isn’t written in Aramaic.
 - a) We need to consult the Coptic or Greek, the original language in which it was written.
 - 3) The Greek word is *koinonos* = “partners;” “partakers;” “fellowship;” “sharers.”
 - 4) It is used 10 times in the N.T., including these: Lk.5:10; 2 Cor.1:7; 2 Cor.8:23 (were Titus and Paul in a homosexual marriage?); Phile.1:17.
 - 5) This is not the usual word for wife, which is the Greek word *gyne*.
 - a) *koinonos* never used in the Bible for “wife.”
 - 6) So this argument is based on a possible reading of a damaged manuscript of an uninspired book.

3. **The Gospel of Mary Magdalene.**

- a. On page 247 of TDVC Teabing says:
 - 1) “I shan’t bore you with the countless references to Jesus and Magdalene’s union. That has been explored ad nauseam by modern historians. I would, however, like to point out the following.” He motioned to another passage. “This is from the Gospel of Mary Magdalene.”
 - 2) Sophie had not known a gospel existed in Magdalene’s words. She read the text:
 - a) And Peter said, “Did the Saviour really speak with a woman without our knowledge? Are we to turn about and all listen to her? Did he prefer her to us?”
 - b) And Levi answered, “Peter, you have always been hot-tempered. Now I see you contending against the woman like an adversary. If the Saviour made her worthy, who are you indeed to reject her? Surely the Saviour knows her very well. That is why he loved her more than us.”
- b. The implication is that Jesus knew her well enough to know if she was worthy.
 - 1) They claim this suggests a sexual relationship with Mary.
- c. It says nothing of the sort.
- d. Makes no suggestion beyond the kind of love He had for the apostle John and others – Jn.11:5,36; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7,20.

4. Again, these two Gnostic Gospels are dated much later than the N.T. documents:
 - a. The Gospel of Philip: “no earlier than 350 AD.”
 - 1) 180-350 – http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_Philip
 - b. The Gospel of Mary Magdalene: “The earliest fragments dated to the third century, and most scholars date it no earlier than 180-200 AD”
 - 1) Philip Jenkins, Professor of History and Religious Studies, Penn State University (Philip Jenkins, Hidden Gospels; Oxford Press, 2002, 69,117).
 5. Funny how when someone finds a later text that contradicts the Bible, it is the Bible that is wrong and the later text that is the truth.
- E. A single Jesus is “un-Jewish”?**
1. On page 245 of TDVC Teabing says:
 - a. “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 than our standard biblical view of Jesus as a bachelor.”
 - b. “Why?” Sophie asked.
 - c. “Because Jesus was a Jew,” Langdon said, taking over while Teabing searched for his book, “and the social decorum during that time virtually forbid a Jewish man to be unmarried. According to Jewish custom, celibacy was condemned, and the obligation for a Jewish father was to find a suitable wife for his son. If Jesus were not married, at least one of the Bible’s gospels would have mentioned it and offered some explanation for His unnatural state of bachelorhood.”
 2. Notice the argument that He MUST have been married since the scriptures say NOTHING about Him not being married.
 - a. Actually, to the contrary, if Jesus had been married, the Gospel’s would surely have mentioned it because of Jesus’ claims, and His followers’ belief, that He was the Son of God.
 - 1) But again, silence doesn’t prove anything!
 3. Celibacy was highly valued in some circles, especially among Jews dedicated to God.
 - a. Jesus Himself taught on it – Matt.19:9-12.
 - b. Paul taught it under some circumstances – 1 Cor.7:26-29.
 4. Jesus had good reason to break the normal custom of marriage:
 - a. He lived an itinerant lifestyle (“no place to lay His head”) and He was totally devoted to doing His Father’s will.
 - b. Would be killed at young age (cf.1 Cor.7:26-29).
 - c. If He had a wife and child, men would have argued about His divinity.

Conclusion:

- A. There is NO Biblical evidence that Mary had a special relationship with Jesus.
 1. She was simply one of many women who followed Jesus as one of His disciples.
- B. There is no evidence from the Gnostic writings of their marriage or of a sexual relationship.
- C. The evidence that Jesus was single right up to the time of His death is beyond historical dispute.
- D. [BTW, this is certainly NOT a new doctrine – Mormons were teaching it in the mid 1800’s.]
- E. We’ll plan on one more lesson in this series looking at the claims that the Bible we have today is a fabrication of Emperor Constantine, and we’ll do that in two weeks.

(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.)