

Understanding *The Da Vinci Code*

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Table of Contents

The Reason This Is Necessary	1
What Do We Know About... ..	3
The Knights Templar	3
Mary Magdalene	3
The Council of Nicea	4
The Priory of Sion	5
Opus Dei	6
Gnosticism	6
The Sacred Feminine	8
The Reliability of New Testament Documents	9
Was Jesus Really God?	11
Did Jesus really claim to be God?	11
Did the early church believe Jesus was God?	15
Evidence that Christ was who he said he was.	16
A Basic List of Errors in The Da Vinci Code	18
Summary	22

The Reason This Is Necessary

A training like this should not really be necessary. The Da Vinci Code is, after all, fiction. Normally a novel would not cause all of this controversy. Certainly there are other books that have made it big because of their controversial approach to issues related to the Christian faith, but they can easily be dismissed, or at least debated, and the problems easily sorted out.

The only reason this story is an exception is because of a statement that Dan Brown put in the beginning of his book. That statement says:

Fact:

The Priory of Sion – a European secret society founded in 1099 – is a real organization. In 1975 Paris's Bibliothèque 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.

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.

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

So what is the problem? The problem is that none of these things are facts. And along with these overtly stated "facts," there are many more problems that are introduced in the story. In the process of telling his tale, he puts out so much wrong information about the Christian faith that it needed a response.

We intuitively sense that a response is needed, but the Christian pollster, George Barna, effectively quantifies this need for us. According to Barna's polling:

- Approximately 45 million adults in the U.S. have read the book cover to cover (20%).
- Catholics are more likely than Protestants to have read it (24% vs. 15%).
- Among Protestants, those associated with mainline churches are more likely than non-mainline churches to have read it.
- "Upscale" individuals are four times as likely to have read it as "downscale" people.
- Of those who have read it, 24% say the book was helpful in their own spiritual growth or understanding.
- Very few people said the story changed their beliefs, but 5% said they did change their beliefs or religious perspectives because of the book. This represents about 2 million people. That is more people than will change any of their beliefs as a result of the teaching at all of the nation's churches combined in a typical week.

- The people most likely to change beliefs were Hispanics (17%). Women were three times more likely than men and liberals were twice as likely as conservatives.
- More than 30 million adults are likely to pay for a ticket to see the film and it will probably break the \$300 million box office barrier - which will make it among the top 20 movies of all time.
- More than 10 million adults who have not read the book will probably go see the movie. If that holds it is expected that about a half million people will change one or more of their religious beliefs based upon the movie's content. The highest impact will probably be among young people who are still forming their beliefs.
- The most likely to attend the movie are:
 - ▶ People under 35
 - ▶ Catholics
 - ▶ Hispanics
 - ▶ Political liberals
 - ▶ People who are not born again Christians

Another poll also was released by the Opinion Research Business (ORB) that gives us more reason to prepare ourselves. They state that when people read the book, their beliefs about the Roman Catholic Church and the life of Christ are likely to be altered. This survey was done in Britain and they found that of those who had read the book, a large percentage take the claims seriously. These people were also:

- four times more likely to believe that Opus Dei is a murderous organization, and
- largely believed that Jesus and Mary Magdalene had children together (60%).

The real danger is that a year or two from now, many people may not remember where they got all of the false information about Christ and the Christian faith, but it will become the basis of their understanding about these topics. As Christians, we have a choice. We can understand what is going on and engage it, or we can put our heads in the sand. We can be very confident about dealing with this if we are willing to make the effort to educate ourselves about the phenomenon.

What Do We Know About...

The Knights Templar

The First Crusade was a success for the European Christians who went to the Holy Land to take back Jerusalem from the Muslims. In the early 1100s, after that victory, a group of knights led by Hugues de Payens offered themselves as a military force to protect Christian pilgrims who were traveling to the Holy Land. Their offer was accepted and they were given quarters on the Temple Mount.

During the first nine years of their existence, this group was made up of nine knights. Seemingly, the reason it was such a small group is that few were willing to take their vows of chastity, poverty and obedience.

Because of the groups dedication, an abbot wrote a letter praising the knights which was widely circulated throughout Christian Europe. As a result of that letter, many men of noble birth decided to join the Templar Order and many others gave them gifts of land and other valuables.

Because of their vow of poverty, the knights were not individually allowed to own the land and other gifts. However, this restriction did not apply to the order as a whole and they gladly accepted them and put them to immediate use.

As a result, the knights became quite wealthy. Then, in addition to all of the gifts, they became experts in trade and banking which added to their wealth.

A couple of centuries later, in 1307, King Philip IV of France saw an opportunity to take the enormous accumulated wealth of the Templars. On October 13 of that year, Philip, with the help of the Pope, had the Templars arrested for heresy. This charge allowed their money and assets to be seized.

To make the charges stick, The Templars were tortured to gain confessions. The confessions included such things as trampling and spitting on the cross, homosexuality and sodomy, and the worshiping of an idol named Baphomet.

In 1314, the last Grand Master of the Knights Templar, Jacques de Molay, was burned at the stake. Legend has it that De Molay cursed King Philip and Pope Clement as he burned, and implored both men to join him in death within a year. Interestingly, Pope Clement V died one month later and Philip IV seven months after that.

Mary Magdalene

1. Her actual name was Miriam and she was named after the Old Testament Jewish prophetess.
2. She was from the town of Magdala (Magdalene was not her last name. - Mary of Magdala).
3. Jesus cast out seven demons from her. Mark 16:9, Luke 8:2
4. She was one of Jesus' disciples who traveled around with him and the Twelve (Jesus' entourage was composed of both men and women). Matthew 15:40
5. She was not the prostitute mentioned in Luke 7 who anointed Jesus' feet.
6. She was a follower of Jesus and supported him financially (which means that she may have been wealthy). Luke 8:1-3
7. She traveled with Jesus and the Twelve to Jerusalem from Galilee for the Passover celebration. Matthew 27:55
8. She watched the crucifixion from afar. Matthew 27:56, Mark. 15:40-41, John 19:25

9. Mary was among those who stood vigil when Jesus was put in the tomb. Matthew 27:61, Mark 15:47
10. She was among the group who intended to put burial spices on Jesus' body after his crucifixion. Mark 16:1
11. She was the first, or with the first group, to discover that the tomb was empty and she went to inform the apostles. Matthew 28:1, Mark 16:9, Luke 24:10, John 20:1-2
12. Jesus had a conversation with her after his resurrection. John 20:11-17
13. Jesus sent her to tell the apostles of the news of the resurrection when she saw him on Resurrection Morning. John 20:18

Summary

- There is no early historical evidence whatsoever, in any ancient document, that Jesus was married, much less to Mary Magdalene.
- There is no evidence that Mary Magdalene was a major church leader. The idea that she had a ministerial role equal to that of the Twelve Apostles is pure fabrication. There were women who participated in ministry in the early church, but the only office we know anything about was that of deaconess. There is no hint that Mary Magdalene participated even at that level.

The Council of Nicea

The Convening of the Council of Nicea

The first Council of Nicea was held in 325 A.D. It was held in Bithynia and attended by 318 church leaders from around the world. This first council became the pattern upon which subsequent councils were modeled.

Basically the council was called to address the issue of the nature of God. Since its beginning, the church's predominant understanding of the nature of God was Trinitarian – one God who revealed himself in three distinct persons. In that day, however, there was a small group of people who believed that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit represented more than one God. This group was called the Monarchianists and included Arius, the Presbyter of the church in Alexandria, Egypt. As a result, the name of the argument came to be known as the Arian controversy.

Arius believed that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were completely separate from one another, and that the Father had created the Son. Arius asserted that if the Father begat the Son, then the Son must have had a beginning like every other part of creation. That being the case, there had to have been a time when he did not exist, and that he was created from nothing like the rest of creation. Arius believed that if the Son were equal to the Father, there would be more than one God. In the end, the Council of Nicea condemned the beliefs of Arius and wrote the first version of the now famous Nicene creed which proclaims that the Son was "one in being with the Father."

How Controversial was the Arian Controversy?

As the Council began to investigate the controversy, they questioned Arius using Scripture. In this interrogation they discovered that he was not interpreting scripture the traditional way, but that he had his own new way of approaching it.

As Arius began to espouse his theological stance, the bishops of the Council stopped up their ears and immediately rejected his teaching. They used the argument that Arius' view had to be wrong because it was new. They, then, tore up a letter containing Arius' teaching, as well as an Arian confession of faith. At that point they wrote the Nicene Creed to explicitly spell out the doctrine of the Trinity.

Originally there were seventeen bishops who were unwilling to sign the Creed. The reason they didn't want to sign was not because they disagreed with its content, but because it used a word to describe the nature of God which was not used in the Scripture texts. However, by the end of the meeting, there were only three holdouts, and when the final vote was taken, it was passed 316-2.

The Priory of Sion

The Priory of Sion was established in 1956 in France. It was the brainchild of Andre Bonhomme and Pierre Plantard and began simply as a small club of friends.

These two, along with a couple of other friends were talking one day about the bad state of housing and they decided to form a society devoted to the cause of low-cost housing. They decided to name the group after a hill called Mont Sion which was located outside of the town of St. Julien-en-Genevoise. With this, The Priory of Sion was born. They, then, officially registered the organization with the French government. The extent of the work of the group was to produce a journal, called *Circuit*, which contained articles about their cause.

Plantard, himself, had a shady past. He was a supporter of the Vinchy regime in France during WWII and was involved in the anit-semitic movement as well as facist politics. In 1942 he founded a group called the Alpha Galates and spent time in prison because he did not register it with the authorities. Around 1953, he also spent time in jail for fraud and embezzlement.

In the 1980s, Plantard revived the Priory of Sion in a different form. This new "organization" had nothing to do with the original cause or the previous members of the group. In fact, he created an entirely new history for the Priory and tried to use that as a basis for con games.

He claimed that the group was a secret society that was founded during the Crusades by Godfrey de Bouillon and was linked with the Knights Templar. His story linked the group to secret societies and the legends of Gisors, Berenger Sauniere and Rennes-le-Chatear. He also personally claimed to be from a line of French kings and was the keeper of secret papers associated with the Priory. To help legitimize his story, he concocted a list of Grand Masters which dated back many centuries.

Later, during the mid-1980s, a French researcher named Jean-Luc Chaumeil exposed Plantard's fraud and checkered past. This caused Plantard to quit his con games for a time.

However, in 1989 he updated his hoax and tried to make a come-back. He revised his story about the Priory of Sion and produced a new list of grand masters that included the name of Roger-Patrice Pelat. Unfortunately, Pelat was involved in a financial scandal, and when the connection between Pelat and Plantard's story was discovered, the judge in the case ordered a search of Plantard's house. This search uncovered a large stash of fake Priory of Sion documents which included a claim that he was the true King of France.

In the process, Plantard finally admitted his hoax and was warned by the judge to cease and desist from the whole thing. After this, Plantard gave up his attempts to use this name.

Opus Dei

Opus Dei is nothing like what is described in *The Da Vinci Code*. Basically, it is a Catholic institution founded in Spain by Saint Josemaria Escrivaa in 1928. With the support of the local bishops, the group began to grow until it finally received official approval from the Vatican in 1950. From there it began to expand around the world.

The group's mission is to help people connect their occupation and daily activities with their spiritual walk. Opus Dei conducts classes, lectures, retreats and gives pastoral care to help people become more faithful to Christ and the Catholic Church.

Opus Dei has around 85,000 members and consists of both men and women. There are about 3000 members in the United States. Ninety-eight percent of its membership are laypersons and most of them are married. The other two percent are priests. There are no monks in Opus Dei.

Opus Dei does not call people to live a monastic life. Rather, they try to help people grow closer to God in their ordinary secular activities. There is a small number who have committed themselves to celibacy. These people make themselves available to help maintain the activities of the organization. Even though this group has committed to celibacy, they do not take vows, wear robes, sleep on straw mats or spend all their time in prayer and corporal mortification.

Members of Opus Dei do make limited use of corporal mortification, but it is not as described in *The Da Vinci Code*. What they do is in line with the more conventional Roman Catholic tradition. Opus Dei is not a cult group, but is fully integrated into the Roman Catholic Church.

Gnosticism

The word "Gnosticism" comes from the Greek word "gnosis" which means "knowledge." There were many Gnostic groups and each had its own specific variation of the basic Gnostic doctrines. In general, though, Gnosticism teaches that salvation is achieved through special knowledge.

The basic concepts of Gnosticism emerged before the appearance of Christianity, but later forms latched on to the Christ event and claimed that it was through Christ that God revealed the knowledge necessary for salvation.

For Gnostics, reality is understood to exist in layers. At the top is an unknowable God who is absolutely pure and perfect. At the bottom is the material universe which is considered evil. In between there exists a series of lesser divinities, called Aeons, who were created by God.

One of these lesser Gods had a desire to know the unknowable God and from this evil desire was born the Demiurge (an evil god). This evil God (Demiurge) is the one who created the material universe, as well as mankind. The Demiurge is understood by the Gnostics to be the God of the Old Testament. As a result, the material universe is evil which makes physical human bodies evil, as well.

Somehow a spark of the divine pure spirit from the good and true God fell into the material universe and became trapped in the bodies of human beings. This gives humans a longing to reunite with the true God. The Demiurge, along with some other lesser gods (the Archons), are working to prevent the pure spirit souls from ascending back to God after the physical body dies.

For Gnostics, deliverance from material form is only attainable through special knowledge which is revealed by enlightened Gnostic teachers. Christ plays a special part in this process

because he was the divine redeemer who descended from the spiritual realm to reveal the knowledge necessary for this redemption to take place.

As a result, Christ is not seen to be the incarnation of God and could not atone for the sins of mankind. He was simply a messenger from God who came to transmit special saving knowledge.

There were two basic approaches to Gnosticism. Both regard the material world as evil, but one group became ascetics and the other very licentious. The ascetics tried to use severe abstinence to free the soul from the slavery of the material world. The other group felt that any attempt to purify the corrupt body was useless and that it didn't matter what you did with the body.

Gnostic writers claim to have received their doctrine from the early apostles and even from New Testament writings, themselves. But in order to come up with their beliefs, they had to interpret the writings allegorically.

Gnosticism was the first heresy to be rejected by the early church. The early church fathers rejected Gnosticism in the second century, well before Constantine came on the scene. This heresy was an ongoing problem, though, and even during the time of Constantine it was still being dealt with. The purpose of the First Council of Nicea was to fight this heresy which claimed that Jesus Christ was a phantom or an angel and not a man of flesh and blood.

Early Gnostic Writings (2nd century)

- The Gospel of Thomas
- The Secret Book of James
- Basilides
- Naassene Fragment
- Gospel of Mary
- Dialogue of the Savior
- Gospel of the Savior
- Marcion
- Epiphanes
- Ophite Diagrams
- Ptolemy
- Gospel of Truth
- Excerpts of Theodotus
- Heracleon
- Acts of Peter
- Acts of Thomas

Worldview Analysis

1. What is the nature of ultimate reality?

There is an unknowable God who is absolutely pure and perfect. Below him there are various other layers of gods (Archons) which exist between the true God and the Demiurge.

2. What is the nature of material reality?

Material reality was created by an evil god called the Demiurge who is identified with the God of the Old Testament. The Demiurge came into being out of an evil desire to know the unknowable God. Thus, the material world he created is evil.

3. What is a human being?

Human beings were created as material beings by the Demiurge. However, there is a divine spark from the unknowable God trapped in the evil material body which gives humans a desire to escape the evil material universe and reunite with the good God.

4. What happens to a person at death?

The ultimate goal is for individuals to escape the material universe and reunite with the true God. This is accomplished by special knowledge (gnosis) which is imparted by Gnostic teachers. Christ plays a part in this because he descended to the material world to reveal this knowledge. The spirits of those who attain the special knowledge will escape from the prison of their bodies at death, and the spirit of others will simply continue to be trapped in material reality.

5. Why is it possible to know anything at all?

Knowledge derives from the revelation of Jesus and is the special means by which mankind can escape the evil physical world.

6. How do we know right and wrong?

Right and wrong are related to the ability to get the special knowledge to free the spirit.

7. What is the meaning of human history?

Time is related to material reality and is linear. Those who ultimately escape to eternity are no longer in a frame which is confined to time.

Authority

Basically, the ultimate authority of Gnosticism were the teachers who invented the philosophy. Some of them produced doctrinal writings to try and explain their teachings and claimed that their beliefs were taught by the Apostles of Jesus. In some cases they also tried to use New Testament writings to advance their beliefs.

Evidence for their Authority

There is no evidence that Gnostic teachings are correct except for the assertions of the individuals who advocated that belief system. There is also no objective evidence that the apostles of Christ passed on this kind of teaching. In fact, some of the New Testament writings specifically talk against Gnostic doctrines. In the case of those who tried to use New Testament writings, it was necessary for them to interpret the texts allegorically. There was never any objective justification for this unusual method of interpretation.

The Sacred Feminine

The concept of the *sacred feminine* relates to the admiration of, and faith in, the mysterious female power of sexual reproduction and female beauty. It is the belief that women, through their gift of reproduction, are in fact closer to God than men. It is believed that through the sacred feminine, man is allowed to experience one of the most spiritual acts possible, that being sexual intercourse. It is the yin and yang concept where men and women work *together* in a sacred symbiotic circle. Together they are one, and together they can create the greatest miracle ever – new life. According to *The DaVinci Code*, the Gnostics believed that men were spiritually handicapped and required a lot of promiscuous sex with women to make a connection with God.

It should be noted that there were some Gnostic groups which allowed promiscuity, but it was not in any way connected with the concept of a sacred feminine. These groups believed that

the physical body is an illusion, so the sex act itself was meaningless. Because of this, they saw no reason to forbid it. But even this was decidedly the minority position.

For the most part Gnostics tended to have a very strong hatred of women. In fact, as a rule, Gnostics were extreme ascetics and believed the body to be evil. They viewed women as fleshly temptations and were, therefore, a threat to salvation. As a result, Gnostic writings are filled with hateful statements about women. The fact is, most Gnostics advocated chastity and looked at sex as a repugnant but necessary evil. Some went so far as to actually advocate celibacy.

Another problem with the assertions of *The DaVinci Code* is that no cult of the sacred feminine existed during time of the early church. The cult of the sacred feminine was introduced in Europe between 1100 - 1150 A.D. and had a Romantic, not Gnostic, origin. Fraudulent neo-pagan myths were invented during the Romantic period which claimed that the dominant religion of the ancient world was a cult of the sacred feminine. These myths have been imported into the storyline of *The DaVinci Code*.

The whole idea of the sacred feminine is more at home with animistic fertility cults than with Gnosticism. Fertility cults assert that the gods will bring fertility to the earth and its creatures if humans engage in sexual intercourse as a religious act.

The primary figure in fertility cults is the "mother-goddess" and her male consort. Typically, the male companion will die with each seasonal cycle and is later reborn. This follows the crop cycle which, likewise, dies and then is reborn.

Adherents of these religions believe that the success of their harvest is tied to the sexual relationship of the female-male pair. Believers often had sexual relationships with temple prostitutes, both male and female, as a form of worship. They believed that by imitating the sexual act of the "mother-goddess" with her consort, they would help insure the fertility of the land.

The Reliability of New Testament Documents

There are virtually no original copies of any very ancient writings. Because of the materials that ancients had to write on, and the methods for preserving them, written documents tended to deteriorate and disappear within a relatively short period of time. This is why we have so few ancient documents of any kind.

However, there were some writers that people throughout history recognized as notable and felt their writings were valuable enough to preserve. In that day, though, the only method of preservation was to make copies – by hand. As a result, documents which were considered more important were copied more times and were more likely to be passed along until our present day. There are a couple of things that are important to know about the transmission process.

First, in the copying process, since they were all done by hand, there was the possibility that errors would be introduced into the copied texts. Copies made by professional scribes are less likely to have flaws, and many of the copies that were made of important documents were done by these professionals.

Secondly, as these copies were passed along to different regions of the world, they became grouped into families. Analysts can determine the lineage of many manuscripts because of the various common characteristics they find from the scribes in the various regions.

By taking all of the manuscripts from different regions and comparing them, they can determine what, if any, corruptions have been introduced and analyze their accuracy. There are two main points that are used to make these determinations.

1. Obviously, the shorter the interval between the original and the earliest extant copies the better. With shorter intervals, the documents would not have passed through the hands of as many copiers. So a shorter interval would suggest a more accurate copy.

2. The more copies that are available from different regions, the more material there is to compare to make sure that changes have not been made in the manuscripts.

In the case of the New Testament, the time frame is short and the number of copies is enormous. Based on the evaluation of the best scholars, there is a 99.5% probability that the New Testament that we now have is totally faithful to the original documents. This far exceeds that of any other ancient document. Note the comparisons in the following chart.

A Comparison Between the New Testament and Other Ancient Writings

Author	Date of the Original	Earliest Actual Preserved Copy	Approximate Time Span Between the Original & the Earliest Copy	Number of Copies
Pliny	61-113 A.D.	850 A.D.	750 years	7
Plato	427-347 B.C.	900 A.D.	1200 years	7
Demosthenes	4th Cent. B.C.	1100 A.D.	800 years	8
Herodotus	480-425 B.C.	900 A.D.	1300 years	8
Suetonius	75-160 A.D.	950 A.D.	800 years	8
Thucydides	460-400 B.C.	900 A.D.	1300 years	8
Euripides	480-406 B.C.	1100 A.D.	1300 years	9
Aristophanes	450-385 B.C.	900 A.D.	1200 years	10
Caesar	100-44 B.C.	900 A.D.	1000 years	10
Tacitus	circa 100 A.D.	1100 A.D.	1000 years	20
Aristotle	384-322 B.C.	1100 A.D.	1400 years	49
Sophocles	496-406 B.C.	1000 A.D.	1400 years	193
Homer (Iliad)	900 B.C.	400 B.C.	500 years	643
New Testament	1st Cent. A.D. (50-100 A.D.)	2nd Cent. A.D. (Approx. 130 A.D.)	10 - 80 years	5600

Was Jesus Really God?

Did Jesus really claim to be God?

Matt 20:25-28

25 Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. 26 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever wants to be first must be your slave- 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." NIV

Matt 26:63-66

63 ... The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." 64 "Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven." 65 Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy. 66 What do you think?" "He is worthy of death," they answered. NIV

Mark 2:6-12

6 Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, 7 "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" 8 Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, "Why are you thinking these things? 9 Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? 10 But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" He said to the paralytic, 11 "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." 12 He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!" NIV

Mark 9:31-32

31 because he was teaching his disciples. He said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise." 32 But they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it. NIV

Mark 14:61-64

61 ... Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" 62 "I am," said Jesus. "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven." 63 The high priest tore his clothes. "Why do we need any more witnesses?" he asked. 64 "You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?" They all condemned him as worthy of death. NIV

Luke 22:67-71

67 "If you are the Christ," they said, "tell us." Jesus answered, "If I tell you, you will not believe me, 68 and if I asked you, you would not answer. 69 But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God." 70 They all asked, "Are you then the Son of God?"

He replied, "You are right in saying I am." 71 Then they said, "Why do we need any more testimony? We have heard it from his own lips." NIV

John 3:16-18

16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. NIV

John 4:25-26

25 The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." 26 Then Jesus declared, "I who speak to you am he." NIV

John 5:16-18

16 So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jews persecuted him. 17 Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working." 18 For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God. NIV

John 6:32-35

32 Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." 34 "Sir," they said, "from now on give us this bread." 35 Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty. NIV

John 6:37-40

37 All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. 38 For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. 39 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. 40 For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." NIV

John 8:12-18

12 When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." 13 The Pharisees challenged him, "Here you are, appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid." 14 Jesus answered, "Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going. But you have no idea where I come from or where I am going. 15 You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one. 16 But if I do judge, my decisions are right, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me. 17 In your own Law it is written that the testimony of two men is valid. 18 I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me." NIV

John 8:23-24

23 But he continued, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. 24 I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am [the one I claim to be], you will indeed die in your sins." NIV

John 8:57-59

57 "You are not yet fifty years old," the Jews said to him, "and you have seen Abraham!" 58 "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!" 59 At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds. NIV

John 9:35-38

35 Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" 36 "Who is he, sir?" the man asked. "Tell me so that I may believe in him." 37 Jesus said, "You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you." 38 Then the man said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him. NIV

John 10:7-11

7 Therefore Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. 8 All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. 9 I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture. 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. 11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. NIV

John 10:24-33

24 The Jews gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly." 25 Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father's name speak for me, 26 but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. 27 My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. 30 I and the Father are one." 31 Again the Jews picked up stones to stone him, 32 but Jesus said to them, "I have shown you many great miracles from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?" 33 "We are not stoning you for any of these," replied the Jews, "but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God." NIV

John 11:21-27

21 "Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask." 23 Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." 24 Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." 25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; 26 and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" 27 "Yes, Lord," she told him, "I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world." NIV

John 12:44-46

44 Then Jesus cried out, "When a man believes in me, he does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me. 45 When he looks at me, he sees the one who sent me. 46 I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness. NIV

John 13:12-20

12 When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. 13 "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. 14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. 15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. 16 I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. 17 Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them. 18 "I am not referring to all of you; I know those I have chosen. But this is to fulfill the scripture: 'He who shares my bread has lifted up his heel against me.' 19 "I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe that I am He. 20 I tell you the truth, whoever accepts anyone I send accepts me; and whoever accepts me accepts the one who sent me." NIV

John 14:6-9

6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7 If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him." 8 Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." 9 Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?" NIV

John 16:28

I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father." NIV

John 18:33-37

33 Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" 34 "Is that your own idea," Jesus asked, "or did others talk to you about me?" 35 "Am I a Jew?" Pilate replied. "It was your people and your chief priests who handed you over to me. What is it you have done?" 36 Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place." 37 "You are a king, then!" said Pilate. Jesus answered, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me." NIV

Rev 1:17-18

17 When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. 18 I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades. NIV

Did the early church believe Jesus was God? (Bible verses that indicate Jesus is God)

Matt 2:1-2

1 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem 2 and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him." NIV

Matt 2:11

On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. NIV

Matt 14:33

Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God." NIV

Matt 28:9

Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. NIV

John 1:1

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. NIV

John 1:14

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. NIV

Acts 7:55-60

55 But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 56 "Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." 57 At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, 58 dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59 While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." 60 Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep. NIV

Rom 10:13-14

13 for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." 14 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? NIV

1 Cor 1:1-2

1 Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes, 2 To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ-their Lord and ours NIV

Phil 2:5-11

5 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,
7 but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—
even death on a cross!

9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every
name,

10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. NIV

Col 2:9

For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, NIV

Heb 1:6

And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship
him." NIV

Heb 1:8

But about the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness
will be the scepter of your kingdom. NIV

Quoted from Psalm 45:6, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of uprightness is the
scepter of Thy kingdom."

Evidence that Christ was who he said he was. (From *The Case for Christ* by Lee Stroble)

1. Eyewitness Evidence - People who knew Jesus and were present wrote the gospels and other New Testament writings.
2. Documentary Evidence - The biographies of Jesus and other writings about the early church are accurately preserved.
3. Corroborating Evidence - There is strong evidence of the truth of the New Testament's information outside of the Biblical text.
4. Scientific Evidence - The archeological evidence is strong.
5. Rebuttal Evidence - Other approaches which try to discount the evidence for the accuracy of the accounts of Jesus do not stand up to scrutiny.
6. Identity Evidence - Jesus believed he was the Messiah. He was either crazy, lying or truthful).
7. Profile Evidence - His life stands the test.
8. The Fingerprint Evidence - Jesus matches up with the identity of Messiah from prophesy.

9. Medical Evidence - Medical descriptions of the death and resurrection of Jesus are strong.

10. Evidence of the Missing Body - The body really was gone.

11. The Evidence of Appearances - Jesus was seen after the resurrection by the apostles, close associates and over 500 more people.

12. Circumstantial Evidence

The disciples were willing to die for their beliefs.

The conversion of skeptics.

James, the brother of Jesus

Paul

Changes to key social structures and a completely new theology among former Jews

Communion and Baptism - You wouldn't expect the celebration of an execution.

The emergence of the church from nothing.

A Basic List of Errors in The Da Vinci Code

Theological Errors

1. The church never set out to suppress women's spirituality as a political move.
2. Christianity does not try to hide the truth from people. Rather it tries to reveal it.
3. It is not true that every faith is based on fabrication. Christianity is based on fact - the reality of the nation of Israel (see archeological evidence), eyewitness accounts, evidence for the resurrection, etc.
4. It is not true that those who truly understand the faith of the Bible know that the stories are metaphorical. In fact, they are based on historical facts.
5. Jesus did claim to be divine.
6. The Jews often fell to idolatry, but it was certainly against the Law of Moses, the prophets and Jewish tradition to worship any God but the true one.

Historical Errors

1. There is no evidence that the Holy of Holies in the Jewish temple housed a female deity.
2. There is no evidence of ritualistic sex in Jewish temple worship.
3. There is no evidence that the early Christians practiced goddess worship.
4. Constantine and the Council of Nicea did not invent the deity of Christ. It is in the New Testament.
5. Constantine did not select the four gospels most favorable to male leadership for inclusion in the New Testament.
6. Christianity as we know it was not the product of Constantine's power play.
7. The Bible was not produced at the Council of Nicea by Constantine. The Old Testament was canonized well before New Testament times, and the New Testament was written by eyewitness of Jesus' ministry.
8. The Old Testament canon was not established with Constantine. It was settled canon between 450 ~ 150 BC.
9. The Bible was not assembled by Constantine. It was established well before his time.
10. Constantine did not make Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire.
11. Christianity began worship on Sunday during the New Testament period. It was not changed by Constantine.
12. Constantine did not go about to destroy the Gnostic gospels.
13. Constantine and his male successors did nothing to suppress matriarchal paganism. There were many pagan religions and many of them did not even have a goddess.
14. Constantine was not baptized on his deathbed against his will. It was willingly on the night before a battle.
15. Jesus' followers, up until Constantine, did recognize Jesus as divine.
16. There is no evidence that Mary Magdalene ever traveled to France.
17. There is no evidence that Mary Magdalene had a daughter – much less named Sarah.
18. There is no evidence that Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene. The concept of Mary and Jesus being married is not taken seriously among historians. The only references to it seem to be in fictional writings.
19. There is no evidence anywhere that Jesus fathered a child with Mary.
20. It is not true that Mary Magdalene was directed to establish the Christian church.

21. There is no evidence that a daughter of Jesus and Mary Magdalene gave rise to a prominent family line that is still present in Europe today.
22. There is no evidence to support a disagreement between Peter and Mary.
23. There is no evidence that Mary Magdalene was of the house of Benjamin and of royal descent. There is no genealogy of Mary given anywhere.
24. The Bible is not the product of countless translations, additions and revisions. It was copied from original documents and the canon has been static since before the Council of Nicea.
25. The church councils did not convene to select books of the Bible, but to verify which ones were already accepted by the faithful.
26. The council of Nicea did not discuss Gnostic gospels or anything pertaining to the canon.
27. The vote about Jesus divinity was not close. It was 316-2.
28. There is not an ancient secret society known as the Priory of Sion that still worships Mary Magdalene as a goddess and is trying to keep the truth alive. The Priory of Sion was a club founded in 1956 by four young Frenchmen and named after a local mountain in France.
29. The Priory of Sion did not create the Knights Templar.
30. The Knights Templar were not devoted to pagan animistic worship with a female deity.
31. The Knights Templar did not mastermind Gothic architecture and did not build temples.
32. The only purpose of the Knights Templar was to protect pilgrims to the Holy Land.
33. Pope Clement did not order the suppression of the Knights Templar to disrupt their conspiracy. King Philip suppressed them in order to get their wealth.
34. The Knights Templar never searched for information about Jesus and Mary Magdalene.
35. The Sangreal documents do not actually exist. No historically reliable documents exist by any name or by any author which assert that Jesus ever got married or that he and Mary Magdalene had children together.
36. The Gnostic Gospels were never widely accepted in the early church.
37. The four gospels in the New Testament were already accepted as scripture by Christians well before most of the Gnostic gospels were even written.
38. The Gnostic gospels do not pre-date the New Testament gospels.
39. There was not a war between Christians and pagans in early Christian times. Many Christians were martyred for their faith, but they did not war against their oppressors.
40. Alexander Pope did not speak at Newton's funeral.
41. The French government did not ban the movie *The Last Temptation of Christ*.
42. There is no evidence that Mithradism had any foothold in the Roman Empire before 100 A.D.
43. The first century attitude toward men being single was not harsh as is mentioned in the book. The Essenes were all single.
44. There is no evidence that Joseph of Arimathea was a relative of Jesus.

Artistic Errors

1. Most art historians dismiss the assertion that the person next to Jesus in DaVinci's "The Last Supper" is a woman. Additionally, the painting was not a fresco, but a watercolor which has been refurbished many times. It is impossible, at this time, to know exactly what it really looked like.
2. Da Vinci did not use any kind of code in his painting of *The Last Supper*.
3. In the painting of *The Last Supper* - The Bible makes no reference whatsoever to a fancy, jewel-encrusted chalice.

4. There is no evidence that the figure next to Jesus in The Last Supper is a woman. Leonardo often painted effeminate looking men.
5. If Mary, in The Last Supper, is sitting in John's position, where is John?
6. The idea that there is a large "M" in The Last Supper has no basis.
7. The Mona Lisa is not a self-portrait of Leonardo.
8. The title "Mona Lisa" does not refer to the Egyptian gods Amon and Isis.
9. There is no evidence that the original painting of Madonna of the Rocks was filled with "explosive and disturbing details," and that it horrified church officials.
10. The angel Uriel in the Madonna of the Rocks is not making a "cutting gesture" as if slicing a head.
11. The Madonna of the Rocks is over 6½ feet tall, not five.
12. The Madonna of the Rocks was painted on wood and Sophie would not have been able to lift it and put here knee through it.

Factual Errors

1. Human elements of Jesus' life were not edited out of the New Testament.
2. The Nag Hammadi texts do not speak of Christ's ministry in very human terms. This was a library of Gnostic writings discovered in Egypt in 1945 and, though they speak of Christ and the apostles, they are not Christian writings.
3. The Gnostic gospels don't support the point the DaVinci code is trying to make regarding the divinity of Christ or the value of women.
4. The Gospel of Philip was not written in Aramaic. It was written in Coptic and was a translation of an earlier Greek text.
5. The Gospel of Mary Magdalene is not a part of the Nag Hammadi manuscripts or the Dead Sea Scrolls.
6. In the Gospel of Mary Magdalene, there is no reference, whatsoever, that Jesus gave Mary instructions to start the church.
7. In the Gospel of Mary Magdalene, Peter is not portrayed as being jealous about Mary being chosen. He is questioning whether or not she received a special revelation.
8. Jesus was not considered by Christianity, before the council of Nicea, to be merely mortal.
9. The original gospels in the New Testament do refer to Jesus' human traits.
10. There were never 80 gospels. In fact there were no where close to 80. And the few that did exist outside of the Bible were written much later.
11. The word YHWH is not derived from a masculine and feminine set of words. It is the Hebrew word, "to be."
12. There is no female equivalent to Yahweh. The word Shekinah means the "Glory of God."
13. The word Yahweh did not come from the word Jehovah. It was the other way around.
14. The name Jehovah was not a union between the masculine Jah and the pre-Hebraic name for eve. The name Eve was a Hebrew word meaning life.
15. The Dead Sea Scrolls do not contain the earliest Christian writings. They were pre-Christian and contain no Christian writings at all.
16. The Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in 1947, not the 1950s.
17. The accounts of the life of Christ were not taken from Mithraism.
18. Mithras was not called the Son of God or the Light of the World.
19. There was no death, burial and resurrection of Mithras.

20. It is most likely that the myth of Mithras was modeled after the teachings of Christianity rather than the other way around.
21. There is no universally understood meaning of the symbol of the pentacle. In many places there was no meaning at all, it was simply decorative.
22. The pentacle has been used in history to represent health, the elements (spirit, earth, air, fire and water), or spirituality over materialism. There is no scholarly source that interprets it as the sacred feminine.
23. The pentacle was not a contender to be the symbol of the modern Olympics.
24. Mary Magdalene is not demonized in the Catholic church. In fact, she is honored as a saint.
25. Mary Magdalene's bones are not buried in the Louvre.
26. Opus Dei has no monks. It is a lay organization.
27. There is no evidence that Christianity borrowed its ideas from pagan sources.
28. There is no evidence for the assertion that "In his own lifetime, Jesus inspired millions to better lives."
29. Constantine did not coin the term heretic.
30. Harvard University has no department of symbology.
31. The very structure of the Roman Catholic Church is misrepresented.
32. There is no evidence that Mary Magdalene is the holy grail.
33. The church did not burn 5 million witches during the Middle ages.
34. The Bible is not a single book, but a collection of writings written over a period of 1500 years by over 40 authors.
35. The official religion of Rome at the time of Constantine was not Sun worship. There was no official religion. Basically all religions were tolerated as long as they tolerated other religions.
36. Constantine did not make Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire. He simply made it a legal religion.
37. The Olympic games were a tribute to Zeus, not Venus.
38. The early Christians were not anti-female.
39. The Bible is not anti-female.
40. The doctrine of original sin did not originate during the Middle Ages.
41. There are not 666 panes of glass in the Louvre's glass pyramid, there are 673.
42. Leonardo did not even come up with the name "Mona Lisa." It was a 19th century title given the painting by others. Mona is short for "Madonna" (meaning lady) and Lisa is the name of the most likely subject of the painting, Lisa Gherardini).
43. Da Vinci is not Leonardo's last name. It is a reference to where he was born.
44. There were no trunks of documents containing hidden information about Jesus.
45. The holy grail (and it is just a legend) has never been looked upon as a person.
46. Tarot cards come in decks of 78 cards, not 22.

Summary

The statement at the beginning of Dan Brown's book notwithstanding, most of the information presented as factual in *The Da Vinci Code* is pure fiction. If that fact can be kept in mind, it is possible to enjoy this story for what it is – an action thriller.

But beyond enjoying the story, Christians have a tremendous opportunity to engage their non-Christian colleagues to talk about rather deep topics of Christian faith that are normally taboo in daily life. This book and movie have put the topics of the deity of Christ and the validity of the Christian faith into the public domain in a way that allows for an open witness.

It is our hope that you will not only become informed about the errors in this story, but will take the opportunity to use it to share the truth of the gospel with those who do not know Christ. The real truth will stand very strong in the face of what is false.