

# THE DA VINCI CODE DEBATE

## OVERVIEW

The premise of the book is that a symbologist by the name of Robert Langdon goes searching for the Holy Grail. He soon finds that the Holy Grail is not an "it" but a "her". The story goes that Jesus Christ was married to Mary Magdalene. Mary was supposed to head up the church after Jesus' death. However, Peter was not happy about this so Mary, and her daughter, Sarah, fled into hiding in Gaul, where they established the Merovingian line of European royalty.

In 325 A.D. Emperor Constantine called the Council of Nicea. At this council, they voted to make Jesus, who was only a common man, a God. They then compiled the Bible out of the books that spoke of only men leading the church, and burned all of the other books, like the Gospel of Phillip and the Gospel of Mary Magdalene, because they contained references to Jesus' marriage and bloodline.

The secret was forgotten until the Knights Templar stumbled upon documents hidden under the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. They would vow to protect the lineage of his family. When the Pope found out about the bloodline, he had the Knights Templar hunted down and killed. The Pope knew that if the lineage of Jesus came to light, a woman would sit at the head of the church, and the Roman Catholic church would be ruined. The secret society called the Priory of Sion (who formed the Knights Templar) would pick up the quest in 1099 to guard the "Holy Grail", protecting the lineage to this day. According to their documents, the great artist Leonardo Da Vinci was a member of the Priory of Sion and even painted clues concerning the Holy Grail in his paintings. Today, the Vatican has working for it an ultra conservative group of monks called the Opus Dei who are trying to track down and destroy the Priory of Sion and the lineage of Jesus Christ.

## PROBLEM

Jesus, Mary Magdalene, Constantine, Council of Nicea, Gospel of Philip, the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, Leonardo Da Vinci and his paintings, the Knights Templar, Priory of Sion, and the Opus Dei...all real. *The real problem is not that they are real but that almost all of the "facts" concerning them are FALSE.*

## KNIGHTS TEMPLAR

***[BOOK: The Knights Templar were a group of knights that went to the Holy Land seeking the real Holy Grail (Mary Magdalene). They found and recovered the Sangreal Documents which detail the family tree of Jesus and Mary Magdalene, proving who should be the true "ruler" of the universal church. They were sought out and destroyed by Pope Clement V who they were blackmailing with the secret of the Grail.]***

FACT: The Knights Templar did exist. They formed in 1118 A.D. during the Crusades to provide protection to the pilgrims wishing to travel to Jerusalem on a pilgrimage. Over time, the Knights Templar became very wealthy from all of the lands and gold donated to them for the cause. After the Crusades, the Knights Templar turned the

wealth into an elaborate banking system. "It was King Philip IV ('the fair') of France who, desperate for the Templars' wealth, forced the pope to suppress their order, whereupon the French king-not the pope-arrested them and burned some, including Grand Master Jacques de Moley, at the stake in 1314."<sup>1</sup>

## PRIORY OF SION

***[BOOK: The Priory of Sion was founded in 1099 by a crusading French king named Godefroi de Bouillon, to preserve the secret lineage of Jesus and wait for the perfect time to reveal this lineage to the world. They worship Mary Magdalene and the Sacred Feminine to this day.]***

FACT: The Priory of Sion was established in 1956 in France. Proof of the Priory's role was "proven" by documents discovered in the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris. The trouble is that, the documents proved to be fake. They were planted there by Pierre Plantard. An investigation ensued and one of his sidekicks admitted to helping him stage the hoax. It is from these forged documents (which included the list of Priory Grand Masters such as Da Vinci) that Dan Brown bases his entire book upon.

## OPUS DEI

***[BOOK: Those with the Opus Dei antagonists trying to destroy the Priory of Sion to say the church as we know it.]***

FACT: The Opus Dei is a highly conservative branch of the Catholic church. However there are no monks in the organization. It is strictly a lay movement concerned with theology of the church.

## THE SACRED FEMININE

***[BOOK: The sacred feminine is the worship of a female goddess. In this case, Mary Magdalene is worshipped as goddess of heaven. Brown asserts that Judaism practiced the sacred feminine, including ritualistic sex in Solomon's Temple where both "God and his powerful female equal Shekinah resided" (p. 336). It was the early church and Constantine that sought to destroy the sacred feminine and place the man at the head of the church.]***

FACT: This is false in its entirety. Worship of all gods except Yahweh was forbidden. He had, and has, no equals. Female worship is, instead, a practice often found in pagan worship. In fact, the Hebrew language of the Jews does not even have a word for "goddess".<sup>2</sup>

***[BOOK: " 'The Jewish tetragrammaton YHWHYH-the sacred name of God-in fact derived from Jehovah, an adrogynous physical union between the masculine Jah and the pre-Habraic name for Eve, Havah'" (DC, p.336)***

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<sup>1</sup> The Da Vinci Code, Fact or Fiction?, Hank Hanegraaff & Paul L. Maier, Tyndale House, Wheaton, IL 2004. P. 23

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

FACT: YHWH or Yahweh, is the sacred name of God. It was and is only spelled with consonants (YHWH). No one really knows how it is pronounced because the vowels were intentionally left out. Jewish rabbis, when they arrive at God's sacred name while reading the Bible out loud will say "Adonai" meaning "Lord". Later, rabbis took the consonants from YHWH and the vowels from Adonai and came up with "Jehovah". Jehovah was derived from YHWH and Adonai, not the other way around.

## JESUS AND MARRIAGE

***[BOOK: The main premise of the book is that Jesus married Mary Magdalene and had a child.]***

FACT: No where in the Bible does it mention Jesus being married. While there has often been debate about "what if" Jesus had married and had children, we find no records whatsoever that He did. No writings of the early church fathers or even any apocryphal works ever blatantly say that Jesus was married. However, Brown quotes up the Apocryphal work, "The Gospel of Philip" to support his case:

***"And the companion of the Saviour is Mary Magdalene. Christ loved her more than all the disciples and used to kiss her often on the 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?" (DC, p.266) Philip 1:55b***

There are two approaches we can take to this passage. We can tear the passage apart and say how the word "companion" does not mean "wife". If Mary was Jesus' wife, the Apostles would not be getting mad at him for loving her. Therefore the word must mean "close friend". The second approach is to reject the passage altogether. The early church fathers evaluated the book of Philip, found it did not qualify as inspired text, so they rejected it from inclusion in the Bible. I would not use the first approach. Don't argue over the text; it is not inspired.

## EMPEROR CONSTANTINE

***[BOOK: "I thought Constantine was a Christian," Sophie said. "Hardly", Teabing scoffed. "He was a lifelong pagan who was baptized on his deathbed, too weak to protest. In Constantine's day, Rome's official religion was sun worship-the cult of Sol Invictus, or the Invincible Sun-and Constantine was it's head priest. Unfortunately for him, a growing religious turmoil was gripping Rome. Three centuries after the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, Christ's followers had multiplied exponentially. Christians and pagans began warring, and the conflict grew to such proportions that it threatened the rend Rome in two. Constantine decided something had to be done. In 325 A.D., he decided to unify Rome under a single religion. Christianity." (DC, p. 251)***

FACT: Constantine grew up with a mother who was a Christian and a father (who ruled the western part of the Roman Empire) who highly favored Christianity. Upon

his father's death, the Roman soldiers immediately declared Constantine as his father's successor. Constantine would then march on the central Roman Empire, controlled by Maxentius, who was a pagan and a tyrant. On the eve of a very critical battle at the Milvian Bridge, Constantine had a dream in which he was instructed to place the image of the cross on his soldier's shields and in the name of this symbol, go forth against the enemy. Constantine did just that and won a stunning victory. Maxentius was killed during battle, freeing Constantine to march on Rome. Upon taking it, he declared himself the supreme Ruler of the Roman Empire. Constantine immediately legalized Christianity. He did so to honor the God that gave him victory. That God seemed to hear and answer prayers.

Constantine was not without his faults. He had grown up in a pagan world. He, like many of us, gradually allowed the faith to clean up his life and he made mistakes along the way. However, overall, Constantine was a great friend to the church.

He did the following during his rule:

- Returned all property and church buildings confiscated by Emperor Diocletian to the Christians.
- Abolished various customs and traditions offensive to Christians such as the gladiatorial games.
- Contributed liberally to the building of churches.
- Erased the heathen symbols of Jupiter, Apollo, Mars and Hercules from the imperial coins and tore down old pagan shrines and temples.
- Called the Council of Nicea to settle the Arian controversy that was splitting the church.

He was baptized at the end of his life. Why at the end? Baptism was seen as a way to be cleansed from all your sins. Doing it at the end of your life gave you a better chance not having a particular sin keep you out of Heaven.

Historian Philip Schaff fills in his final days: "After the solemn ceremony he promised to live thenceforth worthily of a disciple of Jesus; refused to wear again the imperial mantle of cunningly woven silk, richly ornamented with gold; retained the white baptismal robe; and died a few days after, on Pentecost, May 22, 337, trusting in the mercy of God, and leaving a long, and fortunate, and a brilliant reign, such as none but Augustus, of all his predecessors, had enjoyed."<sup>3</sup>

## CHRISTIAN SYMBOLS

***[BOOK: "By fusing pagan symbols, dates, and rituals into the growing Christian tradition, [Constantine] created a kind of hybrid religion that was acceptable to both parties." (252)]***

FACT: Not true. If assimilation with other religions was so easy, the Christians would have done it years ago and saved themselves much persecution. Truth be told, paganism was dying and Christianity was thriving. Christianity was conquering, not assimilating, paganism. They would not and did not compromise.

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<sup>3</sup> Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church, Vol. 3, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1996. P. 36-37

***[BOOK: "Transmogrification," Langdon said, "The vestiges of pagan religion in Christian symbology are undeniable. Egyptian sun disks became the halos of Catholic saints...Nothing in Christianity is original. (DC, p. 252)]***

FACT: Christianity did borrow many symbols, including the halo, from pagan religions. But, the Christians were changing the meanings of those symbols to suit their own purposes. For example: the pagans believed in the legend of the Phoenix, which flew into the sun and burned up, only to rise again from the ashes. The Christians took that symbol and gave it a new meaning, just as the phoenix rose from the ashes anew, so too will we arise to new life in Christ.

***[BOOK: "'Originally,' Langdon said, 'Christianity honored the Jewish Sabbath on Saturday, but Constantine shifted it to coincide with the pagan's veneration day of the sun.' He paused, grinning. 'To this day, most churchgoers attend services on Sunday morning with no idea that they are there on account of the pagan god's weekly tribute-Sunday.'" (DC, p. 252)***

FACT: The shift from Saturday to Sunday happened very early in the first century. The very first Christians found that they were no longer welcome in their local synagogues for worship on the Sabbath (Saturday). They decided to shift the day of worship to The Lord's Day (the day Jesus rose from the dead) to further distance themselves from Judaism. Instances of Sunday worship are found in Acts 20:7, I Corinthians 16:2, and Revelation 1:10. Numerous church fathers also verified and agreed with the change in the first and second centuries.

## C⊕UNCIL ⊕F NICEA

***[BOOK: "'At this gathering,' Teabing said, many aspects of Christianity were debated and voted upon-the date of Easter, the role of bishops, the administration of sacraments, and, of course, the divinity of Jesus.' 'I don't follow. His divinity?' 'My dear,' Teabing declared, 'until that moment in history, Jesus was viewed by His followers as a mortal prophet...a great and powerful man, but a man nonetheless. A mortal...Jesus' establishment as 'the Son of God' was officially proposed and voted on by the Council of Nicaea...[and] a relatively close vote at that,' Teabing added.'" (DC, p.253)***

FACT: Jesus himself claimed to be Divine. This claim was made in all four Gospels which have been accepted as Canon since the first century. Even the apocryphal (additional) books that didn't make it into the Canon never had a problem with, and even proclaimed Jesus' Divinity. Every church father from the first century onward has written of Jesus' Divinity. If theology in the first four centuries was ever in error, it erred on the side of taking some of Jesus' Divinity away from Him and making Him less God.

The Council of Nicea did meet in 325 A.D. It was a gathering of the "who's who" in Christianity. These Christians from all over the Roman Empire met together to discuss the matters of the church in a new age with no persecution.

The council discussed the following:

1. Standard procedures for the re-admission of the lapsed (Christians who denied Christ and the church while being tortured.)
2. Standard procedure to elect and ordain presbyters and bishops.

### 3. The Arian controversy that threatened to divide the church.

It was this third point that causes history to remember the Council of Nicea. The Council debated Arianism, a heresy being taught that said Jesus (the Word) was not co-eternal with God. Jesus was created by God. The council debated the issue and then drew up what would become the "Nicene Creed". It was voted on and accepted by a vote of 300 – 2.

WE believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten of the Father, that is, from the substance of the Father, God of God, light of light, true God of true God, begotten, not made, of one substance with the Father, through whom all things were made, both in heaven and on earth, who for us humans and for our salvation descended and became incarnate, becoming human, suffered and rose again on the third day, ascended to the heavens, and will come to judge the living and the dead.

And in the Holy Spirit.

But those who say that there was when He was not, and that before being begotten He was not, or that He came from that which is not, or that the Son of God is of a different substance or essence, or that He is created, or mutable, these the catholic church anathematizes [excommunicates, throws out of the church].

Nicene Creed, 325 A.D.

## THE BIBLE

***[BOOK: "The Bible is a product of man my dear. Not of God. The Bible did not fall magically from the clouds. Man created it as a historical record of tumultuous times...(p. 250-251)]***

FACT: It is true that the Bible (all 66 books) did not magically fall from the sky. It was developed and collected over time. During the first century, the Old Testament was taken in its complete form from Judaism. The collection of 27 New Testament books we have today was discussed as early as the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, but was not finalized until 397 A.D.

***[BOOK: "...and it has evolved through countless translations, additions, and revisions. History has never had a definitive version of the book"(DC, p. 250-251)]***

FACT: History HAS had a definitive version of the Bible, in it's complete form, from 397 A.D. until today. The Bible has been through countless translations and revisions. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew, the New Testament in Greek and Aramaic. As new languages took center stage, it was important to translate the Bible into that language. Even today with our Bibles in English our translations still need revising and updating as our English language changes.

While there are countless revisions to translations, the Hebrew and Greek texts behind the translations never change. Every translation, update and revision comes

from a standardized Hebrew and Greek text. In this way, the Bible stays true to the original.

The standardized Hebrew and Greek texts are taken from over 5,300 fragments and complete manuscripts with some of the manuscripts dating back to 200 A.D. When all of these documents are compared for mistakes (spelling, grammar, etc.) we have a text that is almost 100% identical to what the New Testament writers would have written. In fact it has been estimated that our text is 98.33 % pure<sup>4</sup>. Believe it or not, the longer the Bible is around, the more accurate it gets.

***[Book: " 'More than eighty gospels were considered for the New Testament, and yet only a relative few were chosen for inclusion-Matthew, Mark, Luke and John among them." "Who chose which gospels to include?" Sophie asked. "Aha!" Teabing burst in with enthusiasm. "The fundamental irony of Christianity! The Bible, as know it today, was collated by the pagan Roman emperor Constantine the Great.'" DC, p. 251]***

FACT: Very few of the apocryphal (extra) books were ever truly considered for inclusion in the Canon. The charts below show which books were seriously considered. You will also notice that Constantine and Nicea are not mentioned. It was up to the writings of the church fathers to make the decision of what books made the cut. The first collated (complete) Bible was put together in 370 A.D., almost 40 years after the death of Constantine.

### 7. The Development of the New Testament Canon

PERIOD	CHARACTERISTICS	APPROXIMATE DATES	SIGNIFICANT SOURCES	BOOKS RECEIVED	BOOKS QUESTIONED
APOSTOLIC FATHERS	No serious debate, no official pronouncements	100-140	quotations in Apostolic Fathers	Four Gospels Pauline Epistles (unspecified corpus)	None
GNOSTIC OPPOSITION	reaction against Gnostic truncation of canon (esp. writings of Marcion)	140-220	quotations in Church Fathers Muratorian Canon (c.180) Gospel of Truth (Gnostic)	Four Gospels Acts 13 Pauline Epistles 1 Peter 1 John Jude Revelation	Hebrews James 2 Peter 2-3 John Shepherd of Hermas Didache Revelation of Peter
FINAL SOLIDIFICATION	general agreement by end of fourth century	220-400	Origen	Four Gospels Acts 13 Pauline Epistles 1 Peter 1 John Revelation	Hebrews James 2 Peter 2-3 John Jude Shepherd of Hermas Didache
			Eusebius	Four Gospels Acts 14 Pauline Epistles 1 Peter 1 John	James 2 Peter 2-3 John Jude Revelation Shepherd of Hermas Didache
			Athanasius (Paschal letter of 367—final acceptance in East)	Present Canon	
			Synod of Rome (382—final acceptance in West)	Present Canon	
			Synod of Carthage (397—acceptance by entire church)	Present Canon	

<sup>4</sup> The King James Only Controversy, Can you Trust the Modern Translations?, James R. White, Bethany House Publishers, Minnesota, 1995, p. 39

## 8. Books Debated for Inclusion in the New Testament Canon

QUESTIONED BOOK	REASONS GIVEN FOR ACCEPTANCE	REASONS GIVEN FOR EXCLUSION	RESULT
HEBREWS	Thought Pauline in East	Thought non-Pauline forgery in West	Accepted
JAMES	Thought genuine in East	Authorship questioned in West	Accepted
2 PETER	Petrine authorship	Authorship questioned Similarity of chapter 2 to Jude	Accepted
2-3 JOHN	Johannine authorship	Lack of citations in early writings	Accepted
JUDE	Early citations Apostolic authorship	Authorship questioned	Accepted
REVELATION	Widely recognized as Johannine	Questioned by Eusebius largely because of his opposition to chiliasm	Accepted
THE SHEPHERD OF HERMAS	Edifying contents Visions from God	Nonapostolic origin Late date	Excluded
DIDACHE	Record of genuine apostolic traditions	Uncertain origin Late date	Excluded
REVELATION OF PETER	Suspected Petrine authorship Similarity to Johannine Apocalypse	Authenticity doubted	Excluded

Walton, Robert, Chronological & Background Charts of Church History, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1986.

***[BOOK: " '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 made Him godlike. The earlier gospels were outlawed, gathered up, and burned.'"* (p. 254)**

FACT: The earliest gospels were Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. They made it into the Canon. The writings that were rejected were often rejected because they had a later date; after 100A.D. 100 A.D. was set as the cutoff point because the last known disciple of Jesus, John, died in 100A.D. Constantine did not commission a Bible and did not order the burning of "outlawed" books.

***[BOOK: " 'Fortunately for historians,' Teabing said, 'some of the gospels that Constantine attempted to eradicate managed to survive. The Dead Sea Scrolls were found in the 1950's hidden in a cave near Qumran in the Judean desert. And of course, the Coptic Scrolls in 1945 at Nag Hammadi. In addition to telling the true Grail story, these documents speak of Christ's ministry in very human terms. Of course, the Vatican, in keeping with their tradition of misinformation, tried very hard to suppress the release of these scrolls. And why wouldn't they? The scrolls highlight glaring historical discrepancies and fabrications, clearly confirming that the modern Bible was compiled and edited by men who possessed a political agenda...'"* (p.254)**

FACT: Many gospels did survive. They can be purchased today<sup>5</sup>. They are sometimes called "The Lost Gospels." They were never lost. They simply dropped out of use in favor of the Inspired Canon.

Scrolls were found at Qumran by the Dead Sea in 1947. Not one New Testament book was found. They were all Old Testament books, commentaries, and theological works by the Essene community that lived there. There was some controversy as to why translations of the Dead Sea scroll were so long delayed (several decades). Rumors flew about scrolls containing "theology damaging to the church." That wasn't true. The issue was not what was IN the manuscripts but who OWNED them. The long delay was based on copyright issues, not content. The complete Dead Sea Scrolls are now available for purchase<sup>6</sup>.

Coptic Scrolls were found at Nag Hammadi. It did contain many New Testament apocrypha books that had truly been lost to modern day scholars. However, the books were known and read by the early Church Fathers and had been both considered and rejected for inclusion in the Bible.

## ART WØRK

***[BOOK: " 'This fresco [Last Supper], in fact, is the entire key to the Holy Grail mystery. Da Vinci lays it all out in the open The Last Supper.' Sophie scanned the work eagerly. 'Does this fresco tell us what the Grail really is?' 'Not what it is,' Teabing whispered, 'But rather who it is. The Holy Grail is not a thing. It is in fact...a person.'" (p. 256)***



***" 'And not just any person,' Teabing blurted, clambering excitedly to his feet, 'A woman who carried with her a secret so powerful that, if revealed, it threatened to devastate the very foundation of Christianity!'" (p. 259)***

FACT: The book goes on to claim that the person seated at the left of Jesus (Jesus's right) is not John, but Mary Magdalene, His wife. The problem with this is twofold. First, Renaissance painters often depicted young men as feminine looking. Numerous paintings exist with a youthful and feminine looking John. The second problem if the person is Mary Magdalene, that leaves 11 men and Jesus. Where is John? Art critics find Dan Brown's theory laughable at best.

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<sup>5</sup> New Testament Apocrypha, Two Volumes, Wilhelm Schneemelcher Editor, Westminster/John Knox Press, Great Britain, 1991.

<sup>6</sup> The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English by Geza Vermes, Penguin Books, New York, 1997.