

# The DaVinci Code: Revealed Truth or Destructive Fiction?

Session One: "It's Just a Book??"

Cogito, Ergo Credo: I Think, Therefore I Believe!

## Session One: "Who Cares? It's Just a Book!" (Or is it?)

*"We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.  
2 Corinthians 10:5*

### The Buzz...

Dan Brown's blockbuster novel is quite a hit. It has sold over 40 million copies since released, and with a high budget, high profile movie due May 2006, its influence is sure to spread. It is an exciting murder mystery, with secret knowledge, sex rites, and plot twists and turns thrown in to keep the reader engaged. Clearly many people have enjoyed the book.

So what's the big deal? Why is it controversial to Christians? Are we just being a little paranoid – after all it's 'just a novel?' The problem is two-fold: First, the caveat at the front of the book does not say that it is simply a work of fiction – it states that it is based upon fact; Second, it challenges Christian Orthodoxy as a planned deceit. Indeed, if the book is correct, then Christian's are *wrong*. Finally, it presents an alternative belief system which it claims is the *true* path to God. Clearly, a challenge has been cast. But should we take the challenge seriously, or just wait until it goes away, as it likely will? Should we ignore the book and the movie, or should we investigate the facts for ourselves, and be prepared to engage the debate?

### Christian Apologetics

An 'apologetic' is simply a 'defense.' This fancy word derives from the Greek word 'apologia' which we translate as 'an answer' in 1 Peter 3:15. It is this word that God uses in the command that he gives all Christians through the Apostle Peter to be ready to defend our hope in Christ. This concept of defense is also clearly communicated by Paul in 2 Corinthians 10:5 as he reminds us that we are to demolish arguments and knowledge that sets itself up against the True Knowledge of God. If there is ever a case of knowledge that sets itself up against the True Knowledge of God, it is found in Dan Brown's runaway bestseller.

"ALWAYS be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give a reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect."  
**1 Peter 3:15b**

### The Plot

The book is a very entertaining, fast paced murder mystery that keeps the reader turning the pages. Jacques Sauniere, The curator of the Louvre Museum in France is killed and discovered in a peculiar position – the recognizable image of Leonardo DaVinci's *Vitruvian Man* (a man naked with arms and legs spread, lying within a circle (of blood in our particular mystery.)

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A very competent Police captain – Bezu Fache – is called to the scene, along with the department cryptologist Sophie Neveu, whom we discover is Sauniere's estranged granddaughter. Sophie was in fact called by her grandfather before he was killed, in an attempt to reconcile with her and to share a deep family secret. Robert Langdon, a famous Harvard professor of Religious Symbolology (which of course is a made-up profession!) is also called to the scene as an unwitting suspect of the crime (he was also summoned by Sauniere before he died!).

Sauniere had left cryptic clues for his granddaughter and Langdon which they quickly find were meant solely for them. Just as the police are about to arrest them both, they escape and the chase begins – the Police are chasing them as now certain suspects, and they are chasing the meaning of the clues before anyone else gets to them. Langdon and Sophie eventually find a unique key, an elaborate lock-box, and a map, and all the while Langdon is explaining to Sophie that the symbology involved appears to lead to the ultimate treasure hunt – the Holy Grail of Christ.

But Langdon informs us that the Grail is not what most of us think it is; it is not the chalice used by Christ at the Last Supper (which was of course rendered in a famous painting by DaVinci). Instead the Grail is a secret – it is the bloodline of Christ's that has survived to this day. Now if Christ has a bloodline, he obviously had a child – and of course the mother of the child is none other than Mary Magdelene. This secret is clearly the secret of the ages, connivingly suppressed by the Roman Catholic Church and the early Patriarchs who were not interested in the truth, but only in the power that they could achieve by elevating themselves as the only arbiter of the message of God. So, they instituted their power by suppressing the message of Mary Magdelene and of Christ. They accomplished this by selecting only a few books for the canonized Bible which support their patriarchal agendas, and established the creeds that point to Christ as being something that He was in fact not – a resurrected savior.

This new, false creed supposedly suppressed the real truth – that God is found in each of us and that the 'feminine' is as divine as the masculine.

Clearly this is a controversial subject, that paints the Roman Catholic Church as nothing but power hungry and deceitful in the worst way, and if exposed could potentially ruin their position of power. So to protect themselves, an affiliate of the Church dispatches a mysterious albino monk named Silas on a mission to kill the messengers of the suppressed truth and destroy any remaining evidence of the 'Grail'. We discover that Sauniere was killed because he was in fact the secret leader of the Priory of Scion, a group related to the Knights Templar whose thousand year old purpose is to perpetuate the secret and the evidence until the time has come to release it to the world. We find that Leonardo DaVinci (as well as many other famous and influential people in history) were members of this secret society. And to top it all off, it turns out that Sauniere himself is a member of Christ's infamous bloodline, making Sophie a descendent of Christ and a princess.

In the end the real culprit behind the murder is Sir Leigh Teabing, who is himself a Grail aficionado (he of course knows the 'real' truth about the Grail) and is unwittingly called into service by Langdon and Sophie to help them decipher the clues. Throughout the book, it is Teabing and Langdon who are Brown's mouthpieces that call into question traditional Christian Orthodoxy in lieu of the sacred feminine and their version of the truth about God.

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## The Charges Against Christianity

As you can tell from the synopsis above, the claims made against Christianity are bold and breathtaking. And we must remember that they are presented by Brown as fact, supposedly with a dearth of evidence to support them. So let's take a summary look at just some of the claims made by Brown against Christian Orthodoxy, keeping in mind Brown's assurance of the facts at the beginning of the book:

**FACT:**

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

**The Sacred Feminine** – "The Holy Grail is a person...a woman in fact...Mary Magdelene...The Holy Grail represents the sacred feminine and the goddess, which of course has now been lost, virtually eliminated by the Church. The power of the female and her ability to produce life was once very sacred, but it posed a threat to the rise of the predominately male Church, and so the sacred feminine was demonized and called unclean." (Brown, 237, 238, 243)

**The Man-Made Bible** – "The Bible did not arrive by fax from heaven...The Bible is a product of *man*, my dear. Not of God...Man created it as a historical record of tumultuous times, and it has evolved through countless translations, additions and revisions. History has never had a definitive version of the book." (Brown, 231).

**Original Sin and the Mysoginistic Church** – "It was *man*, not God, who created the concept of 'original sin,' whereby Eve tasted of the apple and caused the downfall of the human race. Woman, once the sacred giver of life, was now the enemy." (Brown, 238)

**Christ Married** – "Any gospels that described *earthly* aspects of Jesus' life had to be omitted from the Bible...[including] Mary Magdelene's marriage to Jesus Christ...it's a matter of historical record...Jesus as a married man makes infinitely more sense than our standard biblical view of Jesus as a bachelor...The greatest cover-up in human history... Not only that Jesus Christ was married, but He was a Father." (Brown, 244, 249)

**Constantine's Maneuver** – "In 325 A.D, [Constantine] decided to unify Rome under a single religion – Christianity...Constantine was a very good businessman. He could see that Christianity was on the rise, and he simply backed the winning horse." (Brown, 234).

**Christ's Mortality** – "Jesus' establishment as 'the Son of God' was officially proposed and voted on by the Council of Nicea." "Hold on [says Sophie] You're saying Jesus' divinity was the result of a vote?" "A relatively close vote at that" [answers Teabing]. "Because Constantine upgraded Jesus' status almost four centuries *after* Jesus' death, thousands of documents already existed chronicling His life as a *mortal* man." (Brown, 233-234).

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**Constantine's Bible** – "Constantine commissioned and financed a new Bible, which omitted these [gnostic] gospels that spoke of Christ's human traits and embellished those gospels that made Him godlike. The earlier gospels were outlawed, gathered up, and burned." (Brown, 234).

**The Power-Hungry Early Church** – "Many scholars claim that the early Church literally *stole* Jesus from His original followers, hijacking His human message, shrouding it in an impenetrable cloak of divinity, and using it to expand their own power." (Brown, 233).

**The Deceived But Sincere Modern Church** – "...it's important to remember that the modern Church's desire to suppress these documents comes from a sincere belief in their established view of the Church...What I mean...is that almost everything our father's taught us about Christ is *false*." (Brown, 235).

**The Mercenary Church** – "[Sophie asks Teabing:] 'You think the Church killed my grandfather?' Teabing replied 'It would not be the first time in history the Church has killed to protect itself. The documents that accompany the Holy Grail are explosive...what happens...if persuasive scientific evidence comes out that the Church's version of the Christ story is inaccurate, and that the greatest story ever told is, in fact, the greatest story ever *sold*...The Vatican faces a crisis of faith unprecedented in its two-millennium history.'" (Brown, 266-267).

**Copycat Christianity** – "Nothing in Christianity is original...Historians still marvel at the brilliance with which Constantine converted the sun-worshipping pagans to Christianity. By fusing pagan symbols [from Mithraism], dates [such as Easter and Christmas], and rituals [such as 'god eating', aka the sacrament of Communion] into the growing Christian tradition, he created a kind of hybrid religion that was acceptable to both parties." (Brown, 232).

**It's All About the Sex** – "Hieros Gamos [a sex ritual in which men and women wear masks and tunics and have intercourse]...dates back more than two thousand years. Egyptian priests and priestesses performed it regularly to celebrate the reproductive power of the female...Historically, intercourse was the act through which male and female experienced God...The Hieros Gamos ritual is not perversion. It's a deeply sacrosanct ceremony...Orgasm as prayer." (Brown, 308-309)

**The Calculatingly Prudish Church** – "For the early Church...mankind's use of sex to commune directly with God posed a serious threat to the Catholic power base. It left the Church out of the loop, undermining their self-proclaimed status as the *sole* conduit to God. For obvious reasons, they worked hard to demonize sex and recast it as a disgusting and sinful act." (Brown, 309).

**Deceptive History** – "Historians could not possibly confirm its [Christ's bloodline] authenticity...no more so than they can confirm the authenticity of the Bible...Meaning that history is always written by the winners...By its very nature, history is always a one-sided account." (Brown, 256).

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**Blind and Fabricated Faith** – “Sophie, *every* faith in the world is based on fabrication. That is the definition of *faith* – acceptance of that which we imagine to be true, that which we cannot prove. Every religion describes God through metaphor, allegory, and exaggeration, from the early Egyptians through modern Sunday School...Those who truly understand their faiths understand the stories are metaphorical...Religious allegory has become a part of the fabric of reality. And living in that reality helps millions of people cope and be better people...but it appears their reality is false.” (Brown, 341-342).

## A Summary Conclusion Of The Charges Against Christianity

If Brown is correct, then the truth of history cannot be known, Jesus was not Divine, there is no such thing as original sin, Christianity is simply a sham with borrowed creeds and rituals developed to deceive those who need a religious ‘crutch’ in their lives to get by, and the true pathway to God (whatever God is) is through ourselves and our sexuality. To once again quote Brown: “almost everything our father’s taught us about Christ is *false*.” (Brown, 235).

## What Does This Mean?

Brown is not mincing words. If the book were just a ‘fun’ mystery / thriller, that would be one thing. But to proclaim itself as revealing truth to those who would listen is nothing short of blasphemy and heresy. Even David Klinghofer, who is himself not a Christian (he is Jewish), understands the charge and the stakes involved:

“What’s at stake in The DaVinci Code is nothing less than traditional Christianity itself...The founder of Christianity had a daughter, Sarah, by Mary Magdelene. If true, this theory would overturn some of the central beliefs of Christians.” ([David Klinghofer, National Review \(December 8, 2003\)](#)).

A challenge has been thrown down. Now the ball is in our court – we must decide what to do about it. Can the Truth be known? Can history be confidently understood? Is Dan Brown right and we Christians are sadly deceived, or is Orthodox Christianity based upon knowable, logical and rational evidence, accurately brought through the ages to protect His Church?

### Thinking Points

What dangers are presented by this version of the ‘facts’?

Can a ‘novel’ that challenges Orthodoxy be innocent?

Can we reliably ‘know’ history?

Why would someone be interested in believing that the ‘facts’ in this book are accurate?

So what? Won’t it all just ‘go away’?

Why is this book so immensely popular?

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## Lesson Summary

Dan Brown is presenting a direct challenge against Christian Orthodoxy

We must take this attack seriously – it is a direct attack on our core beliefs.

If he is correct, then we are sadly deceived.

If he is not correct, then this is a terribly dangerous book.

**Next Lesson:** Let's Examine The Facts Behind The Charge

## Resources:

### **Books:**

*The DaVinci Code*; Dan Brown; Doubleday; 2003

*De-Coding DaVinci*; Amy Welborn; Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division; 2004

*The DaVinci Fraud*; Robert M. Price; Prometheus Books; 2005

*Cracking DaVinci's Code*; James L. Garlow, Peter Jones; Victor Publishing Division; 2004

*Breaking the DaVinci Code*; Darrell L. Bock; Nelson Books 2004

### **Online:**

Dan Brown Online <http://www.danbrown.com/>

### **Online Forum:**

Don't forget to provide your comments and ask questions of the WIBO/RYM community at our Forums located at: <http://www.renewyourmind.org/dc/dcboard.php>