

The Da Vinci Deception

In March 2003, Doubleday Books published 85,000 copies of a fictional work by a relatively unknown author, Dan Brown. Since its initial publication, *The Da Vinci Code* has sold well over 60 million copies to a readily growing fanbase. Brown's work has been so successful that Hollywood has followed the trend by bringing *The Da Vinci Code* to the screen, following the recent success of other blockbuster films such as *The Passion* (\$30 million to produce, \$611 million in gross receipts) *The Chronicles of Narnia, The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe* (\$180 million to produce, \$743 million in gross receipts), etc. So popular is the Brown novel, one editor stated, "If the "*Harry Potter*" books stand as the essential popular read for young people, then "*The Da Vinci Code*" has captured the crown for grown-ups."¹

One would almost think that Hollywood must have been converted and become the medium for presenting truth to masses when considering recent "religious films" and "religious television programs", but "God does nothing in partnership with Satan;" (*Evangelism*, p. 260) "either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit." (Mt. 12:33) It cannot be that God would choose to use an unrepentant, vile channel to convey eternal truth, confusing humanity by sending such mixed signals. The conclusion is evident – Satan is using these films to condition men to question the authenticity, accuracy, and integrity of the word – for the word is Jesus. (John 1:1-3, 14) "Error is never harmless. It never sanctifies, but always brings confusion and dissension. It is always dangerous. The enemy has great power over minds that are not thoroughly fortified by prayer and established in Bible truth." (*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 292)

The Da Vinci Code raked in \$77 million on its opening weekend (\$224 worldwide); the Code's worldwide gross receipts ranked second in history only to last year's *Star Wars: Episode III*, which hauled in \$253 million. As of May 29, 2006, *The Da Vinci Code*'s receipts totaled \$464 million (\$125 million to produce) in its second week.

Brown's book begins with the murder of Jacques Sauniere, curator of the Louvre Museum in Paris. As he is dying, he realizes he is the only person left to pass on an important secret. Later that night, a visitor from the French equivalent of the FBI awakens Langdon, a Harvard University professor visiting Paris, and summons him to the Louvre. Langdon, who studies symbols, has an appointment with Sauniere, but the curator never shows up.

Sauniere is found naked, arms and legs outstretched. Drawn on his chest in his own blood is a five-pointed star. Langdon figures out that Sauniere is positioned like "*The Vitruvian Man*," Leonardo da Vinci's most famous sketch. He also recalls that the curator was a scholar of Leonardo Da Vinci and that Da Vinci liked to hide messages in his art.

More clues are uncovered as Langdon is led to the *Mona Lisa*, *The Madonna of the Rocks* and *The Last Supper*. He recalls that Leonardo was part of a brotherhood that guarded an ancient secret dealing with the quest for the Holy Grail and the story of Jesus Christ. Later, Langdon discovers that Sauniere was Leonardo's modern-day counterpart.¹

Dan Brown alleges that through fact and scholarly research, he has unearthed the truth about Jesus, Mary Magdalene, and early Christianity – a truth so dangerous that it has been veiled in

secrecy via a vast conspiracy by the Roman Catholic Church. In essence, everything that people think that they know about Jesus is completely wrong, as it is the result of Catholic propaganda. Further, Brown's novel alleges that throughout history there has been a secret group of true followers of a Gnostic Jesus and his wife, Mary Magdalene, the true "Holy Grail". Following is a skeleton of Mr. Brown's thesis:

- early Christianity entailed "the cult of the Great Mother" Mary Magdalene represented by the feminine cult and the Holy Grail of traditional lore
- she was also Jesus' wife and the mother of his children
- Magdalene's womb, carrying Jesus offspring, was the legendary Holy Grail (as seen in Da Vinci's encoded painting, *The Last Supper*)
- Jesus was not seen as divine (God) by His followers until Emperor Constantine declared him so for his own purposes
- The Nicean Council of the third Century was the context for Constantine's power grab, and the relationship of Magdalene as paramour of Christ was quashed there
- "Mary Magdalene's remains and the secret documents that tell the real story were found on the Temple Mount when Jerusalem was conquered in the First Crusade."
- Brown sees a connection between the Nag Hammadi documents (a.k.a., Gnostic Gospels) discovered in 1945 and this storyline
- The "truth" about Christ and Mary Magdalene has been kept alive by a secret society named the Priory of Sion that was lead by great minds like Da Vinci²

"The Grail," Langdon said, "is symbolic of the lost goddess. When Christianity came along, the old pagan religions did not die easily. Legends of chivalric quests for the Holy Grail were in fact stories of forbidden quests to find the lost sacred feminine. Knights who claimed to be "searching for the chalice" were speaking in code as a way to protect themselves from a Church that had subjugated women, banished the goddess, burned non-believers, and forbidden the pagan reverence for the sacred feminine." (*The Da Vinci Code*, pages 238-239)

Brown asserts that the Holy Grail was actually Mary Magdalene and throughout the centuries Grail-keepers have been guarding the true (and continuing) bloodline of Christ and the relics of the Magdalene, *not* a material vessel. Therefore Brown claims that **"the quest for the Holy Grail is the quest to kneel before the bones of Mary Magdalene."**

Since the search, at the heart of *The Da Vinci Code* is a pilgrimage to pray before the relics of such a popular Catholic saint, it's no surprise then that, at the end of his journey, the hero, Langdon, finds himself doing the quintessential Catholic thing: kneeling in prayer before her bones.³

Was Jesus Just A Great and Powerful Man?

Many people and religious orders have sought to answer this question without allowing the Word to speak for itself. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, *though* thou be little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting", "In the beginning was the

Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”

If Jesus were not God, then the accusations raised against him by the Pharisees would indeed have been true. They accused him of blaspheming God by claiming to be God and by forgiving men of their sins. (John 10:30-33; Mark 2:5-7) Additionally, a created being can not be worshipped – regardless of his/her role. While in vision, John the Revelator sought to worship Gabriel twice, and both times he was quickly reproved. “And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See [thou do it] not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” “And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.” (Rev. 19:10; 22:8, 9)

Jesus was not mixed up on the issue regarding who could be worshipped; when tempted by Satan to kneel and worship him, Christ responded, “Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.” (Matt. 4:9, 10) Christ acknowledged that he had not come to change the law or the prophets but to fulfill and magnify them (Matt. 5:17- 19; Isa. 42:21); his messages to the Pharisees and to lost sinners was that God’s law must be obeyed without the added encumbrances of human tradition. (Matt. 23:23; 19:17) Yet, before and after the resurrection, He received worship of man. (Matt. 20:20; John 20:28; Matt. 28:17)

Was Jesus Married?

The main passage that Brown uses as support is a little known paragraph from the Gnostic writings. (Gospel of Philip 63:32-64:10) The key part of the text is broken at 63:33-36 and reads (Ellipses represent the broken locations in the manuscript and may signify missing words or phrases),

“And the companion of the...Mary Magdalene...her more than...the disciples...kiss her...on her...”.

From this Brown asserts that Jesus was married to and had sex with Mary Magdalene.

Recently, another Gnostic Gospel was partially reconstructed, The Gospel According to Judas, which interprets Judas’ betrayal as one positively performed in obedience to the instructions of Jesus. This positive portrayal follows the Gnostic notion that the human form is a prison. In this view, Judas helped to release the spirit of Christ from its physical constraints. In common with Phillip, the other variations directly undermine and challenge the canonical gospel and Bible which is one harmonious whole.

Among other things, “Phillip’s” gospel states, “Adam came into being from two virgins— from the Spirit and from the virgin earth.’ (Ph 90) ‘The Mother is the truth, yet the conjoining is the recognition,’ (Ph 116) and “it is not possible for anyone to see anything of the things that actually exist unless he becomes like them...You saw the Spirit, you became Spirit. You saw

Christ, you became Christ. You saw the Father, you shall become Father. So in this place you see everything and do not see yourself, but in that place you do see yourself – and what you see you shall become.”

When Jesus was teaching his followers, his mother and brethren gathered on the outside to persuade him to submit to the rabbis. (Matt. 12:48-50) If Jesus were married, why wasn't his wife there leading the entourage? Additionally, there is no mention of Jesus' wife during His ministry; when Jesus was tried and crucified, there is no mention of a wife. Upon the cross, Jesus instructed his disciple John to look after his mother (John 19:26, 27) but made no mention of a “supposed wife”. After Jesus' death and resurrection, there is no mention of a “wife” nor a “widow” or a “future seed”. Paul, using the other apostles as a pattern, wrote about his right to have a wife, yet he does not use Jesus as an example, which would have assuredly given full weight to his argument. (1 Cor. 9:1-5)

Ironically, the only basis one has for this nonsense is a fraudulent “gospel”, that among other erroneous ideas teaches New Age concepts of Earth worship, that God is a Mother, and pantheism. Remember our Lord said, “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” and “what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?” (Amos 3:3; 2 Cor. 6:14) These “gospels” and “The Gospel” do not agree.

Relics or Revelation?

The heart of Dan Brown's work is to encourage the reader “to kneel before the bones of Mary Magdalene” instead of kneeling at the foot of the cross in penitence and contrition of heart. So prone is man to worship anything but God, Jehovah commissioned angels to bury the body of Moses and protect its resting place lest Israel venerate and worship his corpse. “So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.” (Deut. 34:5, 6) “Many who had been unwilling to heed the counsels of Moses while he was with them would have been in danger of committing idolatry over his dead body had they known the place of his burial. For this reason it was concealed from men. But angels of God buried the body of His faithful servant and watched over the lonely grave. (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 477).

During Israel's wilderness journey, serpents began to bite those who constantly murmured and complained. Moses was instructed by God to make a brazen serpent erecting it upon a pole that those who looked might live. (Num. 21:9) Centuries later, though no one was alive from the wilderness wanderings, Israel fell into the same relic fever when they began to worship the brazen serpent that was still intact from the time of Moses. In the days of King Hezekiah, this serpent was destroyed. “He (Hezekiah) removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan.” (2 Kings 18:4)

Sadly, these two object lessons that were intended to illustrate the plan of redemption were corrupted by Satan. Moses was a symbol of the righteous who would rise in the first resurrection, (Mt.17:1-9; Jude 9) but instead of Israel being able to witness it; it was seen only by Christ and his angels and the Devil who unsuccessfully tried to stop it. The serpent who was a

symbol of Jesus on the cross (John 3:14-19) may have been used as a pictorial tool to illustrate history and remind men and women who have been stung by sin and are facing death – that healing and salvation still come through the Lamb!

Tragically, *The Da Vinci Code* and other works of its sort will continue to deceive and destroy millions just as Jesus said. (see Matt. 24:24) There is no room for a neutral position or an “innocent perusal” of dangerous errors from Mr. Brown or any other writer who rejects the solid foundation of the Bible for human speculation and opinion. As the apostle Peter stated, “we have not followed cunningly devised fables” but rather have built upon “a more sure word of prophecy” given to us by the Holy Ghost. (2 Peter 1:16-21)

1. <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/7127228>
2. http://www.leaderu.com/focus/Da_Vincicode.html
3. <http://davincicode-opusdei.com/?p=83>