

Introduction to the Seminar

A. Why do a seminar on the Da Vinci Code (DVC)?

1. The book is a novel with a captivating story that has sold millions of copies
2. The movie will be a blockbuster and thus greatly expand the influence of the basic ideas contained in the novel
3. Although it is fiction, Dan Brown claims certain things in the novel are factual. Page 1 states:

FACT:

The Priory of Sion – a European secret society founded in 1099 – is a real organization. In 1975 Paris' Bibliotheque 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 234 Lexington Avenue in New York City.

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

4. Dan Brown has consistently stated that he believes the information presented in the novel is true and accurate. (Example: *Good Morning America* and the ABC Special *Jesus, Mary, and Da Vinci*, both on November 3, 2003).
5. Many people have begun to ask questions regarding the true nature of Christ and early Christianity, and to doubt the veracity of the New Testament and historic Christian orthodoxy.

B. My qualifications and methodology for presenting the seminar

1. I received a B.S. degree in history from the US Naval Academy
2. My masters degree from seminary included significant study in the areas of theology and early church history.
3. I will restrict my comments to the areas of the history and theology of the early church. The other areas - art, history of the middle ages (especially secret societies), and the Catholic Church - are outside my areas of expertise and will only be tangentially covered in this seminar.
4. The novel clearly bases many of its historical claims on the book *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*, which is mentioned in the book by name, and through one of the key characters Leigh Teabing, which is an anagram of two of the names of the authors of *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*. However, I will restrict my comments to the claims as they appear in *The Da Vinci Code*.
5. All page references today will be to the hardback version of the *Da Vinci Code*. The ISBN data for this version is listed in the bibliography.
6. The historical and theological claims in the novel are tightly interwoven and will be difficult to extricate from one another. Consequently, some of the data may be repeated several times.

C. A brief overview of *The Da Vinci Code*

I. The Role of Constantine in Early Christianity

A. Constantine's role in the Da Vinci Code (DVC)

1. Constantine is really the ultimate villain of DVC
2. He is presented as a pagan emperor who only pretended to be a Christian for political purposes, and who radically altered Christianity from its original form into the form we know as orthodox Christianity today
3. Is there any historical validity to these charges?

B. Was Constantine a Christian or a pagan?

1. DVC - A lifelong pagan – “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.” (page 232)
2. History – A pagan who converted to Christianity – A brief history of the life and times of Constantine
 - a. Diocletian and the Great Persecution (c. 300 AD)
 - b. Empire split in 4 parts; fights start; Milvian Bridge, 27 October 312 – “By this sign conquer”.
 - c. Constantine wins and becomes Emperor in the West, and apparently a Christian (though he is certainly inconsistent in his faith as all Christians!).
 - d. Constantine issues Edict of Toleration in 313 – Christians are no longer to be persecuted
 - e. In 321 Constantine outlawed labor on Sunday, as it was the Lord's Day.
 - f. Lucinius, Emperor in the East begins persecuting Christians again, so Constantine attacks him, wins and becomes sole Emperor in 324.
 - g. Called Council of Nicea in 325 AD.

- h. He was baptized shortly before death – a common custom in that day.

C. What role did Constantine play in Christians worshipping on Sunday's?

1. DVC – Constantine made Christians worship on Sunday as honor to the pagan sun god. “Even Christianity’s weekly holy day was stolen from the pagans.” What do you mean?” “Originally,” Langdon said, “Christianity honored the Jewish Sabbath of 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 sun god’s weekly tribute-*Sunday*.” (Pages 232-233)
2. History – Christians began worshipping on Sunday from the time of the apostles, and this was universal from almost 200 years before the time of Constantine.
 - a. 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 - ¹ Now about the collection for God’s people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. ² On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.
 - b. Acts 20:7 - ⁷ On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight.
 - c. “No longer observing the Sabbath, but living in the observance of the Lord’s Day, on which also our life has sprung up again by Him.” - Ignatius, *Letter to the Magnesians*, 9 (c. 117)
 - d. “On the Lord’s own day gather together and break bread and give thanks.” - *Didache*, 14 (c. 150-200)
 - e. “We keep the eighth day with joyfulness, the day also on which Jesus rose again from the dead.” - *Epistle of Barnabas*, 15 (c. early 2nd century AD)

- f. “But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Savior on the same day rose from the dead. - Justin, *Apology I*, Chapter 67 (c. 165 AD)

D. What role did Constantine play in the development of the Christian Bible, and especially the Gospels?

1. DVC – Constantine was a major force in determining which books went into the Bible (especially the Gospels) and he had other books burned. “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.” (Page 234). “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 we know it today, was collated by the pagan Roman Emperor Constantine the Great.” (page 231).
2. History – The Gospels and other writings of the NT were accepted long before Constantine, and he had nothing to do with the formation of the Christian canon.
 - a. “The historical reality is that the Emperor Constantine had nothing to do with the formation of the canon of Scripture: he did not choose which books to include or exclude, and he did not order the destruction of the Gospels that were left out of the canon (there were no imperial book burnings). The formation of the New Testament canon was instead a long and drawn-out process that began centuries before Constantine and did not conclude until long after he was dead. So far as we know, based on our historical record, the emperor was not involved in the process.” (Bart Ehrman, *Truth and Fiction in the Da Vinci Code*, page 74.)

- b. Paul considered the Gospel of Luke to be Scripture on par with the OT writings: ¹⁷ The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. ¹⁸ For the Scripture says, "Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain," and "The worker deserves his wages." (1 Timothy 5:17-18, quoting Deuteronomy 25:4 and Luke 10:7).
- c. Muratorian Fragment (c. 2nd century AD) – knew of four Gospels, including Luke and John (names of first two were contained in missing part of the list): "The third book of the Gospel: according to Luke....The fourth gospel is by John, one of the disciples..."
- d. Irenaeus (c. 180 AD) – only 4 Gospels – no more no less – "It is not possible that the Gospels can be either more or fewer in number than they are. For, since there are four zones of the world in which we live, and four principal winds, while the Church is scattered throughout all the world, and the "pillar and ground" of the Church is the Gospel and the spirit of life; it is fitting that she should have four pillars, breathing out immortality on every side, and vivifying men afresh. From which fact, it is evident that the Word, the Artificer of all, He that sitteth upon the cherubim, and contains all things, He who was manifested to men, has given us the Gospel under four aspects, but bound together by one Spirit." (*Against Heresies*, 3.11.7). Note: Irenaeus specifically mentions all four Gospels by name throughout this section of his writing.
- e. Tertullian (c. 160-225) – "Of the apostles, therefore, John and Matthew first instill faith into us; whilst of apostolic men, Luke and Mark renew it afterwards." (*Against Marcion*, Book 4, Chap. 2).
- f. Origen (c. 185-254 AD) – "Among the four Gospels, which are the only indisputable ones in the Church of God under heaven, I have learned by tradition that first was written that according to Matthew...Secondly, that according to Mark...and thirdly, that according to Luke...after them all, that according to John." (*Commentary on the Gospel According to Matthew*, quoted in Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, Book 6, Chapter 25).

- g. The overall canon: “Despite the claims of Leigh Teabing, almost everyone in the orthodox church agreed that the four Gospels, the Acts, the thirteen Pauline Epistles, 1 Peter, and 1 John should be include.” (Bart Ehrman, *Truth and Fiction in the Da Vinci Code*, page 74.)
- h. “So the canon was not finalized even by Constantine’s day, even though it was agreed among all ‘orthodox’ Christians that the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were canonical scripture. Constantine had nothing to do with that decision.” (Bart Ehrman, *Truth and Fiction in the Da Vinci Code*, page 90.)
- i. Furthermore, this process was not even discussed at the Council of Nicea, and we have no knowledge of Constantine’s views on the subject whatsoever! The first complete list of NT books is from Athanasius, in 367 AD, 30 years after the death of Constantine!
- j. For more information on the development of the NT canon, see the seminar “How Did I Get My Bible?” available at our church website www.bayridgechristianchurch.org

E. Conclusion

1. Constantine was a Christian covert – not a lifelong pagan. Contrary to the assertions DVC, he appears to have experienced a real conversion, and did many things to support the growth of Christianity in the Empire.
2. Constantine did not radically alter Christian practices. For example, Christians had worshipped on Sunday since the time of the New Testament. Christian faith and practice was based upon the teachings of the Scripture, and was instituted by the Christian church leaders – not by Constantine.
3. Constantine played no role in the development of the New Testament canon. This process had begun over 200 years prior to Constantine’s time, and was not completed until after his death. Constantine had no involvement in this process, and did not order spurious books destroyed.

II. The Other ‘Gospels’ and Writings

- A. Introduction – Will the real Christian documents please stand up!
1. One of the central claims in DVC is that the biblical documents were doctored and that there were other, original, more accurate documents that tell the real story of Jesus. However, these documents were destroyed by Constantine, though a few have survived.
 2. What are these other documents? Were they really the original Christian Scriptures until Constantine banished them? Are they better sources than the documents of the New Testament?
- B. How many Gospels were written?
1. DVC – More than eighty gospels were written. “Jesus Christ was a figure of staggering influence... Understandably, His life was recorded by thousands of followers across the land... 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.” (Page 231).
 2. Reality – far fewer than 80 “gospels”
 - a. “There are several historical errors in Teabing’s account. As we will see in a later chapter, Jesus’ words and deeds were by no means recorded ‘by thousands’ during his lifetime; on the contrary there is no evidence that *anyone* recorded the facts of his life while he was still living. Nor were there eighty Gospels considered for inclusion in the New Testament. And Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are not ‘among’ those that were included in the New Testament – they were the *only* ones included.” (Bart Ehrman, *Truth and Fiction in the Da Vinci Code*, page 48.)

- b. “As I’ve already indicated, Teabing is wrong to assert that there were eighty other Gospels vying for a place in the New Testament. The reality is we don’t even *know* how many other Gospels were written; we certainly do not have eighty available to us today, although there are at least a couple of dozen that we know about.” (Bart Ehrman, *Truth and Fiction in the Da Vinci Code*, pages 48-49.)

C. Q, the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi Texts

1. ‘Q’ –

- a. DVC – Q is a document written by Jesus Himself – “In those trunks are reputed to be the *Purist Documents* – thousands of pages of unaltered, pre-Constantine documents, written by the early followers of Jesus...Also rumored to be part of the treasure is the legendary “Q” document – manuscript that even the Vatican admits they believe exists. Allegedly, it is a book of Jesus’ teachings, possibly written in His own hand.” “Writings by Christ Himself?” “Of course,” Teabing said. “Why wouldn’t Jesus have kept a chronicle of His ministry? Most people did in those days.” (page 256).
- b. Reality – Q is a hypothetical document that many scholars believe underlies the common sayings of Jesus found in Matthew and Luke.
 - i. ‘Q’ is an abbreviation for the German word ‘Quelle’, which means ‘source.’
 - ii. ‘Q’ is a hypothetical document
 - iii. ‘Q’ is not thought to have been written by Jesus
 - iv. ‘Q’ is thought to have been a collection of sayings of Jesus that circulated
 - v. Some scholars think it underlies many sayings found in Matthew and Luke

2. The Dead Sea Scrolls

- a. DVC – Dead Sea Scrolls contain Gospels
Constantine tried to destroy and correct the New Testament. “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...Of course the Vatican, in keeping with their tradition of misinformation, tried very hard to suppress the release of these scrolls.” (page 234).
- b. Reality – Dead Sea Scrolls contain no information about Jesus at all – they are Jewish – not Christian
 - i. The Dead Sea Scrolls were originally found in 1947 – not the 1950’s
 - ii. The Dead Sea Scrolls make no mention of Jesus or Christianity at all
 - iii. The Vatican in no way tried to suppress the release of the Dead Sea Scrolls

3. The Nag Hammadi Texts

- a. DVC – Nag Hammadi texts correct errors in NT that portray Jesus as divine. “Fortunately for historians,” Teabing said, “some of the Gospels that Constantine attempted to eradicate managed to survive... 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.” (page 234).
- b. Reality – Nag Hammadi texts contain ancient Gnostic writings that had been rejected by the church as obviously spurious long before the time of Constantine.
 - i. The documents at Nag Hammadi were books, not scrolls

- ii. Constantine did not try to destroy these texts – we have no record of imperial book burnings!
- iii. These documents make no mention of the Grail at all
- iv. The Vatican in no way tried to suppress the release of these documents
- v. These documents do not speak of Christ in “very human terms.” In fact, they were rejected by the early church because they denied the real humanity of Christ!

D. A Brief Overview of the Gnostic Gospels and Writings

1. The Gnostic Gospels and writings were not really a uniform collection. The term has been applied to these writings which have certain common beliefs, although the early groups producing these writings did not necessarily agree with one another on many key ideas.
2. Gnostic Gospels and writings include *The Gospel According to Thomas*, *The Gospel of Judas*, *The Infancy Gospel of Thomas*, *The Gospel of Peter*, *The Apocalypse of Peter*, *The Gospel of Mary*, *The Gospel of Philip*, etc.
3. Contrary to the claims of DVC, the Gnostic writings are clearly later than the writings of the New Testament. All of the books of the New Testament were written prior to 100 AD, while almost every Gnostic Gospel was a product of the 2nd or 3rd century.
4. The specific disciple or follower of Christ who are the “heroes” and “villains” in each of these writings differ from the specific disciples of followers who are the “heroes” or “villains” in the other Gnostic writings. For example, the “hero” who receives secret revelations in *The Apocalypse of Peter* is Peter, while in *The Gospel of Thomas* it is Thomas, and in *The Gospel of Judas* it is Judas. And Peter is the “villain” in *The Gospel of Mary*, while Mary Magdalene is the hero.

5. These writings did have a common overarching set of beliefs on the world, God, humanity, revelation, salvation, and Jesus Christ.
6. The Gnostic beliefs on these topics stood in sharp contrast to the beliefs of orthodox Christianity and the apostolic writings that had been accepted by the Church

E. A Closer Look at Gnostic vs. Christian Beliefs

1. The World

- a. Gnostic – the material world is inherently evil, and stands in unalterable opposition to the world of the spirit, which is good
- b. Christian – the material world was created by God and was good, but now struggles under the curse because of man's sin.

2. God

- a. Gnostic – The True God is completely spirit and can have no contact with matter, which is inherently sinful. In eternity past God created other divine emanations, who themselves paired off and produced offspring. Eventually one of these, usually called Sophia (wisdom) became separated and spontaneously produced another divine being, who with help of his minions created the material world and imprisoned Sophia within it.
- b. Christian – There is only One True God, the Triune Father, Son, and Spirit, Who made the material world, who loves that world, called it good, and Who became truly human to work salvation for fallen humanity.

3. Humanity

- a. Gnostic – Sophia is trapped within some human bodies, who thus have the divine spark within them and can be saved. Other humans who do not have this spark are simply material like animals and will cease to exist when they die.

- b. Christian – All humans are created in God's image, and human bodies are an inherent part of what it means to be human. All humans are loved by God, and all humans will be bodily resurrected after death – some to eternal life and others to eternal destruction.

4. Revelation

- a. Gnostic – God had revealed secret knowledge to specific apostles, and this knowledge had been passed on in secret to the later Gnostics. Often the Old Testament played little or no part in Gnostic revelation.
- b. Christian – God had revealed Himself in both the writings of the Old Testament, and openly to all the apostles in the New Testament. This revelation was not “secret” but was given to the entire church to know and understand.

5. Salvation

- a. Gnostic – The divine spark can only be saved and escape this material world through knowledge. It must learn where it came from, how it got here, and it can be delivered through gnosis (knowledge).
- b. Christian – Salvation came through the very physical life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Son of Man. Those who have true faith in Christ are saved, and will one day be bodily raised from the dead.

6. Jesus Christ

- a. Gnostic – Christ came from out of this world to bring this gnosis (knowledge) so that those with the divine spark could learn it and be saved. Some Gnostics were docetists, who believed that Jesus only appeared (from the Greek word *dokeo* – to appear) to be human, but was not really flesh and blood. Other Gnostics were adoptionists, who taught that the Divine Christ came upon or in the human Jesus at his baptism, and then taught his followers the truth. He then left Jesus prior to the crucifixion. The human Jesus suffered and died, but not the divine Christ.

- b. Christian – Jesus Christ was truly God and truly man. He was the Eternal Son of God, one with the Father, but was truly born of the virgin Mary and was true flesh and blood human. Jesus Christ was God Incarnate – God in human flesh.

F. Why Were Gnostics and Their Texts Rejected?

1. Their writings often contradicted one another and accepted Christian writings
 - a. Remember that the hero receiving revelation in one of these writings was the villain in the writing of another group! Who really received the “secret” revelation?
 - b. The writings also contradicted established Christian testimony received from ALL of the apostles.
2. The texts were not written by the apostles whose name they bear.
3. Their texts contained bizarre incidents and ideas
 - a. *The Gospel of Thomas* –
 1. A number of sayings are very similar to those found in the canonical Gospels. For example:

The disciples said to Jesus, “Tell us what the kingdom of heaven is like.” He said to them, “It is like a mustard seed. It is the smallest of all seeds. But when it falls on tilled soil, it produces a great plant and becomes a shelter for birds of the sky. (saying 20; compare with Mark 4:30-31)

Jesus said: No prophet is acceptable in his village, no physician heals those who know him. (saying 31; compare with Luke 4:24)
 2. However, a lot of the sayings sound very strange:

Jesus said to them: When you make the two one, and when you make the inner as the outer and the outer as the inner and the above as the below, and when you make the male and the female into a single one, so that the male will not be male and the female not be female, when you make eyes in place of an eye, and a hand in the place of a hand, and a foot in the place of a foot, and an image in the place of an image, then you shall enter the Kingdom (saying 22)

Simon Peter said to them: "Let Mary go out from among us, because women are not worthy of the Life." Jesus said: "See I shall lead her, so that I will make her male, that she too may become a living spirit, resembling you males. For every woman who makes herself male will enter the Kingdom of heaven (saying 114).

1. These texts are replete with Gnostic ideas about the body and this evil material world – this is what lies behind one becoming two, eyes replacing eyes, male and female being united, etc.
 2. Note, however, the low view of women – they have to become male to be saved – hardly the height of feminism!
- b. *The Apocalypse of Peter* - When he had said those things, I saw him seemingly being seized by them. And I said "What do I see, O Lord? That it is you yourself whom they take, and that you are grasping me? Or who is this one, glad and laughing on the tree? And is it another one whose feet and hands they are striking?" The Savior said to me, "He whom you saw on the tree, glad and laughing, this is the living Jesus. But this one into whose hands and feet they drive the nails is his fleshly part, which is the substitute being put to shame, the one who came into being in his likeness. But look at him and me."... And he said to me, "Be strong, for you are the one to whom these mysteries have been given, to know them through revelation, that he whom they crucified is the first-born, and the home of demons, and the stony vessel in which they dwell, of Elohim, of the cross, which is under the Law. But he who stands near him is the living Savior, the first in him, whom they seized and released, who stands joyfully looking at those who did him violence, while they are divided among themselves. Therefore he laughs at their lack of perception, knowing that they are born blind. So then the one susceptible to suffering shall come, since the body is the substitute. But what they released was my incorporeal body. But I am the intellectual Spirit filled with radiant light. He whom you saw coming to me is our intellectual Pleroma, which unites the perfect light with my Holy Spirit.
1. In this text, notice that the Christ is not on the cross, but rather a human substitute.

2. Note that Peter is at the crucifixion, an assertion that the authentic Gospels all deny.
 3. Note that the shell, the body, belongs to Elohim, the Hebrew word for God in the Old Testament. He is the evil creator God. In the crucifixion Jesus is freed from this shell, and thus he laughs at those killing him, and ultimately at Elohim.
- c. *The Infancy Gospel of Thomas* - When the boy Jesus was five years old, he was playing in a narrow part of a rushing stream. He was gathering the flowing waters into ponds, and immediately they were made clean, and he ordered these things with a single word. And after he made clay, he molded twelve sparrows from it. And it was the Sabbath when he did these things. But there were also many other children playing with him. Then, a certain Jew saw what Jesus was doing while playing on the Sabbath. Immediately, he departed and reported to Jesus' father, Joseph, "Look, your child is in the stream and he took clay and formed twelve birds and profaned the Sabbath?" And Joseph went to the area and when he saw him, he shouted, "Why are you doing these things that are not permitted on the Sabbath?" Jesus, however, clapped his hands and shouted to the sparrows, "Depart, fly, and remember me now that you are alive." And the sparrows departed shrieking. When the Jews saw this, they were amazed. After they had gone away, they described to their leaders what they had seen Jesus do. The son of Annas the scribe was standing there with Jesus. Taking a branch from a willow tree, he dispersed the waters which Jesus had gathered. When Jesus saw what had happened, he became angry and said to him, "You godless, brainless moron, what did the ponds and waters do to you? Watch this now: you are going to dry up like a tree and you will never produce leaves or roots or fruit." And immediately, this child withered up completely. Then, Jesus departed and returned to Joseph's house. The parents of the one who had been withered up, however, wailed for their young child as they took his remains away. Then, they went to Joseph and accused him, "You are responsible for the child who did this." Next, he was going through the village again and a running child bumped his shoulder. Becoming bitter, Jesus said to him, "You will not complete your journey." Immediately, he fell down and died. Then, some of the people who

had seen what had happened said, "Where has this child come from so that his every word is a completed deed?" And going to Joseph, the parents of the one who had died found fault with him. They said, "Because you have such a child, you are not allowed to live with us in the village, or at least teach him to bless and not curse. For our children are dead!"

1. Notice how Jesus performs a miracle simply to amuse himself. This is unlike His true miracles recorded in the Gospels, all of which serve some larger purpose.
 2. Notice how moody, impatient, and vindictive Jesus is in these brief stories. Anyone who crosses the five year old Jesus is likely to end up physically deformed or dead!
4. The Gnostics and orthodox Christians had two sets of incompatible beliefs. Both sides recognized this.

G. When were the Gnostics and Their Texts Rejected?

1. This process began during the times of the New Testament
 - a. 1 John 1:1 - ¹ That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched-- this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.
 - b. 1 Timothy 6:20-21 - ²⁰ Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called **knowledge** (gnosis), ²¹ which some have professed and in so doing have wandered from the faith. Grace be with you.
 - c. 1 John 4:1-3 - ¹ Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. ² This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: **Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God,** ³ but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.

- d. Colossians 2:8-9; 20-23 - ⁸ See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ. ⁹ For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in **bodily** form... ²⁰ Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: ²¹ "**Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!**"? ²² These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. ²³ Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their **harsh treatment of the body**, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.
2. This process was completed long before the time of Constantine
 - a. Justin Martyr – died c. 165 – He wrote several treatises against the Gnostics, but they have been lost and we only know of them through the writings of Tertullian and others.
 - b. Irenaeus – c. 180 AD – The Bishop of Lyons, France, who wrote *Against Heresies* to combat the Gnostics and their writings. Many of the Gnostics and their writings are refuted in this work, including the recently published *Gospel of Judas*, which was previously known primarily through this writing of Irenaeus.
 - c. Tertullian – c. 155-230 – wrote against a number of heresies, including the Valentinians, one of the leading Gnostic sects of the day.
 - d. Serapion – Bishop of Antioch

H. Conclusion

1. There are a lot fewer texts than DVC claims
2. These texts were written later than the NT texts, and were not written by apostles or their companions
3. These texts are not historically accurate, but contain bizarre and fanciful events

4. The ideas contained in these texts contradict orthodox Christianity
5. The Gnostics were consistently rejected from the middle of the first century on, long before the time of Constantine

III. Jesus and Mary Magdalene

A. Were Jesus and Mary Magdalene married?

1. DVC claims that Jesus and Mary Magdalene were married
2. It claims that all Jewish men were married, and that the marriage of Jesus and Mary Magdalene was a well documented historical reality.
3. Are these claims true? What do we know about Mary Magdalene? Are there documents that say they were married? What difference would it make if they were? Has the church spent millennia trying to destroy this secret?

B. Were all Jewish men married?

1. DVC – Yes – “Jesus as a married man makes infinitely more sense than our standard biblical view of Jesus as a bachelor.” “Why?” Sophie asked. “Because Jesus was a Jew,” Langdon said, taking over while Teabing searched for his book, “and he social decorum during that time virtually forbid a Jewish man to be unmarried. According to Jewish custom, celibacy was condemned, and the obligation for a Jewish father was to find a suitable wife for his son. If Jesus were not married, at least one of the Bible’s gospels would have mentioned it and offered some explanation for His unnatural state of bachelorhood.” (Page 245)
2. Reality – No
 - a. “Is Robert Langdon right to say that Jewish men were *expected* to be married and that celibacy was ‘condemned’? Unfortunately, this again is simply part of the narrative fiction of *The Da Vinci Code*; it has no basis in historical reality...For we do know of Jewish men from the time and place of Jesus who were single, and it is quite clear that they were not ‘condemned’ for it.” (Bart Ehrman, *Truth and Fiction in the Da Vinci Code*, page 155).

- b. Josephus on the Essenes – “It also deserves our admiration, how much they exceed all other men that addict themselves to virtue, and this in righteousness; and indeed to such a degree, that as it hath never appeared among any other men, neither Greeks nor barbarians, no, not for a little time, so hath it endured a long while among them. ... There are about four thousand men that live in this way, and neither marry wives, nor are desirous to keep servants.” (Josephus, *Antiquities*, Book 18, Chapter 1, Verses 20-21)
- c. Remember that Paul, Barnabas, Timothy, and their companions were also Jewish men who were not married. This was in no way something that was ‘condemned’ or even ‘unusual’ in their culture.
- d. “Jesus could well be single and fit into the practice of pious Jews. Not every Jew had to be married. There were times when the virtue of remaining single was followed by some and respected by other Jews. There were good religious reasons why some Jews did not marry, most often out of intense religious dedication. Some also remained single for reasons of practicality given the nature of their chosen ministry.” (Darrell L. Bock, *Breaking the Da Vinci Code*, page 57).

C. Does the Historical Record Indicate Jesus Was Married?

1. DVC – Yes –

- a. “As I mentioned,” Teabing clarified, “the early Church needed to convince the world that the mortal prophet Jesus was a *divine* being. Therefore, any gospels that described *earthly* aspects of Jesus’ life had to be omitted from the bible. Unfortunately for the early editors, one particularly troubling earthly theme kept recurring in the Gospels. Mary Magdalene.” He paused. “More specifically, her marriage to Jesus Christ.” “I beg your pardon?” Sophie’s eyes moved to Langdon and then back to Teabing. “It’s a matter of historical record,” Teabing said... (Page 244)

- b. “Sir Leigh Teabing was still talking. ‘I shan’t bore you with the countless references to Jesus and Magdalene’s union. This has been explored ad nauseam by modern historians...’” (Page 247).

2. Reality – No Historical Record of Jesus Being Married

- a. “Most significant is a fact that cannot be overlooked or underestimated: in *none* of our early Christian sources is there any reference to Jesus’ marriage or to his wife. This is true not only of the canonical Gospels...but of all of our other Gospels and all of our other early Christian writings put together....List every ancient source we have for the historical Jesus, and in none of them is there mention of Jesus being married.” (Bart Ehrman, *Truth and Fiction in the Da Vinci Code*, page 153).
- b. “Now, if there were even one *spark* of evidence from antiquity that Jesus even *may* have gotten married, then as a historian, I would have to weigh this evidence against the *total* absence of such information in either Scripture or the early church traditions. But there is no such spark - not a scintilla of evidence – anywhere in the historical sources. Even where one might expect to find such claims in the bizarre, second century, apocryphal gospels...there is no reference that Jesus ever got married.” (Paul L. Maier, *The Da Vinci Code: Fact or Fiction*, 16).

D. What About the *Gospel of Philip*?

1. DVC – It says Jesus and Mary were married – “Sophie read the passage: ‘And the companion of the Saviour is Mary Magdalene. Christ loved her more than all the disciples, and used to kiss her often on her mouth. The rest of the disciples were offended by it and expressed disapproval. They said to him “Why do you love her more than all of us?’ The words surprised Sophie, and yet they hardly seemed conclusive. “It says nothing of marriage.” “Au contraire.” Teabing smiled, pointing to the first line. “As any Aramaic scholar will tell you, the word *companion* in those days, literally meant *spouse*.” (Page 246).

2. Reality – It says nothing at all of Jesus and Mary being married
 - a. And the companion of the [...] Mary Magdalene. [...] loved her more than all the disciples, and used to kiss her often on her [...]. The rest of the disciples [...]. They said to him "Why do you love her more than all of us?" – (Note: The brackets [...] indicate broken locations in the manuscript where there is no reading because the manuscript is damaged. This – not the one in DVC – is the actual text!)
 - b. The meaning of a kiss in the Gospel of Philip is revelation – not sexual love: “For it is by a kiss that the perfect conceive and give birth. For this reason we all kiss one another. We receive conception from the grace which is in one another.” (Gospel of Philip, quoted in Darrell L. Bock, *Breaking the Da Vinci Code*, page 22).
 - c. The *Gospel of Philip* is not written in Aramaic – it is Coptic. And the key word ‘companion’ is actually the Greek word *koinonos*, which means “companion; partner; sharer”. The Greek word for wife is actually *gyne* (from which we derive terms such as gynecology). In the NT, *gyne* is translated as wife 56 times; *koinonos* is used 10 times and is **never** translated as wife.
 - d. The Gospel of Philip was probably composed almost 200 years after Christ, and contains little of historical value – it is only useful as an interesting look at what Gnostics believed almost 200 years after Christ, not for the actual events of Jesus’ life.

E. Positive reasons that show Jesus was NOT married to Mary Magdalene

1. Every family member of Jesus is mentioned repeatedly – but no text ever mentions a wife
 - a. Mark 6:3 - ³ Isn't this the carpenter? Isn't this **Mary's son** and the **brother** of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren't **his sisters** here with us?" And they took offense at him.
 - b. John 6:42 - ⁴² They said, "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, **whose father and mother we know**? How can he now say, 'I came down from heaven'?"

- c. John 19:25 - ²⁵ Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, **his mother's sister**, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. (Note the other women's relation to Jesus is mentioned, but not Mary Magdalene's!)
2. Mary Magdalene is never linked to any male for identification – though all others are! Rather, she is identified by her home town of Magdala.
- a. Matthew 27:55-56 - ⁵⁵ Many women were there, watching from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for his needs. ⁵⁶ Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary **the mother of James and Joses**, and **the mother of Zebedee's sons**.
 - b. John 19:25 - ²⁵ Near the cross of Jesus stood **his mother**, his mother's sister, **Mary the wife of Clopas**, and Mary Magdalene.
 - c. Luke 8:2 - ² and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (**called Magdalene**) from whom seven demons had come out;
3. Jesus shows care for his mother, but not Mary Magdalene, at the cross
- a. John 19:25-27 - ²⁵ Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶ When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Dear woman, here is your son," ²⁷ and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.
 - b. Jesus has a responsibility to take care of the women who depend on him, including any family members who do not have a husband, or a wife (if he had one). Notice that he takes care of Mary His mother, but does nothing for Mary Magdalene. It is unthinkable that Jesus would have neglected Mary Magdalene if she had been His wife.

F. What Difference Would It Make If Jesus Had Been Married?

1. DVC – It would destroy Christianity. This is the great secret that the church has supposedly murdered millions to maintain over the last 2,000 years. This was done because the church wanted to foster a view of Jesus as purely Divine rather than human.
2. Reality – The church has *never* taught that Jesus was purely Divine. It has always believed that He was both fully God and fully man at the same time. In fact, it was the Gnostics who taught that Jesus was only Divine and was not truly human. Therefore, many Gnostics would have decried Jesus being involved in such a human institution as marriage. Christians do not deny the marriage of Christ for theological reasons, but for historical reasons. The historical record is clear: He was never married!

G. What Do We Know About Mary Magdalene?

1. She was not a prostitute as is commonly believed. This is not in the Scripture, but arose from a sermon by Pope Gregory the Great in 591 AD. However, Gregory did not do this to smear Mary, but rather to use her as an example of how Christ could change lives.
2. Jesus had cast seven demons out of her

Luke 8:1-2 - ¹ After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, ² and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: **Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out;**
3. She was a faithful disciple of Jesus

Luke 8:1-2 - ¹ After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. **The Twelve were with him, ² and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene)** from whom seven demons had come out;

4. She was a witness of the crucifixion

Mark 15:39-40 ³⁹ And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, heard his cry and saw how he died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!" ⁴⁰

Some women were watching from a distance.

Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, & Salome.

5. She was a witness of the resurrection

John 20:1, 10-18 - ¹ Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, **Mary Magdalene went to the tomb** and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance... ¹⁰ Then the disciples went back to their homes, ¹¹ but Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb ¹² and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. ¹³ They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." ¹⁴ At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. ¹⁵ "Woman," he said, "why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." ¹⁶ **Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher).** ¹⁷ Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" ¹⁸ **Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!"** And she told them that he had said these things to her.

Consider how important this fact is: In a time when women were considered unworthy to be witnesses, the first witness to the resurrection is the woman Mary Magdalene! She then carries the message to the Apostles, and thus became known in church history as the apostle (messenger) to the Apostles! Mary is not the Grail – but she is a prime witness to the real identity of Christ, a point we will look at in the final section.

H. Conclusion

1. Many religious Jewish men of Jesus' day did not get married.
2. There is no historical reason to believe that Jesus married anyone, much less that He was married specifically to Mary Magdalene. We have no historical sources which make this claim; it is a modern flight of fancy – not a historical fact.
3. In fact, we have many positive historical reasons which point to the fact that Jesus was not married.
4. The reason that Christians do not believe that Jesus was married is not because Christianity denies the humanity of Christ. As a human Jesus could have been married. Christians do not believe He was married for historical – not theological – reasons.
5. Mary Magdalene was not the wife of Christ or the mother of His child, but she is an important figure. She was a devoted follower of Christ, and a key witness of the crucifixion, the burial, and the resurrection of Christ. As such, she points us to the real identity of Jesus Christ.

IV. The Deity and Humanity of Christ

A. Introduction – Is Jesus Divine or human?

1. The ultimate idea to which the Da Vinci code is driving is that Jesus was merely a human prophet, and that this was what virtually all Christians believed until the time of Constantine.
2. DVC teaches that Constantine needed Jesus to be a Divine figure in order to unite the empire, and so he forced this idea upon Christians.
3. Since Christian writings had not taught this before, the real Christian documents which portrayed a merely human Jesus were banished and destroyed, and replacement documents which portrayed a Divine Jesus were put into the Christian New Testament.
4. What did early Christians believe about the nature of Christ? Did they think he was Divine, human, or both?
5. What did the Gnostic writings that DVC claims were the original Christian documents teach about the nature of Christ?
6. Who is Jesus Christ? Who did He claim to be, and what is His true nature?

B. When Did Christians First Believe That Jesus Was Divine?

1. DVC – When Constantine forced this upon the church at the council of Nicea
 - a. “At this gathering,” Teabing said, “many aspects of Christianity were debated and voted upon – the date of Easter, the role of the 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.” “Not the Son of God?” “Right,” Teabing

said. “Jesus’ establishment as ‘the Son of God’ was officially proposed and voted on by the Council of Nicea.” “Hold on. You’re saying Jesus’ divinity was the result of a *vote*?” “A relatively close vote at that,” Teabing added.

- b. This is really the key assertion towards which all else in DVC is directed. According to DVC, Jesus did not claim to be divine, and his followers originally did not think of Him this way. This was the invention of Constantine which was forced upon the church at the Council of Nicea.

2. Reality – Jesus claimed to be Divine, and this is what the Church had always believed, and this was not the question debated at Nicea.

- a. “Constantine did call the Council of Nicea, and one of the issues involved Jesus’ divinity. But this was not a council that met to decide whether or not Jesus was divine, as Teabing indicates. Quite the contrary, everyone at the Council – and in fact, just about every Christian everywhere – already agreed that Jesus was divine, the Son of God. The question being debated was how to understand Jesus’ divinity in light of the circumstance that he was also human...And there certainly was no vote to determine Jesus’ divinity; this was already a matter of common knowledge among Christians, and had been from the early years of the religion.” (Bart Ehrman, *Truth and Fiction in the Da Vinci Code*, page 14-15).

- b. “The view that Teabing lays out is wrong on all key points: Christians before Nicea already did accept Jesus as divine; The Gospels of the New Testament portray him as human as much as they portray as divine; the Gospels that did *not* get included in the New Testament portray him as divine as much, or more so, than they portray him as human.” (Bart Ehrman, *Truth and Fiction in the Da Vinci Code*, page 15).

c. Early teaching on Jesus’ Divinity

- 1. John 1:1-3 - ¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

2. Philippians 2:5-7 - 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.
3. Hebrews 1:1-3, 8 - ¹ In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. ³ The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.... 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.
4. Mark 1:1 - ¹ The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
5. "There is one physician, both fleshly and spiritual, born and unborn, God come in the flesh, true life in death, from both Mary and God, first subject to suffering and then beyond suffering, Jesus Christ our Lord." (Ignatius, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 7:2, c. 110).
6. "On an appointed day they had been accustomed to meet before daybreak, and to recite a hymn antiphonally to Christ, as to a god..." (Pliny the Younger, Letter to Trajan, c. 112).
7. "Brothers we ought to think of Jesus Christ as we do of God, as 'Judge of the living and the dead.'" (2 Clement 1:1, c. 100)
8. "And furthermore, my brothers: if the Lord submitted to suffer for our souls, even though He is Lord of the whole world, to whom God said at the foundation of the world, "Let us make man according to our image and likeness...." (*Epistle of Barnabas*, 5.5, c. 100)

C. The real debate at Nicea

1. The real debate was over Arianism
2. The teachings of Arius
 - a. Arius taught that Jesus was divine, but was still created by the Father

- b. Christ did not exist from all eternity – “there was a time when he was not.”
- c. Christ was divine, but was inferior to the Father – not in role (economically is the technical term) but in being (ontologically is the technical term).
- d. This is the idea supported by Jehovah Witnesses today

3. The decision at Nicea

- a. The council affirmed the teaching of the New Testament that Jesus was divine and was not created – He was begotten – not made
- b. It was affirmed that Christ was eternal – there was never a time when He was not
- c. Christ was equal to the Father in being (ontologically) but subordinate to the Father in role (economically).
- d. This is the position of all Orthodox Christians.
- e. Note: Even on this issue the actual vote was not close as Teabing claims; approximately 300 bishops attended, and only two went against the decision; it was 300-2!

D. Did Christians not believe Jesus was human?

- 1. DVC – Christians denied that Jesus was human, and accepted only those writings which showed him as only Divine, while the other writings, which showed him as only human were banned and destroyed.
 - a. “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 *mortal* man. To rewrite the history books, Constantine knew he would need a bold stroke...Constantine commissioned and financed a new Bible, which omitted those 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.” (Page 234).

2. Reality – Christians always believed that Jesus was both human and divine, and all of the books of the New Testament testify to both His humanity and Deity, while the Gnostic writings often denied His humanity. Furthermore, the writings of the New Testament were not altered in any way – what we have are the original ideas penned by the apostles and their companions. Finally, Constantine did not order the other writings to be banned or burned – he said nothing about them at all!
 - a. The Gospels of the New Testament speak of Jesus in very human terms. In the Gospels He sleeps (Matthew 8:24), is hungry (Matthew 4:2), eats (Matthew 11:19), and cries (John 11:35). This is a very human Jesus!
 - b. “[According to the Gnostic texts] the incarnation is really an apparition. This ‘more divine’ Jesus is the opposite of what *The Da Vinci Code* claims for these secret gospel texts; they do not have a more human Jesus but a more divine and removed Jesus.” (Darrell L. Bock, *Breaking the Da Vinci Code*, page 78).
 - c. “As it turns out, though, rather than opposing them [orthodox Christians] for thinking that Jesus was divine, it opposes them for maintaining that Jesus was *human*. That is to say, this book [the *Apocalypse of Peter*] runs precisely counter to the claims of Leigh Teabing that the Gnostic Gospels portray a more human, less divine Jesus.” (Bart Ehrman, *Truth and Fiction in the Da Vinci Code*, page 56).
 - d. Contrary to the claims of DVC, the original writings of the New Testament were not altered. The New Testament is the most well attested work of antiquity, and we have hundreds of manuscript fragments, quotes of church fathers, and allusions to New Testament texts which prove that the New Testament was not altered. What we have today is what was penned by the original authors! For more on this, see the seminar on “How Did I Get My Bible?” available at our church website www.bayridgechristianchurch.org, especially the section on transmission of the Bible texts.

- e. “The historical reality is that the Emperor Constantine had nothing to do with the formation of the canon of Scripture: he did not choose which books to include or exclude, and he did not order the destruction of the Gospels that were left out of the canon (there were no imperial book burnings). The formation of the New Testament canon was instead a long and drawn-out process that began centuries before Constantine and did not conclude until long after he was dead. So far as we know, based on our historical record, the emperor was not involved in the process.” (Bart Ehrman, *Truth and Fiction in the Da Vinci Code*, page 74.)

E. The Biblical teaching on Jesus Christ

1. Jesus is the Eternal Son of God, Who has always existed, along with the Father and the Holy Spirit.
2. Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary, becoming fully human – the God-Man.
3. Jesus lived a life of perfect obedience to God and His Law, displaying perfect righteousness and fulfilling mankind’s obligation to obey God.
4. Jesus willingly suffered and died on the cross, bearing the righteous wrath of God for the sin of all mankind so that we could be free from punishment and receive the blessings of God.
5. Jesus was bodily raised from the dead, gave convincing proof of this fact, and ascended into heaven.
6. Those who look to Jesus Christ in faith are saved, not because of their own works, but because of the life, death, and resurrection of Christ.
7. All other beliefs about Jesus Christ are false and lead one away from God and cause one to remain under God’s righteous wrath for sin.

F. Jesus Christ: Lord, Liar, or Lunatic

1. Jesus Christ clearly and repeatedly claimed to be God.

John 10:31-33 - 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."

John 5:18 - 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.

Mark 14:61-64 - ⁶¹ But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer. 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.

2. There are only three options available when someone seriously makes this claim:
 - a. He is a liar – he is saying he is God, but he knows that he is not. He is a wicked liar who is trying to deceive people for his own ends. Such human beings are the dregs of the earth.
 - b. He is a lunatic – he thinks he is God, but he has lost his mind. He can not tell reality from fantasy. Such human beings need to be cared for in an insane asylum, and greatly pitied for their mental delusions.
 - c. He is Lord of all – He says He is God, and He is right!

3. There are NO other options. The path chosen by *The Da Vinci Code* – Jesus is a great mortal prophet, but not God – is the path of intellectual dishonesty and suicide. There are no other options – because Jesus did not intend to give us any other options. We must decide – lunatic, liar, or Lord?

Bibliography

The Da Vinci Code – Dan Brown. ISBN 0-385-50420-9

This is the hardcover edition of the book that I used for reference, as do virtually all of the works about *The Da Vinci Code* cited below. For this reason, I would recommend using this version if you are doing further research. This version, along with an unabridged audio version (both tape and cd), are available at the public library.

Resources for Further Study

Note: there are many other books and DVD's on these topics, but the ones listed below are books which I have read/watched. I did not want to recommend books or DVD's which I had not read or watched. Many of these are available from the public library, and I have copies of most of them which could be borrowed for brief periods of time.

Truth and Fiction in the Da Vinci Code: A Historian Reveals What We Really Know About Jesus, Mary Magdalene, and Constantine. Bart D. Ehrman. ISBN 0-19-518140-9.

Bart Ehrman is a historian of the early church who chairs the Department of Religious Studies at UNC, Chapel Hill. He is not an orthodox, evangelical Christian, but he does offer a great look at how history is actually done. In many ways this was the most helpful critique of *The Da Vinci Code*, but do note that his liberal bias leads him to some wrong conclusions regarding Jesus, and the date of many New Testament books. If you are bothered by these items, the book will quickly lose its sparkle. However, if you can overlook these faults, it is a solid work. This book is available in both hardback and audio format at the public library, and I own a copy.

Breaking the Da Vinci Code. Darrell L. Bock. ISBN 0-7852-6046-3.

Darrell Bock is the research professor of New Testament studies at Dallas Theological Seminary. He is a capable historian, and is an evangelical believer. Consequently, his work has many of the good points of Ehrman's book, but is not plagued by the liberal biases that mar Ehrman's work. He also includes some information not found in Ehrman's work. On the whole, these two make good companions for one another.

The Da Vinci Code: Fact or Fiction. Hank Hanegraaff and Paul L. Maier. ISBN 1-4143-0279-7

Hank Hanegraaff is the head of the Christian Research Institute, and Paul Maier is a professor of ancient history at Western Michigan University. The book is really almost two books. In the first part, the historian Maier refutes the errors of *The Da Vinci Code*, while in the second half Hanegraaff makes a positive case for the Christian faith. A much briefer, less technical work than the previous two, but a good quick read.

Beyond the Da Vinci Code (DVD) – History Channel Documentary.

This DVD is available from the public library. I found it disappointing. It lends far too much credence to the ideas of *The Da Vinci Code* in the interest of keeping the viewer following the story. In the end, almost everything in *The Da Vinci Code* is debunked, but along the way too much sensationalism is allowed. It does provide a lot more information on art, architecture and secret societies however.

Origins of the Da Vinci Code – The Disinformation Company

This DVD is available from the library. It is in large part an interview with one of the authors of *Holy Blood Holy Grail*, the sensationalistic book that lies behind *The Da Vinci Code*. The best thing I can tell you about this DVD is the company who made it is aptly named: “The Disinformation Company.” The DVD is largely good for a look into the fevered minds of conspiracy theorists.

If you would like to read some Gnostic texts, simply do a search on the internet. Multiple versions and translation are available. As always, be careful to note the presuppositions of anyone writing any introductory material. However, some familiarity with these documents goes a long way to dispelling rumors about what they present.