

CRACKING THE DA VINCI CODE

Part 1

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Matthew 16:13-16 (NIV) *"When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say the Son of Man is?' ... ¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.'"*

John 20:30-31 (NIV) *"Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."*

Claim #9: Leonardo Da Vinci was a member of the secret society known as the priory of Sion which knew about Mary and Jesus' child.

FICTION: Though there could have been an organization known as the Priory of Sion in the Middle Ages, no proof of its existence has been found. What has been uncovered however is a scam concocted by a Frenchman named Pierre Plantard.

Plantard forged a series of documents in the 1960's and 70's and illegally placed them in libraries all over France. The documents were designed to prove the existence of a bloodline from Jesus and Mary Magdalene through the kings of France to HIMSELF. Plantard referred to himself and his co-conspirators as the Priory of Sion. He believed that including names of famous individuals such as Da Vinci lent credence to his scheme.

In 1993 however, Plantard's ruse was discovered and he admitted under oath having created the documents and having invented the Priory.

Claim #10: Art historians agree that Da Vinci's painting of "The Last Supper" shows Mary Magdalene next to Jesus.

FICTION: Credible art historians and scholars have long accepted the figure painted to the right of Jesus as being that of the youthful apostle John. The conventions of Florentine Art dictated that many men – especially younger men - were often represented in a somewhat feminine manner. Perhaps the most certain proof that the figure is not Mary Magdalene, but instead the apostle John, can be found in the fact that none of Da Vinci's contemporaries ever doubted it.

A Closer Look at Claims of the Code ...

Claim #1: Mary Magdalene had a place of significance in the group that followed Jesus.

FACT: Mary Magdalene was one of a number of women who followed Jesus. In fact, other than Jesus' mother, she was the most prominent of these women. She is referred to more times than any other woman in the Gospels and when lists of women are mentioned her name comes first seven out of eight times.

Luke 8:1-3 (NIV) *"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 Joanna the wife of Cuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means."*

Claim #2: The marriage of Jesus and Mary Magdalene is a matter of historical record.

FICTION: There is no Christian document that even alludes to the notion that Jesus and Mary Magdalene were married. All four Biblical Gospels portray Jesus as a single man and not even the secret or Gnostic gospels so often referenced in Brown's book suggest otherwise.

If Jesus had been married Paul would have certainly included His name when he was expressing the "right" of the disciples to marry...

1 Corinthians 9:3-5 (NLT) *"This is my answer to those who question my authority as an apostle. ⁴ Don't we have the right to live in your homes and share your meals? ⁵ Don't we have the right to bring a Christian wife along with us as the other disciples and the Lord's brothers and Peter do?"*

Claim #3: The early church knew that Jesus and Mary Magdalene had a child.

FICTION: The story of Jesus and Mary Magdalene's child did not surface until 800 years AFTER the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, so it would have been impossible for the early church to "know" about it. The child would not be a point of discussion today, had the idea of it not been perpetuated by other authors in other works of fiction.

In a recent Primetime documentary dealing with the possibility of Jesus and Mary's child, correspondent Elizabeth Vargas made this conclusion: "We found that there was no evidence whatsoever of a child of Jesus and Mary Magdalene. We found nothing to support the theory."

Claim #4: Other "gospels" besides those in the New Testament have been discovered in Egypt.

FACT: In 1945, an Arab boy named Muhammed Ali Al-Samman unearthed 50 ancient texts while working in a field in northern Egypt. These texts were written in the form of Biblical scriptures and originated from a group called the Gnostics whose non-Christian belief system was based on the notion that human beings can experience salvation through "gnosis" or knowledge, or from within themselves...a thought in direct opposition to the basis of salvation in the Christian faith...

Ephesians 2:8-10 (NIV) *"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰ For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."*

Among the texts were writings that came to be called the gospels of Philip, Truth and Thomas. The catch, however, is that these texts were not the "lost" books of the Bible as Brown suggests. They were the writings of a fringe group who believed in a version of Christianity very different from and contradictory to the beliefs of the early Christian church. These texts were written hundreds of years after the eyewitness accounts in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and were an attempt to "bend" Christian thinking toward Gnostic theology.

Claim #5: The "secret" gospel of Philip tells us that Mary Magdalene kissed Jesus.

FACT: As already mentioned, the Gnostic gospels do not represent Christian theology, but it is true that the gospel of Philip does say that Mary Magdalene was a companion of Jesus and that He did kiss her. The problem is that Brown claims the text says that Jesus

loved Mary Magdalene more than all the disciples and that He kissed her on the mouth. In reality, the passage in question is incomplete. There are significant gaps where the original material on which the text was written has simply dissolved with age and Brown has taken the liberty to fill in the blanks in a way which suits his version of the truth. Furthermore, it was the custom of the times for friends and family – even acquaintances – to greet each other with a kiss.

2 Corinthians 13:11-14 (NIV) *"Finally, brothers, good-by. Aim for perfection, listen to my appeal, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you. ¹² Greet one another with a holy kiss. ¹³ All the saints send their greetings. ¹⁴ May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."*

Claim #6: The Roman Emperor Constantine was responsible for deciding what constitutes the Bible as we know it today.

FICTION: Though Constantine did convert to Christianity and issued the Edict of Milan which recognized Christianity as an official religion in the Roman Empire, the process of determining which writings should be included in what we know as the New Testament began 150 years before Constantine was born and was concluded many years after his death. Constantine's other "major" contribution to early Christianity was to convene the bishops at the Council of Nicaea so that an errant priest named Arius could be formally censured for teaching that Jesus was not divine.

Claim #7: The bishops of the early church met at the Council of Nicaea in 325AD to discuss the divinity of Jesus.

FACT: By Constantine's order, the bishops gathered in Nicaea and, contrary to Brown's assertion that the vote was very close, did in fact vote 316 to 2 against the false teaching of Arius and to reaffirm their belief in the absolute divinity of Christ.

Claim #8: Prior to the Council of Nicaea, the church believed that Jesus was just a mortal man.

FICTION: More than 500 verses of The New Testament refute this claim and speak to the fact that Jesus was more than just a human being and in fact that He was both God and man...