

The Da Vinci Scam • Decoding Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*

[Note: Yellow highlighted text is the trigger point for advancing the PowerPoint slides that accompany this study.]

I. INTRODUCTION

A. 1 Thessalonians 5:21

Test all things; hold fast what is good.

B. Book & Author Background

1. Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* has been 160 weeks on the NY Times bestsellers list. It spent a good portion of that time in the #1 spot,
 - a. As of 2 weeks ago, the hardcover was still #2, while the newly released paperback immediately shot to the top spot.
 - b. Translated into 42 languages, it's sold 40 million copies worldwide,
 - c. Earning the author \$350 million.
2. While the book is officially designated as "fiction," it's Brown's contention that the book is really *historical* fiction.
 - a. He means that while the book's characters & plot are fiction,
 - b. The props, events, art, locations, & historical characters the story is woven around are real & tell a tale very different from standard history, specifically the history of Jesus & the Church.
3. To make this clear, there's a page at the very front of the book which says, "FACT:" in big, bold letters.
 - a. This is followed by 3 paragraphs which make certain assertions Dan Brown wants the reader to believe are factual.
 - b. Very simply, *they aren't!*
 - c. Brown has the right to *assert* what he says is fact, but his assertion *doesn't make it so*.
4. We'll take these 3 paragraphs apart later.
5. For now, what's important to note is that while *The Da Vinci Code* is a *novel*, Brown has a specific goal in mind, and that is to present an *alternative* story of Jesus & the Church from that of classical history.
6. Brown is the author of 4 books, 3 of which have done fairly well in sales.
 - a. *Deception Point, Angels & Demons, The Da Vinci Code*
 - b. Each of these stories is based on a sinister conspiracy in which powerful forces have secrets they don't want the world to find out about & are more than ready to kill to protect.
 - c. 2 of the books, *Angels & Demons*, & *The Da Vinci Code* are brutally hard on the Roman Catholic Church.
 - d. Brown *vilifies* the Catholicism & in doing so, misrepresents its history in a most atrocious manner.
 - e. There's enough evidence of Rome's blunders & brutality that Brown doesn't need to make more up – but that's precisely what he does.
 - f. And in his headlong pursuit of smearing the Church, he plays fast & loose with history.

C. Why Deal With This?

1. Someone might well ask – "Why deal with this?"
2. Why waste time refuting a book which is only a novel?
3. That's a good question – and there's a good answer.
4. The reason why is because while the book *is* a novel, as I said, Brown contends that it's wrapped around a central fact that presents a very different story of Jesus & the Church.
5. The fact that the book has been 3 years in the Top 5 of the NY Times bestsellers list means it's hugely influential.
6. If you've listened to the radio or TV then you know there's a growing body of people who *believe* the revision of history the author is promoting.
7. What will make the influence of the book even *more* pervasive is the *movie* Ron Howard is

- making of it, with Tom Hanks as the main character.
8. The success of *The Da Vinci Code* has spun up a whole industry of new books on Jesus.
 - a. Chances are good that at some point, someone will ask us what we think of the book & the alternative story of Jesus it tells.
 - b. We need to be ready to answer in a clear & articulate manner.
 9. So here we go . . .

II. THE MAIN POINTS

A. *The Errors*

1. Dan Brown uses the plot line of *The Da Vinci Code* to say . . .
 - Jesus was merely a man & not God.
 - It was the Council of Nicea in 325 AD that officially declared the deity of Christ, which up till that point had **not** been something Christians had believed.
 - Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene
 - They had a child
 - Jesus intended Mary to take over the leadership of the Church
 - A secret organization called *The Priory of Sion* has existed for over 900 years to safeguard the “true” story about Jesus & Mary, & to protect the sacred bloodline of Christ.
 - The Priory of Sion is overseen by a *Grand Master*, a position which has been held by such notables as Sir Isaac Newton, Botticelli, Victor Hugo, and Leonardo Da Vinci.
 - The Holy Grail is not the cup Jesus drank from at the Last Supper. It’s the “vessel” which held, *not* Jesus’ blood, but His bloodline: Mary Magdalene is the holy grail.
 - The Roman Catholic Church has waged a centuries old battle to wipe out this story & to end Jesus’ bloodline, all so they can retain power & control over “the Jesus story.”
2. Where the book gets its title is from the codes & symbols Leonardo Da Vinci **supposedly** included in a couple of his painting; *The Last Supper*; & *Madonna of the Rocks*.
 - a. Brown says these symbols validate Leonardo’s being a Grand Master of the Priory of Sion,
 - b. And that he meant to keep the “true” story of Jesus & Mary alive.

B. *The Plot*

1. The novel begins with the murder of the Curator of the Louvre in Paris.
2. He’s the last Grand Master of the Priory of Sion & the lone guardian of its secrets.
3. His murderer is an agent of a radical Catholic sect known as *Opus Dei*.
4. As the curator dies, he carefully arranges his surroundings & body in a bizarre manner.
5. The French police then invite the main character of the story to assist them in their investigation.
6. He specializes in deciphering codes & is an expert on ancient symbols.
7. As he follows the clues left by the curator, he discovers the existence of the Priory of Sion & its closely guarded secrets & becomes the target of the Vatican’s cover-up.
8. Lo & behold, the woman he hitches up with along the way is none other than the latest in the bloodline of Jesus & Mary.

III. THE DA VINCI SCAM

A. *Refutation*

1. There are so many historical errors in *The Da Vinci Code* it’s a bit difficult at times knowing what Brown intends to be taken merely as fiction & as his attempt to **re-write history**.
2. So we’re only going to deal with the errors just listed.

ERROR #1: *Jesus was merely a man and it wasn't until the Council of Nicea in 325 AD that the deity of Christ was made an official doctrine.*

1. Here's what Brown writes on pg. 233 about the Council of Nicea . . .
"Until that moment in history, Jesus was viewed by His followers as a mortal prophet . . . a great and powerful man, but a *man* nonetheless. Jesus' establishment as 'the Son of God' was officially proposed and voted on by the Council of Nicea; a relatively close vote at that."
2. Brown contends that the Roman Emperor Constantine funded & presided over this council to secure his power over the Empire. He says,
"Establishing Christ's divinity was critical to the further unification of the Roman Empire and to the new Vatican power base. By officially endorsing Jesus as the Son of God, Constantine turned Jesus into a deity who existed beyond the scope of the human world, an entity whose power was unchallengeable."
3. Then he writes;
"Now the followers of Christ were able to redeem themselves *only* via the established sacred channel-the Roman Catholic Church."
4. There is so much wrong here, we could spend *hours* quoting the many historical sources that refute it.
5. First of all, the deity of Christ was certainly **NOT** something the Council of Nicea "officially proposed & voted on."
 - a. He makes it sound as if the deity of Christ was an innovation.
 - b. This is absurd as anyone who's read the NT, the source documents of the Christian Faith, knows.
 - c. Jesus was born of a virgin, conceived by the Holy Spirit.
 - d. He made several claims to deity during His lifetime, some of them leading to the Jews trying to stone Him for blasphemy.
John 10:33 • "The Jews answered Him, saying, 'For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God.'"
 - e. In the end, it was precisely *that charge* that saw Him fixed to a Roman cross!
6. The Council of Nicea in 325 was indeed a watershed in the history of the Church.
 - a. The Roman Emperor Constantine was a new convert to the faith.
 - b. He'd learned that there was a theological crisis brewing that threatened massive turmoil in the Church. So he used his office as Emperor to call for a gathering of church leaders from all over the Empire.
 - c. Actually, it wasn't even Constantine who *initiated* the Council.
 - d. That was done by Alexander, a Bishop who opposed the errant doctrine that was causing the turmoil.
 - e. Far from the Council of Nicea being a means for Constantine to assert his power, as Brown contends, he didn't even attend!
 - 1) He was too old & knew he didn't have the theological knowledge to enter into the discussions.
 - 2) He simply sent 2 assistants so they could report back to him when all was settled.
 - 3) Constantine had no favored position on the matter of the debate. He left it to be decided by those who truly understood it.
 - f. One school of thought, led by a theologian named Arius, argued that Jesus was merely a man.
 - g. Arius was an excellent debater & had managed to sway a number of church leaders to his view.
 - h. But early Christians *overwhelmingly worshipped* Jesus Christ as their risen Savior & Lord.
 - i. Since worship was reserved for God alone, this meant they viewed Him as God.
 - j. Numerous *catechisms*, lists of basic beliefs of the first believers & the early church, have

- been found.
- k. **Most** of them carry the belief in the deity of Christ.
7. One of the things that brought such relief to the Church when Constantine passed his **Edict of Toleration** removing the ban on Christianity was that Christians would no longer be executed for saying “Jesus is Lord.”
 - a. You see, the word ‘Lord’ in Greek is ‘Kurios,’ a title referring to **deity**.
 - b. For generations the Roman Emperors had used it as a **loyalty** test.
 - c. People were forced to come before an altar, drop a pinch of incense on it, & say, “Caesar is Lord”—meaning they recognized Caesar’s divinity & pledged their loyalty to him.
 - d. While pagans, who already believed in a host of gods, found such an oath no problem, Christians refused to perform this act of religious worship or make the declaration because they considered it blasphemous.
 - e. For this they were persecuted & martyred by the hundreds of thousands.
 - f. For them, only One could be called “LORD” – Jesus, & they would rather give their lives than apply that title to a mere man like the Emperor.
 - g. The early Christian title for Jesus as “Lord” was a clear sign pointing to their belief in His deity.
 8. All of the pre-Nicean church fathers make it clear in their writings that Jesus was esteemed as both God & man in the early church.
 9. In *The Da Vinci Code*, Brown makes it appear that Arius’ view that Jesus was just a man was **THE** accepted position of the early church.
 10. Again, on pg. 233 he writes,

“Until that moment in history, Jesus was viewed by His followers as a mortal prophet . . . a great and powerful man, but a man nonetheless.”
 11. But Arius’ view was by no means the majority view.
 - a. In fact, in a letter to the Early Church historian Eusebius, Arius **complained** that his views were leading to fierce opposition & persecution of his followers by other Christians.
 - b. Why would they oppose him if his ideas were **the** accepted view as Brown contends?
 12. Once the Council of Nicea had a chance to hear all sides & to take a close look at the books they considered authoritative scriptures, it boldly affirmed the standard & traditional view that Jesus was God & named Arianism a heresy.
 - a. Contrary to what Brown says – it was **NOT** a close vote!
 - b. Only 2 out of more than 300 bishops refused to sign the Nicene creed.
 13. Brown gets his idea that the early church did not consider Jesus divine from what he claims are “many other gospels” that circulated at that time but weren’t included in the Bible.
 - a. On pg. 231 he says,

“The Bible, as we know it today, was collated by the pagan Roman Emperor Constantine the Great. . . . More than 80 gospels were considered for the NT, and yet only a relative few were chosen for inclusion.”
 - b. On pg. 234 he writes,

“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.”
 - c. This is just plain hogwash!!!
 - d. The process of compiling an authoritative body of documents Christians could look to as the basis of faith & practice had progressed for **centuries before** Nicea.
 - e. There was a nearly complete canon of Scripture long before 325 AD.
 - f. It’s rather ironic that the **real impetus** for collecting & consolidating Scripture was a **rival sect** that produced its own quasi-biblical canon around 140 AD.
 - g. A Gnostic leader named **Marcion** began spreading a heresy that the OT God & NT God were **different deities**.
 - 1) He refused to acknowledge the OT as inspired & removed anything from the NT he considered **too Jewish**.

- 2) In 144 AD, the Church in Rome, which because it was at the center of the Empire had become the lead church, declared Marcion's views heretical.
 - 3) Challenged by the new threat, church leaders began to take serious thought to what books should be consolidated into an authoritative collection.
 - h. When *another* sect emerged in the late 2nd century under a false teacher named *Montanus*, that just added further fuel to the fire of urgency that the Church close & finalize the canon.
 - i. The 4 Gospels & Paul's epistles had already achieved wide circulation & unquestioned authority within the early church.
 - j. Church leaders gathered at several councils & agreed on a list of books.
 - k. In 190 this list was circulated as a *definitive set* of approved writings that today is called the *Muratorian Canon*.
 - l. This list is very close to our modern NT. It includes 2 additional books that were later dropped because their authorship could not be confirmed.
14. The early Church Fathers were concerned with a couple key factors when deciding what books to include in the canon;

Authorship – Had to be written by an apostle or the close associate of an apostle.

Edification/Inspiration – The book had to convey the sense of divine inspiration, as

evidenced by the fact that it had a proven track record of edifying the Body of Christ.

- 15. Contrary to *The Da Vinci Code*, Constantine had **NOTHING** whatsoever to do with the canon of Scripture!
- 16. Brown also asserts that at the Council of Nicea a bunch of *other rules* & beliefs were debated & settled.
- 17. This simply isn't so! The Council of Nicea was interested in only one thing – settling the Arian controversy about the nature of Christ.
- 18. But Brown contends that this was the place at which the Church fundamentally *changed* the Christian faith.
 - a. He refers to the Council of Nicea as a work of the “Vatican” & the “Roman Catholic Church.”
 - b. It's at that point the reader ought to stop, scratch his/her head & say, “Wait a minute – in 325 AD there **was no Vatican or Roman Catholic Church**.”
 - c. It would be *hundreds of years* before Roman Catholicism arose, & the Vatican came even later.
 - d. Brown wants to install some kind of sinister element he labels the “Catholic Church” hundreds of years before it existed.
 - e. And he says it “hijacked” the Christian faith, which was more accurately preserved in all the books **NOT** included in the Bible.
- 19. Just what books is he referring to?
 - a. On pg. 234 Brown writes,

“Fortunately for historians some of the gospels that Constantine attempted to eradicate managed to survive. The Dead Sea Scrolls were found in the 1950's hidden in a cave near Qumran in the Judean desert. And, of course, the Coptic Scrolls in 1945 at Nag Hammadi. . . . These documents speak of Christ's ministry in very human terms. Of course, the Vatican, in keeping with their tradition of misinformation, tried very hard to suppress the release of these scrolls. And why wouldn't they? The scrolls highlight glaring historical discrepancies and fabrications, clearly confirming that the modern Bible was compiled and edited by men who possessed a political agenda—to promote the divinity of the man Jesus Christ and use His influence to solidify their own power base.”
 - b. The “historical discrepancies and fabrications” are all with Brown.
 - 1) The Dead Sea Scrolls were produced by the Jewish Essene community that had absolutely ***no connection*** to Christianity whatsoever.
 - 2) They weren't discovered in the 1950's; it was the 40's.

- 3) And they were safely in their caves *years before Jesus was even born!*
20. As for the Nag Hammadi documents – they aren’t scrolls at all as Brown says – they’re books [codices]!
 - a. And contrary to what he says, they were **Gnostic** works that stand very much in **opposition** to Christianity.
 - b. Listen, this is a discussion that has gone on for a number of years now.
 - c. There’s a small group of people who say that the Gnostic stories of Jesus are valid treatments on the life & teaching of Jesus.
 - d. They say that what they contain is what Christians believed **until** the Council of Nicea when Constantine made a pure power play & hijacked the Church.
 - d. But history simply doesn’t support them because we have many ancient manuscripts written by early church leaders **refuting** the Gnostics!
 - 1) Some scholars believe both John & Paul were dealing with early Gnostic concepts in some of their letters.
 - 2) Colossians & 1 John contain material that sounds very much like a pointed refutation of Gnostic thought.
 21. What’s especially challenging for Brown & his modern pro-Gnostic ilk is that the very documents he appeals to, the Nag Hammadi codices, contain information that **flatly contradicts** his statements.
 - a. Brown says the earliest Christians believed Jesus was just a man with a wife & children.
 - b. Supposedly the Gnostic Nag Hammadi gospels say so. They don’t!
 22. The Gnostics did **not** believe Christ was truly human because of their dualistic worldview.
 23. Gnosticism was little more than a syncretistic amalgamation of Greek philosophy, Egyptian occultism, & Christian terminology.
 - a. From the Greeks they got the idea of **dualism**; in which all spirit is pure & good while anything material is corrupt & evil.
 - 1) Thus, they taught that the pure spirit of Christ descended on the man Jesus at his baptism, but left just prior to the Passion.
 - 2) What died on the cross was just a broken man – the cross provides nothing in terms of atonement according to Gnosticism.
 - 3) This is why in the recently released *Gospel of Judas*, another Gnostic gospel, Judas is presented not as the villain, but as the hero – because by his betrayal of Jesus, he helps the pure spirit of Christ get loose from the body of Jesus.
 - b. From Egyptian occultism they borrowed the idea of salvation coming through learning special mysteries.
 - 1) In Gnosticism, man’s problem isn’t sin, it’s ignorance.
 - 2) Salvation comes through knowledge, which is where they derive their name: ‘Gnosis’ is the Greek word for ‘knowledge.’
 - 3) But these secret truths were only given to those who could pay the requisite fee & had the intellectual prowess to attain them.
 - c. Christian terminology was added to the mix simply as a pragmatic step. Christianity was on the rise & it was clever marketing that recognized using Jesus Christ as a way to gain access to a whole new realm of possible converts.
 - d. Isn’t this what all the cults do – they claim Jesus is **really** a part of **their** group because there’s an inherent attraction to the person of Christ.
 24. What’s important to **affirm** is that neither the Church nor man “invented” the deity of Jesus at some point in history.
 25. This was always the standard belief of the orthodox Church because it was claimed by Jesus Himself & proclaimed by the apostles in the Bible.
 - a. Read the early church documents & you will see that the consistent teaching is that Jesus is God in the flesh.
 - b. The 7Q4 fragment of 1 Timothy 3:16 dated 50-80 AD by leading papyrologists says, “God

- appeared in a body.”
- c. In 100 AD Ignatius of Antioch wrote in the Letter to the Smyraeans, “I give glory to Jesus Christ, the God who bestowed such wisdom upon you.”
 - d. In the late 2nd Century, Hippolytus wrote, “For Christ is the God over all.” (*Refutation of All Heresies* 10.34)
 - e. Iranaeus, 120-202 AD wrote, “In order that to Christ Jesus, our Lord, and God, and Savior, and King.”
 - f. In 150 AD Justin Martyr wrote, “The Father of the universe has a Son, who also being the first begotten Word of God, is even God.” (*First Apology*, ch. 63)
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26. On pg. 231, *The Da Vinci Code* says “over 80 gospels” were considered for inclusion in the Bible.
 - a. It’s a complete mystery where he comes up with this number.
 - b. Among the Nag Hammadi manuscripts there some 60 Gnostic works, dated from the late 2nd to 4th century; well removed from the time of the NT documents.
 - c. Of these 60, only 5 are labeled as Gospels because they claim to be records of the life of Christ.
 - d. And while they **claim** to be written by an apostle or one of the first disciples of Jesus, because they weren’t written until hundreds of years later, they’re obviously frauds.
 27. So Dan Brown would have us overlook the clear historical value of M,M,L&J in favor of texts history affirms are late frauds & the work of an aberrant sect the church leaders of that time disavowed as heretical.
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ERROR #2: *Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene and they had a child.*

1. While this becomes a major plot line in the story, on pg. 247, Teabing says, “I won’t bore you with the countless references to Jesus & Magdalene’s union. That has been explored *ad nauseum* by modern historians.”
 2. Apart from the book *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*, by Baigent, Leigh, & Lincoln, there simply isn’t any body of work done by historians, modern or otherwise, on this topic.
 - a. In October, 2004 Baigent & Leigh filed a lawsuit against Dan Brown, accusing him of [\[1\]](#) plagiarizing their book.
 - b. While the case was recently dismissed, those who’ve read both books recognize the common themes between them.
 - e. The proof Brown drew his inspiration from their book is that the character in *The Da Vinci Code* who unloads the majority of all these errors we’re looking at is named “Leigh Teabing.”
 - 1) Leigh is the last name of one of the authors of *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*.
 - 2) ‘Teabing’ is an anagram of the other, Baigent.
 - f. The basis of Baigent & Leigh’s lawsuit was that Brown could have gotten his ideas from no where else but them.
 3. *The Da Vinci Code* gives the false impression that among scholars, Jesus union with Mary is a well-known fact.
 - a. The **opposite** is the case;
 - b. Even among **secular** scholars, Jesus is universally understood as being single.
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4. Brown has the Teabing character say that it was the norm & expectation for Jewish men of Jesus’ to marry & that to remain single was completely outside the bounds of what social acceptability.
 5. While it’s true marriage was the norm & there was a definite social pressure to marry, celibacy was also practiced. Some of Judaism’s greatest heroes were single -
 - a. Daniel, Jeremiah, & John the Baptist were single.
 - b. Paul advocated celibacy for those who were gifted for it.
 - c. Jesus even taught that celibacy was a viable option & some were ordained by God for it.
 6. Brown appeals to the Qumran community of Essenes who produced the Dead Sea scrolls as an ancient source for his ideas.
 - a. Yet we know the Essenes were a monastic & **celibate** community that lived in Israel during

- the time of Christ.
- b. At the end of the first century, the Jewish historian Josephus referred to the Essenes as being celibate, & **commended** them for their devotion to God.
 - c. If marriage was considered as morally necessary as Brown contends, Josephus would not have found the Essenes admirable.
7. Still, Brown finds what he considers **proof** of the marriage of Jesus & Mary Magdalene in the 3rd Century, Gnostic Nag Hammadi Gospel of Philip.
- a. Gospel of Philip –
And the companion of the ____ Mary Magdalene _____ her more than ____ the disciples ____ kiss her _____ on her _____.
 - b. The blanks are gaps/holes in the original manuscript; we don't know what words were there.
 - c. So they've been "suggested." And here's the way it's rendered now -
And the companion of the [Savior is] Mary Magdalene. [But 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?'
8. The Gospel of Philip has been reliably dated to the late 3rd century.
9. Too late for being seriously considered as an authoritative work on the Life of Jesus.
10. Specially since the Early Church Father Ireneaus **refuted** the Gnostic attempts to fabricate such stories of Jesus.
11. What's hard for Brown is even apart from the spurious nature of the Gnostic gospels, they **never** mention a marriage or child between Jesus & Mary!
12. Indeed, the very sources he sites as proofs FOR such a union argue against it.
- a. If Jesus & Mary Magdalene **were** married,
 - b. Why would the apostles get torqued about them kissing or Jesus showing more affection to her than they?
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13. According to the **historically reliable** sources, Jesus was celibate.
14. Brown & his cohorts argue the **reason** why there isn't any early evidence Jesus & Mary were married is because the Roman Catholic Church **erased** it.
- a. There is an argument from **silence**. And you can't refute that; it's the proverbial trump card!
 - b. They say, "That there's no early evidence of the marriage of Jesus & Mary is **proof** the Church covered it up."
 - c. Maybe rather it means there **never was any evidence** because it never happened.

ERROR #3: *Jesus intended Mary to take over the leadership of the Church.*

1. On pg. 248, Teabing makes another wild statement –
According to these unaltered gospels [he's referring to the Gnostic texts], it was not *peter* to whom Christ gave directions with which to establish the Christian Church. It was *Mary Magdalene* . . . Jesus was the original feminist. He intended for the future of His Church to be in the hands of Mary Magdalene.
2. His basis for this comes from another Gnostic text called *The Gospel of Mary Magdalene*, dated to the late 2nd or early 3rd Century.
3. But **nothing** in that manuscript says Jesus made Mary the heir of His movement or legacy; not even close!
 - a. It simply says he gave her special revelations he didn't impart to others.
 - b. Which is consistent with a Gnostic system of thought but certainly not classic Christianity.

ERROR #4: *A secret organization called The Priory of Sion has existed for over 900 years to safeguard the "true" story about Jesus & Mary, & to protect the sacred bloodline of Christ.*

1. First of all, since we've already discredited the idea that Jesus & Mary were married, there's no need for an organization to safeguard the secret or protect the bloodline.
2. Second, let's take Dan Brown's initial remarks at the very outset of the book where we find this page.

FACT: The Priory of Sion – a European secret society founded in 1099-is a real

organization. In 1975, Paris's 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.

3. The Priory of Sion does exist, but it wasn't founded until May, 1956 in France. What I'm about to share with you has all been substantiated in French court cases.
 - a. It was started by Pierre Plantard, who – get this – was the last surviving descendant of the **Merovingians**.
 - b. The Merovingians were rulers of France until they were supplanted by the Carolingian dynasty in the 8th Century.
 - c. Plantard was a radical monarchist who wanted to restore the throne to France, & of course, sit on it as the last of the Merovingian royal line.
 - d. Since his claim to the throne had no real force or merit & no one was interested in a restoration of the monarchy, he devised a scheme to **raise** interest.
 - 1) That scheme was to start a secret society called The Priory of Sion which was charged with a special mission –
 - 2) To protect the bloodline of Christ.
 - e. When no one showed interest in joining his group, Plantard concocted a hoax – He fabricated some documents titled *Les Dossiers Secrets* & planted them in the archives of the Paris National Library in 1967.
 - f. These documents refer to other ancient texts & give clues on how to find & interpret them.
 - 1) No one has ever seen these other ancient parchments *Les Dossiers Secrets* refer to.
 - 2) But they supposedly spell out the Jesus-Mary story and how their descendants moved to France and became the Merovingian royal line.
 - 3) Plantard knew he couldn't fabricate actual ancient parchments; they'd be exposed as frauds.
 - 4) So instead, he wrote modern documents which spoke of these fictional ancient sources.
 - 5) *Les Dossier Secrets* were indeed found in the Paris National Library & there was a minor stir at their discovery.
 - 6) But the investigation that followed led to the conspiracy started by Plantard & the whole thing ended up in court where all the people involved in the hoax admitted it, including [\[2\]](#) Plantard.
 - k. According to *Les Dossiers Secrets* in order to protect the descendants of the Merovingians from their enemies, a secret society was formed, the Priory of Sion, which had as Grand Masters certain alchemists & esoteric personalities from the past, including such notables as Newton & Da Vinci.
 - l. Plantard needed to make the Priory of Sion appear ancient so he borrowed from the Crusades.
 - 1) What he borrowed was that in 1099 when Godefroy de Bouillon was King of Jerusalem after the First Crusade, he founded the “Abbey of Our Lady of Mount Zion.”
 - 2) Plantard just shortened this to the Priory of Sion.
 - 3) History tells us the Abbey was destroyed by the Muslims in the 13th Century & the little order of monks connected to it ended in the 15th Century.
4. So, historically – **everything** Brown says about the Priory of Sion is **wrong**.
5. His FACT is FICTION!
6. Sir Isaac Newton, Botticelli, Victor Hugo, & Leonardo Da Vinci had nothing to do with the Priory of Sion; they couldn't have – it didn't even exist until 1956!
7. One might well ask where Brown came up with the idea that the Priory of Sion was an ancient secret society whose goal was to protect the true Jesus & Mary story & bloodline of Christ.
 - a. That was dreamed up by one of Plantard's friends, Henry Lincoln, who later collaborated with Baigent & Leigh in writing *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*, where the same ideas are repeated.
 - b. Lincoln was a British actor who knew the whole Priory of Sion story Plantard was telling

- didn't have enough **juice** to fire anybody up.
- c. He knew the British couldn't care less about some lame Merovingian claim to the throne of France.
 - d. Lincoln was a producer of documentaries about ancient mysteries & lost treasure & had come across a **profane legend** about Jesus & Mary Magdalene.
 - e. So he devised a new story: The Merovingians, he said, were the bloodline of Christ.
 - 1) Jesus was of the tribe of Judah & the royal line of David.
 - 2) Mary Magdalene, he said was of the tribe of Benjamin & the family of Saul.
 - 3) Jesus, he said, wanted to unite the two royal lines of Israel into one line & so had married Mary & produced a child.
 - 4) Years later in working with Baigent & Leigh, Lincoln further developed the idea that the Holy Grail wasn't the cup Jesus drank from at the Last Supper but was the vessel that held Jesus actual blood-LINE – Mary.
 - 5) And this is why the search for the holy grail is such a mysterious thing – because it actually is a deep secret protected by the Priory of Sion.
 - 6) Lincoln knew that by recasting the grail legend this way it would capture the interest of the British with their legends of Arthur & his knights seeking the Holy Grail.
 - 7) The French also had a legend that following Jesus' death, Mary fled Israel & settled in Southern France where she eventually died & was buried.
 - 8) Several churches scattered throughout the area where made the location of her tomb, & all kinds of symbols & clues were found that supposedly pointed to the whole great secret.
 8. The important point to keep in mind in all of this is that there isn't one shred of hard, historical evidence for any of it.
 9. Rather, what we DO know is that the key people associated with the founding of the Prior of Sion have admitted publicly the origin of the organization is made-up.

ERROR #5: *The Holy Grail is not the cup Jesus drank from at the Last Supper. It is the "vessel" who held not Jesus' blood, but His bloodLINE – Mary Magdalene*

1. Since we've already pretty well covered this, let me just dispense with it by asking – What's the big deal with the grail anyway???
2. There is absolutely no Biblical or historical relevance for the grail.
 - a. It factors not at all into the Gospels.
 - b. It's not mentioned in the early church writings.
 - c. It's of no interest to any of the Apostles or early believers.
 - d. It doesn't even become a legend until hundreds of years after the fact when relics became a big deal & their trade fetched a lot of scam artists a lot of money.

Finally, **ERROR #6:** *As a Grand Master of the Prior of Sion, Leonardo Da Vinci included codes & symbols in a couple of his painting; The Last Supper, & Madonna of the Rocks.*

1. Well, since we've already seem that the Prior of Sion didn't even come into existence until 1956, that's a bit tough.
2. But what of Brown's elaborate analysis of *The Last Supper* which he says just **screams** the whole Jesus & Mary story?
3. This idea has been called "absurd" by one of the most learned scholars of Leonardo, Professor Judith Veronica Field, who teaches at the University of London & is the current president of the Leonardo Da Vinci Society. [\[3\]](#)
4. I'm not going to go into a detailed analysis of the painting because we don't have time.
5. Let me just summarize with this – Brown's main point is that the figure to the **right** of Jesus – on **our left**, is a woman.
6. Now, this position is supposed to be occupied by John as we read the Gospels.
7. But the figure there **is** pretty feminine, & Brown contends this is because Leonardo put **Mary** there, at Jesus' right hand **in the position of favor**.
8. Then he says, notice the obvious "V" that's formed by them.

- a. That's the symbol for the *womb* & a sign of the *divine feminine*, the *goddess*, of which Leonardo, as a member of the Priory of Sion, was a devotee.
 - b. Oh & by the way, so was Jesus! Yeah – He wasn't the Son of God who came to save the human race from sin. His mission was to restore the worship of the goddess!
 - c. Then see the "M" Jesus & Mary form – standing for "*matrimonio*."
 - d. Then see Peter's hand making a cutting motion across Mary's throat.
 - e. Then see the knife in his hand down here.
9. Okay, look, this is all just silly!
 - a. If that's Mary – where's JOHN?
 - b. Would not Leonardo's contemporaries have strung him up for fiddling with the story of the Last Supper by putting Mary at the table & leaving John out?
 - c. The fact is, *any* art historian will tell you Leonardo *often* represented the masculine form in a feminine manner.
 - d. In fact, it's this tendency that has caused some to assume Leonardo Da Vinci was a homosexual.
 - e. But art historians will tell you that following the customs of the time, since John was the *youngest* & the most *spiritually intuitive* of the disciples, it's not difficult to understand why Leonardo would represent him this way.
 - f. Is Peter making threatening motions because he's upset with Mary usurping his place as the leader of the disciples & taking over his role as Pope of the Church?
 - g. No! This painting captures the moment at which Jesus had just told them one of them will betray Him.
 - h. Peter has called for John's attention so he can tell him to ask Jesus who it is.
 - i. Peter then grabs a knife because as his later zeal with the sword in the garden reveals, at a word from Jesus, Peter is ready to kill the traitor.
 10. If this was supposed to be Jesus & Mary & the painting was supposed to be a massive sign showing their union, then they'd be head to head, not pulled away from each other like this.
 - a. John's leaning *toward Peter* because Peter had called him.
 - b. This is *John*, not Mary! If it's Mary, why is she leaning toward her enemy & where's John?
 11. It makes no sense – but for Dan Brown & the tale he weaves, truth isn't really what's important.

IV. CONCLUSION

1. We could go on, literally for many more hours correcting the many other errors in *The Da Vinci Code*.
2. Let's end with Matthew 24:23-24, where Jesus says of the last days,

23 "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it.

24 For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.
2. In *The Da Vinci Code*, Dan Brown says, "Look, here *is* the Christ!"
3. But it's a false Christ.
4. A lot of people read *The Da Vinci Code* & take it as nothing more than an interesting piece of fiction.
5. Others read it & because they work at *rejecting* Christ, they find in the story more support for their rejection.
6. Still others read it & believe the lies about how the Church tries to cover up its secret past.
7. A few will swallow the lie hook, line, & sinker.
8. As the people of God, we need to be ready to help people find where they can go to learn about the Real Jesus.

[1]

Elizabeth Day, «*Da Vinci Code* Bestseller Is Plagiarism, Authors Claim», *The Sunday*

Telegraph, October 3, 2004

[2] http://www.cesnur.org/2005/mi_02_03d.htm

[3] (cf. Gary Stern, «Experts Dismiss Theories in Popular Book», *The Journal News*, November 2, 2003).