

CHRISTIAN ANSWERS

OF AUSTIN, TEXAS

CHRISTIAN DEBATER GUIDE VOLUME 4, NUMBER 2

The Da Vinci Code vs. The Facts



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www.biblequery.org,
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Would you believe that Martians have landed innumerable times, Jesus Christ has returned at least ten times, or that wild rhinoceroses terrified horses in Minnesota during the 19th century until they were lured to Canada? Would you believe Einstein created a "Franck-Einstein Monster," or that you can get psychic readings in 7 minutes that have never failed? You might, if you believed everything in tabloids such as the *Weekly World News* and *The National Enquirer*. Would this kind of writing be more believable in book form?

Many see Dan Brown's novel, *The Da Vinci Code*, as only a little more accurate than the above examples. But why shouldn't we give his book a break, since after all, it is in the fiction section. The danger here however, is Dan Brown said, in an interview, that if he were writing a non-fiction book, he would not change any of the historical assertions and claims of the novel.

While I am not aware of Dan Brown ever writing for tabloids, you have to give him credit that his tall tales strategy has been successful; it has sold over 40 million copies and he has an estimated worth of around \$56 million. Part of Brown's book's success is due to its outrageous claims such as: *Until 325 A.D., Jesus was viewed as a mortal prophet, not the Son of*

God. p. 233

- * *More than 80 gospels were considered for the New Testament.* p. 231
- * *Today's Bible was collated by Constantine.* p. 231
- * *Nag Hammadi Gnostics deserve to be called other Christians.* p. 234
- * *"Jesus' establishment of Jesus as "the Son of God" was officially proposed and voted on by the Council of Nicaea. -A relatively close vote at that,"* p. 233
- * *Original Christianity had a feminine goddess, and sexuality is divine, etc.* pp. 237-239, 434, 444-446

There are other similar claims as well. These are easy to refute, and many scholars have already refuted these claims on a point-by-point basis in numerous books and websites.

The focus of this article is different. Rather than asking why Dan Brown selectively ignored history or asking why he wrote a book like this, (which made millions of dollars) my emphasis is on the question of why so many could think that the history presented in this book might be true. In fact a survey in the *Ottawa Citizen* 6/24/2005 said that 16% of Canadians read the book, and of those, 33% really believed some of the claims.

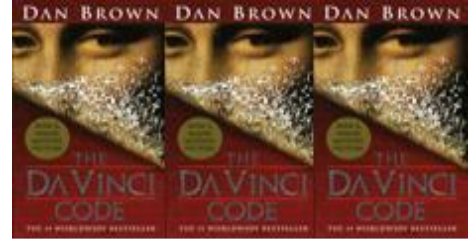
I think there are three reasons why some people are so gullible here:

- 1. Abject ignorance of what early Christianity taught.**
- 2. Deception by writers claiming Gnostics were Christians too.**
- 3. Some freedom from morality.**

Once we are educated about these three things, then Brown's errors become very obvious.

1. What Early Christianity Taught

- * *To refute The Da Vinci Code, remember "64 or more."*



* **More than 64 Early Christian Writers:** We have preserved writings from more than 64 early Christians, many of whom were bishops or famous among Christians in their time, sort of like Charles Spurgeon, D.L. Moody, Josh McDowell, or Lee Strobel are in modern times. You can read a little about each of them at www.historycart.com/earlychristianwriters.htm.

* **64 Bible Books named or quoted:** As they wrote on various Christian topics, most of them loved to quote Scripture, in fact, they mentioned by name and/or quoted from 64 of the books of the Bible (only the short books of Obadiah and 3 John excepted). You can see a grid of some of the writers and which books they named, or quoted at www.historycart.com/earlychristianNTreferences.htm.

* **More than 64 Christian Doctrines:** Just like Christian authors today, they were not perfect, but then they did not claim to be scripture either. Sometimes they disagreed with each other on secondary points, or difficult issues such as what to do about people who left the faith and sacrificed to Roman gods, but later repented. However, they were united in teaching at least 64 doctrines of faith, experience, and practice. For doctrines attested by at least three Christian writers, and denied by none, see www.historycart.com/

(continued on page 3)

"exhort in sound doctrine and refute those who contradict" (Titus 1:9)

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THE GOSPEL IN BRIEF

There is one, and only one, eternal, true, Holy God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Matt 28:19). He created everything by His word. God has told us the truth about Himself in the word He has given us, the Bible, which He commands us to obey. God is compassionate and just to all. God is pure and Holy; sin is destroyed in His presence (Numbers 14:18). However, we have all sinned, falling short in the evil we do, and the good we fail to do. Yet our problem is not just what we do, but also who we are; we are selfish, corrupt, and estranged from God. Because God is just, He will punish sin impartially, yet God still bestows his love to all men. So our Savior, Jesus, the only begotten Son of God (the God-man, John 1:1,14), was graciously sent to suffer and die on the cross for our sins and to purify us from all unrighteousness by the sacrifice of His body and blood. He was born of the virgin Mary, lived a sinless life, and was physically raised from the dead and ascended into heaven. Jesus will physically return to judge the world. God commands everyone to repent and to believe in Him. God's Spirit lives in each of us who believe in Him to guide us into truth, convict us of our sins, and to work in us to sanctify us to live a more holy life, pleasing our Lord. God's children will dwell forever with God, and those who reject Jesus will suffer eternal torment. There is no other way for anyone to come to God except through Jesus (Jn. 14:6). Please do not depend on anyone else, your own efforts, your religion, but simply put your faith in Christ our Master. So as Rom. 10:9 says, "That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart the God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." You are urged not to despise God's mercy but call out to the Lord and trust **ONLY** in Him.

(See also Acts 10:36-43)

THOUGHTS FROM THE DIRECTOR



Larry Wessels

Here we go again, another bold and vicious attack against the truth of the Christian Gospel brought to you by the "Father of Lies" (John 8:44) the Devil by way of his pop culture minion Dan Brown and his best selling book, *The Da Vinci Code*.

The Da Vinci Code claims that: 1) Christians did not recognize Jesus as divine until the fourth century AD, when a group of bishops voted on his divinity (DVC, p. 233), 2) the earliest records about Jesus (which it claims are the Gnostic gospels discovered in Nag Hammadi, Egypt) are not the records that appear in the New Testament (DVC, p. 245), 3) the four Gospels in the New Testament (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) were edited and embellished by the Emperor Constantine to make Jesus appear divine (DVC, p. 234), 4) Jesus married Mary Magdalene and had a child (DVC, pp. 245-249, 255), and 5) early Jews and Christians worshipped God through ritualistic sex (DVC, pp. 309-310). Worse yet, Dan Brown claims that the afore mentioned "claims" by *The Da Vinci Code* are based on historical facts. Nothing could be further from the truth!

Those who are familiar with our ministry know that we defend the Christian faith (Jude 3) from the constant attack by false prophets that come from every side whether they be people like Dan Brown, or groups like Jehovah's Witnesses (founded by Charles Taze Russell), Mormonism (founded by Joseph Smith, Jr.), Christian Science (founded by Mary Baker Eddy), Scientology (founded by L. Ron Hubbard), Islam (founded by Muhammad), or whoever. The Bible is given to us by revelation of God (II Tim. 3:15-17) and is meant to be our standard for discerning truth from error. In fact, 33 per cent of the New Testament is "apologetic" (a defense against heresies) in nature with I John and Colossians particularly doing a nice job on first century Gnostic heretics. If the Bible cannot be trusted than any novel or tall-tale will do such as Brown's fiction.

Our Director of Research, Steve Morrison, has done his homework and has provided us with excellent material to refute Brown's claims in this issue. Peace.

WHAT IS CHRISTIAN ANSWERS ?

Our ministry name is derived in part from I Peter 3:15 which states, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts; and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." (KJV). This is the goal of **Christian Answers** in an increasingly anti-Christian society here in America and throughout the world; giving answers and reasons why the Christian faith can be trusted and believed. Christians are to know what they believe and why they believe it.

The Biblical commands to "fight the good fight of faith" (I Tim. 6:12), to be "set for the defense of the gospel" (Phil. 1:17), to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3), to "be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict" (Titus 1:9), to "put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not" (Rev. 2:2), to "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves." (Matt. 7:15), to "examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good" (I Thess. 5:21), "with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Tim. 2:25), to follow the example of Paul and Apollos who "vigorously refuted the Jews in public debate, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was Christ." (Acts 18:28). These are but a few of the marching orders for the call to ministry, discernment and evangelism.

The inerrant Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17) whereby the gospel is preached, which is "the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth" (Rom. 1:16), is the weapon of our evangelism. As Hebrews 4:12 states, "For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow: it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." This is the evangelical missionary methodology of **Christian Answers**— to bring the Biblical perspective to a culture that is almost completely ignorant of it; to bring Christian truth, Christian answers to those who, as the prophet Isaiah said, have made "lies...and falsehood" their refuge (Isa. 28:15); to smash lies and falsehoods with the "hammer" of God's word (Jer. 23:29); see also Proverbs 30:5-6, Psalm 138:2b, Isaiah 40:8, John 5:39-47, I Cor. 14:37, and Acts 17:11.

Christian Answers utilizes all outreach that God allows us including television, radio, audio cassettes, video tapes, speaking engagements, and the printed page. The materials we have been able to produce have been used by churches, Bible teachers, Christian apologists, laymen and others as well as those seeking life in Christ.

We are not afraid to stand up for Jesus Christ in public forums or wherever the Lord leads. Of course this type of ministry is not for the faint of heart and very often leads to the same type of suffering and persecution that we find in the book of Acts. But as the old saying goes, "one life will soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last," and as Paul said, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3:14), knowing this mortal life is short and God's eternity is only a moment away for all.

Our ministry is "exempt from federal income tax under section 501 (a) of the Internal Revenue Code as an organization described in section 501 (c) (3) by the Internal Revenue Service". Donations to our ministry are tax deductible, therefore those who contribute will receive a donation receipt good on your US income tax. This applies to donations only, not sales. We are legally registered in the state of Texas.

[earlychristiandoctrines.htm](#). There are not really any surprises here. Conservative Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox Christians have all said these things.

In addition, not only did Christians write that Jesus was God, but non-Christians wrote that Christians believed Jesus was God.

* **Lucian of Samosata**, (also called Lucian the Greek) second century satirist, wrote about Christ, "...the man who was crucified in Palestine because he introduced this new cult into the world...Furthermore, their first lawgiver persuaded them that they were all brothers one of another after they have transgressed once and for all by denying the Greek gods and by worshipping that crucified sophist himself and living under his laws." (*The Passing Peregrinus* 11-13)

* **Pliny the Younger** was a governor of Bithynia who killed many Christians for their faith. He wrote Emperor Trajan in 112 A.D. saying, "...they affirmed, however, that the whole of their guilt, or their error, was, that they were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang in alternate verse a hymn to Christ as to a god,...Epistles 10.96.

* **At least 24 early Christian writers, New testament manuscripts and early non-Christian writers all show that early Christians believed Jesus was God.** So why on earth could Dan Brown's book claim Christians did not believe Jesus was God until 325 A.D. at the Council of Nicea? I suppose that perhaps Brown could have an answer to that thought: "just ask my accountant"

* **50 early New Testament manuscripts and fragments before ca 300 A.D. attest that we have the same text (97/98%) today as back then.** All of these are even prior to the famous manuscripts Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus. You can see this list at www.historycart.com/earlyNTmanuscripts.htm

* **175-200 Old Testament Dead Sea Scrolls before 70 A.D. show that the text of the Bible in Jesus' time is the same (95%) as we have today from other sources.** You can read about this at www.historycart.com/deadseascrolls.htm

Now to return to refuting Dan Brown's book — it was universally believed there were only four gospels, the books of the Old and New

Testaments, and Christian doctrine was pretty much settled. Among specific doctrines were that Christ was both God and man, born of the Virgin Mary, crucified and rose again, and that believers were to live holy and chaste lives. But I will let the early Christian leaders speak for themselves.

* **Papias**, who died about 163 A.D. was a disciple of John the apostle. He wrote over 5 volumes; unfortunately most of what he wrote was lost. However, the church historian Eusebius records "*he [Papias] has given in the following words: And the presbyter said this. Mark having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately whatever he remembered. It was not, however, in exact order that he related the sayings or deeds of Christ. For he neither heard the Lord nor accompanied Him. But afterwards, as I said, he accompanied Peter, who accommodated his instructions to the necessities [of his hearers], but with no intention of giving a regular narrative of the Lord's sayings. Wherefore Mark made no mistake in thus writing some things as he remembered them. For of one thing he took especial care, not to omit anything he had heard, and not to put anything fictitious into the statements. [This is what is related by Papias regarding Mark; but with regard to Matthew he had made the following statements:] Matthew could put together the oracles [of the Lord] in the Hebrew language, and each one interpreted them as best he could"* Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* 3:39 (vol. 1, p. 154)

* **Irenaeus** (182-188 A.D.) writes, "*It is not possible that the Gospels can be either more or fewer in number than they are...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.*" *Irenaeus Against Heresies* book 3 ch. 11.8

* **Tertullian's** *Five Books Against Marcion* (207/208 A.D.) book 4 ch. 2 says, "*We lay it down as our first position, that the Evangelist Testament has apostles for its authors, to whom was assigned by the Lord Himself this office of publishing the gospel...Of the apostles, therefore, John and Matthew first instill faith into us; whilst of apostolic men, Luke and Mark renew it afterwards. These all start with the same principles of the faith, so far as*

relates to the one only God the Creator and His Christ, how that He was born of the Virgin, and came to fulfill the law and the prophets." Later he mentions a false gospel published by Marcion.

But if that was true, what about the controversy that led to the 325 A.D. Council of Nicea? It is an ignorant statement to say that Nicea was about whether Christ was God or not. Rather it was between Orthodox Christianity and Arians, who disagreed on how Christ was God. Was Christ of the same substance as the Father as Orthodox Christianity says, or was He of like or different substance, presumably less than the Father as Arians believed.

You can read at least 24 early Christian writers who said that Jesus was God, all before Nicea at: www.historycart.com/earlychristiandoctrines.htm under **Deity of Jesus Our Lord**. Again, Dan Brown's writing has dishonestly ignored a large amount of Christian writing.

Some might think it is a real letdown for early Christians actually to believe the same as we do today on the essential points. However, having read through seven volumes of the early Christian writers before 325 A.D., I find it encouraging that God guided them, and us, to the same truths.

Again, the early Christian bishop, Irenaeus, says: "*The Church, though dispersed throughout the whole world, even to the ends of the earth, has received from the apostles and their disciples this faith: one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them; and in one Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who became incarnate for our salvation; and in the Holy Spirit, who proclaimed through the prophets the dispensations of God, and the advents, and the birth from a virgin, and the passion [death], and the resurrection from the dead, and the ascension into heaven in the flesh of the beloved Christ Jesus, our Lord, and his [future] manifestation from heaven in the glory of the Father 'to gather all things in one,' and to raise up anew all flesh of the whole human race, in order that to Christ Jesus, our Lord, and God, and Savior, and King, according to the will of the invisible Father,...*" *Irenaeus Against Heresies* book 1, ch. 10.2, p. 330.

2. Why the Nag Hammadi Gnostics Can

not be Called Christians

No early Gnostic would believe what Dan Brown presents as early Christianity because of the way Brown has selectively chosen from so-called Gnostic teachings. All of the various Gnostic schools claimed the following:

The god of the Old Testament, the Creator, was an evil/deluded/misled god who made a wicked mistake in creating the earth and matter. They thought the Jewish Bible (the Old Testament) was from a bad god.

The New Testament god, who was a different being from the evil Old Testament god, came to set everything right.

All early Gnostics thought Jesus was a divine being, which totally refutes the false assertions in Dan Brown's book.

Many Gnostics believed Hercules, Jupiter, and other Greco-Roman gods were real beings in heaven. Gnostics in general tried to mix pagan teaching with Christianity.

In particular, the Gospel of Thomas, which Nag Hammadi Gnostics held to, had a very low view of women. Let's look at some quotes:

What do you think of this "truth" from the last of the 114 teachings of the Gospel of Thomas? *Simon Peter said to Him, "Let Mary leave us, for women are not worthy of Life." Jesus said, "I myself shall lead her in order to make her male, so that she too may become a living spirit resembling you males. For every woman who will make herself male will enter the Kingdom of Heaven."*

How about the 98th saying? Jesus said, *"The Kingdom of the Father is like a certain man who wanted to kill a powerful man. In his own house he drew his sword and stuck it into the wall in order to find out whether his hand could carry through. Then he slew the powerful man."*

To see a listing of 30 Gnostic schools, go to ww.historycart.com/listofgnostics.htm

3. True Christianity Teaches Moral and Ethical Responsibility

So why would anyone even advocate the Gospel of Thomas or Gnosticism? This is frankly answered at www.y2gatewars.com/id81.htm (5/6/01).

As the following quote clearly shows, advocating Gnosticism allows its adherents to free themselves from the essential truths of the traditional Christian Gospel as found in the Bible. *"One of the biggest differences between this Gospel and later biblical writings is that it has neither gloom nor doom, no political positioning, not a crucifixion nor resurrection in sight. The gospel recognizes Jesus as a teacher, not God. Hallelujah!"*

Why would the people of the Jesus Seminar (this seminar is composed of unbelieving theologians and skeptics who vote by using their opinions as to what Jesus did or did not say) promote this? Perhaps if they did not, they would not be able to make so much money publishing books and speaking. Even a liberal scholar, Howard Clark Kee in a letter to the *Los Angeles Times* called the seminar "an academic disgrace" (from *The Real Jesus*, by Timothy Luke Johnson, p. 18).

Despite all the attacks by modern day Gnostics and unbelieving liberals, early Christians were united in believing in no sex outside of marriage between a man and woman. Dan Brown, however, goes on and on about phallic and feminine symbols in Judaism and Christianity, and how "the evil Catholic Church" repressed all this sexuality. Actually we have so many early Christian writings prior to the council of Nicea that even if it had wanted to, the Catholic Church would have been unable to suppress what early Christians really taught. Once again Dan Brown is just dead wrong.

Conclusion: Peter prophesied in 2 Peter 2:1-2 that there would be false teachers. Regardless of the historical facts, perhaps Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* "had to be written" because there was such a large market for gullible people who would hope it would be true, and had never been taught about the massive evidence of early Christianity between the New Testament times and the Council of Nicea.

Recommended Books

- * *The Truth Behind the Da Vinci Code* by Richard Abanes
- * *The Gospel Code* by Ben Witherington III
- * *Breaking the Da Vinci Code* by Darrell L. Bock, Ph.D.

* *Cracking the Da Vinci Code* by James Garlow & Peter Jones

* *Discussing the Da Vinci Code* by Lee Strobel & Garry Poole

Recommended Web Sites:

* www.answeringinfidels.com/content/view/60/1/

* **The Da Vinci Code: Separating Fact from Fiction:** [\[www.rbc.org/davinci/\]](http://www.rbc.org/davinci/)

* **Deciphering the Da Vinci Code from Crosswalk:** [\[www.crosswalk.com/news/weblogs/mohler/?adate=7/29/2003\]](http://www.crosswalk.com/news/weblogs/mohler/?adate=7/29/2003)

* **Crash goes the Da Vinci Code by Ron Rhodes:** [\[www.leaderu.com/theology/crashdavincicode.html\]](http://www.leaderu.com/theology/crashdavincicode.html)

* **Dismantling the Da Vinci Code by Sandra Miesel:** [\[www.leaderu.com/popculture/dismantlingda-vinci.html\]](http://www.leaderu.com/popculture/dismantlingda-vinci.html)

Not-Recommended References

* The Franck-Einstein Monster was in the *World Weekly News*, March 20, 2006, p. 24.

* The wild rhinoceroses menacing horses in Minnesota was in the *World Weekly News*, March 20, 2006, p. 45.

* Psychic readings in 7 minutes that have never failed are in *The National Enquirer*, March 27, 2006, p.52.

Steve's Q & A

Q: Dear Steve,

The author of the book *Misquoting Jesus*, Bart Ehrman, makes a claim that the story of Jesus and the adulteress, where Jesus says "He who is without sin, let him cast the first stone" is not found in the earliest manuscripts and that the story was made-up and added later. Is there any other evidence to confirm that this story was not made-up and added later? Thanks, Dane

A: Hi Dane,

From the data I have it is absent in the Bodmer II papyri (p66) (125-175 A.D.) which has preserved most of the Gospel of John, including everything continuously from John 6:35b to John 14:26. John 7:53-8:11 was never present in that manuscript. It is also absent in Bodmer 14, 15 (p. 75) as an unbroken, continuous line *early 3rd century), Sinaiticus, Vaticanus,

Alexandrinus, L, N, T, W, X, Delta, Theta, Psi, 0141, 0211, 22, 33, 157, 209, 565, 892, 1230, 1241, 1253, 1333*, 2193, 2768, family 1424, Diatessaron, Old Syriac, Sahidic Coptic, Armenian, Gothic, Clement, Tertullian, Origen, Chrysostom, Nonnus (431 A.D.), Cyril, Cosmas, Theophylact).

It is included though in the Byzantine Lectionary, Cantabrigiensis 95th-6th century, some early Armenian, Apostolic Constitutions Book 2 chapter 14 (c. 380 A.D.).

The Expositor's Bible Commentary, vol. 9, p. 91 says the Latin version of Irenaeus mentions it. Irenaeus wrote fairly early (182-188 A.D.), but there is some question where it is in the Greek (that Irenaeus wrote in) or that it was just added later in the Latin translation.

The following manuscripts included it, but with obelisks showing a question about its authenticity. E, S, Lambda, Psi, 1 007, 1 443, 1 445, 1 69m, 1 170m, 1 185m, 1 211m, 1 1579m, 1 1761m.

These 168 Greek works are included after John 7:36 in f1 family, standardized Armenian.

Bruce Metzger in his *Textual Commentary* 2nd edition p. 219-223 gives reason why some think it should be excluded. Zane C. Hodges in *Greek New Testament*, introduction p.xxiii-xxxii says that more than 900 manuscripts include it.

Bart Ehrman makes some wild claims by the way. However, this one is a wild claim, as some scholars can make a case for agreeing with him on this point, while others disagree.

So how prone were the Alexandrian copyists to leaving things out? On the ending of Mark, it too is absent in the Alexandrian family and present in the Byzantine family. However, quite curiously, though both Vaticanus and Sinaiticus (in the Alexandrian family) do not have the ending of Mark, they have blank space for the ending. Vaticanus does not have any other blank spaces in the manuscript, and even more telling, Sinaiticus has eraser marks where it used to be but then was

erased.

In Matthew 16:2-3, which scholars generally agree should be in the Bible, it is not present in most Alexandrian manuscripts. It says, "*He [Jesus] replied, when evening comes, you say, 'it will be fair weather, for the sky is red, and in the morning, 'Today it will stormy, for the sky is red and overcast.' You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times. 'A wicked.'*" vs. "*He replied, a wicked.*"

In Alexandria and other parts of Egypt, the dry climate is such that red skies do not mean rain, so apparently they took this out of Matthew to avoid questions about this.

Conclusion: John 7:53-8:11 and the Mark 16:9-20 are the largest variants in the New Testament. However, even these do not change any doctrine or practice of Christianity. A Christian would think this passage should be out if they trusted the earlier and Alexandrian family of manuscripts more than those who preserved the Byzantine family of manuscripts, and the passage should be in if they trusted the Byzantine family more. While I do not have proof, my feeling, based on Alexandrian manuscripts leaving other things out, is that they ought to be in our Bibles.

REPLY:

Wow, thanks Steve you are amazing. I appreciate your help very much. I was invited to join a political chat group that is mainly made up of liberals. They invited me to join because they had run off a few of their conservative members, and I suppose they needed some new blood. There are only about three or four of us that are conservative. They are not supposed to talk about religion due to the sensitivity of the subject, but it almost always comes up. I might refer some of the Agnostic of Atheists to your website when they have questions or comments on some religions subjects.

Thanks again Steve and God Bless you,
Dane (Dallas, TX)

Q: Hi Steve,

Your website is such a great and extensive resource for manuscript study. I have two quick questions:

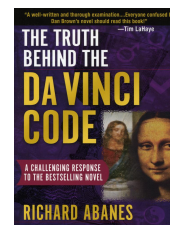
1. Where did you get the table of the different comparisons of the manu

scripts of the New Testament?

2. Do you know where I can download electronic versions of these manuscripts? Thank you, Jim L (from the web)

A: Hi Jim,

I created the table myself. It took me awhile, but I went through all the manuscripts and variants I could find. Unfortunately I do not know for sure where one can look at electronic copies, but a friend told me about a guy at Dallas Theological Seminary, named Wilson I think, who is trying to put them online. But if you want to see each word of many of the New Testament manuscripts, (in neat type, along with many photographs too), I would recommend buying *The Text of the Earliest New Testament Greek Manuscripts* edited by Philip W. Comfort and David P. Barrett. Grace and Peace, -Steve



**The Truth Behind
The Da Vinci Code**

Award-winning investigative journalist Richard Abanes refutes Dan Brown's multimillion-copy blockbuster.

The Code: Jesus was married to Mary Magdelene, whom he named leader of the church before his death.

The Truth: This fantasy has no support even from the "Gnostic gospels" mentioned in the book, let alone from the historical data.

The Code: Since the year 1099, a super secret society called "The Priory of Sion" has preserved knowledge of Jesus and Mary's descendants.

The Truth: Today's "Priory of Sion" was founded in the early 1960s by a French con man who falsified documents to support the story of Jesus' "bloodline."

The Code: As a "priory" leader and pagan goddess-worshipper, Leonardo da Vinci coded secret knowledge about Jesus and Mary into his paintings.

The Truth: Da Vinci had no known ties to any secret societies. Any obscure images in his paintings likely reflect his personal creativity rather than Brown's imagination.

The Truth Behind the Da Vinci Code, probing, factual, easy to read and revealing.

BK-80, \$7.00 +S&H, 96 pages.

ANSWERS TO THE DA VINCI CODE

By Timothy Paul Jones, Ed.D.

(excerpted from Rose Publishing pamphlet)

Is sex a “spiritual act” in which one may find the “spark of divinity”? (DVC p.310)

At this point, *The Da Vinci Code* is partly correct: God is the ultimate source of our sexuality. According to Genesis, “God created humanity in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them.” Yet-and this is where *The Da Vinci Code* goes wrong-sexual pleasure is not intended to be an end in itself. Certainly, God didn’t plan our sexuality to be a frenzied group ritual, such as the one celebrated in *The Da Vinci Code* (DVC pp. 310-312). Rather, the ultimate pleasure expressed between a husband and his wife is intended to be a reflection of the intense, exclusive passion that God feels for his people. That’s why, throughout Scripture, God is presented as the loving husband of his people. Therefore, there is no “spark of divinity” that we can find in a moment of sexual pleasure. What we can find, within the context that God created for sexual expression, is a beautiful reflection of divine love. (Gen. 1:26-27; Isa. 54:5; Jeremiah 31:32; Ezekiel 16:1-32; Hosea 2:1-20, II Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25)

Did the Christian church recast sex as “a shameful act?” (DVC p.125)

No, the church as a whole did not recast sex as shameful. According to one of the characters in *The Da Vinci Code*, the major religions of the world have “worked hard to demonize sex and recast it as a disgusting and sinful act” (DVC p. 309). A glance at the Old and New Testaments quickly calls this claim into question: “Rejoice in the wife of your youth, let her breasts fill you with delight.” Another text explicitly describes the bride and groom on their wedding night. According to the apostle Paul, the only reason for a wife and husband not to have sex consistently was if they agreed to “devote [themselves] to prayer for a limited time.” Certainly some church leaders have frowned on sex, but their teachings do not agree with Scripture. (Prov. 5:18-19; Song of Solomon 5:10-16, 7:1-13; I Cor. 7:3-5).

Was Shekinah the “powerful female equal” of God, worshiped alongside YHWH in the Old Testament? (DVC p. 309, 446)

No, the term “Shekinah” never appears in the Old or New Testaments. It is a Hebrew term used by later rabbis to describe God’s presence among his people. It simply means “the one who dwells.” At no point did

“Shekinah” refer to a separate, female deity.

Was Jesus “the original feminist?”

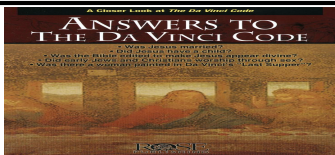
It depends on how one defines “feminist.” Jesus did not plan for his church to be a matriarchal community, centered in “the divine feminine,” as *The Da Vinci Code* implies. Jesus did teach that women are to be respected and valued equally with men as creatures formed in God’s image. Jesus, however, was not advocating a new form of feminism. In fact, this sort of “feminism” is what God intended from the very beginning. (Matt. 19:3-9; Acts 2:18; Gal. 3:28; Gen 1:27; 2:18)

Did ancient Jews and Christians experience the divine through “ritualistic sex?” (DVC p. 309)

No, ancient Jews or Christians who were faithful to the teachings of their religion, never attempted to experience the divine through ritualistic sex. According to a main character in *The Da Vinci Code*, early Jewish worship included *Hieros Gamos* (“sacred union”), acts of ritual sex through which “the male could find spiritual wholeness” (DVC p.309). These rites-*The Da Vinci Code* contends-continued among Christians until the established church engaged in a “brutal crusade to ‘reeducate’ the pagan and feminine worshipping religions” (DVC p.125). In truth, the earliest texts from the Jewish tradition explicitly forbid practices of “cult prostitution.” Early Christians were accused of such acts. However, when a Roman governor thoroughly investigated the charges in AD 112, he found nothing shameful - only an ordinary worship celebration (Deut. 23:17, 18).

Does the holy name of God, YHWH, imply a union between a masculine and a feminine deity? (DVC p. 309)

No, the holy name of God has nothing to do with masculine or feminine deities. YHWH, is a noun derived from the Hebrew term “hayah” (“to be”). It was a variation of this term - “ehyeh,” (“I AM”) - that God spoke to Moses through the burning bush (Exodus 3:14). The ancient Hebrews viewed the name YHWH with such reverence that they did not even speak it.



This outstanding little 12 page , laminated foldout pamphlet by Rose Publishing gives you quick and well referenced answers to the false claims of *The Da Vinci Code*. Perfect to have on hand in discussions with friends, co-workers, and family.
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ISLAM UPDATE

Afghan girl is forced to marry at the age of four under Islamic law and is later beaten and tortured.

Muslim vote tips the balance politically to the left in the Netherlands.

Islamic government in Iran threatens the United States with “harm and pain” if it tries to stop it from developing its nuclear program.

American Muslims gaining a foothold in U.S. politics.

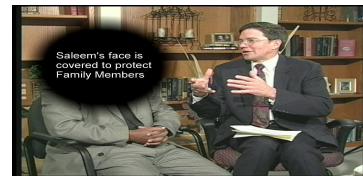
Muslim leader Sheikh Ismail Nawahda called for world-wide Islamic rule while in Jerusalem.

A Pakistani Christian singer was beaten, robbed, and forced to convert to Islam.

Torture and death of Jew by Islamic extremists deepens fears in France.

A recent Muslim graduate of the University of North Carolina is charged with nine counts of attempted murder for trying to avenge Muslim deaths.

Those wishing to obtain the full articles to these headlines may order them by sending \$3.00 + shipping and handling, and requesting “Islam Update, Vol. 4, #2.”

Christian Answers Islamic Video of the Month

Rev. Saleem Masih (face covered to protect his family) and Larry Wessels

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1. Bahaiism (Dr. Frank Beckwith)
2. Islam (Dr. Samuel Shahid)
3. Buddhism (Dr. Steve Morrison)
4. Hinduism/Reincarnation (Mark Cass)
5. Roman Catholicism (Richard Bennett)
6. Jehovah's Witnesses #1 (Larry Wessels)
7. Jehovah's Witnesses #2 (Larry Wessels)
8. Mormonism (Robert McKay)
9. Word-Faith Heresy #1 (Dr. Michael Horton)
10. Word-Faith Heresy #2 (Dr. Michael Horton)
11. Seventh-day Adventism #1 (Wallace Slattery)
12. Seventh-day Adventism #2 (Wallace Slattery)
13. The "Church of Christ" (Bob L. Ross)
14. Liberal Christianity #1 (Morrison & Wessels)
15. Liberal Christianity #2 (Morrison & Wessels)
16. Atheism (Larry Wessels)
17. Nation of Islam (Wilford Darden)
18. United Pentecostals (Dr. Steve Morrison)
19. Unification (Moonies) (Morrison & Wessels)
20. Demon Possession (Dr. Thomas Ice)
21. Roman Catholicism #1 (Rob Zins)
22. Roman Catholicism #2 (Rob Zins)
23. The Da Vinci Code (Morrison & Wessels)
24. Darwin's Evolution Religion (Dr. M. Girouard)



Larry Wessels and Steve Morrison in studio for cable access show concerning "The Da Vinci Code."

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**Inside This Issue:
Topic: The Da Vinci Code**

**page 1: The Da Vinci Code vs. The Facts
page 2: Thoughts from the Director
page 6: Islam Update
page 8: Letters from the Frontline**

“exhort in sound doctrine and refute those who contradict” (Titus1:9)

LETTERS FROM THE FRONTLINE



To: Biblequery.org,

Thank you so much for this wonderful site. I was reading my bible this morning, and ran across (as I have many, many times) the side-note that said (3 early manuscripts...) and it occurred to me that that may or may not be a big deal, depending on how many early manuscripts we have. I went into Yahoo, and there you were, answering my question and many other questions I've had over the last few years of my Christian life. Thank you again, and may God continue to bless your work.

S.H. (From the web)

To: Webmaster@biblequery.org,

I stumbled across your site when I was doing some research on Exodus (somehow ended up on your Hosea page –the internet is so much fun). I just wanted to encourage you in Christ –you cut through the political nonsense to the heart of the issue. Thanks for the effort you've put into this! *“Do no let kindness and truth leave you; Bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.”* Prov. 3:3.

K.N. (From the web)

Dear Steve,

We received the Christian Answers Website CD yesterday. We want to send our thanks and appreciation for the tremendous amount of work you have put into compiling such a wealth of information. The onboard search engine works really well. I'm sure we will be referencing your materials often in the future as we continue to publish the truth. Keep up with the good work. Spreading the truth about Jesus throughout the world is our commission. Be encouraged and trust God for all your needs.

A.C. (From the web)

Dear Larry,

Paul Carden and I are going to Belize in a couple of weeks to “train the saints,” and to deal with the widespread UPC problem there.

your UPC tape. Let me know the cost and I will get it right off to you. [4 days later] Thanks so much for your timely response. This allows us to put together the final pieces of our counter-cult library and training aids for Belize. We are also taking many CDs and also a DVD player to use in the new store front ministry called “Da Watta Fountain.” Many groups of darkness in such a beautiful land, and many opportunities. I will greet Paul for you. In His Grip, B.K. (Everson, WA)

Dear Larry,

I appreciate the newsletters and the information on evolution that you sent me. Enclosed is a money order for an audio cassette I would like: RP-2 “The Impossibility of Evolution /The Reality of Creation Science” by Dr Girouard. If you have any literature on carbon dating please send it along as well. Thanks and God Bless. K.E. (Austin, TX)

Dear Christian Answers,

I'm writing to you about the following questions: 1) The women's role in church. A listing you have on this topic. 2) Information on what is in the teaching of Rastafarians and why is it growing? 3) Things to know about Christian Dating and Christian Marriage. 4) Why is it that Reformed Christians believe God didn't love the world, only the selected ones? Please explain to me on what you might know. Thank you for your time and I'm looking forward to hearing from you. Sincerely, In Christ Jesus. R.H. (Vacaville, CA)

Dear Sir,

I enjoyed your Christian Answers television program last night on cable access channel 11. It was very interesting. I would like a copy of your literature that you have. Thank you. F.A. (Austin, TX)

Dear Brother Larry,

Just a note to acknowledge safe

Christian Debater Guide

video. We had no difficulty whatsoever in playing both the DVD and the video but it was kind of you to have thought of it and your action is greatly appreciated. May God bless you richly in your work for Him!

B. L.-D. (Central African Republic)

Dear Christian Answers,

Thank you for not compromising the truth. God bless you. M.K. (Evansville, IN)

To: cdebater@aol.com,

Love in Jesus Christ, I'm so blessed with this site (www.biblequery.org). Let me introduce myself, my name is Kristian, and I love apologetics very much. Now, I'm debating with Jehovah's Witnesses. I'm in Indonesia. Thank you. Jesus loves you!

K.Y. (From the web)

Dear Brother Larry,

Love your newsletter. We met and did “battle” with Jehovah's Witnesses & Mormons years ago in the Probe Center in the John Ratliff era (1990). Glad to see you're still fighting the good fight. I don't live in Austin anymore but have kept up with you. Please change the address you have for me. Drop me an e-mail when you get a chance. God Bless.

C.B. (Amarillo, TX)

Hi Larry,

I pray that all goes well with you and your family and your word for the Lord. I really enjoyed your newsletter and your package info. and your DVD/videos. I was called by my brother-in-law, Bill, and he really liked the DVD by Brother Bennett on Roman Catholicism. However, he did not get the DVD in his package on “The Sahih Muslim Hadiths” which I thought was very good. Thanks for all the info. I give out books, and sermons all the time by Spurgeon, Gill, Pink, Owen, etc. ...great men used of God for His glory. Would you please send Bill the 2 DVDs with this new order for him. Send me the one DVD with this order for me. Keep the rest of the check for a donation for all of your work. Yours in Christ,