

Examining *The Da Vinci Code* and *The Bible*



Week 3:
The Holy Grail

August 21st, 2005

Cliff Notes from Our Series

The Code



- Dan Brown's Spiritual Journey (world view)
- Bible/Christianity has been altered
- Christianity is a copycat religion
- Jesus was married and had a daughter

The Bible

- Our identity in Christ is our world view
- The Bible is reliable and God breathed
- Jesus celebrated the Passover and fulfilled it
- Christianity is unique with a Savior God

**Last week:
Are we a copycat religion?**

-- Dan Brown asserts that many of our traditions and beliefs stem not from the teachings of Jesus, but from adoption of pagan rituals.

--In reality, it is all a matter of dates and going beyond the surface. The Osiris myths are a far cry from the resurrection story, and other pagan religions (Mithraism) borrowed from Christians, not the other way around

This week: Uncovering the Holy Grail

Dan Brown reveals in the Da Vinci Code who, not what, is the Holy Grail...

Table Talk

- Why is the Holy Grail intriguing?
- What do you know about the Holy Grail?
- How does knowledge of the Grail enhance or change your faith in Christ?

Dan Brown's Holy Grail Theory

- Jesus was mortal – not Divine
- The Bible was changed to cover up the truth – for profit and political gain
- Jesus was married – blending two Royal Bloodlines
- Jesus had a child – passing on the Royal Bloodline



“...at the Council of Nicea 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....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....Because Constantine upgraded Jesus' status almost four centuries after Jesus' death; thousands of documents already existed chronicling His life as a mortal man”

The Da Vinci Code: Dan Brown, 233 &244.

“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 (which he believes were the Gnostic Gospels) were outlawed, gathered up, and burned....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. 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. 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.”

The Da Vinci Code: Dan Brown, 234.

Now, the book claims that the marriage between Jesus and Mary is

“a matter of historical record”, and Da Vinci was certainly aware of that fact. “The Last Supper [painting] practically shouts at the viewer that Jesus and Magdalene were a pair.” 244

“...the social decorum during that time virtually forbids 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." 245

Teabing says that these Nag Hammadi documents are:

"...the earliest Christian records."
245

And that they "do not match up with the gospels in the Bible" 245-246

And then he quotes a passage from the
Gospel of Philip:

“And the companion of the Savior 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?’” 246

“I shan't bore you with the countless references to Jesus and Magdalene's union. That has been explored ad nauseam by modern historians. I would, however, like to point out the following.’ He motioned to another passage. ‘This is from the Gospel of Mary Magdalene.’ Sophie had not known a gospel existed in Magdalene's words. She read the text:

“And Peter said, ‘Did the Savior really speak with a woman without our knowledge? Are we to turn about and all listen to her? Did he prefer her to us?’ And Levi answered, ‘Peter, you have always been hot-tempered. Now I see you contending against the woman like an adversary. If the Savior made her worthy, who are you indeed to reject her? Surely the Savior knows her very well. That is why he loved her more than us.’” 247

“Mary was of royal descent.” 248

According to The Da Vinci Code, there are two primary reasons why the Church wanted to cover up Mary and Jesus' marriage.

First because Jesus having sex with his wife would undermine His deity, and be viewed as sacrilegious.

And second, because Jesus was from a Royal bloodline as well, the Tribe of Judah in the line of King David.

Dan Brown Raises Three Questions

1. What is/Who is the Holy Grail (Jesus, Mary or a cup)?
2. Should we worship a woman instead of a man (Mary vs. Jesus)?
3. Can we rely on the “Church” and Scripture for the truth?

Holy Communion

- It is not an icon/idol to be touched or worshiped, but practiced.
- It is not a cup, a woman or a man, it is fulfillment of the Old Testament.
- It is a covenantal relationship with Christ

Constantine and the Council

- Dan Brown asserts that Constantine used the Council of Nicea as a means to establish a bible for social and political motives
- Once again, the best lies are 90% truth...

Constantine

- Background: Emperor Diocletian decided in the 3rd century the empire was too big and split it into two pieces.
- At York Constantine was named emperor of the west by his army, and thus began his political career.
- On his way to prove his legitimacy, he had a “battlefield conversion”.

Constantine, contd.

- At Milvian Bridge he sees a cross in the sky and hears “By this sign you will be the victor”.
- After slaughtering the army of Maxentius, he “converts” to Christianity officially and begins allocating funds for bishops to build new churches.

Council of Nicea

- Constantine overtakes the whole of the Roman Empire in 324, and calls the Council of Nicea together in 325.
- Why call a council? Without a formal set of rules, bishops at the time were bickering over a variety of issues. In order to keep the peace (and *unity*), a council was needed.

Council of Nicea, contd.

- What did the council do?
 - Decided the issue of the Trinity
 - Set up canons (laws) on church order and authority within the church
- What did the council NOT do?
 - Set up the formal bible (50+ years later)
 - Yield to Constantine's political whims

**Jesus is human
and Divine**

External Evidence of Christ

- Tacitus report of Emperor Nero's decision to blame the Christians for the fire that destroyed Rome, A.D. 64.

Nero fastened the guilt . . . on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of . . . Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judaea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome. . . .

Tacitus, Roman Historian

External Evidence of Christ

- Tacitus A.D. 64.
- Pliny the Younger, the Roman governor of Bithynia in Asia Minor wrote letters to Emperor Trajan, A.D. 112.

They were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang in alternate verses a hymn to Christ, as to a god, and bound themselves by a solemn oath, not to any wicked deeds, but never to commit any fraud, theft or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up; after which it was their custom to separate, and then reassemble to partake of food—but food of an ordinary and innocent kind.

Pliny the Younger, Roman governor of Bithynia in Asia Minor.

External Evidence of Christ

- Tacitus, A.D. 64.
- Pliny the Younger, A.D. 112.
- Josephus was a first century Jewish historian, who references Jesus twice in his *Jewish Antiquities*.

The first reference describes Jesus as a wise man, whom Pilate condemned to be crucified.

The second reference describes the condemnation of one "James" by the Jewish Sanhedrin. This James, says Josephus, was "the brother of Jesus the so-called Christ."

Josephus, first century Jewish Historian.

External Evidence of Christ

- Tacitus, A.D. 64.
- Pliny the Younger, A.D. 112.
- Josephus, first century.
- Babylonian Talmud, A.D. 70-200.

“Many thought John was the promised Messiah but he vehemently denied any such role. He explained his mission in the word of the prophet Isaiah, ‘The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight’ (Matt. 3.3). He was he claimed, only the forerunner of the Messiah. ‘I baptize you with water...’ he said, ‘but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire’ (Luke 3.16).”

Bruce Shelley, Church History In Plain Language, 6.

It's clear from the Biblical record that the disciples, Jesus Himself, the writers of the New Testament and the early Church fathers believed Jesus to be the Messiah; God in human flesh.

The Disciples believed Jesus to be God

“When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, ‘Who do people say the Son of Man is?’

They replied, ‘Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.’

‘But what about you?’ he asked.
‘Who do you say I am?’
Simon Peter answered,
‘**You are the Christ,**
the Son of the living God.’”

Matthew 16:13-16

“Son of Man”

Used 84 times in the Gospels

“In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a **son of man**, coming with **the clouds of heaven**. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him.

His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.”

Daniel 7:13-14

“Son of man”

“the clouds of heaven”

“He was given authority, glory and
sovereign power”

“All peoples, nations and men of every
language worshiped him.”

“His dominion is an everlasting
dominion that will not pass away”

“His kingdom is one that will never be
destroyed.”

**Jesus used this phrase, this title
to refer to His divine nature.**

“He is the image of the
invisible God...”

Colossians 1:15

“For in Christ all the fullness of
Deity lives in bodily form....”

Colossians 2:9

“The god of this age has blinded
the minds of unbelievers, so that
they cannot see the light of the
gospel of the glory of Christ,
who is the image of God.”

2 Corinthians 4:4

“Who being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God
something to be grasped...”

Philippians 2:6

Mary(s) In the Bible

- Mary, Christ’s mother and Joseph's wife. (Note both Joseph and Mary are “Royal Blood”)
- Mary Magdalene
- Mary of “Mary and Martha”

Mary was a follower and friend of Jesus as were many women (Matthew 27:55; Mark 15:41).

Jesus cast out of Mary seven demons. (Mark 16:9; Luke 8:2)

She was present at Jesus' trial (Matthew 27:45)

And the crucifixion (John 19:25) Mary watched Joseph of Arimathea bury Jesus (Luke 23:56)

After three days, Mary returned to the tomb with some other women, saw that the stone had been rolled away (John 20:1) and they ran back to tell the disciples (John 20:2) that someone had stolen the body.

Mary was also the first person that Jesus appeared to after His resurrection (John 20:15-16) and He instructed her to go back and tell the disciples (John 20:18)

“Celibacy was foreign to the Hebrew culture....but marriage **was not compulsory** (enforced, essential or necessary are other synonyms); for some the demands of the kingdom might involve a celibate life.”

The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church: J. D. Douglass, General Editor, 633 & 34.

“It is good for a man not to marry....I wish that all men were as I am. But each man has his own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that.”

1 Corinthians 7:1 & 7

Other Info

- Where did the prostitute bit come from?
 - Possibly Pope Gregory the Great, who is rumored to have mentioned her as a prostitute in one of his Easter sermons
 - Possibly oral tradition and the “filling in” of sins
 - Possible from another Mary from Egypt...

The Gnostic Gospels found in Nag Hammadi, Egypt in 1945.

The Gospel of Thomas; The Gospel of Phillip; The Gospel of Truth and The Gospel to the Egyptians. Still others include: The Secret Book of James; The Apocalypse of Paul; the Letter of Peter to Philip and the Apocalypse of Peter.

“gnosis” = knowledge

“One basic theme of the myth concerns the heavenly preexistence of human souls prior to their embodied existence in this world. Something happened in that heavenly world of light that caused each human soul to fall from its heavenly home and resulted in the soul's being imprisoned in its body.

But the good god, taking pity on these poor souls, sent to earth a Gnostic Redeemer who imparted a secret knowledge about their former state—a state that people had forgotten—and about how they might return to it.

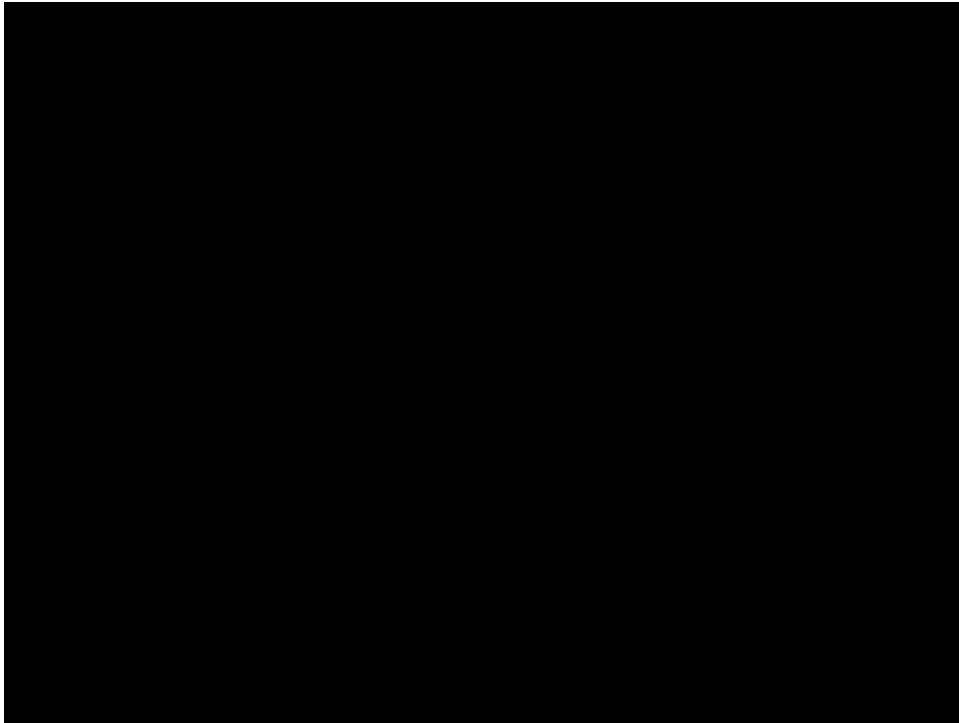
After giving this knowledge, the heavenly figure returned to the world of light.”

Ronald H. Nash:
The Gospel and the Greeks, 205.

“The operating myth of The Matrix can be plainly seen here: a small group of initiates (represented primarily in the film by Morpheus and his crew) who have secret knowledge about the history and genesis of the world bring Neo into the fold.

They tell him his secret history, explain how evil entered the world (by the pride of man as he creates Artificial Intelligence), and relate to their belief in the One, a redeemer (Neo himself) who will save humankind and destroy the world of the matrix.”

Chris Seay and Greg Garrett:
The Gospel Reloaded, 43.



“Peter said to Mary, ‘Sister, we know that the Savior loved you more than the rest of women. Tell us the words of the Savior which you remember—which you know (but) we do not, nor have we heard them.’

*“The Gospel of Mary Magdalene”, The Nag Hammadi Library: James M. Robinson-
General Editor, 525.*

Talking About the Code and the Bible

- Icons/idols: why do people worship them? Which would you rather worship something man-made or someone – someone who happens to be both human and divine?
- Jesus and the recorded words in the Bible are for freedom and not oppression.
- Jesus breaks any and all myths He is our God and He is alive!