

1  **The Da Vinci Code  
Part III**

**“The Illusion of the Sacred Feminine”  
[Luke 7:36-39]**

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4 

- Page 124 - Robert Langdon says this to Sophie:
- “... Constantine and his male successors successfully converted the world from matriarchal paganism to patriarchal Christianity by waging a campaign of propaganda that demonized the sacred feminine, obliterating the goddess from modern religion forever.”
- “... Powerful men in the early Christian church ‘conned’ the world by propagating lies that devalued the female and tipped the scales in favor of the masculine.”

5 

- James Garlow, who co-authored: “*Cracking Da Vinci’s Code*” with Peter Jones, says it this way:
- **“Brown’s thesis is succinct: Christianity destroyed and killed women. Paganism affirmed them.” Page 58**

6 

- Garlow says [in another place]:
- **“Brown makes some sweeping accusations about how the church (or persons representing the church) denigrates women, treating them as accomplices of satan. Then he creates a gender-fueled conspiracy and manipulates reality in order to demonstrate that pagan female cultures were much better than Judeo-Christian cultures today.” - Page 59**

7 

Three specifics set forth in Brown’s book which have no basis in reality:

- 1. There was previously a matriarchal culture that the church tried to crush.
- 2. The church, even up to the present time, has sought to demonize and repress women while pagans and other religions have affirmed and exalted women.
- 3. “Jesus was the original feminist” (p. 248). He intended for the future of His church to be in the hands of Mary Magdalene.

8 

**Is it true that there was a matriarchal culture prior to Christianity which the church attempted to crush?**

- Garlow cites Steven Goldberg, chairman of the department of Sociology at City College, City University of New York:

- “The point is that authority and leadership are, and always have been, associated with the male in every society, and I refer to this when I say that *patriarchy is universal and that there has never been a matriarchy* ... Theories that hypothesized a matriarchal form of society at ‘an earlier stage of history’ made a certain, if tortuous sense, until the findings of the past 50 years failed to include a single shred of evidence that such matriarchies had ever existed and demonstrated the inability of all such theories to deal with reality ...

9 

- “... [Of the hundreds of the societies we have studied in this century ... Without exception [they] have been patriarchal ... [Margaret] Mead acknowledged that ‘it is true ... that all the claims so glibly made about societies ruled by women are nonsense. We have no reason to believe that they ever existed.’”

- So, here we have two highly-regarded scholars: Steven Goldberg and Margaret Mead, saying there never has been such a thing as a matriarchal society. Garlow asks the question: “How then, if it never existed, was Constantine able to convert it to a patriarchal rule?”

10 

- Is it true that the Christian church, even up to the present time has sought to demonize and suppress women while pagans and other religions have affirmed and exalted women?

[In his book, James Garlow cites some very helpful information from a “groundbreaking book” by Alvin Schmidt titled: “**Under the Influence : How Christianity Transformed Civilization.**”]

11 

- Garlow says: “... before the coming of Christ, when the world of paganism was dominant, the lives of most women were held in very low regard. In Greece, India, and China, women had no rights and were considered the property of their husbands. The Greek philosophers of the day had no higher view of women than did other non-Christians. Aristotle taught that a woman ranked somewhere between a man and a slave. Plato taught that if a man lived a cowardly life, he would be reincarnated as a woman.”

12 

**In ancient Greece, wives were especially held in low regard and oppressed:**

- A wife, for example, was not allowed to leave her house unescorted.
- A wife was not allowed to interact with guests in the home, but was confined to her quarters.
- In contrast, [according to Verena Zinserling’s book: “Women in Greece and Rome] a man’s mistress was allowed to accompany a married man in public.
- Garlow says: “The average Athenian woman had the social status of a slave. Women were not educated, nor were they allowed to speak in public. ... Not only were women considered inferior, they were also thought to be the source of evil and thus were not to be trusted.”

13 

- “Wherever Christianity has been introduced, it has lifted up women, not just in antiquity but even in modern times.”
- “Sex-selection infanticide was common in 1880 in pagan China before the influence of Christian missionaries. Girl babies were disposed of as a liability.”

14 

- “It was the influence of Christians that helped to abolish China’s practice of binding women’s feet in order to create the diminutive effect that men found attractive. This dangerous practice had led to gangrene infection, needless amputation, and sometimes even death.”

15 

- “In India the practice of suttee was ended by the influence of Christianity. ... In this custom, a good hindu wife was expected to follow her husband in death by casting herself into the fire on the funeral pyre, and this even if she were young with her whole life ahead of her!”

16 

- “ ‘Child widows’ were also part of the pagan goddess-worshipping Hindu culture. These girls were raised to be temple prostitutes. Amy Carmichael, a Christian, fought to put an end to this practice by rescuing girls from it.”

17 

**This is not to say that everything has always been wonderful in the realm of Christianity!**

- **While there have been periods of church history which are an embarrassment to us today [i.e. the Crusades, witch hunts, the inquisition, etc.], these are the exception and not the norm. Wherever they have occurred, they were a departure from Biblical Christianity.**

18 

Is it true that Jesus was “the original feminist” (p. 248, D.C.), and that He originally intended His church to be in the hands of Mary Magdalene?

- There is absolutely no valid proof that Jesus was ever married!
  - Some of the arguments used:
    - Jesus was a rabbi and rabbis were married
    - Judaism itself favored marriage, and Jesus would likely have been married
    - Reference is made to a text in the “Gospel of Philip,” written a full two hundred years after the time of Jesus, in the second half of the third century, ... which: (1) Refers to Mary as a “companion;” and, (2) it says that He often kissed her.

19 

- **Another passage used in this argument is from the “Gospel of Mary” - a second century document. ...**

- The relevant comment is made by Levi, who says to Peter, “Peter, you have always been hot tempered. Now I see you contending against the woman like the adversaries. But 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. ...”

20 

- Finally, there is absolutely no reference in the Bible which explicitly states, or even implies that Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene. In fact the evidence is against such an idea!
  - The vast majority of both liberal and conservative scholars do not believe that Jesus was married!
  - The first-century culture of Israel was patriarchal and centered on the male. The usual custom involved in referring to a female was to connect her with some male. Mary ‘Magdalene’ refers to Mary’s home, Magdala (Lk. 8:2). If she were married to Jesus, the New Testament would have referred to her as “Mary, the wife of

Jesus.”

21 

- In I Corinthians 9:5 ff. - Paul’s argument would have been much stronger if he had pointed out that the Lord Jesus Himself had a wife, but he does not do so, ... because Jesus was not married!
- History gives witness to how the Roman Catholic church has responded to Mary, the mother of Jesus; ... i.e. how they have glorified her and revered her; ... Many scholars believe there would not have been any real reason why Jesus could not have been married [at least no insurmountable ones]. Therefore, N. T. writers would surely have mentioned this fact openly, ... but such is not the case!

22 

- Neither is the claim true that Jesus intended to place Mary over His church and that this effort was blocked by Jesus’ disciples [and Bishops of the church in the 4th century] who deliberately rejected Christ’s plan and suppressed the role of women in the church.
- This claim is based on a passage in the writings of an early church Father named Hippolytus. However, Hippolytus merely used the term “apostles” [which means ‘to send’] to refer to the women who were eye-witnesses of Christ’s resurrection at the tomb.

23 

- Finally: Jesus was not “the original feminist” in the sense Dan Brown suggests!
- James Garlow says it this way:
- “What is driving Dan Brown’s agenda? It is the pagan worldview that denies and distorts a core biblical truth: Men and women are created equal but different” (p. 78, Cracking Da Vinci’s Code).

24 

- The Bible’s high esteem for women:
  - Gen. 1:27 “In Genesis, we learn that both males and females receive their identity, their sense of value, from their relationship with the Creator, being made in the image of God.”
  - Rom. 5:12 The Apostle Paul indicates that sin entered into the world through the man, Adam! Apparently it was primarily Adam who failed in God’s eyes, probably for not providing adequate protection and leadership!
  - An entire book of the O. T. is named after Esther, who risked her own life to bring about the salvation of an entire race of people!

25 

- Another book of the O.T. is also named after a woman called Ruth! She is used to teach the principles of loyalty, wisdom, obedience and faithfulness.
- One of the Judges over Israel during the period of the judges was a woman named Deborah! She was a wife and a mother, as well as a national leader!
- Proverbs 31 paints the picture of the greatness of women, demonstrating their ability to juggle the amazing pressures as community leader, business woman, wife and mother!
- Matt. 1:1-16 Five women are included in the genealogy of Jesus Himself!

26 

- John 4:17-26 - The first person to whom Jesus announces that He is the Messiah is a woman! The Samaritan

woman at the well!

- **Luke 10:41-42** When Mary [the sister of Martha and Lazarus] sat and listened to Jesus' teaching while her sister Martha ran around fulfilling the "female role," Jesus affirmed Mary's behavior! [Usually, only men behaved in this way!]
- **Luke 8:1-3** In contrast to the culture of the time, a group of women were allowed to travel along with Jesus and the other men. They supported Jesus' ministry financially!
- **Gal. 3:28** The Apostle Paul, who is often called a male chauvinist, says there is no distinction between males and females in their standing before God!

27 

- **Eph. 5:22** Paul says women are to be in submission to their husbands; but in verse 25, he says "Husbands love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her." In other words, a husband is to be willing to die for his wife!
- **Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:1; Luke 24:10** - Women, who according to the customs of the times would not have been allowed to testify in court, are the ones who were selected by Christ to testify about the most important event in the history of the world, the resurrection of Christ from the dead!