

Fact: The Da Vinci Code is Full of Errors

“But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect”

(1 Peter 3:15) circa 64 AD

Imagine if you will, a time far in the future when America has long since ceased to be a Republic and is now a dictatorship ruled by an Imperial family. This future America is deeply divided over whether or not this dictatorship is the best form of government, and while the power and influence of supporters of democracy has waned greatly, there are still many American organizations that support democratic ideals. Let us further imagine, that one particular morning in this future America, we happen to tune into the following broadcast of a popular early morning show:

Latt Moyer: My guest this morning is Bran Down, the author of the new runaway bestselling book *“The Kennedy Code.”*

Good morning Bran, did you ever expect *“Kennedy Code”* to become the number one book in the world having sold over a billion copies?

Bran Down: Well no Latt, but it doesn’t surprise me. After all the issues in this book appeal to a huge segment of the population and urge us to reexamine what we have traditionally about the foundations of this country.

Latt Moyer: Well, since you’ve mentioned it, although your book is a work of fiction, it makes some pretty startling claims. It starts with the bizarre murder of the director of the Imperial library who was killed because he was the last man who knew of a secret left behind by a 20th century President by the name of Kennedy – a secret so powerful that it could reshape the very nature of “Democracy movements.” What was the secret that man was guarding?

Bran Down: Well Latt, the secret was that George Washington was *not* the first *President* of America, he was the *first King*. He was only declared to be “President” after his death at a meeting of congress in the 19th century. You see he and his wife Martha did have their own child, a girl by the name of Sophie, and it was his desire that his daughter would succeed him on the throne. But supporters of democracy, who are also well known to be misogynists would not stand for that. So Sophie was forced to flee to England, where she eventually became the founder of the House of Windsor.

Latt Moyer: And you also claim that it was Thomas Jefferson who for his own selfish political reasons, got Congress to declare that Washington had been “First President” and then suppressed all the evidence of his Kingship and had the history books rewritten?

Bran Down: Yes Latt, that’s right, my protagonist Langley Bob eventually finds out that President John F. Kennedy discovered that secret and was about to expose it, when he was assassinated by a sinister pro-Democracy organization called *“the League of Women Voters”* which exists to make sure that no one finds out the truth about Washington . But luckily, before he died, Kennedy put coded messages into his books and speeches so that others might eventually find out the truth.

Latt Moyer: and this *“League of Women Voters”* along with all the other organizations actually existed?

Bran Down: Yes Latt, that’s right.

Latt Moyer: How much of the rest of the novel is, you know, based on fact?

Bran Down: Well when I initially started writing it, I was, you know, really skeptical, but today, I absolutely believe all of it. It's all based on historical facts.

If you can imagine the feelings that a supporter of democracy would have towards a novel that made such ridiculous allegations about George Washington, then you already have a good insight into how many Christians feel about the equally baseless allegations made about Jesus and the history of Christianity by novelist Dan Brown in his worldwide bestselling novel *The Da Vinci Code*.

Those allegations as we shall see, include the idea that Jesus was never considered divine by his followers until his status was "upgraded" by a Roman emperor 292 years after his death, that Jesus married Mary Magdalene and had a child with her, and that the Bible we now have is also a product of a fourth century Imperial revision.

Many no doubt would respond at this point, that they are sorry that Christians are upset about some of the things said in the novel, but that it is after all, a work of *fiction* and that fictional works are not intended to be read as "fact" by their authors. While there is some truth to that contention, the problem with the *Da Vinci Code* in particular, is that it is obvious that Brown intends us to believe that his fictional characters are in fact exploring historical truths. This is made clear on the first page of the novel which declares in bold letters:

"FACT: the Priory of Sion—a European secret society founded in 1099—is a real organization. In 1975 Paris's Bibliothèque 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."

The page then goes on to talk about Opus Dei as a sinister and controversial Roman Catholic sect and concludes with the sweeping statement, "All descriptions of artwork, architecture, documents and secret rituals in the novel are accurate."

Dan Brown himself has publicly backed up his novel's "factuality" on various interview shows for instance, when Matt Lauer asked "How much of this is based on reality in terms of things that actually occurred? I know you did a lot of research for the book." Brown responded "Absolutely all of it. Obviously, there are--Robert Langdon is fictional, but all of the art, architecture, secret rituals, secret societies, all of that is historical fact." On another morning show Brown was asked by Charles Gibson, "If you were writing it as a nonfiction book, how would it have been different?" to which Brown answered, "I don't think it would have, I began the research for 'The Da Vinci Code' as a skeptic. ... After numerous trips to Europe, about two years of research, I really became a believer."

One wonders how Brown did so much research in Europe, but failed to discover that the "Priory of Sion" was a hoax created by a French forger by the name of Pierre Plantard in 1956 and that the documents he refers to were by his own admission planted in the *Bibliothèque Nationale*, especially considering both European and American newspapers have repeatedly exposed Plantard's elaborate fraud. But regardless, the fact remains that Brown believes that his novel is essentially factual, and wants us to believe the same.

To a certain extent, Brown's revision of Christian history is taking hold with the public. The author of this essay has personally encountered people who sincerely believe and repeat the *Da Vinci Code* version of Christian history. This is, unfortunately, to be expected in an age when popular knowledge of church history and biblical literacy are both at an all time low. It also reflects the rise of the genre of historical fiction as the means that Americans prefer to get their historical information from. One only has to reflect on how influential historical novels like "The Killer Angels" and movies like "Saving Private Ryan" have been on our ideas about events like the Battle of Gettysburg and D-Day. It's also worth remembering that some works of fiction, like Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, have played a profound role in shaping American attitudes and beliefs. A work of fiction can sometimes have a greater effect than a work that is supposed to be non-fiction. That is also

the case with *The Da Vinci Code*, which has outsold and entirely eclipsed one of the supposed non-fiction works that it draws heavily from, the 1983 bestseller "*Holy Blood, Holy Grail*" by Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh, and Henry Lincoln. Brown pays homage to this earlier work, by naming one of the *Da Vinci Code*'s main characters, "Leigh Teabing" after Leigh and Baigent. It's no surprise that Teabing turns out to be the main "theologian" for the novel as well.

A Brief Refutation of the major error of the Novel:

D) "*Jesus' establishment as 'the Son of God' was officially proposed and voted on by the Council of Nicaea. ... 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.*" (*Da Vinci Code*, p. 253)

- The Council of Nicaea (325 AD) was not convened to make Jesus into God.
- The council was called to decide the Arian heresy – i.e. was Jesus the Second member of the Godhead, and thus equal to God the Father, or was he the first born over all creation and *similar* to God but not fully God.
- Thus it was not Jesus as God or Mortal, but *fully* God and uncreated or *similar* to God and created.
- Up until that time, the orthodox had always worshipped Jesus as God the Son.
- Not Even a Close Vote, only two Bishops Dissented

What then did the early Christians believe about Christ in the centuries prior to Nicaea?

Let us ask them:

Barnabas A.D. 74

"And further, my brethren, if the Lord [Jesus] endured to suffer for our soul, he being the Lord of all the world, to whom God said at the foundation of the world, 'Let us make man after our image, and after our likeness,' understand how it was that he endured to suffer at the hand of men" (Letter of Barnabas 5).

Ignatius of Antioch. A.D. 107.

"Be deaf, therefore, when any would speak to you apart from Jesus Christ, who was descended from the family of David, born of Mary, who truly was born, truly took a body; for the Word became flesh and dwelt among us without sin"

"For our God Jesus Christ, was, according to the appointment of God, conceived in the womb by Mary, of the seed of David, but by the Holy Ghost." (Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians 4:9)

Irenæus. A.D. 180.

"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, and the resurrection from the dead, and the ascension into heaven in the flesh of the beloved Christ Jesus, our Lord, and His 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, 'every knee should bow, of

things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess; to him, and that He should execute just judgment towards all..." (Against Heresies X.1)

Tertullian. A.D. 200.

"The Rule of Faith is altogether one, sole, immovable, and irreformable—namely, to believe in one God Almighty, the Maker of the world; and his Son, Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary, crucified under Pontius Pilate, on the third day raised again from the dead, received in the heavens, sitting now at the right hand of the Father, coming to judge the quick and the dead, also through the resurrection of the flesh."

Novatian, of Rome. A.D. 250.

"The rule of truth demands that, first of all, we believe in God the Father and Almighty Lord, that is, the most perfect Maker of all things. . . ' The same rule of truth teaches us to believe, after the Father, also in the Son of God, CHRIST JESUS, our Lord God, but the Son of God.... Moreover, the order of reason and the authority of faith, in due consideration of the words and Scriptures of the Lord ', admonishes us, after this, to believe also in the Holy Ghost, promised of old to the Church, but granted in the appointed and fitting time."

Letter from an Enemy of the Christian Faith

Pliny to Trajan A.D. 112

"They asserted, however, that the sum and substance of their fault or error had been that they were accustomed to meet on a fixed day before dawn and sing responsively a hymn to Christ as to a god, and to bind themselves by oath, not to some crime, but not to commit fraud, theft, or adultery, not falsify their trust, nor to refuse to return a trust when called upon to do so."

II) ***"More than eighty gospels were considered for the New Testament, and yet only a relative few were chosen for inclusion — Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John among them. ... The Bible as we know it today, was collated by the pagan Roman emperor Constantine the Great." (Da Vinci Code, p. 251)***

- Bible was already long since received by the church in its present form by 325 AD.
- No copy of the bible was commissioned at Nicaea
- There were no Gnostic Gospels discovered amongst the Dead Sea Scrolls, which were a collection of *Old Testament* and *Intertestamental* writings discovered in Qumran in Israel.
- Gnostic Gospels discovered at Nag Hammadi, Egypt in 1945 not 1950s
- 50 Coptic Scrolls books Only 5 of these are "Gnostic Gospels"
- They redefine Christianity, Rewrite the Christian Faith and make it a Greek "Gnostic" religion
- All the NT books can be dated to the first century, most likely before 70 AD
- Earliest date for the Nag Hammadi Scrolls is around 150 AD

Lastly, contrary to Brown's thesis, the Gnostic gospels do *not* teach a "sacred feminine" ideal. Gnosticism, in common with most Greek philosophy, held that women were inferior, and incapable of either thinking or loving as deeply as men. Therefore in the Gnostic gospels, women if they have any hope of being saved, have to somehow shed their femininity and *become* men:

Gospel of Thomas, Saying 114: ***"Simon Peter says to them: "Let Mary go out from our midst, for women are not worthy of life!" Jesus says: "See, I will draw her so as to make her male so that she also may become a living spirit like you males. For every woman who has become male will enter the Kingdom of heaven."***