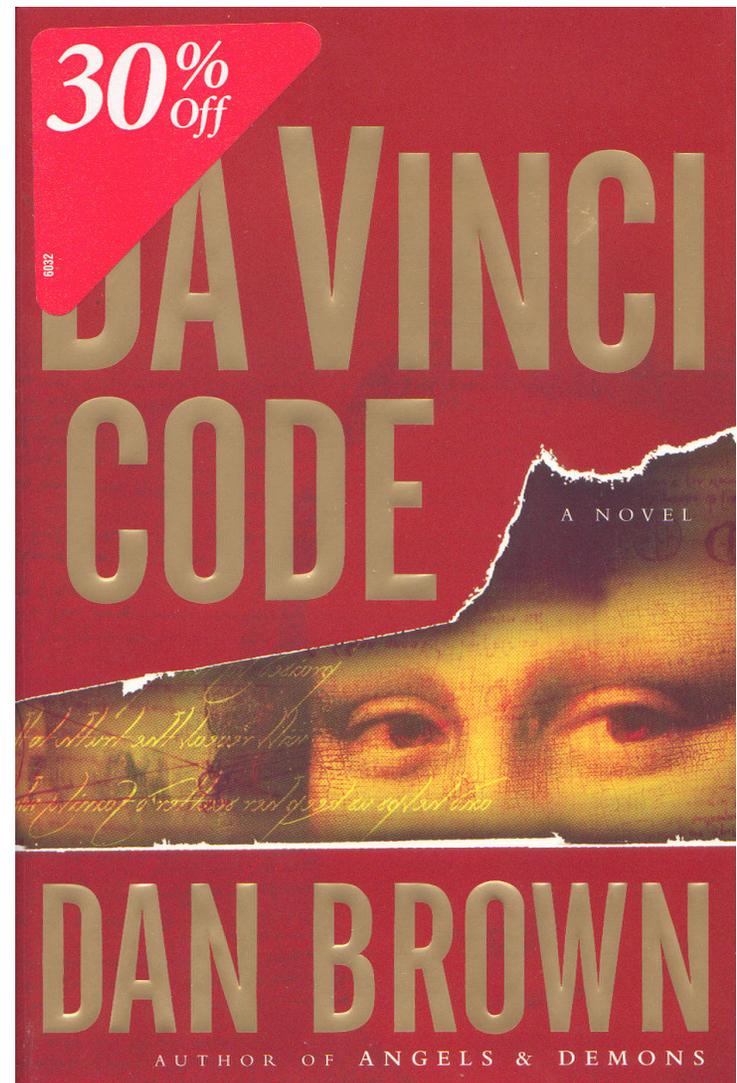


The Da Vinci Code
Introduction &
Major Questions

Robert C. Newman



What's the Buzz?



- The Da Vinci Code is a novel that has attracted an enormous amount of attention:
 - A murder mystery
 - Of the thriller sort
 - Containing 454 pages in 105 short chapters
 - A real page-turner!
- Yet it claims to be a sort of historical novel:
 - Historically accurate
 - With fictional plot and main characters
 - Consider this claim it makes:

The complete text
of page one of
*The Da Vinci
Code*.

The Priory of Sion – a European
secret society founded in 1099 –
is a real organization.

All descriptions of artwork,
architecture, documents,
and secret rituals in this
novel are accurate.

F A C T :

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 Vatican prelature known as Opus
Dei is a deeply devout Catholic
sect that has been the topic of recent
controversy due to reports of brain-
washing, coercion, and a dangerous
practice known as "corporal mortification."
Opus Dei has just completed construction
of a \$47 million National Headquarters at
243 Lexington Avenue in New York City.

All descriptions of artwork, architecture,
documents, and secret rituals in this novel
are accurate.

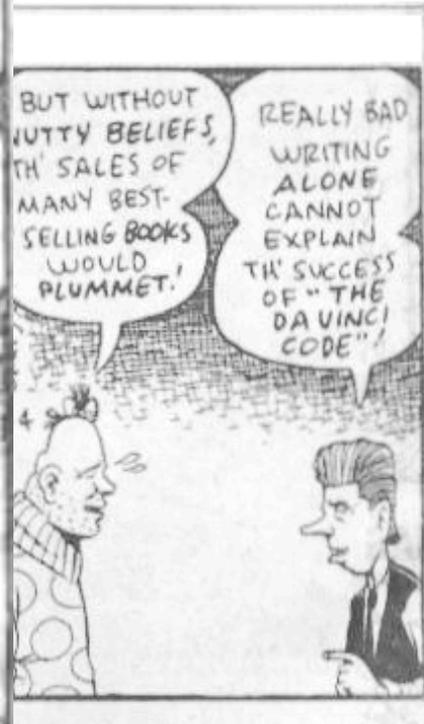
What's the Buzz?



- The book has sold extremely well.
 - Published April 2003, immediate best-seller
 - Sold 40 million copies in hardback
 - Still on NY Times best-seller list June 2006
- A movie based on the book was released in May 2006 & did well.
- The book is exciting & well-written (as this sort of book goes).
- The book is highly controversial.

The Book is Controversial

ZIPPY THE PINHEAD BILL GRIBB

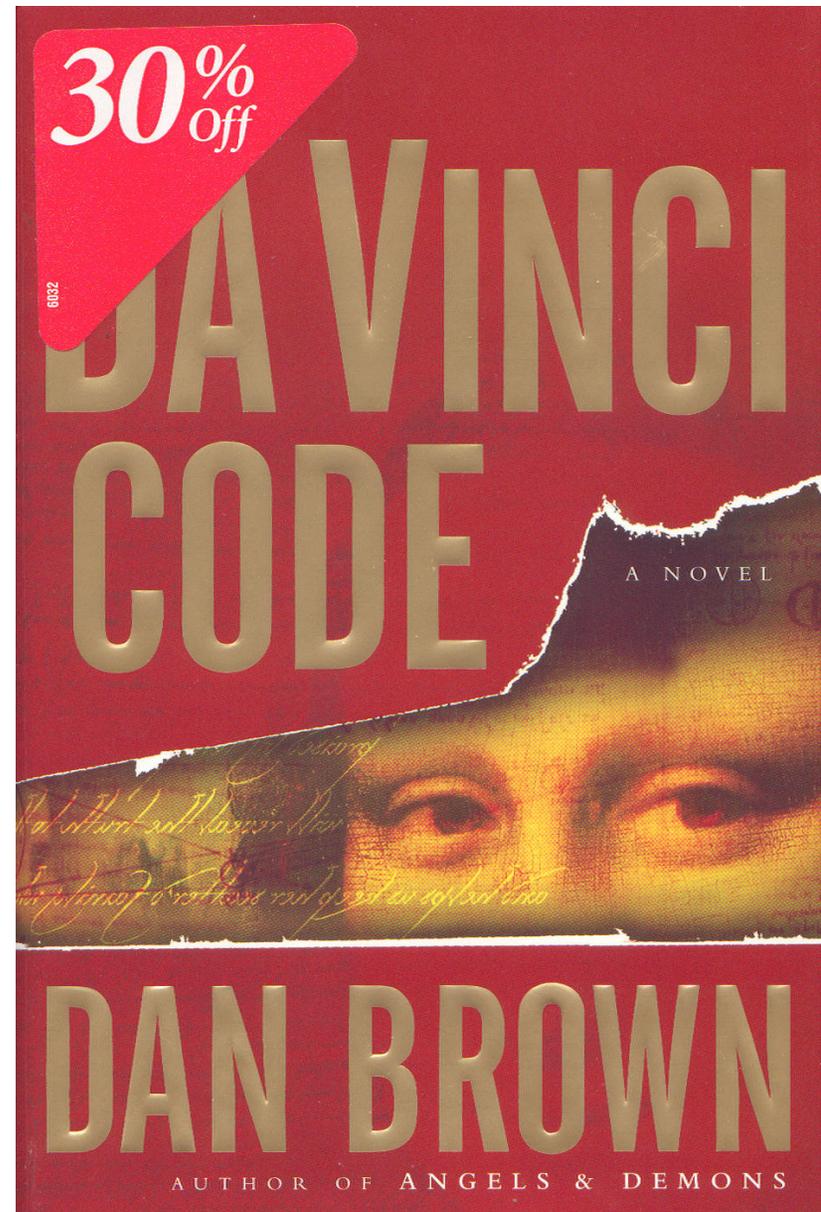


The Book is Controversial

- The popularity of the book is not totally about its attraction as a mystery thriller.
- Much of the interest is surely about its claim that traditional Christianity is a hoax.



The Plot of *The Da Vinci Code*



The Murder

- Victim: Jacques Saunière
 - Curator of the Louvre
 - (Secretly) Grand Master of the Priory of Sion
- Murderer: Silas
 - Large albino Monk connected with Opus Dei
- Master Plotter: The Teacher
 - Mysterious, unseen, provides info to Silas



The Hero & Heroine

- Robert Langdon
 - Prof of Religious Symbology at Harvard
 - In Paris to give a lecture when murder occurs
- Sophie Neveu
 - Cryptographer for French Judicial Police
 - Grand-daughter of murder victim



The Plot

- Story begins with the murder ~ 11 pm, inside the Louvre.
- Langdon is awakened at his hotel an hour & a half later by a phone call from the police.
- He is summoned to meet with Bezu Fache, crack investigator of the Judicial Police, at the scene of the crime.
- Fache secretly suspects Langdon, as Langdon's name was in Saunière's calendar to meet with Saunière earlier that evening.

The Murder Scene

- Saunière has been found dead, naked, and lying in a pose that matches that of Da Vinci's "Vitruvian Man."
- In the few minutes between being shot & dying, he managed to leave several cryptic clues about what is going on.



The Plot Thickens

- As the police prepare to arrest Langdon, Sophie manages to spirit him away.
- They decipher clues her grandfather has left behind.
- These involve a secret group guarding a devastating secret about the Church.



The Plot Moves On

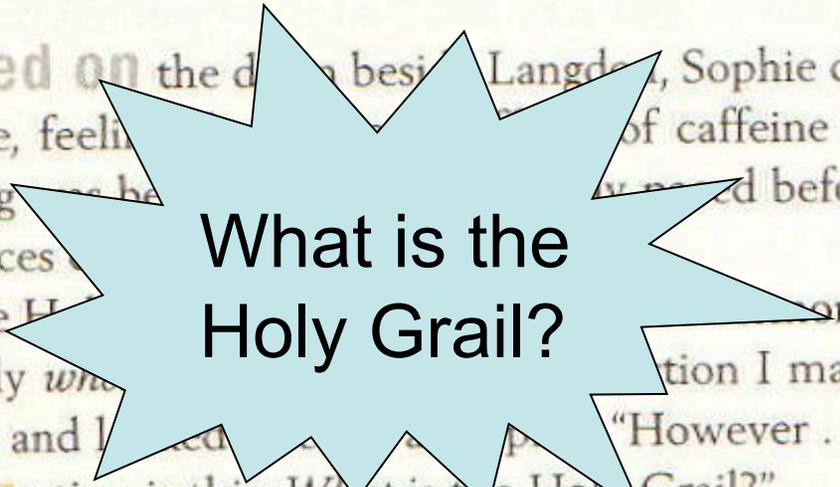
- The rest of the book is a combination of their flight from the French police (and from Silas the murderer), while simultaneously seeking to locate and decipher the clues Saunière has left behind to direct them to the Grail.
- In the course of their flight, Sophie and Langdon travel to several places in France, then to London, and finally to Scotland.

Sir Leigh Teabing

- They seek out Leigh Teabing, ex-British Royal Historian, who lives in a chateau outside Paris.
- Teabing is one of the world's experts on the Holy Grail and the Priory of Sion.
- Teabing fills them in on the Grail secret.



Seated on the dais beside Langdon, Sophie drank her tea and ate a scone, feeling the effects of caffeine and food. Sir Leigh Teabing sat before the open fire, his leg braces



What is the Holy Grail?

"The Holy Grail," Teabing said. "Most people ask me only *what* it is, but the question I may never answer." He turned and looked at Sophie. "However . . . the far more relevant question is this: *What is the Holy Grail?*"

Sophie sensed a rising air of academic anticipation now in both of her male companions.

"To fully understand the Grail," Teabing continued, "we must first understand the Bible. How well do you know the New Testament?"

Sophie shrugged. "Not at all, really. I was raised by a man who worshipped Leonardo da Vinci."

Teabing looked both startled and pleased. "An enlightened soul. Su-

Sophie shrugged. "Not at all, really. I was raised by a man who worshipped Leonardo da Vinci."

Teabing said, "An enlightened soul. Superb! Then you are one of the keepers of the secret of the Holy Grail. He hid clues in his art."

"Robert."

"And Sophie."

"I have."

Teabing's eyes lit up. He walked to the bookshelf across the room. "Robert, would you mind? On the bottom shelf. *La Storia di Leonardo.*"

Langdon went across the room, found a large art book, and brought it back, setting it down on the table between them. Twisting the book to face Sophie, Teabing flipped open the heavy cover and pointed inside the rear cover to a series of quotations. "From Da Vinci's notebook on polemics and speculation," Teabing said, indicating one quote in particular. "I think you'll find this relevant to our discussion."

Sophie read the words.

*Many have made a trade of delusions
and false miracles, deceiving the stupid multitude.*

—LEONARDO DA VINCI

"Here's another," Teabing said, pointing to a different quote.

*Blinding ignorance does mislead us.
O! Watched mortals, open your eyes!*

**The Bible is a
product of man
... Not of God.**

"The Bible is a product of *man*, my dear. Not of God. The Bible did not fall magically from the clouds. Man created it as a historical record of tumultuous times, and it has evolved through countless translations, additions, and revisions. History has never had a definitive version of the book."

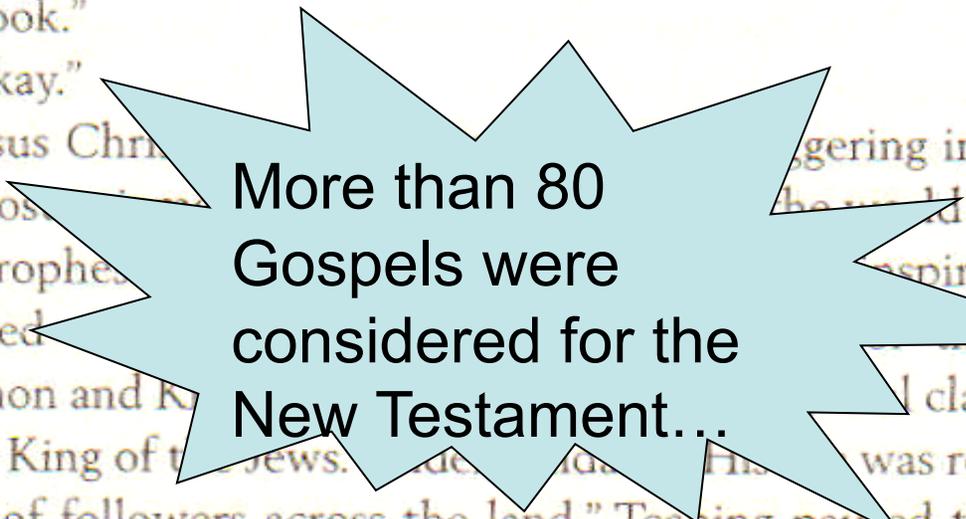
“The Bible is a product of *man*, my dear. Not of God. The Bible did not fall magically from the clouds. Man created it as a historical record of tumultuous times, and it has evolved through countless translations, additions, and revisions. History has never had a definitive version of the book.”

“Okay.”

“Jesus Christ had a staggering influence, perhaps the most powerful the world has ever seen. As the prophesied messiah, he inspired millions, and founded the Kingdom of God on Earth. The times of King Solomon and King David had claimed to the throne of the King of the Jews. His life and teachings were recorded by thousands of followers across the land.” Teabing paused to sip his tea and then placed the cup back on the mantel. “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.

“Who chose which gospels to include?” Sophie asked.

“Aha!” Teabing burst in with enthusiasm. “The fundamental irony of Christianity! The Bible, as we know it today, was collated by the pagan Roman emperor Constantine the Great.”



More than 80
Gospels were
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New Testament...

"Transmogrification," Langdon said. "The vestiges of pagan religion in Christian symbology are undeniable. Egyptian sun disks became the halos of Catholic saints. Pictograms of Isis nursing her miraculously conceived son Horus became the blueprint for our modern images of the Virgin Mary nursing Baby Jesus. And virtually all the elements of the Catholic Mass—the Eucharist, the doxology, and communion, the Mass itself—derive directly from earlier pagan mystery religions."

Nothing in
Christianity is
original

Teaching great-grandchildren that Christianity is original. The pre-Christian God Mithras—called *the Son of God* and *the Light of the World*—was born on December 25, died, was buried in a rock tomb, and then resurrected in three days. By the way, December 25 is also the birthday of Osiris, Adonis, and Dionysus. The newborn Krishna was presented with gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Even Christianity's weekly holy day was stolen from the pagans."

"What do you mean?"

"Originally," Langdon said, "Christianity honored the Jewish Sabbath of Saturday, but Constantine shifted it to coincide with the

pagan's veneration day of the sun." He paused, grinning. "To this day, most churchgoers attend services on Sunday morning with no idea that they are there on account of the pagan sun god's weekly tribute—*Sunday*."

Sophie's head was spinning. "And all of this relates to the Grail?"

"Indeed," Teabing said. "Start with me. During this fusion of religions, Constantine needed to strengthen the Christian religion, and he held a famous ecumenical council in the city of Nicaea."

Sophie had heard of the Council of Nicaea.

"At this gathering, the divinity of Jesus was debated and voted on by the Council of Nicaea."

"I don't follow."

"My dear," Teabing said. "At that time, Jesus was viewed by His followers as a mortal prophet, a great and powerful man, but a *man* nonetheless. A mortal."

"Not the Son of God?"

"Right," Teabing said. "Jesus' establishment as 'the Son of God' was officially proposed and voted on by the Council of Nicaea."

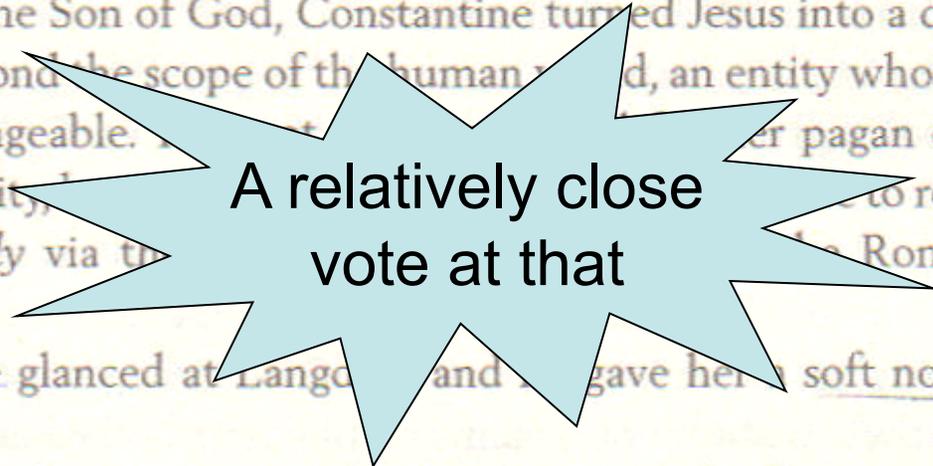
"Hold on. You're saying Jesus' divinity was the result of a *vote*?"

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“Right,” Teabing said. “Jesus’ establishment as ‘the Son of God’ was officially proposed and voted on by the Council of Nicaea.”

“Hold on. You’re saying Jesus’ divinity was the result of a *vote*?”

“A relatively close vote at that,” Teabing added. “Nonetheless, 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. This was a necessary step to counter pagan challenges to Christianity, and to provide a path for pagans to redeem themselves *only* via the Roman Catholic Church.”



Sophie glanced at Langdon and gave her a soft nod of concurrence.

“It was all about power,” Teabing continued. “Christ as Messiah was critical to the functioning of Church and state. Many scholars claim that the early Church literally *stole* Jesus from His original followers, hijacking His human message, shrouding it in an impenetrable cloak of divinity, and using it to expand their own power. I’ve written several books on the topic.”

“And I assume devout Christians send you hate mail on a daily basis?”

"Why would they?" Teabing countered. "The vast majority of educated Christians know the history of their faith. Jesus was indeed a great and powerful man. Constantine's underhanded political maneuvers don't diminish the majesty of Christ's life. Nobody is saying Christ was a fraud, or denying that He walked the earth and inspired millions to better lives. All we are saying is that Constantine took advantage of Christ's substantial influence and importance. And in doing so, he shaped the face of Christianity today."

Sophie glanced at the painting, eager to move on and see the Da Vinci.

"The twist," Teabing said, "is that because Constantine commissioned a new Bible ... a new Bible after Jesus' death, thousands of documents that depicted His life as a *mortal* man. To reverse the situation, Constantine knew he would need a bold stroke. From this sprang the most profound moment in Christian history." Teabing paused, eyeing Sophie. "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 were outlawed, gathered up, and burned."

"An interesting note," Langdon added. "Anyone who chose the forbidden gospels over Constantine's version was deemed a heretic. The

and burned.”

“An interesting note,” Langdon added. “Anyone who chose the forbidden gospels over Constantine’s version was deemed a heretic. The word *heretic* derives from that moment in history. The Latin word *haereticus* means ‘choice.’ Those who ‘chose’ the original history of Christ were the world’s first heretics.”

“Fortunately for us, some of the gospels that survived the Dead Sea Scrolls were found at Qumran in the Judean Desert. The Nag Hammadi papyri, which speak of Christ’s divinity, were kept hidden in the Vatican, in an effort to suppress the truth. The scrolls highlight the 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.”

“And yet,” Langdon countered, “it’s important to remember that the modern Church’s desire to suppress these documents comes from a

Some of the gospels managed to survive ... The Dead Sea Scrolls ... the Coptic Scrolls at Nag Hammadi

Da Vinci's *Last Supper*

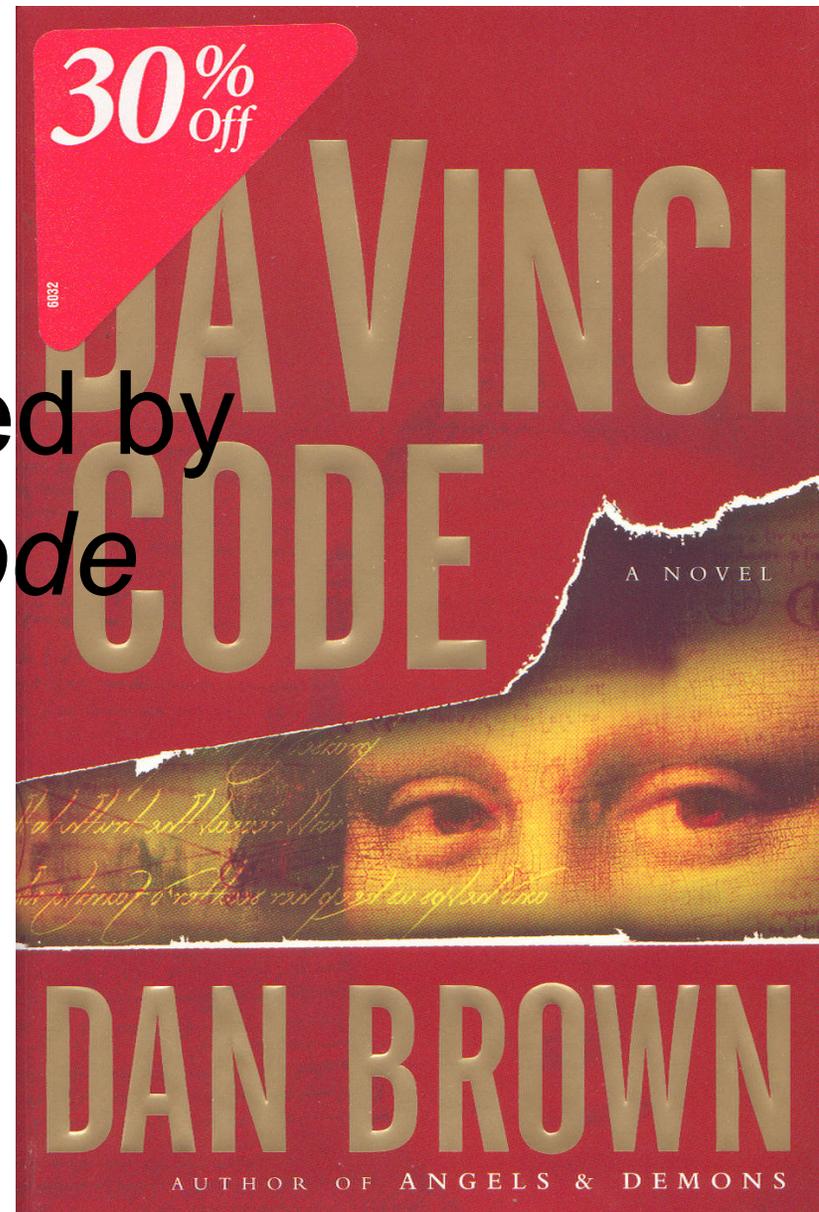
- Teaching goes on to explain how Leonardo Da Vinci has hidden clues in his famous painting.
- He says the figure thought to be St John is really Mary Magdalene, Jesus' wife & mother of his child Sarah.



The Rest of the Plot

- We won't spoil the story by revealing how the book ends.
- But after Jesus' death, we are told, Mary M & Sarah were hidden away in France.
- The church covered this up, male leadership took over & reconfigured Mary Magdalene as a prostitute, rejecting the sacred feminine.

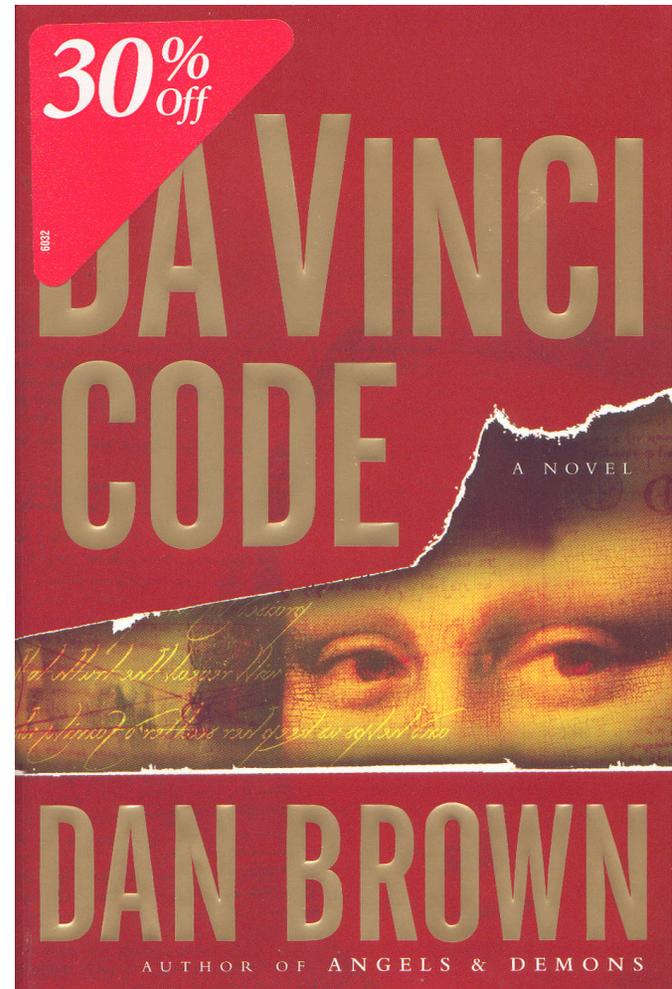
Questions Raised by
The Da Vinci Code



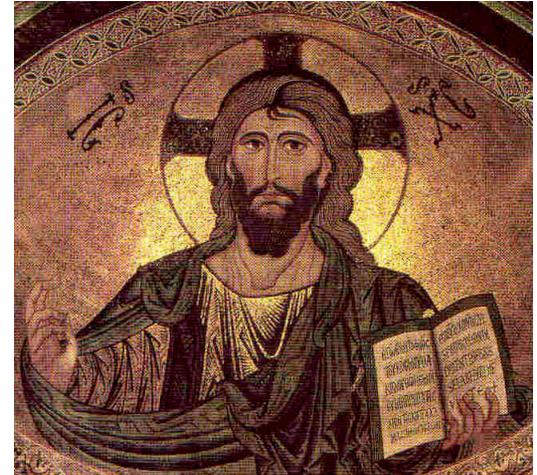
Questions Raised

Include topics such as:

- Christology
- Scripture
- Church History
- Various others:
 - Mary Magdalene
 - Leonardo Da Vinci
 - The Templars
 - The Priory of Sion



Questions about Jesus Christ



- Who was Jesus?
 - Was he merely a human?
 - Was his status upgraded by Constantine?
- Was he raised from the dead after his crucifixion?
- Did Jesus really marry?
- Did he & Mary Magdalene have a child?

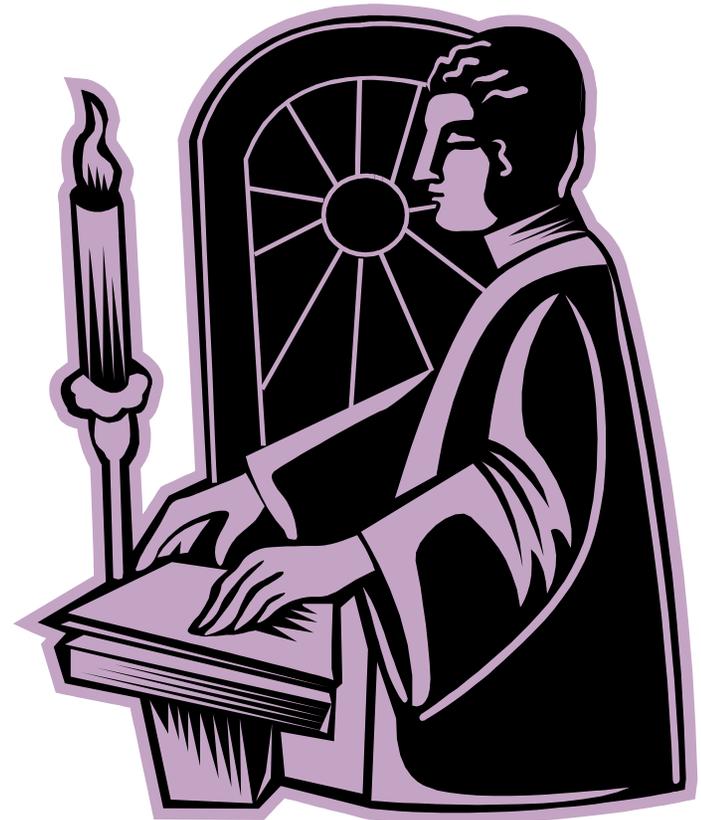
Questions about the Bible



- Is our Bible very different from the one the early Christians had?
- Did Constantine prepare a new Bible?
- Did he destroy the Gospels which pictured a merely human Jesus?
- Did he modify the Gospels in our Bible to make Jesus look divine?
- What about the Gnostic Gospels?

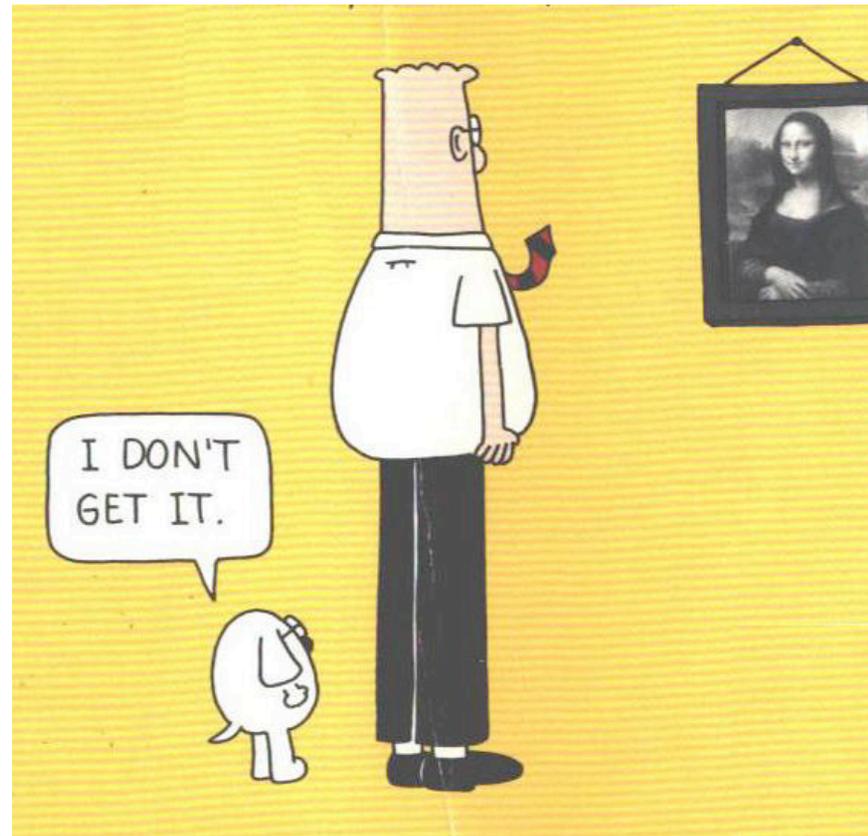
Questions about Church History

- What happened at the Council of Nicea?
- Was Constantine a Christian?
- Did the Roman Catholic Church adopt many features from paganism?
- Has it been covering up a huge secret for nearly 2000 years?



Miscellaneous questions

- What do we know about Mary Magdalene?
- Did Leonardo Da Vinci hide clues in his paintings that reveal the secret of the Holy Grail?
- What do we know about the Templars?
- What do we know about the Priory of Sion?



Let's Get
Started!

