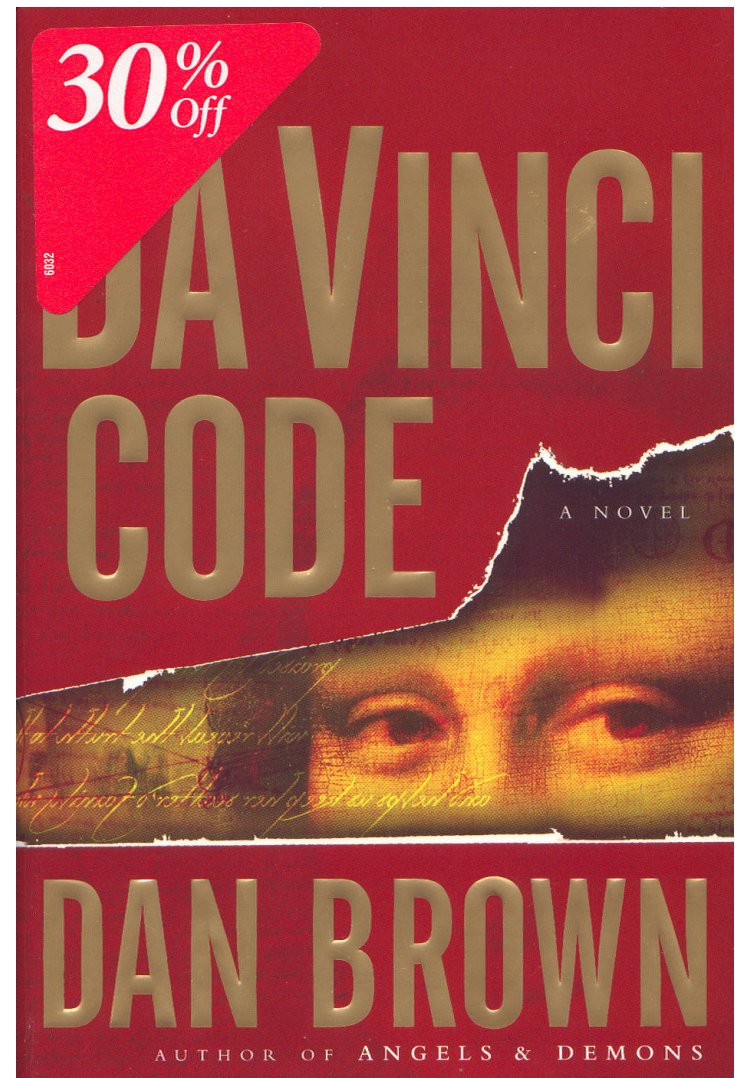


# *The Da Vinci Code: What to Make of It?*

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 some 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
  - Still on NY Times best-seller list May 2006
  - 40 million copies sold in 44 languages
- A movie based on the book has now been released.
- The book is exciting & well-written (as this sort of book goes).
- The book is highly controversial.



# The Book is Controversial

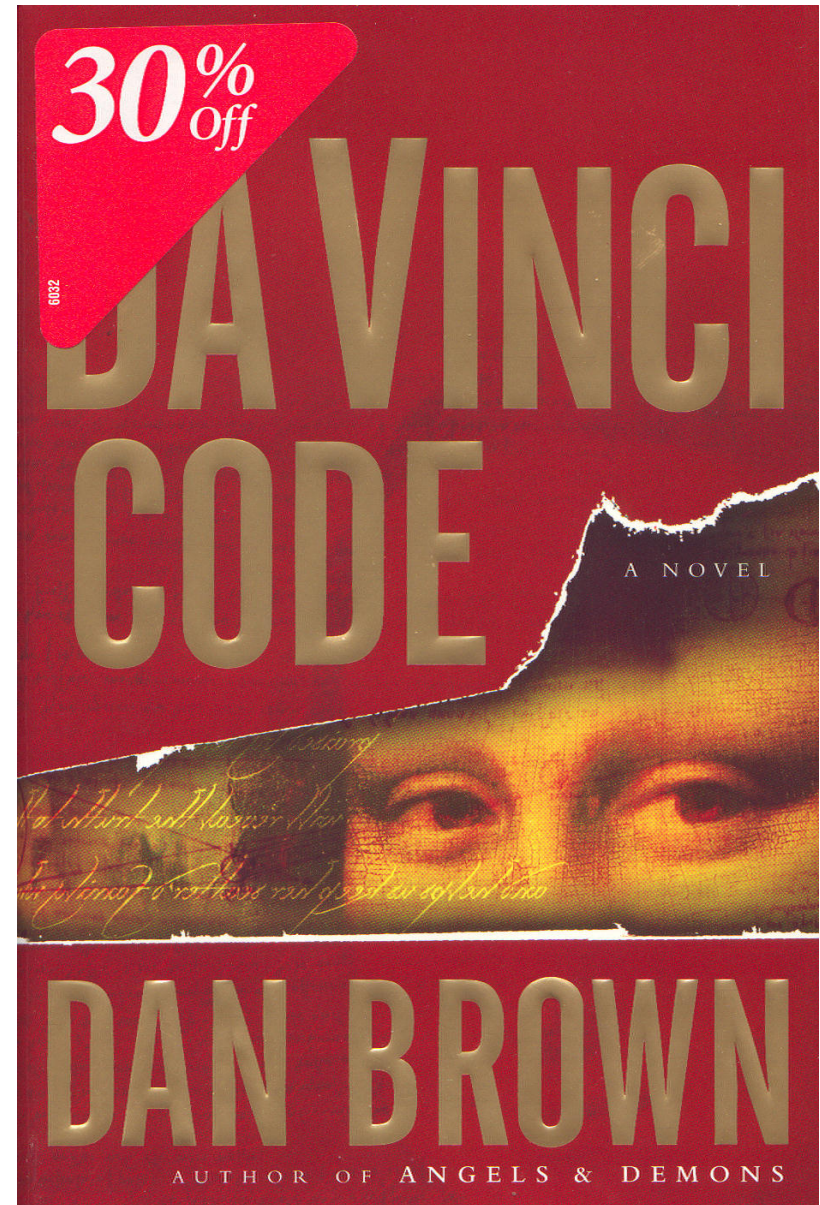


# The Book is Controversial

- Indeed, the book's popularity is not just its attraction as a mystery thriller.
- Much of the interest surely involves 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 Symbolology 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 for a meeting 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 Grail & 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 was hunched before the open fire, his leg braces

What is the Holy Grail?

"The Holy Grail," Teabing said. "Most people ask me only *where* 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, "He was 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 I,"

"I have,"

Teabing's eyes were fixed 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.

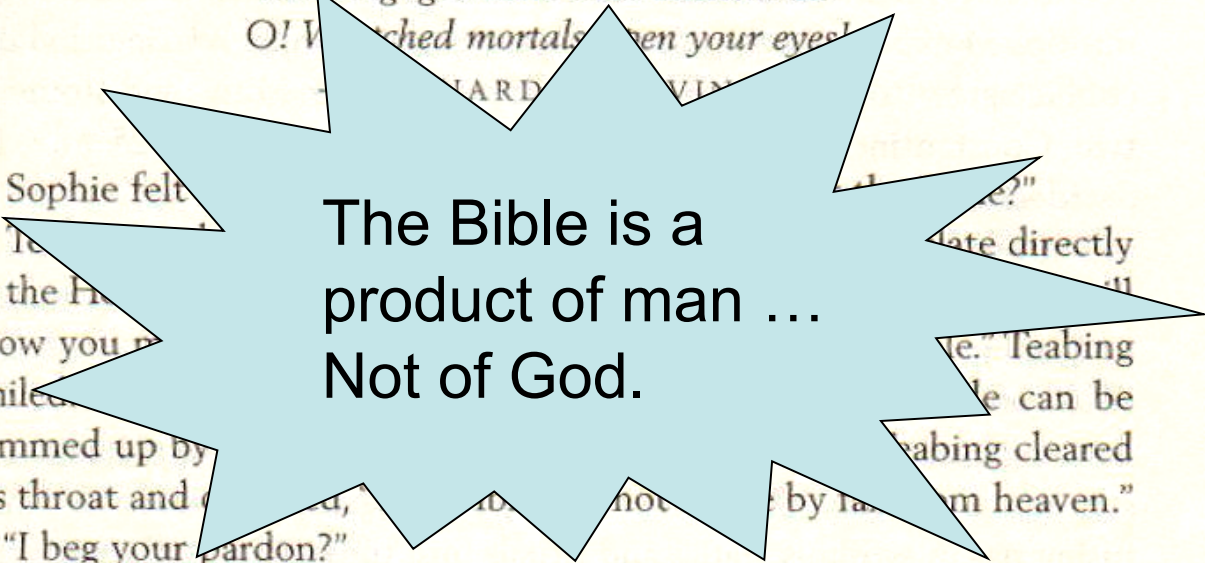


*Many have made a trade of delusions  
and false miracles, deceiving the stupid multitude.*

—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.

Sophie felt  
to the H  
show you  
smiled.  
summed up by  
his throat and  
"I beg your pardon?"

"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 prophesies inspired millions, and founded the times of King Solomon and King David, his claim to the throne of the King of the Jews. His life was 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  
considered for the  
New Testament...



"I thought Constantine was a Christian," Sophie said.

"Hardly," Teabing scoffed. "He was a lifelong pagan who was baptized on his deathbed, too weak to protest. In Constantine's day, Rome's official religion was sun worship—the cult of *Sol Invictus*, or the Invincible Sun—and Constantine was its head priest. Unfortunately for him, a growing religious turmoil was gripping Rome. Three centuries after the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, Christ's followers had multiplied exponentially. Christians and pagans began warring, and the conflict grew to such proportions that it threatened to rend Rome in two. Constantine decided something had to be done. In 325 A.D., he decided to . . . Christianity."

# Constantine a

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to protest

"Transmogrification," Langdon said. "The vestiges of pagan religion in Christian symbology are undeniable. Egyptian sun disks became the

"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 Mass, the doxology, and communion, the Mass, the Mass—derive directly from earlier pagan mystery religions."

Nothing in  
Christianity is  
original

Teabing grew silent. Theologist started on Christian icons. Nothing in 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. "Starting with me. During this fusion of religions, Constantine needed to strengthen the Christian tradition, and he held a famous council in 325 AD, the Council of Nicaea."

Sophie had heard of the Council of Nicaea. It was the first of the Nicene Councils.

"At this gathering, the divinity of Jesus was debated and voted on by the council members. The admission of Jesus as the Son of God was the official result of the council."

"I don't follow."

"My dear," Teabing said. "At the time, Jesus was viewed by His followers as a mortal prophet, a great 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 redeem themselves *only* via the Roman Catholic Church."

A relatively close  
vote at that

Sophie glanced at Lango and gave her a soft nod of concur-  
rence.

"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 Langdon, eager to move on and see the Da Vinci.

"The twist," Teabing said, "is that because Constantine was the first emperor to convert to Christianity after Jesus' death, he was in a unique position to influence the early Church. He 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

Constantine  
commissioned ...  
a new Bible

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 we found at Qumran in the first century AD. The Nag Hammadi documents speak of the Vatican, in keeping them very hard to suppress the truth. They? 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



# Da Vinci's *Last Supper*

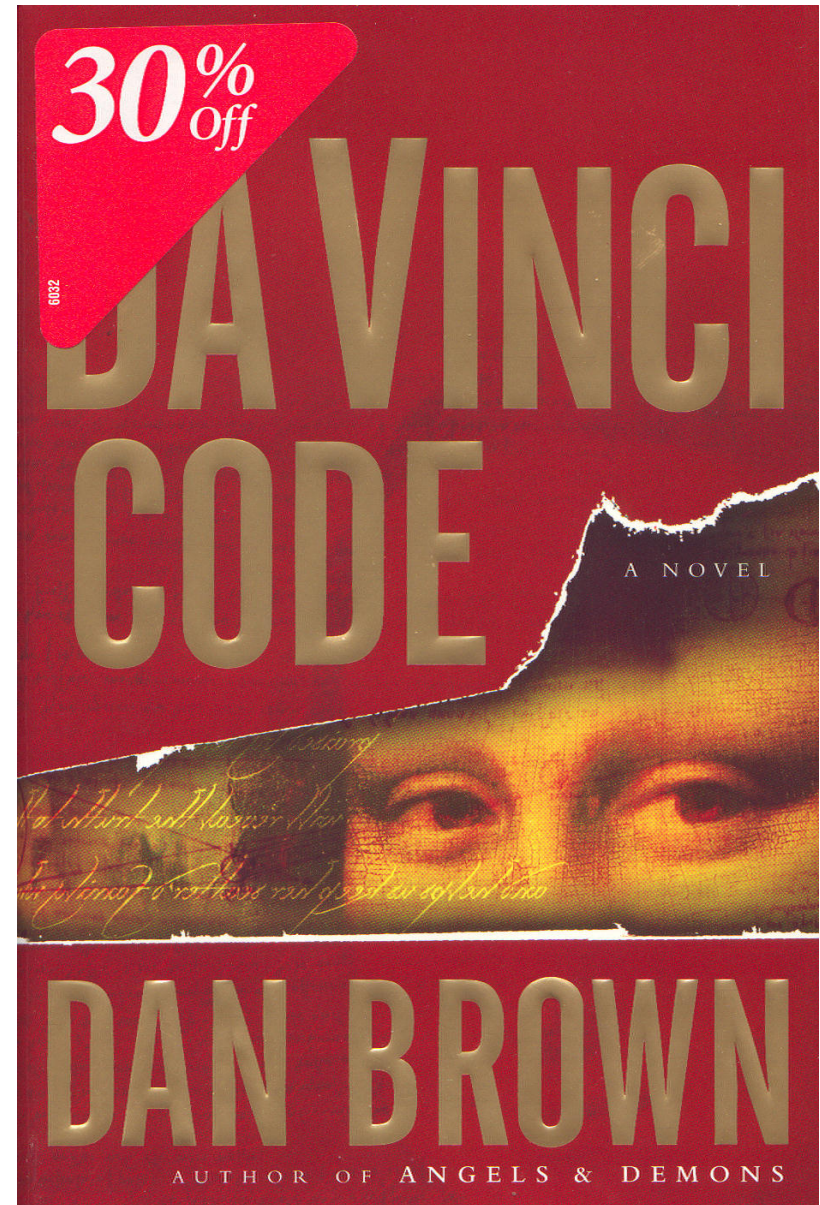
- Teabing goes on to explain how Leonardo da Vinci has hidden clues in his famous paintings.
- He says the figure thought to be St John is really Mary Magdalene, Jesus' wife & mother of his child Sarah.



# 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*

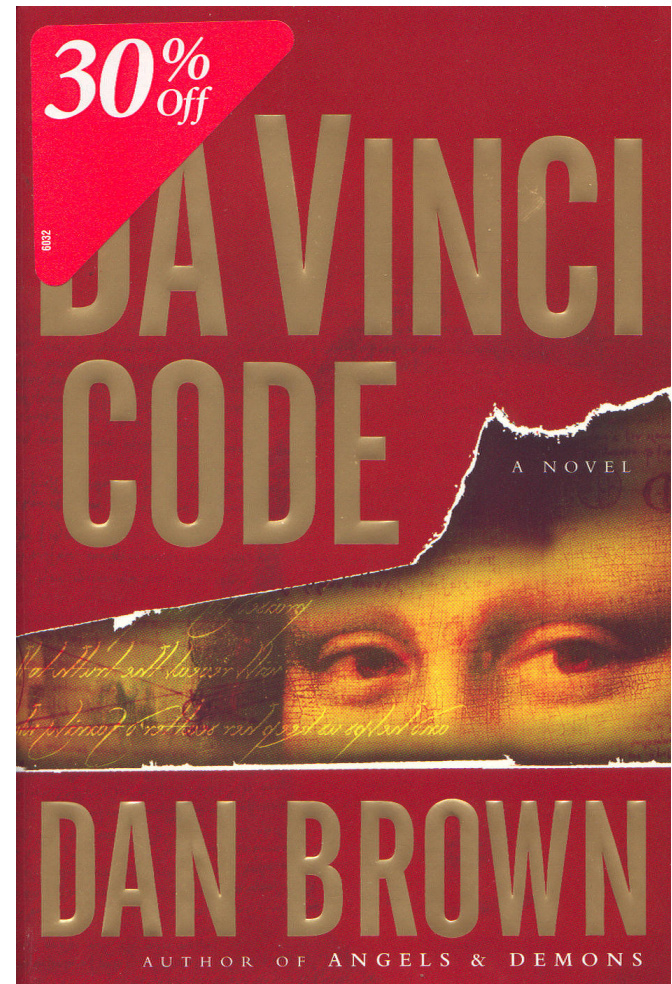




# Questions Raised

Include topics such as:

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



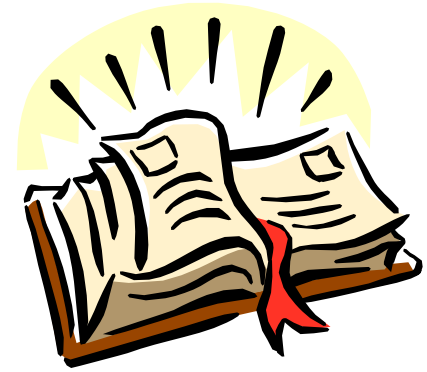


# Questions about Jesus Christ



- 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?

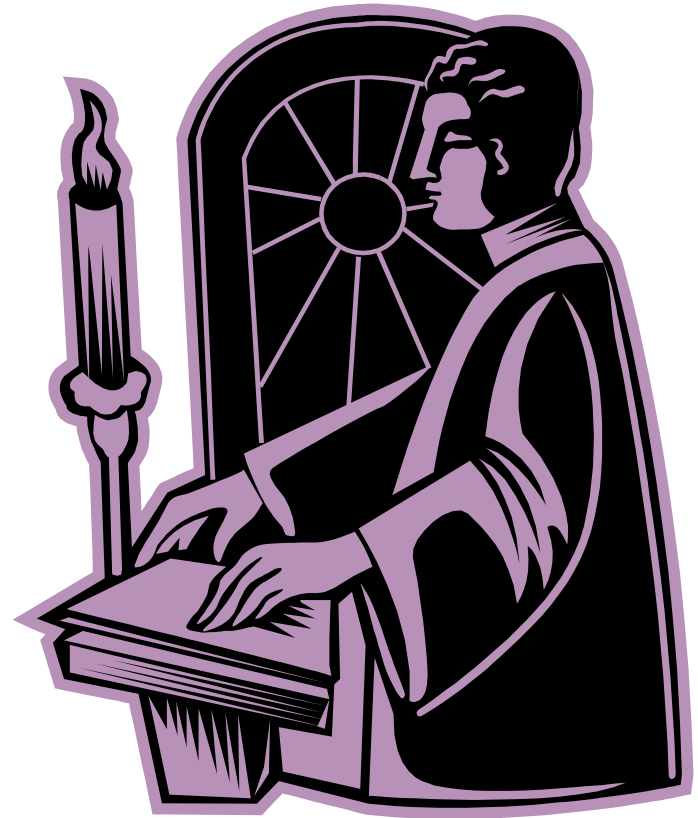
# Questions about the Bible



- 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?

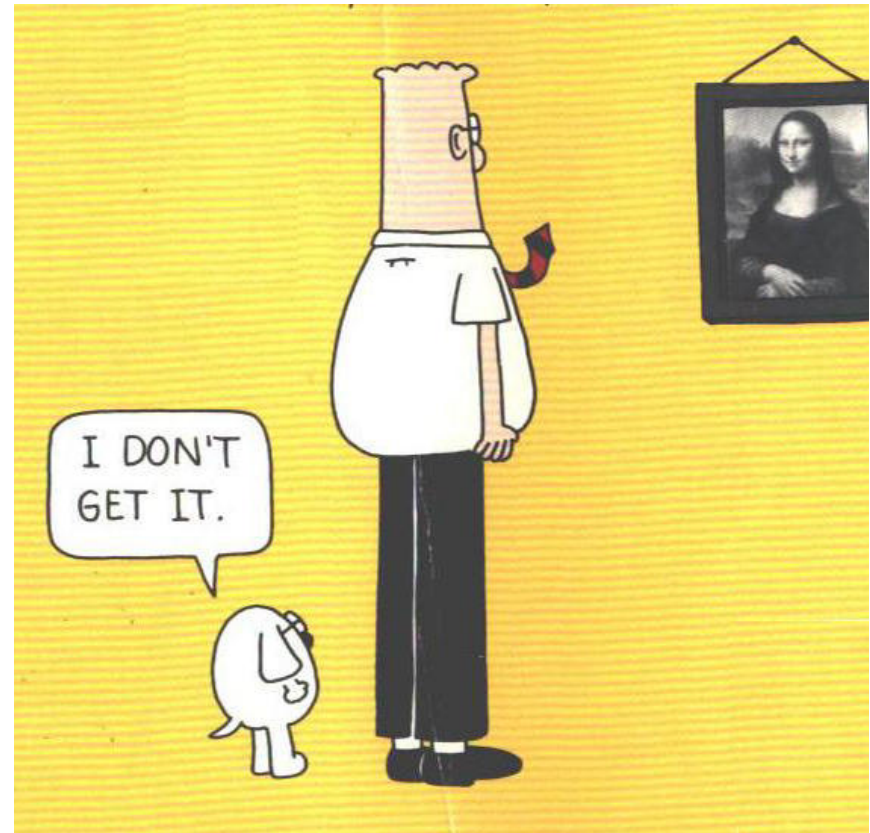
# Questions about Church History

- 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?



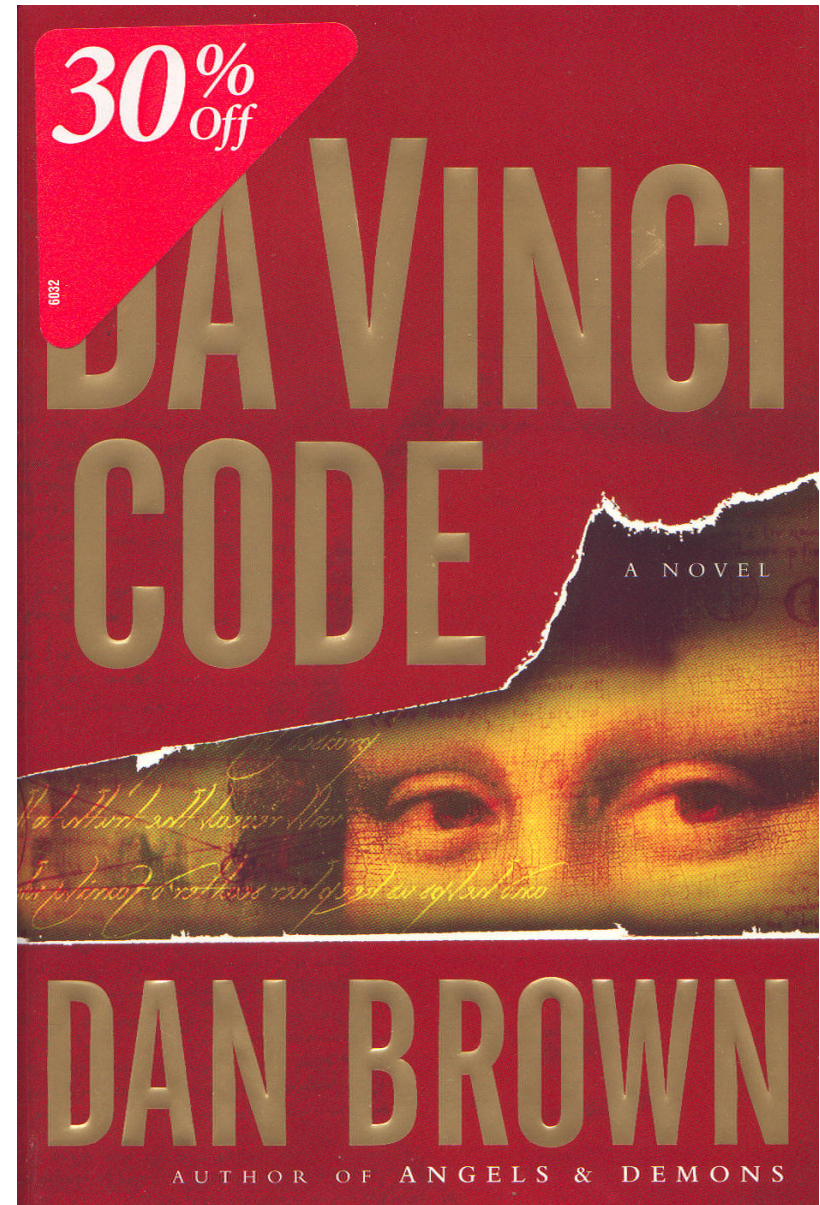
# Miscellaneous questions

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





Let's Get  
Started!



# Evidence from the New Testament



# Jesus: What Says the Bible?

- Who is Jesus?
  - Jesus is human, but not just human.
  - Jesus is also God.
- He was raised from the dead after his crucifixion.
- The Bible says nothing about Jesus having married.

# Who is Jesus? Mark's Testimony

Mark 1:1 (NIV) The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. [[1] Some manuscripts do not have the Son of God.]

Mark 2:5-12 (NIV) When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." 6 Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, 7 "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" 8 Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, "Why are you thinking these things? 9 Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? 10 But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins . . . ." He said to the paralytic, 11 "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." 12 He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"



# Mark's Testimony

Mark 2:27-28 (NIV) Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. 28 So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

Mark 4:41 (NIV) They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

Mark 15:39 (NIV) And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, heard his cry and {[39] Some manuscripts do not have heard his cry and.} saw how he died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son {[39] Or a son} of God!"

# Who is this “Son of Man”?

Daniel 7:13-14 (NIV) "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. 14 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.

# Who is Jesus?

Mark 14:60 (NIV) Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?" 61 But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer. Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, { [61] Or Messiah } the Son of the Blessed One?" 62 "I am," said Jesus. "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven." 63 The high priest tore his clothes. "Why do we need any more witnesses?" he asked. 64 "You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?" They all condemned him as worthy of death.

# John's Testimony

John 1:1-4 (NIV) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of men.

John 1:14 (NIV) The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, {[14] Or the Only Begotten} who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.



# Paul's Testimony

Col 1:15-20 (NIV) He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. 19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

# Paul's Summary

Rom 9:3-5 (NIV) For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, 4 the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. 5 Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! {[5] Or Christ, who is over all. God be forever praised! Or Christ. God who is over all be forever praised!}Amen.

# The Testimony of Hebrews

Heb 1:1-4 (NIV) In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. 3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. 4 So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.

# Hebrews on His Humanity

Heb 7:11-14 (NIV) If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the law was given to the people), why was there still need for another priest to come--one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron?

12 For when there is a change of the priesthood, there must also be a change of the law. 13 He of whom these things are said belonged to a different tribe, and no one from that tribe has ever served at the altar. 14 For it is clear that our Lord descended from Judah, and in regard to that tribe Moses said nothing about priests.



# Jesus: What Says the Bible?

- So, Who is Jesus?
  - Jesus is human, but not just human.
  - Jesus is also God.

Let us next consider:

- He was raised from the dead after his crucifixion.
- The Bible says nothing about Jesus having married.

# He Was Raised from the Dead

This is the uniform testimony of the New Testament:

- Post-resurrection appearances are narrated in all four Gospels and Acts.
- Post-resurrection appearances are also listed in 1 Corinthians 15.
- His resurrection (or second coming) is referred to in nearly all of the other NT books.
  - All but Philemon, 2 John, 3 John

# Was Jesus Married?

- If he was, this would not be a problem for the orthodox view of Jesus, in spite of the allegations Dan Brown makes.
- The Bible teaches that Jesus was fully human, so he certainly *could have* married.
- There is no specific statement in the Bible one way or the other whether Jesus *was* married, but the evidence suggests he was not.



# Was Jesus Married?

- Some have suggested that the wedding at Cana (John 2) was Jesus' wedding:
  - Mormons (Joseph Smith, at least)
  - Authors of *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*
- This is hardly likely:
  - Jesus is *invited* to the wedding!
  - He answers his mother's request about the lack of wine with, "Why involve me?"
  - The narrator distinguishes him from the bridegroom.

# Was Jesus Married?

- Though marriage was common in Jesus' day (especially among Jews), it was not universal:
  - Essenes/Qumran sect
  - Therapeutae
- It does not appear that John the Baptist or Paul were married.
- Paul's remarks (1 Cor 7) suggest he viewed singleness as more appropriate for special dedicated service to God.

# Paul on Marriage

1Cor 7:32 (NIV) I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs--how he can please the Lord. 33 But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world--how he can please his wife— 34 and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world--how she can please her husband. 35 I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.

# Paul's List of Married People Doesn't Include Jesus

1Cor 9:1 (NIV) Am I not free? Am I not an apostle?  
Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not the  
result of my work in the Lord? 2 Even though I may  
not be an apostle to others, surely I am to you! For  
you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

3 This is my defense to those who sit in judgment on  
me. 4 Don't we have the right to food and drink?

5 Don't we have the right to take a believing wife  
along with us, as do the other apostles and the  
Lord's brothers and Cephas{[5] That is, Peter}?

6 Or is it only I and Barnabas who must work for a  
living?



# At Jesus' Crucifixion

- Jesus commits his mother Mary to the care of the apostle John.
- He does nothing of the sort with Mary Magdalene, which is strange if she is really his wife!
- Likewise, no arrangements are made for his alleged child.

# Mary Magdalene?

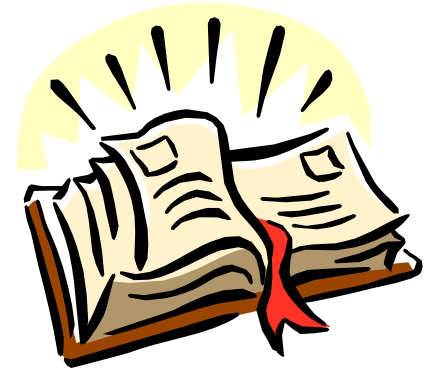
- **None** of the references to her in the NT suggest she is Jesus' wife, which is very surprising if she was. Women were usually identified by their relationships.
- Nor does the NT say she was a prostitute; this is an guess made later by combining some NT accounts.
- She is pictured as having been delivered from seven demons, though the details of her deliverance are not narrated.

# Summary on the New Testament



- So, the NT, as we have it, does not support Dan Brown's claims about Jesus nor about Mary Magdalene.
- But maybe this is part of the church's cover-up!
- This brings us to Brown's allegations about the Bible.

# 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?

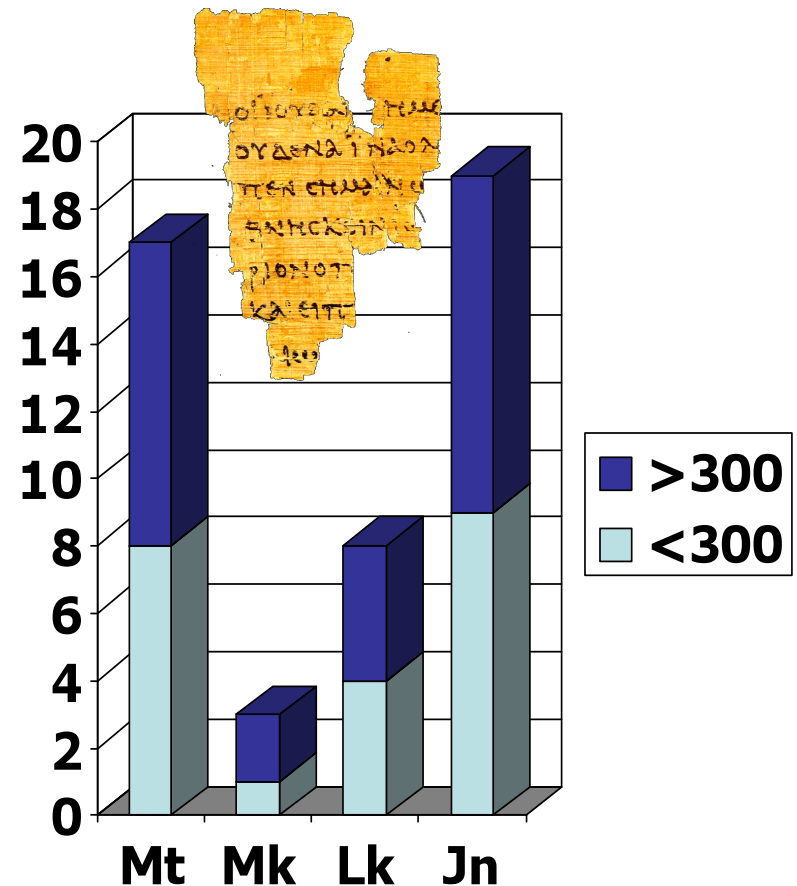


# Is Our Bible Very Different?

- Yes and No.
- Yes, the earliest Christians had only the Old Testament until the NT was written.
- No, there is no evidence that the NT books have been tampered with to produce a different Jesus than they originally gave.
- Consider the Gospels:

# Early Manuscripts of the Gospels

- The graph at right lists the number of surviving manuscripts written on papyrus for the four Gospels.
- The light blue indicates the number from before AD 300, and thus before Constantine. There are 22 of these.



# Summary on Gospels

- Comparing these 22 manuscripts and fragments with Gospel manuscripts from Constantine's time and later, we see no such variations as would make Jesus divine in the later texts but merely human in the earlier ones.
- Thus it does not appear that Constantine modified the Gospels in our Bible to make Jesus look divine.
- He could at most have selected those Gospels which served his purposes.
- Did he?

# Summary on Canon

- The canon of the NT is the list of those books which Christians believe were inspired by God & given by him to his people to tell about Jesus.
- Before the time of Constantine, we have abundant evidence that the recognized Gospels included our four Gospels and no others.
- Some samples:



# Irenaeus (~180)

- Irenaeus was bishop of Lyons in southern France, but he grew up in Asia Minor, an early stronghold of Christianity.
- He had studied under two students of the apostle John — Papias and Polycarp.
- He wrote an extensive book *Against Heresies*, responding to the Gnostics, quoting from all the NT but a few of the shorter letters.

# Irenaeus (~180)

- Irenaeus takes our four Gospels for granted, and even seeks to give symbolic reasons for why there are exactly four of them.
- He also says, “So firm is the ground upon which these Gospels rest, that the very heretics themselves bear witness to them, and starting from these documents, each one of them endeavors to establish his own peculiar doctrine.”
- This is ~145 years before Constantine and the Council of Nicea.

# Origen (~230)

- In Caesarea, Origen develops the largest Christian library in antiquity.
- He gives us the status of the canon question in his time. Two categories were commonly recognized by the orthodox:
  - Books acknowledged by all Christians (21)
    - 4 Gospels, Acts, 13 Paul, 1 Peter, 1 John, Revelation
  - Books disputed by some Christians (10)
    - Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, 2-3 John, Jude,
    - Ps-Barnabas, Hermas, Didache, Gospel of Hebrews
- This is a century before Constantine!

# Eusebius (~325)

- Writing at Constantine's time.
- Four categories for canon discussion then:
  - Acknowledged (21-22)
    - Gospels, Acts, Paul + Hebrews, 1 Peter, 1 John, Revelation (?)
  - Disputed but familiar to most (5)
    - James, 2 Peter, 2-3 John, Jude
  - Spurious but orthodox
    - Acts of Paul, Hermas, Apoc of Peter, Ps-Barnabas
    - Didache, Revelation (?), Gospel of Hebrews
  - Heretical
    - Gospels of Peter, Thomas, Matthaïas, etc.
    - Acts of Andrew, John, etc.



# Summary on Canon

- The evidence is clear that Constantine did not suddenly set off in a new direction, putting together a new Bible.
- Rather, the four Gospels had been recognized by orthodox Christians as authoritative for at least 150 years.
- Final decisions on the exact boundaries of the NT canon are made in the generation following Constantine, but this involves only one book that could be called a gospel, the Gospel of the Hebrews, not one used by Dan Brown.

# Summary on NT Evidence

- The teaching of the NT does not favor Brown's views.
- The NT manuscripts give no evidence of the sort of tampering Brown alleges.
- The four canonical Gospels of the NT were recognized by the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century at latest, about 150 years before Constantine.

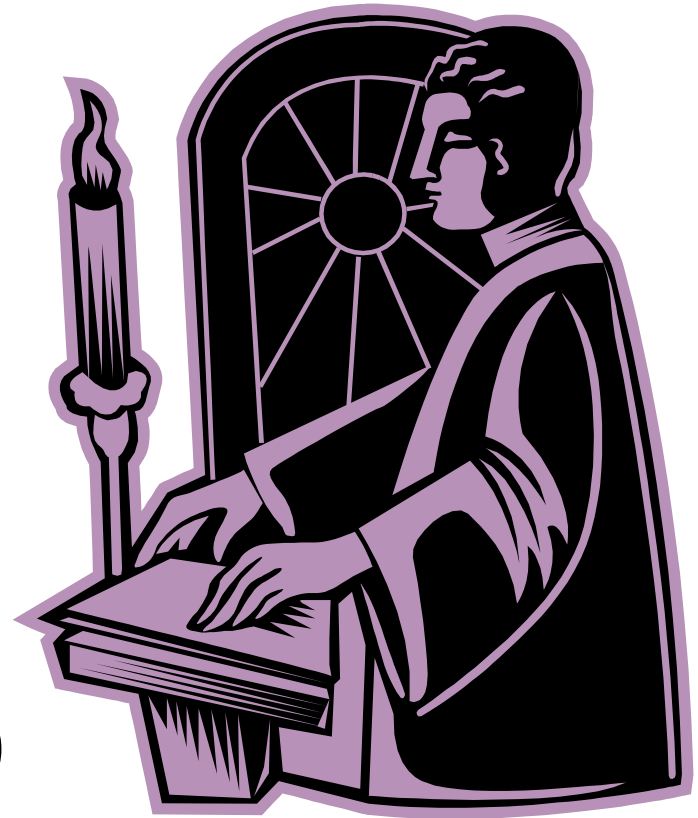
# What about the Gnostic Gospels?



- Good question!
- All of these seem to be much later than our canonical (NT) Gospels, probably none before AD 140.
- None of them picture a “more human” Jesus than do the NT Gospels.
- On the contrary, their picture is less human, though not fully God either (as we use the term). Jesus is some sort of spirit being.

# 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?



# What happened at the Council of Nicea?

- In 325 AD ~300 bishops from all over the Roman Empire gathered at Constantine's request to settle a number of disputes.
- The Christological question at this council was not whether Jesus was man or God.
  - All agreed Jesus was human.
  - The dispute was whether he was also uncreated God or a created god.
- That he was uncreated God won by 300 to 2, not exactly “a relatively close vote”!



# Was Constantine a Christian?

- We cannot see inside people to tell what they really believe.
- From external evidence, It looks like he became a Christian, probably after he was emperor.
- Only ~10% of the Empire appears to have been Christian by 312 AD, so he was not obviously “backing the winning side.”
- His “death-bed” baptism was not uncommon at that time for those who became believers as adults, since there was fear of committing an unpardonable sin after baptism.

# Did the Roman Catholic Church adopt features from paganism?

- Yes, Christianity in a culture typically adopts some features from that culture.
- Since the Bible is not a picture book, artistic elements came from Roman culture: halos, cherubs, mother & child, good shepherd.
- Christianity adopted certain features of liturgical dress, etc. from its culture also.
- The same is true of the liturgical calendar.

# Miscellaneous questions

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



# Mary Magdalene

- As noted above, the New Testament gives no reason to believe she was married to Jesus.
- The traditions we have about her differ in Eastern and Western Christendom, but none of them have her married at all, much less to Jesus.



# Eastern Church Tradition

- Mary followed the apostle John to Ephesus, where she died.
- Modestus (~625) says she was a virgin throughout her life, and that she was martyred.
- Her relics were later transferred to Constantinople by the emperor Leo 6 (ruled 886-912).



# Western Church Tradition

- Mary M belonged to a wealthy family with estates at Magdala & Bethany.
- She went astray & tempted others, but was saved by Jesus.
- In the persecution over Stephen, she and some others were set adrift in a boat on the Mediterranean.
- Without oar or sail, they reached Marseilles, France.

# Western Church Tradition

- In Marseilles, through preaching and miracles, the pagans were saved.
- Lazarus became their first bishop.
- Mary went off to the wilderness and lived a monastic life for 30 years.
- She was carried up to heaven by angels.
- Her relics (!) are venerated at Aix.

# Leonardo da Vinci

- Did he hide clues in his paintings re/ the secret of Jesus' marriage?
- Is the figure to Jesus' right (our left) in *The Last Supper* really a woman?
- Was Leonardo a grand master of the Priory of Sion, which guarded this secret?

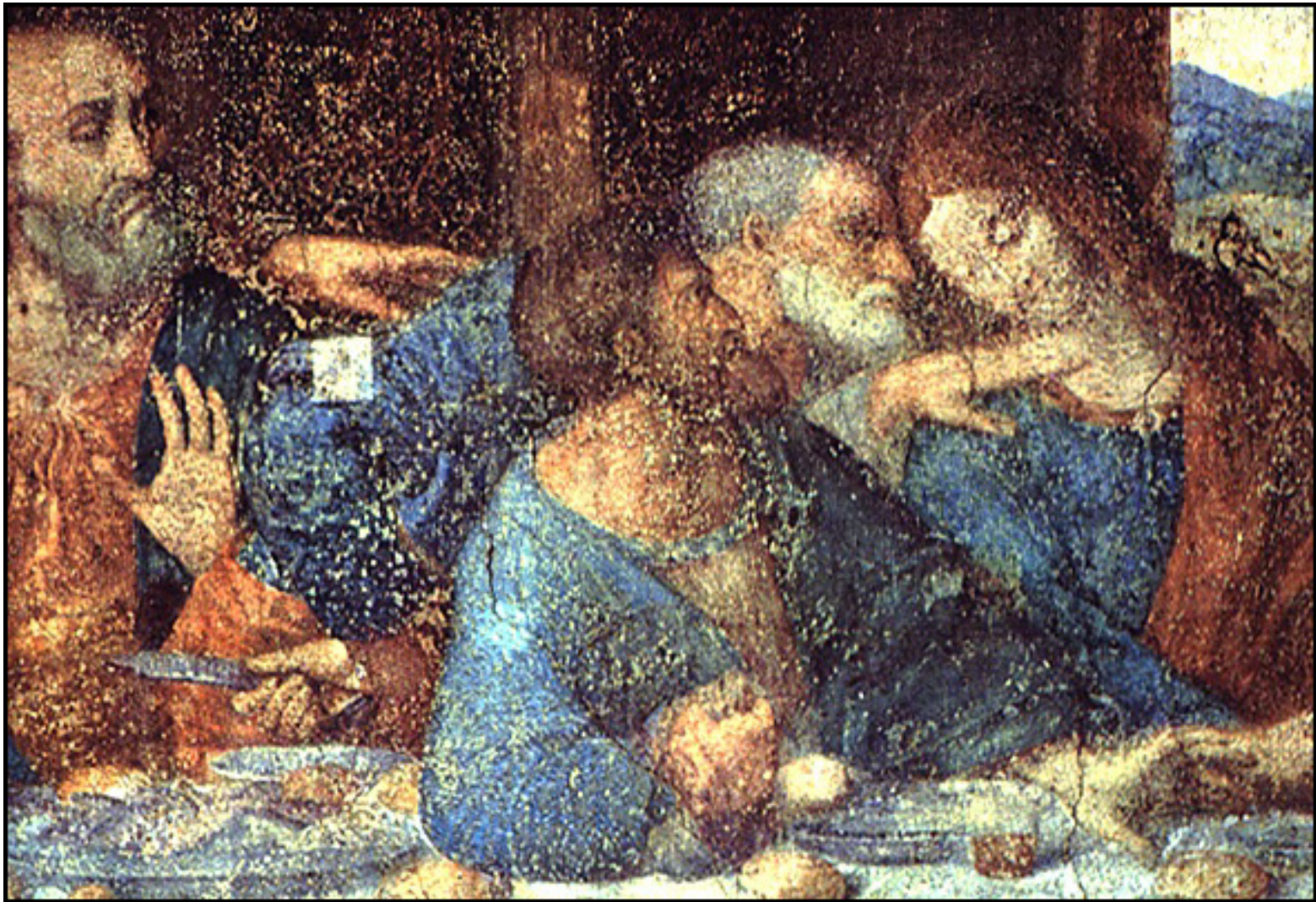


# The Last Supper, 1498





# Detail before restoration





# Del Castagno, 1447

Andrea del  
Castagno,  
1390-1457,  
Florentine  
painter



# Ghirlandaio, 1486

Domenico  
Ghirlandaio,  
1449-1494,  
Florentine  
painter



# Da Ponte, 1542

Giacomo  
da Ponte,  
1510-1592,  
Venetian  
painter

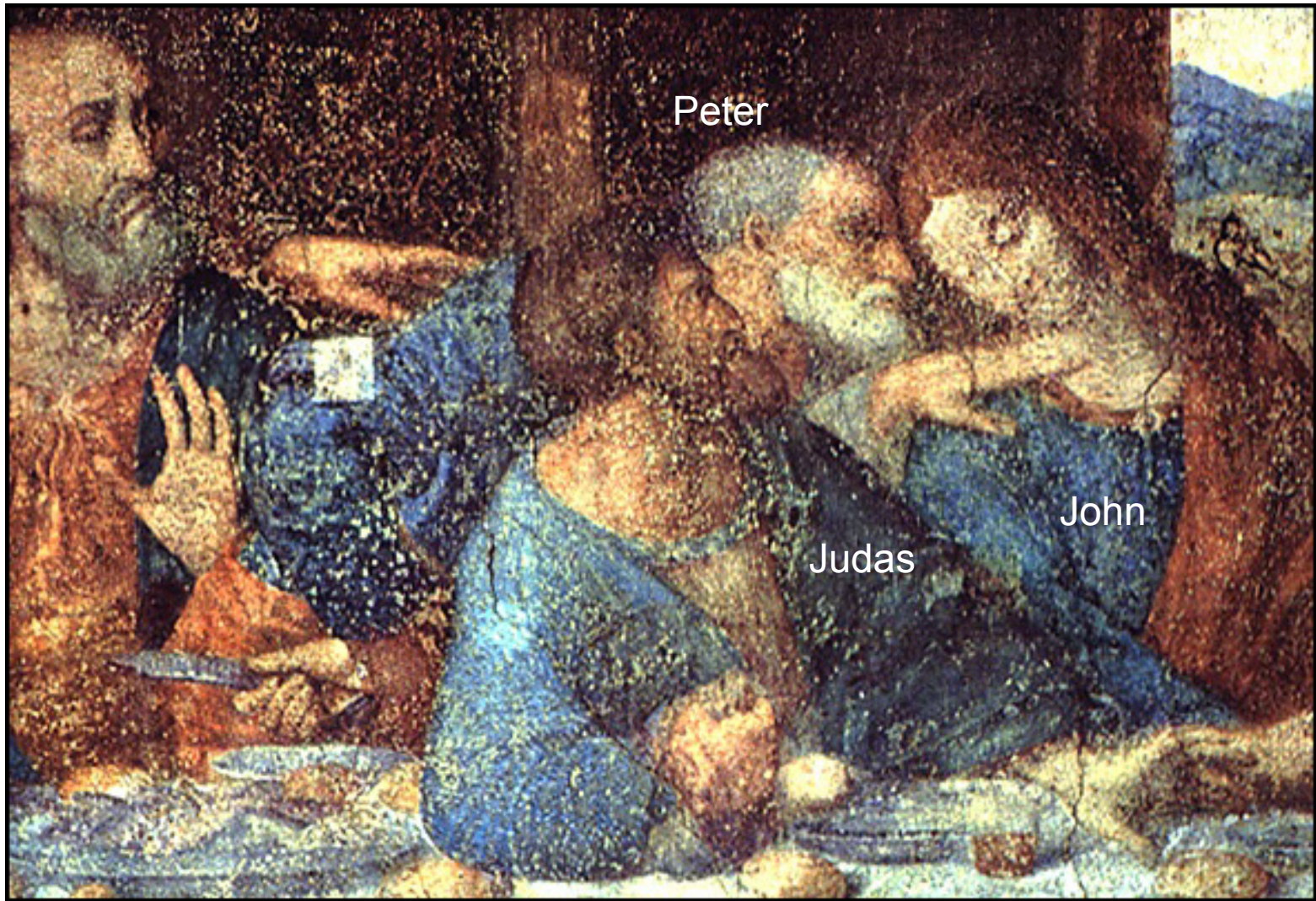


# The secret of *The Last Supper*

- John is traditionally shown as beardless and somewhat effeminate-looking in paintings of this period.
- Leonardo's painting depicts not the Eucharist, but the moment when Jesus has just said someone will betray him, and Peter is leaning over to John (with a knife in his hand) to find out who it is.
- Judas, holding the money bag, is between them, within easy striking distance!



# Detail before restoration





# The Priory of Sion

- Appears to be a hoax, an up-scaled version of an organization founded in 1956 to provide low-cost housing in France.
- One of the founders, Pierre Plantard, later claimed it was founded in 1099. He appears to have invented the list of Grand Masters and viewed himself as an heir of the Merovingian line of French kings.

# Summary

- *The Da Vinci Code* is a complex mixture of fact and fiction that is difficult to untangle without considerable knowledge in many fields.
- Were it not for the fact that it tends to turn people away from the real Jesus, there would be no reason to worry about it any more than multitudes of other conspiracy theories.

30%  
off

*The Da Vinci Code:*  
A Hoax Packaged as an Exciting  
Mystery Thriller

Don't let it keep  
you from the  
real Jesus!

AUTHOR OF ANGELS & DEMONS