

**Responding to The Da Vinci Code**  
Kirk Durston

**A. The Priory of Sion:**

1. The author, Dan Brown, states, before he begins his novel, that the following is fact:  
"The Priory of Sion—a European secret society founded in 1099—is a real organization. In 1975 Paris's Bibliotheque 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."
2. Reality:
  - a) The Priory of Sion was created in 1956 by an eccentric, Pierre Plantard.
  - b) Plantard and associate, Philippe de Chérisey, fabricated a series of documents, including Les Dossiers Secrets, and planted them in various French libraries.
  - c) The false documents created a false history for the Priory, including a false inception date of 1099 and a false list of members, including Sir Isaac Newton.
  - d) Chérisey publicly admitted the documents were forgeries in 1971.
  - e) Plantard subsequently admitted they were forgeries as well.
  - f) In 1989 Plantard fabricated a new history of the Priory of Sion, now founded in 1681, and supplied a new list of Grand Masters.
  - g) Plantard ended up in court in 1993, where he admitted his hoax.

**B. Origin of the Bible:**

1. Dan Brown claims that all descriptions of documents are accurate.
2. Da Vinci Code claims:
  - a) More than 80 gospels were considered for the New Testament. (page 231)
  - b) The Bible was collated by the pagan Roman emperor Constantine who omitted those gospels that spoke of Christ's human traits and embellished those gospels that made him godlike.
3. Reality:
  - a) New Testament scholar, Craig Blomberg, sums it up by pointing out that if everything that was ever called a gospel in the first 500 years of Christianity (most of which are small compilations of esoteric sayings ascribed to Jesus and not narratives of any portion of his life, and written two or more hundred years after his life) was counted, we would have about two dozen documents. About half of these are known only from quotations from early church fathers or small scraps of fragments and *there is little that is unorthodox in them.*<sup>1</sup>
  - b) Constantine did not assemble the New Testament. The canonization of the NT was a process than began during the first century (e.g., Paul's writings were already recognized as Scripture almost immediately ... see II Peter 3:15,16).
  - c) Virtually the entire New Testament could be reproduced from citations contained in the works of early church fathers (32,000 prior to the Council of Nicea, AD 325).

**C. Deity of Christ:**

1. Da Vinci Code:
  - a) "Jesus' establishment as 'the Son of God' was officially proposed and voted on by the council of Nicea." (page 233)
  - b) "Because Constantine upgraded Jesus' status almost four centuries after Jesus' death, thousands of documents already existed chronicling his life as a mortal man."
2. Reality:
  - a) The deity of the Christ, was not only prophesied hundreds of years before Christ ever came (e.g., Isaiah 9:6), but it was confirmed in the four Gospels, which are the earliest gospels, and accepted throughout Christendom up to and including the Council of Nicea.

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<sup>1</sup> Craig Blomberg, (NT scholar), *Denver Journal*, Vol. 7, 2004.

- b) The deity of Christ was already accepted by all the bishops at the Council of Nicea and was not up for discussion. What was discussed was the relationship between the deity of Christ and His mortality (Was He fully God and fully man, or just fully God?).
- c) Contrary to the Da Vinci Code's claim, not a single document exists chronicling Christ's life as a mere mortal man.

#### **D. Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi papari:**

- 1. Da Vinci Code:  
The Dead Sea Scrolls and Nag Hammadi papari speak of Christ's ministry in very human terms and expose glaring historical discrepancies and fabrications in the 'modern' Bible. (234)
- 2. Reality:
  - a) The Dead Sea Scrolls are Jewish documents that say nothing about Christ or Christianity.
  - b) The Nag Hammadi documents were written over 150 years after the four gospels and the time of Christ and in no way imply that Christ was not divine or that there are any historical discrepancies in the NT.

#### **E. The Gospel of Philip and the Gospel of Mary Magdalene as evidence that Jesus married Mary:**

- 1. Reality:
  - a) The Gospel of Philip is a late, third century Gnostic collection, over 200 years removed from the time of Christ and, therefore, of little historical value.
  - b) The Gospel of Mary quotes come from an early, 3<sup>rd</sup> century document of no historical value, so far as the life of Christ is concerned.
  - c) Neither provides any evidence that Jesus married Mary Magdalene.
- 2. Da Vinci Code 'quote' from the Gospel of Philip:  
"And the companion of the saviour 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?' "
- 3. In spite of the fact that Brown states that all descriptions of documents are accurate, the actual text is fragmentary and damaged, so only some words can be made out as follows: "And the companion of the [...] Mary Magdalene [...] her more than [...] the disciples [...] kiss her [...] on her [...]"
  - a) In Da Vinci Code, Teabing states that any Aramaic scholar will tell us that 'companion' means 'spouse'.
  - b) In reality, the document was written in Coptic, not Aramaic and the word for companion was borrowed from Greek and most likely means 'spiritual sister'; 'wife' would have been 'gyne'.
  - c) Another section in the Gospel of Philip expands on the Christian practice of greeting one another with a holy kiss, "For it is by a kiss that the perfect conceive and give birth. For this reason we also kiss one another. We receive conception from the grace which is in one another."
- 4. Even if these 'gospels' said what Brown suggests, since they were written over 200 years after the time of Christ, they are regarded by the scholars as having no historical value, as far as the life of Christ is concerned.

#### **F. Mary Magdalene's and Sarah's records:**

- 1. Da Vinci Code claims that 'Magdalene's and Sarah's lives were 'scrutinously' chronicled by their Jewish protectors.'
- 2. Reality: No such chronicles exist and there is no evidence that any ever did exist.

**Further Reading:** Ben Witherington (2002) *The Gospel Code*, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois. Witherington is professor of New Testament at Asbury Theological Seminary and author of numerous books on the New Testament.