

Church Will Survive 'Da Vinci Code' Destruction

After I read Dan Brown's best selling book, *The DaVinci Code*, I knew I needed to respond. The novel is fiction. Yet, Brown claims that it is based on certain facts, some of which are listed in the opening pages of his book. The reason I'm writing this editorial is to say clearly that most of what he claims to be true is not at all true. People don't like being deceived. The book is filled with historical inaccuracies and outrageous assumptions. Here's what *The DaVinci Code* does (in part).

First, it reduces Jesus to a mere man. Brown has one of his characters say, "Almost everything our fathers taught us about Christ is false" (p. 235) He also claims that the idea of Jesus being God was invented by Constantine at the Council of Nicea in 325 A. D. Wrong! All 27 books of the New Testament can be dated to the first century and each one of them refers to the deity of Christ! Dan Brown has every right to personally reject the deity of Christ. He does not, however, have the right to re-write history and claim that the early Christians rejected Christ's deity. By the way, what my father taught me about Christ is true!

The DaVinci Code also undermines the authority of Scripture. Brown's story line comes mainly from the Gospel of Philip which you'll not find in your Bible. While the Gospel of Philip is indeed an ancient document with Jesus as a major character, it was written over 150 years after Jesus' death by a person (not Philip the apostle) who represented a non-Christian religion called Gnosticism. The gnostics wrote a number of "gospels" which were really forgeries, each claiming their authorship from a famous New Testament character (e.g. Mary Magdalene, Thomas, Judas). The true gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) were all written before 70 A. D. by people who knew Jesus personally or got their information from eyewitnesses.

The DaVinci Code also promotes Mary Magdalene to goddess status by saying she was married to Jesus. According to Brown, Mary Magdalene and Jesus were married and had a child and that that bloodline continues today. He says what the church has done to hide this is "the greatest cover up in human history" (p. 249). Brown gets this idea from various "sources". For instance, he says that in Jesus' day, all Jewish men were required to marry. Actually, they weren't. John the Baptist was single. So was



Paul. A first century historian named Josephus on one occasion wrote about the Essenes and said that they were celibate and noted that "there are about 4000 men who live this way."

Another source from which Brown draws his assumption of Jesus' marriage also comes from the Gospel of Philip where it says that "the companion of the Savior was Mary Magdalene (63:2). Brown has Sir Leigh Teabing stating "As any Aramaic scholar will tell you, the word companion in those days meant spouse (p. 246). I'd say that was a foolish statement since the Gospel of Philip was written in Coptic, not Aramaic!

But, even the Coptic word did not refer to one's spouse. It referred to a friend. And, Jesus had a number of friend who traveled with Him.

Brown backs up his theory of Jesus' marriage with several other ridiculous claims such as "if Jesus wasn't married, the New Testament would have said so." I'll not even go into "The Last Supper" painting. Leonardo himself said in his preliminary sketches that the person to Jesus's right is John the apostle (not Mary). The truth is, no ancient document (Christian or gnostic) mentions anything about Jesus being married to anyone. Nor is there any shred of evidence that he had a child.

Brown's book is filled with excitement and intrigue. His "facts" just aren't true.

The DaVinci Code movie premieres today. My wife and I love to go to the movies. But, we'll probably skip this one. I already know the story. And, I don't appreciate Brown's attack on Jesus, the Bible and the Church.

I'm not worried though. Jesus is alive and well and the Bible is true. Jude 4 says, "For certain men have crept in unnoticed...who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

The church will do just fine. Jesus said, "I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it." (Matthew 16:18)

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