

The Real Jesus

1 John 1:1-4
May 14, 2006

Why does it matter?

1. The teaching of The Da Vinci Code

Teaching of The Da Vinci Code

- That Christians don't have the real story of Jesus
- That the institutional church is the enemy of spiritual truth
- That the genuine spiritual facts are guarded by secret societies
- That priceless works of classical art reveal these hidden messages

Teaching of The Da Vinci Code

- That Jesus isn't divine, but his wife, Mary Magdalene, should be worshiped as a goddess
- That for two thousand years the church has conspired to suppress this truth.

Why does it matter?

1. The teaching of The Da Vinci Code
2. Dan Brown's claim of fact

Dan Brown's Claims

From the front page of the book

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

(p. 1)

Dan Brown's Claims

Interview on NBC Today (10/10/2005)

Matt Lauer: "How much of this [book] is based on reality in terms of things that actually happened?"

Dan Brown: "Absolutely all of it. Obviously, Robert Langdon is fictional, but all of the art, architecture, secret rituals, secret societies—all of that is historical fact."

Dan Brown's Claims

ABC Good Morning America (11/3/03)

Host Charlie Gibson: "This is a novel. If you were writing it as a non-fiction book, how would it have been different?"

Dan Brown: "I don't think it would have."

Why does it matter?

1. The teaching of the Da Vinci Code
2. Dan Brown's claim of fact
3. The influence on others
4. The opportunity for outreach

Be Ready to Give an Answer

¹³Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good? ¹⁴But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, *you are* blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled,

Be Ready to Give an Answer

¹⁵but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always *being* ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;

Be Ready to Give an Answer

¹⁶and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame." (1 Pet. 3:13-16)

Be Ready to Give an Answer

1. Be prepared to make a defense
2. Engage people in conversation
3. Answer with gentleness
4. Be an example

What are the key issues?

The Da Vinci Code claims. . .

1. The Bible is an unreliable source of information about Jesus.
2. Jesus isn't who he claimed to be, God in the flesh and the Savior of the World.

Is the Bible Reliable?

1. Eyewitness accounts

Eyewitness Accounts

"³⁵And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe." (Jn. 19:35)

"²⁴This is the disciple who is testifying to these things and wrote these things, and we know that his testimony is true." (Jn. 21:24)

Eyewitness Accounts

"¹⁶For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty.

Eyewitness Accounts

"¹⁷For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, "This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased"—¹⁸and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain." (2 Pet. 1:16-18)

Is the Bible Reliable?

1. Eyewitness accounts
2. Careful research

The Gnostic Gospels

1. Were there "80 gospels"?

Where there "80 gospels"?

Claim:

According to Teabing, "More than eighty gospels were considered for the New Testament," yet only Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were chosen, because they fit the political agenda of Constantine (DVC p. 231).

Where there "80 gospels"?

Fact:

"When the canon of the New Testament was identified by the Church, there were only four gospels that were ever taken seriously for inclusion. We have no evidence that eighty gospels ever existed. In the Nag Hammadi Library, for example, there are only four documents with the name "gospel" attached. . .

Where there "80 gospels"?

Fact:

"The Early Christian Writings website, which uses the term gospel quite liberally, and includes most early Christian writings, has only twenty-one so-called "gospels." [Mark Roberts]

The Gnostic Gospels

1. Were there "80 gospels"?
2. Do the "Gnostic gospels" give an earlier, more accurate picture of Jesus?

“Gnostic gospels” more accurate?

Claim:

"Fortunately for historians... some of the gospels that Constantine attempted to eradicate managed to survive. The Dead Sea Scrolls were found in the 1950s hidden in a cave near Qumran in the Judean desert. And, of course, the Coptic Scrolls in 1945 at Nag Hammadi." (DVC p. 234)

“Gnostic gospels” more accurate?

Fact:

- The Dead Sea Scrolls contain nothing even remotely resembling a gospel, and almost all were written before Jesus was born!
- The Nag Hammadi gospels (codices, not scrolls) are composed much later than the four canonical Gospels

“Gnostic gospels” more accurate?

Fact:

- The earliest gnostic gospel does not support Brown's position

“Gnostic gospels” more accurate?

“Simon Peter said to them, ‘Let Mary go away from us, for women are not worthy of life.’ Jesus said: ‘Lo, I shall lead her, so that I may make her a male, that she too may become a living spirit, resembling you males. For every woman who makes herself a male will enter the kingdom of heaven.’”
(The Gospel of Thomas, par. 114)

The Gnostic Gospels

1. Were there “80 gospels”?
2. Do the “Gnostic gospels” give an earlier, more accurate picture of Jesus?
3. Did Constantine choose the four gospels for political reasons?

Did Constantine choose?

Claim:

- "The Bible... has evolved through countless translations, additions, and revisions. History has never had a definitive version of the book." (DVC, p. 231)
- "The modern Bible was compiled and edited by men who possessed a political agenda ... to solidify their own power base." (Page 234)

Did Constantine choose?

Claim:

- "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." (Page 234)

Did Constantine choose?

Fact:

- The canon wasn't even discussed at Nicea
- The acceptance of the four gospels as Scripture took place more than 200 years earlier

Should Christians see it?

1. For casual entertainment?
2. As an opportunity for outreach?