

Refuting the DaVinci Code Fable

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The DaVinci Code by author Dan Brown is a best-selling novel with movie following in May 2006. The well-written story draws the reader into a conspiracy theory that undermines the essential beliefs about the origins of Christianity. Though it poses as a fictional novel, it begins with a *Fact page*: “All descriptions of artwork, architecture, documents, and secret rituals in this novel are accurate.” Yet, many of these supposed factual descriptions are inaccurate, misleading, and fabrications.

Refutation: Below is a partial list of errors (in italics) found in the *DaVinci Code* book, followed by brief refutations of those errors. (My book *Lasting Legacy: The History of the Early Church* gives more information refuting *The DaVinci Code*. It can be ordered on this web site.)

1. *The Louvre Pyramid has 666 window panes corresponding with the number of Satan* (p. 21). Not true. There are 673 and have nothing to do with Satan.ⁱ
2. *The Dead Sea Scrolls were found in the 1950s, tell the true Grail story, speak of Christ’s ministry in human terms, and survived Emperor Constantine’s plot to destroy them* (p. 234). They were actually discovered in the 1940s, say nothing about the Grail story, confirm the authenticity of the Old Testament, and had nothing to do with Emperor Constantine.
3. *The Christian story of the Magi bringing baby Jesus gifts was borrowed from a Hindu story about Krishna* (p. 232). Ancient Hinduism has no such story.
4. *The scientist Robert Boyle was a Grand Master of the Priory of Sion, thus against formal and historical Christianity* (p. 326). Not true. Rather, he was a devoted Christian. For instance, he wrote, “The Christian Religion brings mankind diverse positive benefits such as clearer and more extensive knowledge of God and divine things; the Remission of Sins; the Favor of God; several graces and virtues suitable to men’s respective needs and conditions; and above all, a happy immortality in the life to come.”ⁱⁱ (Old English)
5. *Leonardo DaVinci was a flamboyant homosexual* (p. 45). According to most of his biographers, he was falsely accused of this. DaVinci was celibate, non-sexual. None of his massive writings indicate any sexual activity. He wrote, “Intellectual passion drives out sensuality.”ⁱⁱⁱ
6. *The Last Supper painting by Leonardo DaVinci supplies hidden codes and Mary Magdalene sits next to Jesus* (p. 243). DaVinci was commissioned to paint the Last Supper; it was not his idea. The painting is a scene from John 13:21-24. DaVinci did not include Mary Magdalene. John is youthful looking because he was the youngest,

perhaps under twenty years of age. Florentine artists of DaVinci's period often characterized young, unmarried men with feminine facial features to contrast with older, bearded men with rougher features. DaVinci's painting of John the Baptist is similar.

7. *Jesus' marriage to Mary Magdalene is of historical record (p. 244), and they had a daughter named Sarah whom Mary bore in France (p. 255).* They were not married and there is no such historical record. The strong ancient tradition regarding Mary Magdalene is that after Jesus' death and resurrection, she went to Italy. There she witnessed to Tiberius about the resurrection of Christ and preached the gospel throughout Italy. The legend of her having a child in France did not emerge until the ninth century. Tradition says Lazarus and his sisters Martha and Mary went to France.
8. *The Merovingian bloodline is from Christ and there are descendents today named Plantard and Saint-Clair. The ancient secret society of the Priory of Sion holds this knowledge (p. 257, 442).* According to the early Church fathers (Clement, Tertullian, Athenagoras, Methodius, and numerous others), Jesus was a virgin all of His life, never married, and had no offspring. Early church fathers verify these in a number of writings. The ancient Priory of Sion was not a secret and rather unremarkable. In 1956, Andre Bohomme and Pierre Plantard began a new society called Priory of Sion. Plantard, who was a shady character and in jail several times, said he was descended from the Merovingian kings, thus Jesus. Yet, under oath in September 1993, before Judge Thierry Jean-Pierre, Plantard admitted the whole thing was a scam and made up.^{iv}
9. *80 gospels were considered for the New Testament. Constantine chose the four current Gospels in 325 AD. The others were outlawed by him (p. 231, 234).* Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were perceived as authentic from the beginning. They are referred to and validated early on by Clement of Rome (96 AD); Polycarp (160 AD); Justin Martyr (160 AD), etc. Tatian's *Diatessaron* harmonized the four gospel accounts prior to 170 AD. The Muratorian canon of the mid-second century had only these four gospels. All others were heresies. Constantine did not choose them and the Edict of Milan which he issued in 313 gave freedom of religion.
10. *Constantine never converted to Christianity. He plotted with early Church Fathers in 325 to control the empire. He was forced into baptism near the time of his death (231-235).* Constantine converted to Christianity from paganism in 312 when he saw a vision in the sky during a battle campaign. Only 10 percent of the population was Christian when he became emperor so there was no political advantage to becoming a Christian. Thus, he did not plot with the Church Fathers. Though he was baptized near the time of his death, he did so because it was the custom in those days in that part of the empire. Some taught that after baptism, spouses needed to remain

celibate, military leaders could not interrogate prisoners of war, and all sins - even unintentional ones - would no longer be forgiven.

11. *Thousands of ancient documents chronicled Jesus' life as merely a mortal man* (p. 234). This is simply a fabrication. Where's the proof of Brown's claim? Even many of the erroneous Gnostic apocryphal books revere Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior (i.e. *Gospel of Thomas*, *The Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles*, and *The Dialogue of the Savior*).
12. *Before the Council of Nicaea in 325, nobody thought Jesus was God* (p. 233). From the beginning, Christians understood that Jesus was the Son of God, thus God, "*Immanuel - God with us*" (Matthew 1:23). Clement, Aristides, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, Irenaeus, etc. all wrote in terms of Jesus being divine. Here is Ignatius' (110 AD) *Epistle to the Ephesians*:

"Both of Flesh and Spirit;
Both made and not made;
God existing in flesh;
True Life in Death;
Both of Mary and of God;
First possible and then impossible,
Even Jesus Christ our Lord."

13. *Jesus never claimed to be God* (p. 232). False. In Matthew 26:63-64, the high priest was interrogating Jesus: "And the high priest answered and said to Him, 'I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!' Jesus said to him, 'It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.'" Jesus also said, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die." (John 11:25-26).
14. *YHWH was derived from Jehovah* (p. 309). YHWH is ancient Hebrew for God. It came first. Jehovah is a 17th century Jacobean rendering of Yahweh in the King James translation.
15. *Thousands of documents and tens of thousands of pages of Sangreal documents from the first few centuries chronicle Jesus' life as a mortal man and reveal His bloodline* (p. 234, 256). Dan Brown borrowed the idea of Sangreal documents from other authors, but no such documents have ever been found. However, there are over 24,000 parts of the entire book of the New Testament from the first few centuries in existence. These reveal the harmony the biblical account of Jesus rather than the Jesus that Brown suggests.
16. *Jesus' death and resurrection were from a myth and his followers knew he was only a mortal man* (p. 232-233). Not true. Here are two of his followers: (1) Tertullian (207 AD): *Against Marcion* "God lived

with men as man, that man might be taught to live the divine life; God lived on man's level, that man might be able to live on God's level; God was found weak, that man might become most great. If you disdain a God like this, I doubt if you can wholeheartedly believe in a God who was crucified.”^{vi} Clement (96 AD): *1st Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians* “Think, my dear friends, how the Lord offers proof after proof that there is going to be a resurrection, of which He has made Jesus Christ the first-fruits by raising Him from the dead.”^{vii}

ⁱ http://www.adherents.com/people/pd/Leonardo_DaVinci.html

ⁱⁱ Robert Boyle, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/boyle/>

ⁱⁱⁱ http://www.adherents.com/people/pd/Leonardo_DaVinci.html

^{iv} Priory of Sion's website < <http://priory-of-sion.com/>>

^v A compilation of thought on the *Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians* from *Early Christian Writings*, by Betty Radice (London, England: Penguin Books, 1987), 63, and *Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume 1*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004), 52.

^{vi} Henry Bettenson, *The Early Christian Fathers* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1956), 122.

^{vii} Clement, chapter 24, as recorded in Betty Radice, 33.