

Grace to You :: Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time

Dan Brown and The Da Vinci Code

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Dan Brown and *The Da Vinci Code*
How Should Christians Respond?

Dan Brown is an author with an agenda. He wants to revive ancient paganism and restore goddess worship to the world's patriarchal religions. His bestselling novel, The Da Vinci Code, is a blatant attempt to overturn the historic record of God's loving redemption with a tale of sex, intrigue, and conspiracy. To him, Christianity is nothing more than a patriarchal cover-up of the sacred feminine. Brown offers a feminine divinity reminiscent of the Garden of Eden--the same old temptation for a new age. Although Brown has attacked the Bible and the Lord Jesus Christ, Christians should not view the revival of paganism as a threat, but rather as an opportunity for the gospel.

Dan Brown's bestselling novel, *The Da Vinci Code*, is hitting the big screen this summer in a flurry of fanfare and controversy. That spells major success, in the millions, for Sony Pictures, director Ron Howard, and actor Tom Hanks. Dan Brown has already cashed in on the book--putting over \$75 million into his bank account. With a chart-busting novel and millions in the bank, Brown is already fighting off the plagiarism hunters, one price of riches and fame.

Christians have a dog in this fight too. At stake is something more valuable than money--the truth about the Bible, the honor of Christ, and the eternal destiny of human souls are at stake. Dan Brown has drawn a line in the sand with his ideas, in the pages of *The Da Vinci Code*. That's where Christians must show up in full armor, on the battleground of ideas. "We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God" to take "every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:4-5).

Dan Brown Has a Pagan, Feminist Agenda

Dan Brown wants the world's religions to return to the pre-Christian worship of gods and goddesses. This is a revival of paganism.

In 2004, Dan Brown spoke before the New Hampshire Writer's Project about his quest to write *The*

Da Vinci Code. That speech clarifies his purpose in writing--it's more than just a story to him. Brown wants the world and its religions to return to the pre-Christian tolerance of goddess worship. Here's what he said about the point of the entire novel, a point that he laments many people are missing:

Prior to two thousand years ago, we lived in a world of gods and goddesses. Today we live in a world solely of gods. Women in most cultures have been stripped of their spiritual power, and our male dominated philosophies of absolutism have a long history of violence and bloodshed which continues to this day. I simply wrote a story that explores how and why this shift might have occurred, what it says about our past; and more importantly, what it says about our future. As I said earlier, history is written by the winners. The details are long lost, and in many cases, impossible to know. We can challenge and debunk details forever, but the fact remains in the major religions of the world women remain second class citizens. Why can't there be women priests? Why is this even an issue? [1]

Dan Brown is a self-proclaimed Christian, but not of the Bible-believing variety. He is a cultural Christian, a nominal Christian, who has rejected biblical absolutes and embraced the questioning skepticism of postmodernism.

[I]f you ask three people what it means to be a Christian, you will get three different answers. Some feel it is sufficient simply to be baptized into a Christian church. Others feel you must accept the Bible as immutable, historical fact. Still others require a belief that all those who do not accept Christ as personal savior are doomed to hell. Faith is a continuum. We all fall on that line wherever we may fall, and by attempting to classify, and rigidly classify, ethereal concepts like faith, we end up debating the semantics to the point where we entirely miss the obvious. That is, that we are all trying to decipher life's big mysteries--Where did we come from? What happens when we die, where are we going? What does all of this mean? And each of us must follow our own path to enlightenment. [2]

Brown is quite willing to debate the issues, but don't expect him to accept absolutes. He said,

The world is a big place, and now more than ever there is enormous danger in believing we are infallible, that our version of the truth is absolute, that everyone who does not think like we do is wrong, and therefore an enemy. [...] Everyone is entitled to believe what they believe. If you find someone's ideas absurd or offensive, just listen to somebody else. [3]

Dan Brown doesn't want to get caught up in "debating the semantics," he prefers to talk in broad concepts. That's evident in his novel. Though he purports to have based the book on extensive research, the most important part of the book--where he communicates his fundamental thesis--is filled with embarrassing factual errors.

The Da Vinci Code Is Blatantly Anti-Christian

Dan Brown wants to overturn the historic record of God's loving redemption with a tale of sex, intrigue, and conspiracy. He wants you to see Christianity as a patriarchal cover-up of the sacred feminine.

For his "Christian" readers who have grown up hearing the Bible's truth claims, Brown knows he has his work cut out for him. He faces the rather large task of turning Christianity on its head and restoring the sacred feminine to the world. The crucial scene for his purpose has the protagonists, Robert Langdon and Sophie Neveu, learning secret "truths" from historian Sir Leigh Teabing. There in Teabing's library, Brown unfolds his central thesis through the character Teabing.

Ready?

Teabing tells the uninitiated Sophie that Jesus and Mary Magdalene were lovers. At the crucifixion, Mary was pregnant with the child of their union. Aided by Joseph of Arimathea, Jesus' uncle, she fled to France to give birth to a daughter named Sarah. That's important because Jesus and Mary Magdalene were both of royal lineage (he says Mary was of the tribe of Benjamin). The royal bloodline continued to advance quietly for a few hundred years until it intermarried with French royal blood, creating the Merovingian bloodline.

According to Teabing, the emperor Constantine and the "founders" of Christianity knew about Jesus, Mary, and the royal offspring. To maintain the positions of power afforded by a patriarchal church and state, Constantine suppressed the "truth" about the royal couple, smeared Mary's reputation by calling her a whore, and foisted the myth of Jesus' divinity upon the world.

The Brown/Teabing thesis asserts that Constantine canonized the myth of Jesus' divinity in the Bible. At the Council of Nicea, Constantine and a group of bishops voted on which books would be included in the canon. Afterward Constantine tried to suppress and destroy the rest, thereby safeguarding the precious patriarchy for the good of the Roman Empire.

The wild tale continues with an indictment of organized Christianity. Church leaders, secret societies, and ignorant masses have allegedly continued through the centuries as co-conspirators in perpetuating the divine Jesus myth. They thus uphold patriarchy and suppress the rightful role of the goddess and the veneration of the sacred feminine. The founders of Christianity and its leaders have always known the "truth" and have been relentless in silencing anyone who seeks to uncover the truth.

Teabing praises enlightened souls like Leonardo Da Vinci who had the courage to question and challenge the system. Da Vinci and others encoded their works of art with clues to discovering the

ancient secrets about Jesus, Mary Magdalene, and the royal bloodline. In the spirit of Da Vinci, enlightened and courageous souls of today can use his clues, supported by the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Gnostic texts at Nag Hammadi, to uncover the insidious conspiracy, educate the ignorant masses, and restore the long-suppressed worship of the goddess.

The Da Vinci Code Retells the Tale of an Ancient Liar

Dan Brown offers a feminine divinity reminiscent of the Garden of Eden--the same old temptation for a new age.

That's quite a tale, but it's not at all new. As Dan Brown says, "I am not the first person to tell the story of Mary Magdalene and the Holy Grail. This idea is centuries old. I am one in a long line of people who has offered up this alternative history." He's right. In fact, the line of people offering up "alternative history" began with Satan.

In the Garden of Eden, Satan seduced Eve with an "alternative history" that cast doubt on God's character and Word. Into a perfect world of truth and absolutes, Satan asked the first question: "Indeed, has God said...?" He then told her a new tale; interestingly, it was also a story about the divine feminine. Satan told Eve, "God knows that in the day you eat from [the forbidden tree] your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God" (Genesis 3:5). Eve ate that fruit, as did Adam, and every human being since has had their eyes opened to the guilt, shame, pain, and death that results from sin.

The fundamental premise of Dan Brown's novel is rooted in sinful skepticism. He encourages the reader to question the truth, to question Christ's claims, to question the Bible. Brown tells a story in which Jesus is not who He said He is and God's Word is not to be trusted. He then fills the authority vacuum with his ridiculous fable about Jesus, Mary Magdalene, the Holy Grail, and the sacred feminine.

Brown is not just writing a good piece of fiction--he's on a spiritual quest. He isn't an honest seeker either; he is committed to disbelieving the Bible and Jesus' claims of divinity. In the words of his fictional Teabing, "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." [4]

Dan Brown's disbelief about the Bible is a product of his commitment to historical skepticism. In his speech at the New Hampshire Writer's Project, he said,

First, when we read and interpret history, we are not interpreting the historical events themselves. We are interpreting written accounts of those events. In essence, we are interpreting people's interpretations. And second, since the beginning of recorded time, history has always been written by the winners--those societies *and belief systems* that conquered and survived. Despite the obvious bias in this accounting method, we still measure the historical accuracy of a given concept by examining how well it concurs with our existing historical record. I should add that many historians *now believe* that in engaging the historical accuracy of concepts we should first ask ourselves a far deeper question: How historically accurate is history itself? In most cases we'll never know the answer but that should not stop us from asking the questions. [5]

But the Bible is not merely a product of man. "But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (2 Peter 1:20-21). Though written by men, the Bible is God's Word. "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16). Dan Brown has moved beyond harmless fiction to challenge the Word of God and redefine Jesus according to his own idolatrous, blasphemous image. He has questioned God, cast doubt on His Word, and dismissed the sovereign claims of Christ.

Far-fetched tales with fanciful, conspiratorial claims have circulated for years. The general public dismissed them as such because they never gave much credence to something as unscientific as religion. Today, however, the climate is different. Cold, rational secularism has given birth to a nebulous, undefined spirituality. Dan Brown, a spokesman for that new spirituality, says, "What I have finally come to accept is that science and religion are partners. They are simply two different languages attempting to tell the same story. Both are manifestations of man's quest to understand the divine. While science dwells on the answers, religion savors the questions." [6]

Christians Should Use *The Da Vinci Code* As an Opportunity for the Gospel

Even though Dan Brown has attacked the Bible and the Lord Jesus Christ, Christians should not view the revival of paganism as a threat, but rather as an opportunity for the gospel.

The Da Vinci Code--novel, movie, media sensation--enters into a post-Christian climate. Whether it's Dan Brown, Ron Howard, Tom Hanks, proponents of the divine feminine, secularists, and neo-pagans, non-Christians are co-conspirators in a cosmic rebellion against God. Nevertheless, they are our mission field. Were it not for the wondrous grace of God, you would be among them.

As you encounter people influenced by *The Da Vinci Code*, remember what the Bible says about the unbelievers, and have compassion. "[T]he god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God" (2

Corinthians 4:4). They are "futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart [is] darkened" (Romans 1:21). They are "dead in [their] trespasses and sins"; they walk "according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience"; and they are "by nature children of wrath" (Ephesians 2:1-3).

How should you respond? With zeal for the truth of Christ and the authority of God's Word, you must defend the integrity, the veracity, and the authority of the Bible. Don't worry; it's not hard. Brown's "extensive research" failed to produce accuracy on the simplest details of the Bible and church history. Take a little of your time to Read **Albert Mohler's commentary** and **James White's analysis**. Prepare yourself to give an answer to those exposed to the book, the movie, or the media coverage.

Your commitment to see God honored in the culture should be manifest first of all in your testimony about Christ, "who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously" (1 Peter 2:23). In a spirit of gentleness, correct those who deny Jesus' claims on their life (2 Timothy 2:24-26) and call them to repentance and the obedience of faith.

The current popularity of *The Da Vinci Code* is your opportunity to talk with friends and family, neighbors, co-workers, and even strangers about the topics Dan Brown has raised in his story. Embrace the challenge of *The Da Vinci Code* with compassion for hell-bound sinners, and seize this time as an evangelistic opportunity for the Kingdom of God.

[1] Dan Brown, *New Hampshire Writer's Address*, Concord, N.H., http://www.danbrown.com/novels/davinci_code/faqs.html (2004).

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Dan Brown, *The Da Vinci Code* (New York: Anchor Books, 2006 reprint), 250-51.

[5] Brown, *New Hampshire Writer's Address*, 2004.

[6] Ibid.

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