

Why you should care about the Da Vinci Code

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from Yvon Prehn, www.thelionsvoice.com 's only a story.....or so many people say.....even so, there is huge power in stories.

But Dan Brown did not write the book only as a story, as he said, "...the secret I reveal [in the book] is one that has been whispered for centuries…. My sincere hope is that The Da Vinci Code, in addition to entertaining people, will serve as an open door for readers to begin their own explorations." http://www.danbrown.com/novels/davinci_code/faqs.html
In addition he states in the opening of the book:

FACT: ALL descriptions of artwork, architecture, documents, and secret rituals in this novel are accurate.

And what are some of the "FACTS" the Da Vinci Code contains? Though there are hundreds of others, I’ve arranged a few of them below, along with some questions people will be asking about what is in the book.

Over 40 million people have read the book and many, many more will see the movie (over 250 million have seen the Passion of the Christ). Even if you haven’t read the book or won’t see the movie, there are many of your friends and family who will. To be able to talk to them and share with them the truth of the Christian faith is the goal of our upcoming DaVinci teaching series at First Baptist Church, (and the seminar I'm offering on it). To see if it will be useful to you, let’s look at the quotes below and see if you can answer some of the questions these might raise.

The Da Vinci Code and Our Scriptures, first Da Vinci quotes, then questions:"More than eighty gospels were considered for the New Testament, and yet only a relative few were chosen for inclusion—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John among them." DVC p.231.

"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 (which he believes were the Gnostic Gospels, I’ll get to that later) were outlawed, gathered up, and burned…. some of the gospels that Constantine attempted to eradicate managed to survive. The Dead Sea Scrolls were found in the 1950’s hidden in a cave near Qumran in the Judean desert. And, of course, the Coptic Scrolls in 1945 at Nag Hammadi. In addition to telling the true Grail story, these documents speak of Christ’s ministry in very human terms. Of course, the Vatican, in keeping with their tradition of misinformation, tried very hard to suppress the release of these scrolls. And why wouldn’t they? The scrolls highlight glaring historical discrepancies and fabrications, clearly confirming that the modern Bible was compiled and edited by men who possessed a political agenda—to promote the divinity of the man Jesus Christ and use His influence to solidify their own power base." DVC p. 234.

"The Bible is a product of man… Not of God…. 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." DVC p. 23

How will you answer if someone asks:

--Why is the Bible any different than any other book?

--Is it true that the Dead Sea Scrolls show the books of the New Testament show "glaring historical discrepancies and fabrications, clearly confirming that the modern Bible was compiled and edited by men who possessed a political agenda?"

--No matter how good the Bible may have been when it was written, how do we know it hasn’t changed drastically since then?

The Da Vinci Code and Our Savior, first Da Vinci quotes, then questions:"…almost everything our fathers taught us about Christ is false." DVC p.235

"…the greatest cover-up in human history. Not only was Jesus Christ married, but He was a father." DVC p. 249

"The marriage of Jesus and Mary Magdalene is part of the historical record." DVC p. 245

"…the social decorum during that time virtually forbids a Jewish man to be unmarried. According to Jewish custom, celibacy was condemned, and the obligation for a Jewish father was to find a suitable wife for his son. If Jesus were not married, at least one of the Bible’s gospels would have mentioned it and offered some explanation for His unnatural state of bachelorhood." DVC p. 245

How will you answer if someone asks:

--There are a lot of Gospels besides those in the Bible, how do we know they don’t tell the true story of Jesus?

--How do we know Jesus wasn’t married? Weren’t Rabbis supposed to be married?

--Why can’t we just accept the wonderful teachings of Jesus and not worry about the details of his life?

The Da Vinci Code and Our Church, first Da Vinci quotes, then questions:"…"…many aspects of Christianity were debated and voted upon—the date of Easter, the role of the bishops, the administration of sacraments, and, of course the divinity of Jesus…. until that moment in history, Jesus was viewed by His followers as a mortal prophet… a great and powerful man, but a man nonetheless. A mortal….Because Constantine upgraded Jesus’ status almost four centuries after Jesus’ death, thousands of documents already existed chronicling His life as a mortal man" DVC p. 233 &234.

How will you answer if someone asks:

--How did the church decide how it is run?

--What about creeds and councils--aren’t those just political meetings and decisions made by men?

--What about all the awful things the Vatican has done? What about the five million women killed based on the Malus Malefaction book, used by the Inquisition?

The Da Vinci Code and Our Calling first Da Vinci quotes, then questions:"Jesus suspects He will soon be captured and crucified. So He gives Mary Magdalene instructions on how to carry on His Church after He is gone. As a result, Peter

expresses his discontent over playing second fiddle to a woman. I daresay Peter was something of a sexist. Sophie was trying to keep up. "This is Saint Peter. The rock on which Jesus built His Church. The same [Teabing said], except for one catch. According to these unaltered gospels [the Nag Hammadi Texts/Gnostic Gospels], it was not Peter to whom Christ gave directions which to establish the Church. It was Mary Magdalene. Sophie looked at him. "You're saying the Christian Church was to be carried on by a woman? That was the plan. Jesus was the original feminist. He intended for the future of His Church to be in the hands of Mary Magdalene." DVC p.248

How will you answer if someone asks?

--How do we know the Nag Hammadi Gospels aren't the real thing and how we should run the church?

--How do we know Peter was the one to lead the church and Mary Magdalene wasn't? After all it is only a few verses in the New Testament that talk about this and if there are lots of other books that talk about Mary, how do we know that isn't right?

--Isn't the way the church is run today just a result of who won power struggles through history?

Conclusion and Challenge "As a consequence of our ignorance concerning Christian history, we find believers vulnerable to the appeals of cultists. Some distortion of Christianity is often taken for the real thing." Dr. Bruce Shelley: Church History In Plain Language, XV.

Our upcoming class will enable you to learn more deeply about "the real thing" that is our faith and will equip you to share it with those you care about. At the conclusion of our series, you will be able to answer all of the questions above with confidence, and have a secure basis for your faith.

In addition, just to repeat my remarks in the introduction, before you easily dismiss what's in the book or coming up in the movie because you aren't interested, please, please, think about your kids, your grandkids, the neighbors you have, the people you chat with at the grocery store. Many of them have read the book and many younger people who haven't read the book will see the movie. People believe what movies tell them and what this movie will tell them denies everything you have been taught in your faith. You may be very strong, but not everyone is, so again--look at the questions below and think about if you can answer them. In addition to be a challenge to our faith, studying these topics will be tremendous fun.