

Bible Answers to *The Da Vinci Code*

Scripture Debunks Dan Brown

Richard T. Ritenbaugh

Given 27-May-06; Tape #776

Very few people have not heard of Dan Brown's novel, *The Da Vinci Code*. As you may have heard it is a worldwide phenomenon. And, the book has now been made into a summer "blockbuster" movie. It has earned, in the U.S. alone, about \$77 million. But there is more.

An Agence-France Presse article released Monday, May 22, 2006, reports:

"Around the world, director Ron Howard's 125-million-dollar thriller [production costs], starring Tom Hanks, raked in an estimated 224 million dollars, Exhibitor Relations [Company] said. It was the fourth biggest worldwide opening, according to Daily Variety, the top Hollywood trade paper. Only 'Star Wars: Episode III,' 'Lord of the Rings: Return of the King,' and 'War of the Worlds' did better.

This is bad news for us true Christians who were really hoping that it would be a tremendous flop! We were given a bit of encouragement when the critics came out saying that it was slow and boring. They had some rather unkind words also regarding the acting.

But, it was inevitable that it would become a huge moneymaker. Listen to these numbers and maybe you can understand why this was so. According to the Wall Street Journal, on the day that it was released, May 19, 2006, "The book, 'The Da Vinci Code' has sold 60.5 million copies in 45 languages. Worldwide sales figures break down this way according to country: U.S. 21.7 million copies have been sold; in Britain 9 million, France and Japan, 4.7 million each; Germany 3.6 million copies; and China 1.2 million.

The Barna Report says that an estimated 45 million Americans have read it through from cover to cover. "This figure makes it the most widely read book with a spiritual theme, other than the Bible. More worrying is that more than a quarter of them said that it was either extremely, very, or somewhat helpful in their personal spiritual growth or understanding."

Thus, about 11 million Americans "consider *The Da Vinci Code* to have been a helpful and spiritual document." Of these, 2 million (5 %) said that it influenced them to change their beliefs.

The common rebuttal to all this from those in post-Christian America is, "Come on! It is just a novel! It is a work of fiction. We can separate fiction from truth."

Yet, notice this from a review of the book by Ben Witherington III (a professor of Theology at a university in the U.S.) in *Biblical Archaeology Review* (May/June 2004) [remember, this is a work of fiction]:

"However, the book begins with a page labeled 'FACT,' which claims,

among other things, that 'all descriptions of . . . documents . . . in this novel are accurate.' This unfortunately is not true. And although this FACT page will surely give many readers the false impression that this novel is based on sound historical research, the truth is, it is based on all sorts of conjectures—some scholarly, some not. And although the book claims to be based on historical texts, especially the Gnostic Gospels, it is not based on history. The end result is closer to pure fiction than to historical fiction.

"It is not surprising, however, that a powerful and well-written thriller [I and others would disagree], as good a page-turner as any John Grisham novel, could have such an impact in an age of widespread Biblical illiteracy and of ignorance of early Christian history."

People are dumb. They do not know their Bibles. They do not know Christian history. They have just accepted the words of a novelist! This is the whole point: People who know the Bible and believe it, and have learned the rudiments of apostolic Christian history should be able to see right through *The Da Vinci Code*. It is not that difficult. But we have reached such a post-Christian state in this country, and around this world, that the average professing Christian is liable to be duped quite easily. They have no foundation in the truth!

So, today, I want to address the most apparent of Dan Brown's lies and distortions which the Bible disproves. I do not want to get into the history part of this so much, but I want to talk about the area true Christians should be experts in: God's truth, the Bible.

These points will, I hope, be the most relevant to us spiritually. So, I do not only want to debunk the book, I also want to arm us with ready answers to *The Da Vinci Code's* heretical claims.

The first of his claims is:

1) Jesus was simply a man whom Constantine later proclaimed to be God.

Obviously, the Roman emperor Constantine who reigned in the fourth century AD does not enter the biblical record. The Bible does not include anything historical beyond the end of the first century. That is only as far as it goes. So, obviously, Constantine is not in the Bible. Very few of the other Roman emperors are in the Bible either.

It is true that the council of Nicea, AD 325, formalized the belief that Jesus was God by making it a part of the Catholic Church's Creed. This does not have anything to do with the true church of God. But, Constantine along with the others in that council of Nicea (a Catholic Church convention of prelates) did formally say that they believed that Jesus was God. Actually Constantine had very little to do with what they discussed during this council. He just put his imperial seal on the proceedings. Because He put his stamp on it, it had his authority behind it.

Now, that was formalized about 250 years or so *after* the gospel accounts and the whole New Testament was written. Most folks think that the latest book in the Bible was written about the

end of the first century by the apostle John, the only apostle left alive by this time. So, this idea of Constantine authorizing this belief in the Catholic Church is 250 years too late, because the New Testament is very clear that Jesus is God.

Do you want to know where that starts? It is in the first chapter of the first book of the New Testament, Matthew 1! There are no doubts from the very beginning of the New Testament: We are talking about a Person who is divine!

The chapter opens up with His genealogy and continues through verse 17. Then, we have the account of His birth:

Matthew 1:20-21 But while he [Joseph] thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. "And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."

So far there is a link to the Divine already being conceived of the Holy Spirit. Let us go on to Matthew's interpretation:

Matthew 1:22-23 So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "*God with us.*"

God names things what they are. Jesus' name was "Jesus," yes, but it was also *Immanuel* which means "God with us." Jesus was God.

So the very first chapter of the very first book of the New Testament tells us right away that the church of God believed that Jesus was God. How clear is that? It is so plain. You do not need to be a rocket scientist to figure this out. Put two and two together.

Let's think of this chronologically. When did this occur? Before Jesus was born! This is back about 4 or 5 BC, when this was communicated to them. So that is way before AD 325.

Do not forget that throughout the gospels, He is called the Son of God over and over again. He is also called the Son of Man. What does it mean to be the Son of Man? It is bringing out that He was human, right? Well what does it mean when He is called the Son of God? It is bringing out that He was Divine. If a man's son is also a man, then would not God's son also be a God? Seems pretty clear to me!

This one is in the temptation of Jesus by Satan:

Luke 4:9 Then he [Satan] brought Him [Jesus] to Jerusalem, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God [casting doubt], throw Yourself down from here.

So, here is Satan doing what he also has done through Dan Brown—casting doubt—but he is doing it to Jesus' face! "If you are the Son of God, cast yourself off this highest point of the Temple area, and see if God will indeed send His angels to catch you." Notice Jesus' response in verse 12:

Luke 4:12 And Jesus answered and said to him, "It has been said,
` You shall not tempt the LORD your God.'"

Who is Jesus speaking about when He said, "the Lord your God?" Himself! Do you know what He is saying here? "*I am your Creator, buddy. Do not test Me. I am the Lord your God, Satan. I am the God of the Old Testament. I could squash you like a bug*"

Luke 4:13 Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him...

I am sure he got out of there quick, because he knew that Jesus was reaching the end of His patience by quoting the Old Testament in this way. "*Do not tempt Me. Do not tempt Me to unleash My power on your head. Watch it, buddy.*"

What did we find out from this? Jesus Himself—early on, before He started His ministry—was making it known to all of us that He was the God of the Old Testament.

Notice also the opening verses of John 1:

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we
beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of
grace and truth.

Now it does not use His Name, rather a title is used. It calls Him "The Word," "the *Logos*." He was the One who had been with God for all eternity. And it says that this same Logos was God. And, this same Logos became flesh, which we just read up above in Matthew 1. Who was that One? Jesus of Nazareth who became flesh and dwelt among us.

So, here is another disciple and gospel writer stating that he understands that Jesus Christ was not only a man, but also *very* God, from the very beginning. Without a doubt! He was a divine Being, born as a man. Very simple!

In John 8:57, Jesus has been having a long wrangle with the Jews about liberty and whether they were of God or the Devil, and things got hot.

John 8:57 Then the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old,

and have You seen Abraham?"

"*Yeah! Come on! You are just a young man. Abraham lived 2000 years ago.*"

John 8:58 Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, . . ."

He is saying, "Absolutely! Definitely!"

John 8:58 ". . . I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."

Do you know what that means? He said, "*When Moses knelt before the burning bush, I was the One inside of it.*" If you go back and read Exodus 3:14, you will find that when Moses said, "Who do I tell them that You are?" And He said, "I am who I am" sent you.

So then, what Jesus is saying to these Jews who had been arguing with Him about who He was, what His authority was... He comes back and says to end the argument, "*I am God! Be quiet!*" And the Jews did. "*I know this about Abraham because I was there. I have been there from the beginning.*" He said, "I am the I AM." What more do you need?

There was a doubter, though. But, all doubt was put to rest after Jesus was resurrected.

John 20:27-28 Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand *here*, and put *it* into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing." And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

He was not only his Master, but now he was certain that He was God glorified. So, here is a man saying right out that Jesus was not only his Lord, but also his God.

Let us leave the gospels now, and turn to Romans 9. We will see some statements from Paul (and later we will get one from Peter) where it shows that they very definitely understood this belief. Romans 9:3 is at the beginning of the section from chapters 9-11 where Paul discusses Israel's place in God's plan.

Romans 9:3-4 For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises;...

Just about everything pertains to Israel.

Romans 9:5 ...of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, [notice how he identifies Him] who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.

Paul did not have any doubts about who Jesus was. He calls Him, "The eternally blessed God." In other words, he is saying that He is an eternal, holy, divine Being. He is our God. Our God came out of Israel. Obviously, if Paul had these feelings for Israel that he would give himself for them, he is saying by connecting these two thoughts that Jesus was certainly willing, and did, give Himself for His people Israel.

So, the greatest Israelite that ever will be—Jesus Christ—is God.

Colossians 1:13-18 He [the Father] has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed *us* into the kingdom of the Son of His love [Jesus Christ], in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. He [Jesus Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence

Now, it does not come right out and say that He is God, but it does say He created everything. He is been around for ever. He is preeminent over everything. What else could He be? It mentions that He is the firstborn from the dead, and the firstborn over all creation. Paul really makes no bones about this One being God.

In I Timothy 2:5, Paul pulls no punches.

I Timothy 2:5 For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,

How plain does it need to be? One God and one Mediator between God and men, *the* Man Christ Jesus. Notice also that this particular phrase makes it very clear that the Man, Jesus Christ, is God because Paul is combating a Gnostic belief that Jesus, the man, was flesh, but Christ, the Spirit, is God. Paul says, no, the Man, Jesus Christ, is God.

Titus 2:13 is another clear verse. Paul says:

Titus 2:13 [Christians are] looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,

So, he puts the description of "great" here in front of God, showing that He is the high God—the wonderful God. He is not the highest God, but the great God.

In II Peter 1:1, we see that this was not a doctrine of Paul only; Peter thoroughly agreed with

this.

II Peter 1:1 Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ,
To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the
righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:

As he opens up his second epistle, he lets you know that Jesus is not only our Savior but also God.

As I said, these are only some of the verses I picked out. They actually just scratch the surface where examples of Jesus Christ divine nature are concerned. This divine nature is evident in every book of the New Testament. I almost could have picked any page with my eyes closed and found a passage that would say that Jesus Christ is more than a mere mortal.

So, it is very plain that the early church of God, from the earliest times (even pre-church age), believed that Jesus Christ was more than a man as God in the flesh, and certainly very God after His resurrection to glory.

So, this bald-faced lie of Dan Brown's falls flat on its bald face.

II) Dan Brown says that Mary Magdalene was Jesus' wife.

Now, what does the Bible say about Mary Magdalene? You might be surprised how little it actually says about her. One would suppose that, if she were Jesus' most personal and intimate disciple, then she would get more ink, but that is not the case. As a matter of fact, she is barely mentioned. And who she was, and what her personality was like is an absolute mystery. It is perhaps this mysterious aura, because she is mentioned so infrequently, that has made people's imaginations go wild.

There are just a few passing references to her in the Bible, and after the gospels are finished, there are no passages at all. She is not mentioned again.

I want to read most if not all of these passages. It should become clear that, even though she was a faithful disciple and helpful to Jesus in His ministry, she did not have a high place in the organization. That is about all one can say.

We will start this in Luke 8 because this is first place chronologically she is mentioned in Jesus' ministry. She is not mentioned alone, here, but with a group:

Luke 8:1 Now it came to pass, afterward, that He went through every city and village, preaching and bringing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with Him, . . .

Now notice how this is ranked out. First, there is Jesus, then the Twelve.

Luke 8:2-3 . . . and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities—Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons, and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna,

and many others who provided for Him from their substance.

That is basically all we know of Mary Magdalene at this point in His ministry. Only one other gospel writer mentions that Jesus cast out demons from her—seven of them—and she was appropriately appreciative of that. Thus, she used her means to support Him.

Now, if she were the disciple whom Jesus loved, which is one of the things I have heard—as a matter of fact, that is a point Dan Brown brings up in *The Da Vinci Code*. He said that if you looked at the last supper, and looked at "John" whom Jesus loved, you would see that he is a rather effeminate figure; it appears a woman is leaning on Jesus' shoulder. This is a "clue," you see! This was "really" Mary Magdalene! Well, that is poppycock!

You would think that if she were the disciple whom Jesus loved, she would get more mentions, and earlier mentions, than she does. It is just not the case. This account occurs well into Jesus' ministry (which had started back in Luke 4). We are already into chapter 8, and things are moving along, and finally Mary Magdalene shows up.

Certainly, she was a faithful and helpful disciple. But, she was obviously beneath the Twelve in rank, if you want to put it that way. She was a helper. She was not an apostle as one of the later Gnostic gospels said she was. (I believe that is in the "Gospel of Mary.") Nor was she a member of some inner circle. We know that the inner circle, if there was one, was Peter, James, and John, and perhaps Andrew, not Mary Magdalene. She was not Jesus' wife.

Let us put together what we do know:

- 1) We know that Mary was from Magdala—modern Migdol by the sea of Galilee.
- 2) Jesus cast out seven demons from her, and she was grateful for this.
- 3) Along with other women whom Jesus had healed, she used her wealth or means to help fund Jesus' ministry. Some people think that perhaps she was married and had a great deal of wealth, as it was. But, I have not heard it mentioned that she was anyone's wife, so . . . who knows?
- 4) We know that she, along with the other women—Joanna, Susanna, and others—sometimes traveled with Jesus and the other disciples.

This is what we do know. That is about it. Four facts. Very little else is known.

Notice that, in those four facts, there is nothing that says that Mary was a reformed prostitute. Have you not heard that? It is almost a "fact" that Mary Magdalene was a prostitute, and Jesus brought her out of this. Where does this idea come from?

I have heard all kinds of explanations. People try to put things together. They say the lady caught in adultery in John 8, who was forgiven by Jesus, was Mary Magdalene. How did this idea—that Mary was a prostitute—ever get started?

It happened by a process called *conflation*. The content of the last part of Luke 7—where the woman of ill repute came and anointed Jesus' feet at Simon the Pharisee's house, and where He said, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."—is combined with what is said right after that at

the beginning of chapter 8, where the first woman mentioned is Mary Magdalene.

So, the geniuses back in history put these two episodes together and said that this woman who had the bad reputation was the first one mentioned in Luke 8. This was supposedly Luke's way of giving us the high sign about who this was. He did not want to mention her, but he made it apparent by naming her first after this. So, they conflated the two accounts.

In John's account of the anointing, he clearly identifies the woman as Mary, but not as Mary Magdalene. If you go there, you would see that he says that the woman who did this to Jesus' feet with the costly ointment was Mary the sister of Martha and Lazarus. This is Mary of Bethany, which is where this event took place.

Now in those accounts in Matthew, Mark, and John, it is very clear that it is in Bethany, at Simon the Leper's house. It was an alabaster flask of perfumed oil, and she is named as Mary. Now if you read what it says in Luke 7, you will find that there are different details. The woman is not named, and they are at Simon the Pharisee's house.

Now you have got to know that there were about only 10 names that Hebrew people named their children: Joshua, Joses, James (which is Jacob), Simon, and a few others. There must be a dozen different Simons in the Bible. Simon is a very popular name. And just because anointings happened in houses where the owner was named Simon does not necessarily mean that the two occurrences are the same.

They could be different occurrences, at different places, at different times—and because of the details, that is what this appears to be. The Mary who anoints Jesus' feet in Matthew, Mark, and John, is a different person from whoever it was who anoints Jesus' feet in Luke.

An interesting detail here is what is said about these anointings. In Matthew, Mark, and John, Jesus says that He was anointed for His burial, and this will be remembered as a memorial to this woman. The lesson in Luke 7, though, is entirely different. It is about the forgiveness of sin. Which one of these is going to be forgiven more? Which one will be more appreciative?

So, it seems clear to me, at least, that these are two different stories. One happens early on in His ministry, while the later happens just about the time He is about to die, within that week. And so, obviously, His comments about the anointing had to do with His death, which was front and center in His mind.

We cannot use Matthew, Mark, and John to identify the unnamed woman in Luke 7. It could have been any woman of ill repute in Judea and Galilee at that time. It appears, also, that Luke 7 took place in Galilee, and the other took place in Judea. However, I am not certain of that.

So the idea that Mary was a prostitute has no basis whatsoever. She is one of our sisters. You should probably want to uphold the reputation of one of your family members. And, I hope that I have done that with what I have said here. It is a slanderous thing that she has been thought of that way for so long.

Mary Magdalene comes into the story again in Matthew 27:

Matthew 27:55-61 And many women who followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him, were there [the crucifixion] looking on from

afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's sons [notice not Mary the mother of Jesus]. Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be given to him. When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed. And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the tomb.

They had been watching what was going on so they had all the details. Drop down to Matthew 28: 1:

Matthew 28:1 Now after the Sabbath, as the first *day* of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb.

And then, there is the earthquake, and whatnot. The stone is found rolled back.

Matthew 28:5-9 But the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. "He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. "And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you." So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word. And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, "Rejoice!" So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him.

Then Jesus tells them not to be afraid, and to tell the disciples about going to Galilee. That is all that is mentioned [in Matthew] about Mary Magdalene.

Mark 15:40-41 There were also women looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses, and Salome, who also followed Him and ministered to Him when He was in Galilee, and many other women who came up with Him to Jerusalem.

And then Joseph of Arimathea does his thing.

Mark 15:47 And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses observed where He was laid.

Mark 16:1 Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him.

Now the scene changes again:

Mark 16:9-10 Now when He rose early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons. She went and told those who had been with Him, as they mourned and wept.

Verse 11 says that they did not believe her. This next bit is interesting. Luke is the writer who mentioned her (in Luke 8) and introduced her way back there, and then he says in verse 49:

Luke 23:49 But all His acquaintances, and the women who followed Him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

He does not even name her!

Luke 23:55 And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment.

Luke 24:1 Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared.

And then it goes on as we have read before.

Luke 24:9-10 Then they returned from the tomb and told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them, who told these things to the apostles.

So, when he finally gets to the end of the story, he tells us who they were. And that is all.

John 19:25-26 Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by [could it be a woman?], He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!"

It was no woman at all, but the disciple John. Is that not incredible?

John 19:27 Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home.

If you are married and are dying on a cross, and your mother, your (supposed) wife, and your best friend are standing there, and you say, "Mom—son. Friend—mom." Do you ignore the one in the middle? Does that make any sense?

If your wife was there, watching you die, do you think that you would say nothing at all to her? In these accounts, there is no, "Honey, I will see you in three days" or anything similar! There is no, "I will be home for Sunday dinner!" It just does not make any sense that, if He were married to Mary Magdalene, and she was standing there at the foot of the stake, that He would not say anything to her. There is supposed to be an intimate relationship between a man and his wife. And even knowing that He would be back in three days, He would have said *something* to comfort her! But there is no mention at all that He singled out Mary Magdalene for any sort of intimate words before He died. Would He not have said, "Mom—daughter-in-law. Wife—mom. Take care of her"? But no, there is nothing there.

John 20:1-2 Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved [which was a man, John, and not herself], and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him."

John 20:11-12 But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

Then she has a conversation with them.

John 20:14-16 Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" She, supposing Him to be the gardener [What a crack-up! She did not recognize her "husband"?] said to Him, "Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him, "Rabboni!" (which is to say, Teacher).

Not "husband"! Not "dearest"! Not "Josh"! It is very obvious to me that she treated Him with the respect of her Teacher, not her husband.

John 20:17-18 Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her.

Now, some people think, as moderns do, that she came up and gave Him a big hug. But we went through the scriptures. What did she do? She fell down at His feet, and held his feet! Now, seriously ladies, have any of you done this to your husbands? "Honey! I am home!" And you plop down and hug his feet? I do not mean to make this too ridiculous, but if you put this in the scenario that they were husband and wife, what they did does not make sense!

He treats her as a disciple, and she treats Him as a Master and Teacher and God; there is no personal intimacy here. There is not a relationship of husband to wife. It is a very friendly relationship, but it is not an intimate, sexual relationship. Her actions are not of a wife, but a devoted disciple.

And, this is all we know about Mary Magdalene. This is everything. Nothing in the scripture even hints at any kind of relationship approaching that of marriage.

III) Dan Brown asserts that Jesus was married. We talked about Mary Magdalene, now we are going to talk about Jesus Himself.

There are two arguments brought forth that make it seem—if we would accept the arguments—that Jesus should have been married or could have been married.

The first argument is: "*Since Jesus was a man* [which shows the way that they are approaching this], *why should He have not been married? He is a man! Men get married. It says in Genesis 1 to be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth; a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall be joined to his wife, and shall become one flesh. If He was a man, why would He not do this?*"

The second argument is: "*Since Jesus was a Jewish rabbi, He should have been married as an example to those He was teaching, because most Jewish rabbis were indeed married*"

We will take these separately.

The first argument assumes that Jesus was only a man and not divine at all. Thus, there is no "earthly" reason for His remaining celibate. However, we have got to factor in that pre-incarnation, Jesus was the God of the Old Testament. We must ask if He were actually free to marry.

Now, His life continued. He was born, of course, as a human. But, as things work out on the time line, He never ceased to exist through all that. He always was, even when He was a sperm cell put into Mary's egg. He was still God. He was still alive.

Of course, He later died and was dead for three days and three nights, but we are not talking about that portion here. We are talking about his earthly lifetime. As the God of the Old

Testament, was He free to marry? Since most people do not understand the covenants, they do not even come to mind when this question comes up. But, this scenario of Jesus actually marrying can be seen to violate a point of covenant law.

Now, this is rather involved, and I do not want to go into this too deeply. However, I want to go back to Ezekiel 16, and pick up a few points.

Ezekiel 16:8-9 "When I passed by you [Israel and Jerusalem] again and looked upon you, indeed your time was the time of love; so I spread My wing over you and covered your nakedness. Yes, I swore an oath to you and entered into a covenant with you, and you became Mine," says the Lord GOD. "Then I washed you in water; yes, I thoroughly washed off your blood, and I anointed you with oil."

He entered into a covenant with her, which was a marriage covenant. That is the analogy here.

Ezekiel 16:31-32 [this is a bit later...] "You erected your shrine at the head of every road, and built your high place in every street. Yet you were not like a harlot, because you scorned payment. You are an adulterous wife, who takes strangers instead of her husband."

Ezekiel 16:60 "Nevertheless I will remember My covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you."

What this says in the analogy is that He will remember the vow He made in His first covenant, and then He will establish a new, everlasting covenant with them.

In the meantime, she has played the harlot. We could go to Jeremiah 3, as well as Hosea 2, and these same ideas come up. Hosea 2 is the famous one where He says she is not His wife anymore, but a later one says that she will call Him her Husband again.

Jeremiah 3 is that place where He gave her a bill of divorce and put her away. But, then He also says later that He would remember the covenant and bring her back. That is the important point here.

This is the section on divorce in the Pentateuch:

Deuteronomy 24:1-4 "When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts *it* in her hand, and sends her out of his house, when she has departed from his house, and goes and becomes another man's *wife*, if the latter husband detests her and writes her a certificate of divorce, puts *it* in her hand, and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies who took her as his wife, *then* her former husband who

divorced her must not take her back to be his wife after she has been defiled; for that *is* an abomination before the LORD, and you shall not bring sin on the land which the LORD your God is giving you *as* an inheritance."

Now, this is where the problem comes in. Even though He put her away, she became defiled. She had been "loose with other men." And it says here that He should not take her back because that is an abomination. So that brings up a point of law. How is Jesus going to work this out so that He could marry her again? He has promised that He will do this. But, something has to happen in the meantime.

Notice that Jesus Himself says something very similar in Matthew 19, at the end of verse 9:

Matthew 19:9 "And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery."

This situation is in His mind here. So, what does He do to solve this problem?

Romans 7:1-3 Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man.

So, the problem disappears if one of the spouses dies. It cleans the slate off. Jesus sacrificed Himself so that Israel could be both redeemed, and remarried.

In the rest of this section, Paul applies this same principle in a different way. If you read verses 4 through 6, you will see how he uses it. He talks about us being dead to the law. And now we have the opportunity to marry Him.

But, for my purposes today, this principle means that Jesus himself is both free to marry another—the church—as well as to remarry Israel because the two of them become the same thing.

Turn to Ephesians 5: 23 to put the cap on this.

Ephesians 5:23 For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.

Ephesians 5:25-27 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and

cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

Ephesians 5:32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

Of course, we have to factor in Galatians 6:16 here, that the church is the Israel of God. So, at the end of the Tribulation, when Israel begins to repent, they will be brought back in through spiritual Israel and be re-grafted in, and then marry Christ again, too, through the New Covenant.

Thus, if you look at it this way—I know it was a bit tortuous—but this means that Jesus could not have married during His physical lifetime if He were to remain sinless according to the law. It disallowed Him from remarrying Israel. This is an esoteric argument, but it does have merit as to the spiritual reasons why Jesus did not marry.

The second argument just does not get started at all. There was a rule that rabbis were married. There were also exceptions to this. Who was one of Christ's cousins? John the Baptist! He never married, and he was well known and respected around Israel. The Essenes were a monastic and celibate Jewish sect. Some of the Old Testament prophets are said to not have been married. Certainly Daniel was not married, and may have been a eunuch—a probability of the time—and is one of the greatest of the prophets. Also, Hosea was single until God commanded him to marry a prostitute. God commanded Jeremiah not to marry at all while at that place (found in Jeremiah 16:2).

So, it was not a requirement that a prophet be married. Certainly, it was not a hard-and-fast rule.

In Matthew 19, Jesus discusses this, and in a way, He gives a justification to the disciples as to why He did not get married.

Matthew 19:10-12 His disciples said to Him, "If such is the case of the man with his wife, it is better not to marry." But He said to them, "All cannot accept this saying, but only those to whom it has been given: "For there are eunuchs who were born thus from their mother's womb [un-descended testicles or other sterility problems], and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men [common at the time], and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake [choosing to remain single]. He who is able to accept it, let him accept it."

There is good scholarship to conclude that what He means is, "*Guys, this is what I have done. I am in this latter category. There are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake, and I am among them.*" He had dedicated His life to preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God. That was His one thing that He wanted to do. And a wife and children would have been an unnecessary distraction. It would have made His work and His

sacrifice, especially, all that more difficult.

Paul says:

I Corinthians 7:32-33 But I want you to be without care. He who is unmarried cares for the things of the Lord—how he may please the Lord. But he who is married cares about the things of the world—how he may please his wife.

So, Paul and Jesus are saying that they had dedicated themselves single-mindedly to preaching the gospel without having any distractions.

This also would have created all kinds of problems in the church of God such as problems with respect of persons. It could have engendered a line of humans claiming to be some sort of demi-gods who "lord" it over the people. Or they could have been worshipped by the people themselves for being physical heirs of Jesus. That is the basically the whole point of Dan Brown's book. He said that there is a line of people who became kings, who descended from Jesus and Mary Magdalene.

Now, let me add that besides these legal and practical reasons, there would have been nothing defiling had Jesus married and produced children. Understand: I am talking about the sexual angle on this. There would have been nothing defiling had Jesus married and produced children.

It is only during the second and third centuries that the professing church began to have these Gnostic ideas that sexual relations between a man and a woman is evil, corrupting, or something to be avoided at all costs. It turned into the Catholic doctrine that we see today that sexual intercourse is only for producing children. Nothing more.

The Bible considers sexual relations in the confines of marriage to be good and proper. God created it. He said all those things were very good. Because of this, the writers of the gospels would have no reason to suppress Jesus' marriage and children, had it been true. It would not have been some sort of unholy thing—in its physical aspects. But we have already seen that that was not the case. There were other things that were much more important than that.

Only later professing Christianity, infused with Gnosticism, had any problems with sexuality, inside the confines of marriage. This is why the Gnostic gospels (if you have read any of them) are full of sexual themes and innuendo. And this is what happened. There was a rumor through these Gnostic gospels that Jesus had had a relationship with Mary Magdalene. Those Gnostics!

IV) There is one more I wanted to go through. I will just tell you (for the lack of time) that Dan Brown asserted that the divine feminine was suppressed. That there was a divine feminine amongst the Godhead, and that somehow the disciples and the early church quashed this knowledge so that a patriarchy—pope and priests, who were all male—could have the run of the religion.

But this is absolutely silly! This idea of the sacred or divine feminine came straight out of paganism through Gnosticism. It is that old thing where there was a trinity—Father, Son, and Mother (or Father, Mother, and Child). In the past, this sacred feminine deity was named

Semaramis, Ishtar, Istarte, Astoreth, Isis, etc., and now Mary, mother of Jesus has slipped into that role, the divine feminine.

That is also the way that it works out in Dan Brown's book. But he says that it was Mary Magdalene instead of Jesus' mother. It is all very silly.

One of Brown's "proofs" is that in the Old Testament the divine feminine was the *shekinah*—the presence of God—the manifestation of God. Do you know where they got that? The same old trinity thing. In addition, the word *shekinah* is linguistically of the feminine gender in Hebrew. And because it is in the feminine gender, it must mean that this particular aspect of God is feminine. This is sheer stupidity.

I will not go any more into this. The Bible plainly says that God is spirit (John 4: 24), and in Matthew 22: 30, Jesus implies that Spirit beings are sexless. They do not have gender. On the other hand, in every manifestation of God that we know of, He manifests Himself in the masculine role. He is Father, Master, Bridegroom, Husband, Son, King, Priest, Captain, etc. He is always shown in the masculine. Any other idea that the Bible teaches or has encoded some sort of sacred or divine feminine is just ridiculous.

Remember Jesus' warning:

Matthew 24: 4-5 And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many."

Many will write about Christ, and say, "Hey! This is the Christ!" saying that the Christ that we know is different from what we have learned from Scripture. They are going to say, "Yes! Jesus is the Christ." But, they will add all kinds of little details that make Him different.

Matthew 24: 10-12 "And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold."

There is a bit of a connection here. False prophets will rise up, and people will begin to be deceived, and this cascades into their love growing cold. So, He has told us—warned us—that rampant deception, particularly regarding Him, will be a primary characteristic of the end of the age.

Are we discerning the signs of the times?