

The Da Vinci Code – **Know the Truth; 2 Tim 4:3-5**

You may or may not have read/seen the DC, but you've certainly heard about it
It's a story about intrigue, mystery, conspiracy, hidden treasure, secret societies – you name it
On top of that, the subject matter concerns things like the elusive holy grail, the Bible, the church, Jesus, and most importantly your own faith
Put all that together, you have something that is potentially explosive

The problem is, Dan Brown and others like him, have blurred the lines between history and fiction in order to portray the Bible as a propaganda tool and people of faith as misguided weaklings
His claims have the potential to –
Plant doubts; Weaken your convictions; Undermine your faith
My intent is to counter that by separating fact from fiction, truth from myth

Myths that the apostle Paul warned us of in **1 Tim 4:3-5**

Paul says – preach the Word in v2; Why? Because among other things –
They will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths (4)
Myths like “The DC”

In light of this tendency, he says – *be sober-minded*
Keep a clear head; Think clearly; think biblically; Be on the lookout

The first myth or claim that we need to think clearly about is . . .

Claim #1 – The gospels are fabrications of the early church

The assertion goes something like this . . .
The *original* accounts of Christ's life were totally different than those in our Bible
But the male-dominated early church led by Constantine in 325 AD, changed the Scriptures in order to preserve the male power base; and tried to destroy the real accounts as contained in the Gnostic gospels
What we have now reflects those changes and are essentially fabrications that can't be trusted as the true Word of God
In other words, the Bible is a product of man's fabrication, not God's inspiration

The TRUTH is . . . the gospels in the Bible are the real deal

They are not fabrications; they were not changed
The canon (list of authoritative Scriptures) was not *tampered* with to include some writings and exclude others
The Gnostic gospels are *not* the originals
The canonical gospels as found in our Bible are the real deal – they are the true, genuine accounts of Christ's life

- We can be confident that the original gospels weren't changed or fabricated because . . .
 1. There's no evidence to show for it
It's an argument from silence; It's simply conjecture; Made up; Fiction
 2. It's not very plausible – To have changed or fabricated the gospel accounts . . .
They would have had to somehow gather up and destroy *all* existing copies first
Then replace them with fabricated copies
Then convince all the believers that what they had believed and trusted for the last 200 years was false

That would be like our government somehow gathering up all the old copies of the Declaration of Independence, re-writing them, and then convincing us that what we held for the last 200 years wasn't the real deal

3. The *actual* evidence tells a different story
Very simple – the manuscripts of the gospels copied before 325, match the manuscripts copied after 325; There's no change

- What about the claim that the canon was changed/tampered with by Const?
That some books were excluded because they didn't support male rule and sexual repression in the church
Here again, it's totally contrary to the historical account
Eusebius (historian at the time) – the Council of Nicaea didn't even discuss it
Not one of the 20 rulings handed down refers to any issue pertaining to the canon
This notion first showed up in a legend 550 years later!
That would be like me re-writing the diaries of Columbus and his discovery of America – Which account would you believe?
There was no tampering of the canon at the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD
- What these so-called Gnostic gospels? How come they weren't included? 3 reasons –
 1. They weren't written with *apostolic authority*
Either by an apostle directly, or by someone with direct access to one of the apostles
An apostle was one who was an eye witness to the events of Christ's life
And was directly commissioned by Christ to pass on his message
Matthew – by the apostle Matthew; Mark – under Peter's authority
Luke – under the apostle Paul's authority; John – by the apostle John

None of the Gnostic gospels can legitimately claim apostolic authority
Found at Nag Hammadi in 1945 – none written before 150 AD; most written in 3rd and 4th centuries
Whereas the biblical gospels were written between 40–90 AD
So they obviously weren't written by eyewitnesses, even though they used their names (Peter, Thomas, Mary), to bolster their appeal and claim authority
Note – contrary to the DC, the Dead Sea scrolls aren't “Christian records” at all
They are Jewish writings from the century before Christ
They don't even mention Jesus, let alone speak of his ministry “in very human terms”
 2. They weren't *recognized by a majority of churches* as genuine and authoritative
If the writing didn't ring true for local churches, they were rejected
If they didn't resonate with the HS within them, they were set aside
This is where the canon took shape – at the grassroots level
As churches either accepted or rejected different writings that were circulating, the canon was formed – hundreds of years before the various church councils
The councils merely confirmed what the local churches had already agreed upon
 3. They *didn't agree with apostolic doctrine/teaching* (as written and preached)
The claims of the Gnostic gospels were *so* contrary and *so* out there compared to the apostolic witness, it was a no-brainer to reject them
I mentioned some of these last week; Gnosticism claimed that . . .

To be saved, need to experience a secret knowledge of the divine w/in you
Gnosis – means knowledge; the whole heresy is based on secret knowledge
Had to resort to asceticism (harsh treatment of body) to release the divine w/in you
All things physical were considered inherently evil because God’s counterpart (not Satan) failed to create a good world

Christ’s resurrection was rejected

When we encounter ourselves, we encounter God (New Age is actually very old age)

For a woman to be saved, she needed to become a man

God has a feminine side – there’s father god and mother god

I was at a community worship service about 7 years ago – woman stood up to pray and the first words out of her mouth were – “mother god of all creative order”

The Gnostic gospels don’t agree with apostolic doctrine and teaching

The biblical gospels weren’t changed or fabricated

Other more legitimate writings weren’t excluded

The gospels in the Bible are the real deal – Know the Truth

Claim #2 – Jesus was a great man, but a *man* nonetheless

Sir Leigh Teabing, the Holy Grail enthusiast in the DC says that, “Jesus was a mortal prophet, a great and powerful man, but a man nonetheless.”

Through that character, Brown alleges that the Emperor Constantine, in 325AD, gathered the various church leaders together, and upgraded Jesus’ status from man to God

That this was the first instance where Jesus was considered the Son of God

The supposed purpose was to suppress women by removing any evidence of the “divine feminine” from Jesus

Evidence that he was the son of a goddess

The TRUTH is . . . Jesus was God in the flesh

He claimed it – *Whoever has seen me has seen the Father (Jn 14:9)*

Apostles spread it – *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us (Jn 1:1,14)*

Early church confessed it – *In him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell (Col 1:19)*

Church fathers (2nd and 3rd generation after the apostles) confirmed it – Polycarp of Smyrna (disciple of the apostle John, refers to divinity of Jesus, letter 115 AD), Justin Martyr (Christ was the Son of God, 150 AD); Irenaeus (all distinctions between the Father and the Son vanish, 177 AD)

- So it’s simply false that Jesus was not considered the Son of God before 325 AD

He had been proclaimed as such and worshipped as such for almost 300 years

The Council at Nicaea simply confirmed it

And, they reinforced it by concluding that the Scriptures taught that Jesus wasn’t just *like* God, but that he was the *same* as God

Driving home the point that Jesus, the Son of God, was God in the flesh

- The other part of this claim is that Jesus was supposedly the original feminist (twisted)

We saw last week that his consideration, inclusion, and treatment of women was radically counter-cultural, and something that we need to continue in our day

What we didn’t see, and won’t ever see, is that he was the son of a goddess and advocated the practice of ritualistic sex as a form of worship and initiation

Pagan sex rituals were not uncommon before and during the time of Christ – that is true

But there is absolutely *no evidence*, not in the biblical gospels, not the Gnostic gospels, not in any writing of that time, that indicates Jesus or the early church practiced such things

- So how do Dan Brown and others come up with such blasphemous?

Took the term *Shekinah*, a Hebrew word referring to God’s glory in the OT tabernacle, and out of the blue said it refers to the female part of God (the divine feminine)

It’s a total fabrication; Just made it up

From pagan religions they throw in the practice of sex with a female priestess, and combine it with the accounts of women anointing Jesus with oil to say that . . .

The anointing is a reference to ritualistic sex

Put all that together, and you have a heresy (a claim that is contrary to the truth of Scripture) that Jesus “elevated” women to these sexually-oriented priestess and leadership roles, due to his feminine side he received from his god-mother

This pretty much sealed my decision to never see the movie

Jesus was fully man, but he was also fully God – God in the flesh

It’s one of the mysteries of Scripture that’s clearly taught, but not fully reconciled

Claim #3 – Jesus is a figment of your *imagination*

He is whoever you want him to be; whoever you need him to be

To some he’s a countercultural hippie or a charismatic rabbi

To others, he’s a Jewish reactionary, a conservative politician, an insane babler

To a few he’s a homosexual magician or the embodiment of the divine feminine

Jesus is a figment of your spiritual imagination; And if that helps you cope and live life – go for it; it’s all good

But whoever or whatever he is for you, he’s *not* real; The stories are just that – stories

They’re just metaphors – they didn’t really happen

And if they did, they didn’t happen the way they are told in the Bible

But *that* doesn’t even matter

What matters is that you’re a good person and live a good life, and find *your* Jesus to be helpful for *you* – garbage

That’s the figment of Dan Brown’s imagination – the furthest thing from the historically grounded Christianity we find in the Bible

Based on real events, in a real time, with real people

The TRUTH is . . . Jesus is Lord – and you need to come to grips with it

If you haven’t already, you need to come to grips with the fact that Jesus is Lord of all creation, including your life

If the gospels are true, and Jesus was God in the flesh – then he is *Lord*

He claims it; Jn 13:13 – *You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am.*

His disciples confessed it (on multiple occasions; Thomas, Peter, Nathaniel, Soldier)

Apostles preached it – **Phil 2:9-11** – *Therefore God has highly exalted him and*

*bestowed on him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is **Lord**, to the glory of God the Father.*

- If that's true, then you need to come to grips with it and surrender yourself to him while you still have life and breath

The only other options (against overwhelming evidence) are to say that he was an outright *liar*, a raving *lunatic*, or an *imaginary person*

Let's consider those options for a minute

If you say he was an imaginary person, what about extra-biblical writings?

Imaginary people don't draw the criticism and critique and following he did

Imaginary people aren't referred to in secular historical accounts like Josephus

Nor could the apostles have successfully invented a religion based on so many events that could have so easily been proven false

There's no way they could have fooled so many for so long about so much

If you say he was a liar, what do you do with his miracles? Throw them out as well?

If his miracles weren't real, then his first generation followers would have known it, propagated the lies anyway, and *died* for it

That's not plausible because though people will sometimes die for something they *believe* to be true, nobody voluntarily dies for something they *know* to be *false*

If he was a lunatic, then how do you reconcile the amazing wisdom of his teachings?

The consistency of his demeanor; Poise of his character; Composure under pressure

The clarity of his direction; Compassion for people

Someone like that is the farthest thing from being a lunatic

And if you say that maybe the apostles sanitized his life in their gospel accounts, then you're right back to people dying for things they knew to be false – it's not plausible

- Get rid of the notion that he's a great moral example, a great teacher, a great man – but he's *not* Lord of our lives

How could he be a great moral example if he's lying to us about his Lordship?

How could he be a great teacher if he's telling us lies?

How could he be a great man if he's leading us to think he's somebody he's not?

Doesn't make sense – CS Lewis, author of *The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe*, said it best a half century ago – **quote**

- The *truth* is . . . Jesus *is* Lord

Whether you acknowledge it or not, doesn't change the fact that it's true

But it makes a world of difference for your life and death

Question is – Are you going to come to grips with the truth & surrender your life to him?

Or rationalize it and ignore it?

Are you going to flounder along, missing out on the joy/blessing of following Christ?

Or give yourself fully to his worship, purposes, and plans?

If he's Lord, he deserves nothing less

Don't turn away from the truth and wander into myths

Think clearly, be sober-minded, and know the truth (2 Tim 4:3-5)

Close