

Answering the Da Vinci Code

Compiled by Ryan Flunker

The Da Vinci Code page 1:

“FACT: The Priory of Sion – a European secret society founded in 1099 – is a real organization. In 1975 Paris’s Bibliothèque Nationale discovered parchments known as *Les Dossier Secrets*, identifying numerous members of the Priory of Sion, including Sir Isaac Newton, Botticelli, Victor Hugo, and Leonardo da Vinci.”

“The Vatican prelature known as Opus Dei is a deeply devout Catholic sect that has been the topic of recent controversy due to reports of brain-washing, coercion, and a dangerous practice known as ‘corporal mortification.’ Opus Dei has just completed construction of a \$47 million National headquarters at 243 Lexington Avenue in New York City.”

“All descriptions of artwork, architecture, documents, and secret rituals in this novel are accurate.”

This fiction novel is masquerading at “fact,” and is cleverly misleading average readers from historical truth and Christian doctrine. Addressed here are the 4 primary lies from the Da Vinci Code:

- Is Jesus Divine?
- Was He married?
- 80 gospels and the formation of the canon?
- Is the New Testament valid?

The Divinity of Christ

The primary domino

Fiction –

× DC. p. 233

“My dear,” Teabing declared, “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.”

“Not the Son of God?”

“Right,” Teabing said. “Jesus’ establishment as ‘the Son of God’ was officially proposed and voted on by the Council of Nicaea.”

“Hold on. You’re saying Jesus’ divinity was the result of a *vote*?”

“A relatively close vote at that,” Teabing added.

Fact –

- ✓ The purpose of the Council of Nicea (A.D. 325) was not to decide whether Jesus was divine. Quite the contrary: everyone at the Council – and in fact, just about every Christian everywhere – *already agreed* that Jesus was divine, the Son of God (Ehrman. p. 14).
- ✓ The actual purpose of the Council of Nicea was in response to Arian Theology – that Jesus was a creature. It served to make explicit the accepted orthodox belief as to *how* Christ is divine, not *if* He actually is (Leith. p. 28; Komoszewski p. 212).
- ✓ The deity of Christ was not a creation of a forth-century vote of council but is based on the teaching of the four Gospels and other New Testament books. These four canonical Gospels are rooted in apostolic tradition, and they were firmly established as the defining texts of the Christian church by the end of the second century, if not earlier (Bock. p. 153).
- ✓ Many texts that explicitly refer to the deity of Christ occur pre-325:
 - ⌘⁴⁶ (A.D. 200) – Romans 9:5; Hebrews 1:8
 - ⌘⁶⁶ (A.D. 175-255) – John 1:1, 20:28
 - ⌘⁷⁵ (early 3rd century A.D.) – John 1:1
- ✓ Many New Testament references clearly reveal Christ’s deity (all pre-325):
 - He allowed others to call Him the Christ – Matt 16:15-20; 26:63-64
 - He said He could forgive sin – Matt 9:2-6; Luke 7:47-48
 - He didn’t stop others from calling Him the Son of God – Matt 14:33

He promised to rise from the dead – Matt 20:18-19; 27:62-63

He said He would be the judge at the end of time – Matt 25:31-46

“I and the Father are one.” – Jn 10:30

“Thomas said to him, ‘My Lord [ὁ κύριός] and my God [ὁ θεός]’” – Jn 20:28

“Yet, for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ – NASB” – 1 Cor. 8:6

- ✓ Many textual references which are attested to YHWH in the Old Testament are used to speak of Christ in the New:

“The LORD says to my lord, ‘*Sit at my right hand.*’” – Ps. 110:1

“And behold, *with the clouds of heaven* One like a *Son of Man* was *coming.*” – Dan. 7:13

Jesus in Mark 14:62 – “I am,... and you will see the *Son of Man* sitting at *the right hand* of the Power and *coming with the clouds of heaven.*”

- ✓ Many Church Fathers attested to the divinity of Christ pre-325:

Ignatius: “*God Himself* was manifested in human form” – A.D. 105

“There is one Physician composed of flesh and Spirit, generate and ingenerate, *God in man*, authentic life in death, from Mary and from God, first passable and impassable, Jesus Christ our Lord.” – A.D. 110

Referred to Christ as “*our God.*” – A.D. 110

Describes the crucifixion as the place where they witness the, *blood of God.*

Clement: “It is fitting that you should think of Jesus Christ as of *God*” – A.D. 150

Justin Martyr: “The Father of the universe has a Son. And He... is *even God*” – A.D. 160

Irenaeus: “*He is God*, for the name Emmanuel indicates this” – A.D. 180

“But in every respect, too, [Christ Jesus our Lord] is a man, the formation of God... and the Word being made man.

Tertullian: “... *Christ our God*” – A.D. 200

Origen: No one should be offended that the Savior is *also God...*” – A.D. 225

Novatian: “... He is not only man, but *God also...*” – A.D. 235

Cyprian: “Jesus Christ, *our Lord and God*” – A.D. 250

Methodius: “... He truly was and is... with God, and *being God...*” – A.D. 290

Lactantius: “We believe Him *to be God*” – A.D. 304

Arnobius: “Christ performed all those miracles... the... *duty of Divinity*” – A.D. 305 (Garlow. p. 94).

- ✓ Even non-Christian writers from the 2nd and 3rd centuries attest and criticize that Christians treated Christ as divine.

Lucian: “... whom they still worship, the man who was crucified” – A.D. 170

Celsus – scoffed at Christians who were worshipping a man as God: “... they think it perfectly consistent to worship the great God and to worship his servant as God.” – A.D. 177

Pliny the Younger: “They had met regularly before dawn on a fixed day to chant verses alternately among themselves in honour of Christ as if to a god.” – A.D. 112 (Komoszewski. p. 197-99)

- ✓ There was never a vote at Nicea. Bishops either *did* sign or *did not* sign indicating that they agreed or disagreed, but either way Jesus would always be divine; Christians for 250 years prior had agreed that Jesus was divine (Ehrman. p. 23).
- ✓ Contrary to what Teabing asserts, it was not a “*close vote.*” For the 200-250 bishops present all signed the creed – with the exception of *Theonas of Marmarica* and *Secundus of Ptolemais* (Komoszewski. p. 213).

Furthermore:

Fiction –

- ✗ DC. p. 233

“By officially endorsing Jesus as the Son of God, Constantine turned Jesus into a deity who existed beyond the scope of the human world, an entity whose power was unchallengeable.”

Fact –

- ✓ Constantine’s agenda had nothing to do with the nature of Jesus. He sought to unify the nation, and settle the debate from the bickering bishops. His main vision was endorsing harmony, not whether Jesus was the Son of God. “To suggest that Constantine had the ability – or even the inclination – to manipulate the council into believing what it did not already embrace is, at best, a silly notion. At worst, the emperor was merely a speed bump in the church’s march toward a deeper understanding of the nature of Christ” (Komoszewski. p. 215).
- ✓ Jesus looks more divine in the Gnostic gospels (written pre-Nicea), than He does in the Gospels of the New Testament (Ehrman. p. 26, 49).

Jesus and Mary Magdalene

“Sitting in a tree...”

Fiction –

✘ DC p. 244:

“It’s a matter of historical record,” Teabing said, “and Da Vinci was certainly aware of the fact. The Last Supper practically shouts at the viewer that Jesus and Magdalene were a pair.”

✘ DC p. 245:

“As I said earlier, the marriage of Jesus and Mary Magdalene is part of the historical record.”

Fact –

- ✓ The idea that Jesus and Mary were married was not created by Dan Brown. In writing *The Da Vinci Code*, Brown was dependent on an earlier best-seller of the 1980’s, *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* (Ehrman. p. 141). And the connection of Mary to the Holy Grail is a late, fresh twentieth-century addition to the legend of the Holy Grail (Bock. p. 14). Brown sourced his plot off of another fictional novel and thus his purported claims are anything but “a matter of historical record.”
- ✓ Brown’s first point of evidence for the idea that Jesus and Mary were married comes from his observation of Leonardo da Vinci’s *The Last Supper*. Reality reveals that Leonardo depicted John in such a manner which is consistent with 16th century art. John’s feminine appearance is not unique to this painting or to this figure; men in Renaissance art often appear angelic, fragile, and somewhat androgynous. Leonardo’s own notes about the placement of the figures in the mural affirm without question that the figure seated next to Jesus is John (Garlow. p. 124).
- ✓ Brown’s second observation about *The Last Supper* is that it contains a “V” shape which is the alleged symbol for the feminine goddess. In reality the “V” shape is repeated four times throughout the painting, grouping the 12 disciples into 4 groups of 3. This is simply an artistic expression which serves to highlight Christ as the center of the painting.
- ✓ Brown’s next point of evidence for the marriage of Jesus comes from a claim that social structure of the first century “forbid a Jewish man to be unmarried,” (DC p. 245). First off, Jesus was not an official Jewish rabbi, and he had no recognized official role within Judaism (Bock. p. 37). “Secondly, Jesus’ teaching of the kingdom’s call to be eunuchs appears to be rooted in His commitment and example not to be married – Matt. 19:10-12,” (Bock. 38).

- ✓ In addition to this, there is variable evidence of 1st century and earlier Jewish communities where men devoted themselves in celibacy to the reflection of their commitment to God's kingdom (Bock. p. 38).
- ✓ The Apostle Paul was a leading Pharisee prior to his conversion and we know from his personal testimony and challenge that he advises people not to marry because of the nature of the times. Thus, Paul clearly shows evidence of 1st century Jewish celibacy.
- ✓ Whenever texts mention Jesus' family, they refer to His mother, brothers and sisters but never a wife (Bock. p. 41).
- ✓ Jesus shows no special concern for Mary Magdalene at the cross. Once again no wife is mentioned because there was no wife (Ibid. p. 44).
- ✓ In 1 Corinthians 9:5 we read, "Do we not have a right to take along a believing wife, even as the rest of the apostles, and the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas?" Here Paul is defending his very right to get married, and it would have been very simple and a much stronger argument to declare, "Don't we have every right to take along a wife – just as Jesus did!" Yet, Paul makes no such claim. The conclusion is that Paul did not make this point because he could not make such a point (Ibid. p. 42-43).
- ✓ Of all historical texts ever, there is no mention of Jesus ever being married. This is not an argument from silence in the classical sense because there were numerous opportunities to make the point about Jesus being married – had He been. The problem here is that where no marriage has occurred, silence will be the result (Ibid. p. 45). Most significant is a fact that cannot be overlooked or underestimated: in *none* of our early Christian sources is there any reference to Jesus' marriage or his wife. List every ancient source we have for the historical Jesus, and in none of them is there mention of Jesus being married (Ehrman. p. 153).
- ✓ Mary is thought to be single because women in scripture are often associated with their husbands. However, Mary is referred to as Mary Magdalene – indicating her place of origin – the town of Magdala, a fishing village on the shore of the Sea of Galilee (Ibid. p. 154).
- ✓ After claiming that Jewish custom forbid celibacy, Brown looks to the Gnostic gospels for further evidence supporting the claim of Jesus and Mary's marriage. Brown has Teabing report that these gospels are "The earliest Christian records (DC. p. 245). This is not even close to true. The books that Brown cites come some 100-200 years after the time of

Christ; in contrast with our canonical Gospels, written by eyewitnesses and completed before A.D. 70 (Lutzer. p. 27).

- ✓ Brown first cites *The Gospel of Philip* (A.D. 250), “Christ loved her more than all the disciples and used to kiss her often on her mouth,” (DC. p. 246). This text was composed in the second half of the third century a full two hundred years after the time of Jesus, and of all the passages that could suggest Jesus was married, this is the best potential case. “However, the key part of the text is broken and reads, ‘And the companion of the [...] Mary Magdalene. [...] loved] her more than [all] the disciples [and used to] kiss her [often] on her [...].’ The brackets indicate broken locations in the manuscript where there is no reading because the manuscript is damaged,” (Bock. p. 21). Thus, Brown embellishes this reading to suit his topic. It is most likely here, concerning the context of *Philip*, that this might be a reference to a kiss of fellowship, and being so the kiss may be one for the cheek and not the mouth (Ibid. p. 23). Again, of all historical texts, this is the closest we get to a sexual relationship between Jesus and Mary: a missing word, written by Gnostics, 200 years after the fact!
- ✓ Brown then makes this claim referring to the previous mention of “companion” from *Philip* 63, “As any Aramaic scholar will tell you, the word companion, in those days, literally meant spouse.’ Langdon concurred with a nod,” (DC p. 246). First of all *The Gospel of Philip* is not written Aramaic, but it is a Coptic text which is undoubtedly a translation from the Greek (Isenberg. *The Nag Hammadi Library*. p. 139).
- ✓ Secondly, and more importantly the term translated here as “companion” is from the Greek word *koinonos* [κοινωνός], which is literally translated as “one who takes part in something, with someone; companion, partner, sharer,” (BDAG. p. 553). Brown would have you believe this is the Aramaic word for wife, when in reality this word is not Aramaic, but is a Greek lend word in Coptic meaning “companion.” The Greek for wife is *gynē* [γυνή] (Bock. p. 23).
- ✓ Brown uses artistic license to again exaggerate when he makes mention to “countless references to Jesus and Magdalene’s union.” In referring to a marriage union between Jesus and Mary, the references are “countless” because there isn’t a single one. And in reference to any other text including both Jesus and Mary: there are 11 in the New Testament, and a very *countable* few in other texts.
- ✓ The next text that Brown cites is from a fragment known as the Gospel of Mary Magdala. In this passage Peter challenges Mary as the recipient of a special revelation from Jesus. Peter is disturbed because Mary, a

woman, received revelation from Jesus that the other apostles did not receive. “Mary is troubled and hurt by Peter’s challenge, and Levi comes to her defense citing that Jesus made her worthy and knew her well. The implication is that Jesus knew her well enough to know whether she was worthy to receive independent revelation. Out of that knowledge came Jesus’ exceptional love for her. There was no appeal to Mary’s having any familial status. She was simply the beneficiary of a special revelation from Jesus. Nothing in the text indicates anything more than that Jesus appeared to her alone,” (Bock. 25-26).

- ✓ Brown interprets the passage in the Gospel of Mary to somehow indicate that Jesus gave the “instructions on how to carry on His church after He is gone,” (DC. p. 247-48) to Mary. However, “there is nothing in this text to suggest that Jesus entrusted the mission of the church to her, nor that he married her, had sex with her, or that she ever traveled to France” (Ehrman. p. 160).
- ✓ Finally, Brown makes a point that adds to the conspiracy of the plot, namely that Mary Magdalene was from the “House of Benjamin,” so that the union between her and Jesus carries on the royal line (DC. p. 248). There is simply no evidence, historical or otherwise, to suggest that she was from the tribe of Benjamin. Even if she were, this would not make her related to royalty as the fact is many 1st century Jews were from the tribe of Benjamin, including the apostle Paul; Phil. 3:5, (Ehrman. p. 160).
- ✓ Allegedly, the church’s goal in covering up the relationship between Jesus and Mary was to preserve a solely deified non-human Christ (DC. p. 233). Reality, however shows that Christ’s deity along with His humanity has always been confessed from the writings of Paul through our canonical Gospels.

Furthermore:

Brown describes a smear campaign launched by the early church to paint Mary Magdalene as a prostitute (DA p. 244). In reality there has been common confusion with an unnamed woman in Luke 7 and Mary of Magdala in Luke 8, perhaps originally stemming from sermon delivered by Pope Gregory the Great in A.D. 591. Thus, there is no evidence that Mary was ever a prostitute (Bock. p. 28; Garlow p. 118).

Even if *The Last Supper* contained Mary (for sake of argument), all that would prove is that Leonardo da Vinci believed this nonsensical idea that Jesus was married – without a shred of historical evidence – and he lived some 1500 years after Christ! Furthermore, if this is the case then where is the beloved disciple John in the painting?!

How we got the Bible

And who decided the Gospels

Fiction –

× DC p. 231:

“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.”

“Who chose which gospels to include?” Sophie asked.

“Aha!” Teabing burst in with enthusiasm. “The fundamental irony of Christianity! The Bible, as we know it today, was collated by the pagan Roman emperor Constantine the Great.”

× DC p. 234:

“The twist is this,” Teabing said, talking faster now. “Because Constantine upgraded Jesus’ status almost four centuries *after* Jesus’ death, thousands of documents already existed chronicling His life as a *mortal* man. To rewrite the history books, Constantine knew he would need a bold stroke. From this sprang the most profound moment in Christian history.” Teabing paused, eyeing Sophie. “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.”

Fact –

- ✓ Reality shows us that there has never been anywhere close to eighty gospels. Brown interprets his evidence from texts found in the Nag Hammadi Library, and of its forty-five separate titles only 5 of them fall into the collection of gospels. There are scant other collections of early writings containing only a handful of works that are gospels. Our total number of ancient texts can range up to 60-80, but at best only a couple dozen of them can be called gospels (Bock. p. 62; Ehrman. p. 48, 49).
- ✓ “The formation of the New Testament canon was a long drawn-out process that began centuries before Constantine and did not conclude until long after he was dead. So far as we know, based on our historical record, the emperor was not involved in the process” (Ehrman. p. 74)
- ✓ It is true that the New Testament underwent a compilation process; however, most of it was established before the second century – twenty of the twenty-seven books were accepted as part of the Christian canon from the very beginning (Garlow. p. 35).

- ✓ “Historical reality is that the emperor Constantine had nothing to do with the formation of the canon of scripture: he did not choose which books to include or exclude, and he did not order the destruction of the Gospels that were left out of the canon” (Ehrman. p. 74).
- ✓ Contrary to what Brown promotes, the canon of scripture never underwent a systematic process where a bunch of scripture scholars sat down to “consider” which ones would be “chosen.” The finished form of the canon was instead the result of a long process where Christians sifted through the writings continually. It was a process that took many years – centuries, actually. It was not (contrary to Teabing’s view) the decision of one person, or even just one group of persons (for example, a church council). The Bible was the result of protracted and sometimes rancorous discussion, debate, and disagreement (Ibid. p. 75).
- ✓ It is true that out of the many writings arising in the first centuries of the church some would need to be discarded and others affirmed. The motivation which fueled this process was not a political agenda, but rather the heresies which threatened to distort the truth of orthodox Christianity. “The works of second-century theologians like Irenaeus and third-century theologians like Tertullian make it clear that the existence of groups like the Ebionites (a legalistic second-century group) and others led by Marcion (active by 140), Montanus (active by 170), and Valentinus (ca. 100-175) produced pressure to identify not only the core theological beliefs of Christians, but also the key documents (Bock. p. 111).
- ✓ One of the most important canon lists was the Muratorian Canon, written some 150 years before Constantine, which gives evidence that “the gospel” was contained in the four Gospels and in them alone (Ibid. p. 111-12).
- ✓ 2nd century church father Irenaeus makes specific mention of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. He goes on to affirm that there are and can be only four Gospels, stating that “the gospel is quadriform,” (Ibid. p. 114-15).
- ✓ Justin Martyr, writing even earlier than Irenaeus makes mention of Matthew, Mark, and Luke (Ibid. p. 118).
- ✓ Tatian, a student of Justin Martyr, made a compilation of the four Gospels around A.D. 172. It was called the Diatessaron, which is Greek for “through the four,” and was the first attempt to harmonize the four Gospels (Ibid. p. 119).

- ✓ Then we come to the church father Origen (A.D. 185-254), according to the Latin translation of Jerome, Origen stated:

I know a certain gospel which is called “The Gospel according to Thomas” and many others have we read – lest we should in any way be considered ignorant because of those who imagine they possess some knowledge if they are acquainted with these.

Nevertheless, among all these we have approved solely what the church has recognized, which is that only the four gospels should be accepted.

In the midst of heretical claims and religious persecution Origen had the foresight to recognize which texts were valid as scripture and which ones were to be rejected (Bock. p. 119-20).

- ✓ Irenaeus had a full list of twenty-one books, including all four Gospels. The Gospels and the bulk of the Pauline collection were already well established and circulated by A.D. 200 (Ibid. p. 121). Thus the recognition of the four Gospels as scripture significantly predates Constantine and the Council of Nicea. There never was a time when most church leaders were picking and choosing from dozens of gospels (Ibid p. 122-24).
- ✓ In 367, Athanasius, in his Thirty-ninth Festal Letter, pronounced without reservation the twenty-seven books of the New Testament as canonical (Komoszewski. p. 130; Ehrman. p. 93-94; Lutzer. p. 71).
- ✓ By A.D. 393, the canon was effectively closed when Augustine weighed in on the matter. Jerome added icing on the cake by discussing at some length the disputed books (Ibid. p. 130-31). It is also important to note that throughout this canonical discussion lasting until the 4th century, none of these later church fathers added any other gospels or letters or apocalypses to the New Testament canon. The discussion always revolved around the general 27 books with the twenty-two core books remaining solidly confirmed.
- ✓ Contrary to what Brown purports about the compilation of scripture, the true measure and criteria for inclusion into the Christian canon is as follows:
 1. Apostolic – An authority had to be written by an apostle – or at least a companion of the apostles e.g. Mark + Peter; Luke + Paul.
 2. Catholic – Meaning universal; books had to have widespread acceptance among established churches.
 3. Orthodox – The nature of the views expressed in the text had to conform to correct theology and doctrine. (Komoszewski. p. 149; Ehrman. p. 87-88)

- ✓ The finished canon was not finalized even by Constantine's day, even though it was agreed among all "orthodox" Christians that the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were canonical scripture. Constantine had nothing to do with that decision (Ehrman. p. 90).
- ✓ The church in the 1st and 2nd centuries had to define exactly what it believed and in doing so it had to affirm what documents it would recognize as canonical. After reading through some of other gospels and documents it is clear that the early church didn't have documents that were all on the same level, rather the church chose the documents which were exceptional in nature. The texts the churches affirmed as inspired were truly on a completely different level than the rejected texts (Lutzer. p. 76).
- ✓ The Gospels are historically credible witnesses to the person, words, and deeds of Jesus Christ. What the evangelists wrote was based on a strong oral tradition and had continuity with the earliest eyewitness testimony. In essence, the gospel did not change from its first oral proclamation to its last written production (Komoszewski. p. 259).
- ✓ There is no evidence that the early church had to sort through various gospels to find the ones that agreed with the Christian community at large. Rather, the earliest Gospels prevailed precisely because they were written early, they were written by reliable eyewitnesses and/or historians, and they were not given to flights of fancy (Ibid. p. 260).

Furthermore:

- ✓ Brown goes on to cite the Dead Sea Scrolls (DC. p. 234) as a source which speaks to the "ministry of Christ in very human terms." The truth is that the Dead Sea Scrolls do not include anything which is explicitly Christian. They are thoroughly and completely Jewish and faithful to Judaism. In fact they contain nothing about Jesus at all. With reference to gospels, there are in fact no Gospels among the hundreds of documents found at Qumran (Ehrman. p. 35).
- ✓ "Canon" is a transliteration of the Greek word *kanōn*, which means "rule" or "standard." The early church sought to define their beliefs through inspired texts which served as "straight sticks" or "rulers" by which to measure their Christian principles and doctrines. (Komoszewski. p. 123; Bock. p. 109)

New Testament Validity

Can you trust the Bible?

Fiction –

* DC p. 231:

“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.”

DC p. 342:

“Those who truly understand their faiths understand the stories are metaphorical.”

“Sophie looked skeptical. “My friends who are devout Christians definitely believe that Christ literally walked on water, literally, turned water into wine, and was born of a literal virgin birth.”

“My point exactly,” Langdon said. “Religious allegory has become a part of the fabric of reality.”

Fact –

- ✓ It is true that the Bible did not fall magically from the clouds, and the Bible had human authors. But to say that the Bible has evolved through translations, additions, and revisions, with the implication that the original is no longer detectable, is just plain silly (Komoszewski. p. 104).
- ✓ Ancient texts do have small discrepancies between one another due to the nature of scribes and copyists. However the largest number of textual variants involve spelling differences and nonsense readings that are easily detectable. These affect nothing of significance in the text (Ibid. p. 104).
- ✓ The smallest category, about 1 percent of all textual problems involves those variants that are both meaningful and viable. Most New Testament scholars would say that there are far fewer than even 1 percent – and not much of a theological nature is affected (Ibid. p. 105).
- ✓ The New Testament is far and away the best attested work of Greek or Latin literature in the ancient world. For example Tacitus wrote *Annals* in A.D. 56-120, and today we have only 3 surviving copies of his work, with the oldest existing from the 9th century. Livy wrote from 59 B.C. - A.D. 17, and today we only have 27 copies of his work, the oldest from the 4th century. In contrast, from the books of the New Testament we

have over 5,700 (Greek only – plus more than 10,000 in Latin, and more than 1 million quotations from church fathers, etc), and our oldest copies exist back to A.D. 100-150. (Ibid. p. 71)

- ✓ Slight differences should not obscure the overwhelming degree of agreement on the Bible's content. Vigorously attacked, the Bible has withstood intense scrutiny, being repeatedly found historically reliable (Garlow. p. 31).
- ✓ There are no other texts that make a credible claim for inclusion in the New Testament canon. The Gnostic books, such as *The Gospel of Thomas*, simply fail the tests necessary for inclusion, thus the early church made no mistake (Lutzer. p. 75).
- ✓ Given the 1st century's geographical distances, the limitations of communication, and the diverse backgrounds of the churches the uniformity and agreement of selected books is remarkable (Ibid. p. 75).
- ✓ The original documents of the New Testament have been lost, but their contents have been faithfully preserved in thousands of copies. Today we are certain of about 99 percent of the original wording. In no place is the deity of Christ or his bodily resurrection called into question by textual variants. Although much of the wording of the text has undergone change over the centuries, the core truth-claims of Christianity have remained intact (Komoszewski. p. 259).

Furthermore:

- ✓ Brown makes the claim that the discoverers of the Holy Grail would also find a manuscript known as the "Q" document, (DC. p. 256). However truth reveals that the Q document is no existing source whatsoever; it is a hypothetical document that scholars believe once contained sayings of Jesus. Dan Brown's claims have no historical accuracy. (Ehrman. p. 100)
- ✓ The problem with Dan Brown's claims is that he is outlining an era in Christian history to which many average Christians know little to nothing about, and he is cloaking it to be historically true. Readers who don't know the history of early Christianity will naturally take him at his word. But there is more fiction than fact, not just in the plot of *The Da Vinci Code* but also in its discussion of the early documentary record about Jesus. (Ibid. p. 100)

Beyond this...

There are pages upon pages of rebuttals that could be written outlining the sloppy research work which Dan Brown used to pen this novel, and I have only scratched the surface to highlight some of the most obvious. In response to Brown's fiction I have gone to lengths to cite the real facts as taken from popular consumer books. What I mean to highlight is that there are numerous books, articles, and DVDs out there and available to the average consumer to help you get your arms around the reality of Christian history apart from the lies of *The Da Vinci Code*. Each of my citations has come from the publisher's original publication as listed below. (*bibliography partially from Garlow. p. 65-66*)

- Abanes, Richard. *The Truth Behind The Da Vinci Code*
Balsiger, David W., producer (DVD), *Breaking The Da Vinci Code: Answers to the Questions Everyone is Asking*
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Cox, Simon, *Cracking The Da Vinci Code: The Unauthorized Guide to the Facts Behind Dan Brown's Bestselling Novel*
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