

“The Women in Jesus’ Life: *The Da Vinci Code* (2)”

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- **A succinct summary of Dan Brown’s *The Da Vinci Code* claims:**

“If true, the book’s assertions are nothing less than breathtaking: Jesus never claimed to be the Son of God but was actually deified nearly three hundred years later by Emperor Constantine for his own nefarious purposes; Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene, who bore his child; Jesus wanted Mary Magdalene to lead his church, but she was forced out by power-hungry men and demonized as a prostitute; and the four Gospels in the Bible are essentially fabrications designed to seal this masculine power-grab for the rest of history.” (Lee Strobel and Garry Poole, *Explore the Da Vinci Code*, p 8 [Zondervan 2006])

- **Question #1—Was Mary Magdalene Jesus’ wife?**
 - ◆ Luke 8:1-3—along with other _____ she accompanied Jesus.
 - ◆ Luke 8:2/Mark 16:9—Jesus cast seven _____ from her.
 - ◆ Matthew 15:39—she may have lived in _____ for a while (thus the epithet “Magdalene” to distinguish her from the other Marys).
 - ◆ Matthew 27:56, 61/Mark 15:40, 47/John 19:25—she was at the _____ .
 - ◆ Matthew 28:1/Mark 16:1/John 20:1—she was at the _____ .
 - ◆ John 20:1, 11-17/Mark 16:9—she was the _____ person to whom Jesus appeared after his resurrection.
 - ◆ Matthew 28:7, 8/Mark 16:9, 10/Luke 24:1-10/John 20:18—she was the first to proclaim the “good news” of the _____ Savior.
 - ◆ There are _____ other Gospel or New Testament records of her.
 - ◆ *Desire of Ages*: “Mary [the sister of Martha and Lazarus in Bethany] had been looked upon as a great sinner, but Christ knew the circumstances that had shaped her life. He might have extinguished every spark of hope in her soul, but He did not. It was He who had lifted her from despair and ruin. Seven times she had heard His rebuke of the demons that controlled her heart and mind [Magdalene]. She had heard His strong cries to the Father in her behalf. She knew how offensive is sin to His unsullied purity, and in His strength she had overcome. . . . It was Mary [of Bethany] who sat at His feet and learned of Him. It was Mary [of Bethany] who poured upon His head the precious anointing oil, and bathed His feet with her tears. Mary [Magdalene] stood beside the cross, and followed Him to the sepulcher. Mary [Magdalene] was first at the tomb after His resurrection. It was Mary [Magdalene] who first proclaimed a risen Saviour.” (568)

- **Question #2—But what about the other gospels that were kept out of the New Testament canon by Constantine?**
 - ◆ #1—Emperor Constantine kept _____ gospels out of the New Testament, simply because the New Testament canon had already essentially been formed by the early 300's A.D.
 - ◆ #2—Dan Brown’s claim that there were 80 other gospels competing for a place in the New Testament is _____ .
 - The Christian community before the turn of the first century settled on the reliable eyewitness accounts of _____ gospels.

- During the next two centuries apocryphal _____ on the life of Jesus appeared that claimed to be authentic by attaching early church names to them, e.g., the “gospels” of Philip, Thomas, and Mary Magdalene—but the Christian community never accepted them as authoritative, accurate witnesses of the life of Jesus.

□ **Question #3—Did Da Vinci secretly paint Mary Magdalene into his famous *The Last Supper*?**

- ◆ Greg Constantine, artist and art historian here at Andrews University:
 - Unlike previous artists, Da Vinci painted each disciple with unique facial features.
 - Because we have the early sketches to Da Vinci’s painting in which he identifies the youthful face as John’s, “Dan Brown’s claim is a total fabrication.”

□ **Question #4—What about the secretive Priory of Sion that was raised up to protect the secret of Jesus and Mary Magdalene’s marriage?**

- ◆ Page one of *The Da Vinci Code*: “FACT: The Priory of Sion — a European secret society founded in 1099 — is a real organization. In 1975 Paris’s Bibliotheque Nationale discovered parchments known as Les Dossiers Secrets, identifying numerous members of the Priory of Sion, including Sir Isaac Newton, Sandro Botticelli, Victor Hugo and Leonardo da Vinci. . . . All descriptions of artwork, architecture, documents and secret rituals in this novel are accurate.”
- ◆ TRUE fact: “Actually, the Priory of Sion was founded in 1956 to campaign for low-income housing in France. One of its leaders, a convicted con man named Pierre Plantard, fabricated a phony history for the organization and planted these forged parchments in the French library. Among other claims, the fraudulent documents said Plantard was a descendent of Jesus. What Brown fails to tell his readers is that Plantard admitted the entire fraud under oath prior to his death.” (Strobel, “Truth v. *The Da Vinci Code*,” *Citizen*, May, 2006)

□ **Question #5—How shall we respond to those who believe Dan Brown’s assertion that Jesus was not divine?**

- ◆ In a clever blend of fact and fiction, Dan Brown describes the historic Council of Nicaea (325 AD) as a power-grabbing move in which Constantine and the bishops of the church “upgraded Jesus’ status” to deity, in order to blot out the truth about Jesus marriage to Mary Magdalene, to consolidate the power of the church in the hands of an all-male leadership, thus eliminating what Brown calls the “sacred feminine” core of Christianity.
- ◆ *And how shall Christian believers respond to this seismic cultural and theological challenge to Christ’s divinity?*

- ◆ #1—Share the truth about _____.
- There really was a Council of Nicaea convened by Constantine in 325 A.D that formulated the Nicene Creed in response to Arius' teaching that Jesus was not divine: *"We believe in One God, Father Almighty, the Maker of all things visible and invisible. And in One Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God, God from God, Light from Light, Life from Life. Only-begotten Son, first-born of all creation, before all the ages."*
- But the Nicene Creed reaffirmed what the church had always believed about Jesus' divinity:
 - From the confession of Thomas, "My Lord and my God!"
 - To the inextinguishable witness of the infant church in Acts
 - To Paul's soaring theological confessions (Phil 2:5-8)
 - To the John's majestic prologue (John 1:1-14)
- Re: the first Christian martyrs, C. S. Lewis once observed—men may die for a lie that they mistakenly believe in—but no man will give his life for that which he knows is false.
- ◆ #2—Share the truth about His _____.
- In your own life.
- Because there is no more convincing and persuasive evidence for the divinity of Jesus Christ than a life that's been supernaturally changed!

*Let your life become the most compelling evidence
that The Da Vinci Code is wrong!*

women, demons, Magdala, cross, tomb, first, risen, no, no, fictitious, four, writings, history, story