

Cracking the Da Vinci Code¹

Presentation by: Khoi To, US Army Chaplain Candidate and M.Div. student, Talbot Theological Seminary

Content¹

A. Introduction (2/27/05)	1
B. Gnosticism, Ancient Gospels, and the Bible (2/27/05)	3
C. Mary Magdalene, the Church, and Goddess Worship (3/6/05)	6
D. The Grail, The Priori of Sion, and the Knights Templar (3/13/05)	11
E. Leonardo, the Mona Lisa, and <i>The Last Supper</i> (3/20/05)	14
F. Conclusion (3/20/05)	18

A. Introduction

A.1. What's the Fuss?

The Da Vinci Code has sold over 7.5 million copies worldwide² and is still on the New York best-seller list for 64 weeks.³ With these numbers, it is likely that you would run into someone that have either read the book or have heard of it and its controversial message. Though the book is written as a novel and falls under the genre of "fiction," we find this message in the first pages of the book, "FACT: All descriptions of artwork, architecture, documents, and secret rituals in this novel are accurate." This is a strong statement and it is troubling because it somewhat contradicts its genre and argues that, except for the characters and their actions, everything else is a work of non-fiction. This is no mere conjecture for Dan Brown does claim just that. In response to the question, "If you were writing it as a non-fiction book... how would it have been different?" Brown answered, "I don't think it would have [been different]. I began researching [for the book] as a skeptic. I entirely expected... to disprove this theory. And after numerous trips to Europe, about two years of research, I really became a believer."⁴

Disturbingly, Brown also asserts that he left out an even more controversial subject:

"Dan Brown said that when he wrote the best seller that dissects the origins of Jesus Christ and disputes long-held beliefs about Catholicism, he considered including material alleging that Jesus Christ survived the crucifixion.

While speaking at a benefit Tuesday for a New Hampshire writers' group, Brown said the theory is backed by a number of "very credible sources," but that he ultimately decided it was too flimsy.

"For me, that was just three or four steps too far," he told the crowd of more than 800 people.

"Many critics have taken issue with Brown's claim that Jesus and Mary Magdalene had a child who was whisked away to France after Jesus' crucifixion.

But Brown, who was raised Christian, said that theory does not detract from Christianity's message.

¹ Majority content and headings, excluding the Introduction and Concluding Remarks, are from "The Truth behind the Da Vinci Code," by Richard Abanes (Eugene: Harvest House, 2004).

² <http://www.cnn.com/2004/SHOWBIZ/books/05/19/books.davinci.code.ap/>

³ <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/06/20/books/bestseller/0620besthardfiction.html>, current as of 6/13/04.

⁴ As quoted from "The Da Vinci Code: Fact of Fiction?" Hank Hanegraaff and Paul L. Maier, (Wheaton: Tyndale House, 2004), quotations from Dan Brown's interview with Charles Gibson, *Good Morning America*, ABC, November 3, 2003.

Cracking the Da Vinci Code¹

Presentation by: Khoi To, US Army Chaplain Candidate and M.Div. student, Talbot Theological Seminary

"In my mind, the possibility that Jesus might have married Mary Magdalene in no way undermines the beauty of Christ's message," he said.⁵

The content of the book then, when taken as "facts," challenges the veracity of fundamental Christian beliefs. Indeed, the book would rewrite Christian history and change all its major tenets. If so, then the message of the Apostle Paul that Christians "have believed in vain" would be true:

1 Corinthians 15:1-4. ¹ Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. ² By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. ³ For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

But just how have people responded to the book?

"His research is impeccable" - The New York Daily News⁶

"... a compelling blend of history and page-turning suspense... a masterpiece... that should be mandatory reading." - Library Journal⁷

"... an exhaustively researched page-turner about secret religious societies, ancient cover-ups and savage vengeance." - Publisher's Weekly⁸

"... pure genius..." - best-selling author Nelson DeMille⁹

"... historical fact with a contemporary storyline." - USA Today¹⁰

"... fact-based thriller." - Popmatters.com

"... a good yarn within a richly factual content." - Counterculture

"The most amazing thing about this novel is that it is based on fact." - Charles Taylor of salon.com¹¹

My introduction to this book was through my brother, a non-believer, who excitedly told me to read it. He said that it was one of the best readings he has ever had. Certainly he knew that I was a believer and so much so that my vocation is to teach and preach the Christian faith. Was he trying to insert a wedge of doubt in my beliefs? It is possible but when I pressed upon him the reason, he would only answer that he wanted my opinion. Do you think that he is eagerly waiting for my response? I would wager that he is.

Therefore, following the two thousand plus years of apologetic tradition of the Christian faith, it is my honor and privilege to deliver this presentation as my response to my brother and to those in need, with these two verses in mind:

⁵ <http://www.cnn.com/2004/SHOWBIZ/books/05/19/books.davinci.code.ap/>

⁶ Hank Hanegraaff and Paul L. Maier, "The Da Vinci Code: Fact of Fiction?" (Wheaton: Tyndale, 2004), p viii.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Richard Abanes, "The Truth behind the Da Vinci Code," by (Eugene: Harvest House, 2004), p 9.

¹¹ Ibid.

Cracking the Da Vinci Code¹

Presentation by: Khoi To, US Army Chaplain Candidate and M.Div. student, Talbot Theological Seminary

Jude 3-4. ³ Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints. ⁴ For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.

1 Peter 3:15-16. ¹⁵ But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, ¹⁶ keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

The format of the presentation will first take passages from The Da Vinci Code book and then present the corresponding response.

B. Gnosticism, Ancient Gospels, and the Bible¹²

"The Bible is the product of man... not God... More than 80 gospels were considered for the New Testament, and yet only a relative few were chosen for inclusion - Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John among them" (DVC page 231).

B.1. Definition of Gnostics (gnōsis): Greek for knowledge (especially of the soul's origins¹³).

- Salvation came from a "higher knowledge" or divinely revealed truths about the nature of reality.
- Human souls originally existed in the spiritual realm of light until an unknown tragedy imprisoned the souls in a fleshly body. Flesh, therefore, is evil.
- There are two gods, god of light that is good and liberating, and god of darkness that is enslaving.¹⁴
- Salvation comes from the soul being liberated from the body and is achieved through having the correct knowledge about the truth of God, himself, and life.
- Jesus Christ did not die for our sins but instead brought this knowledge to us.
- Jesus Christ was not present in the flesh but was a phantom body.
- Jesus had two mission: 1) to bring this knowledge and 2) release the divine spark of light that is imprisoned in matter.
- Gnosticism is alive today in the New Age movement.¹⁵

B.2. The Scriptures and Emperor Constantine

Constantine's beliefs. "The Bible, as we know it today, was collated by the pagan Roman emperor Constantine... He was a lifelong pagan who was baptized on his deathbed, too weak to protest" (DVC pages 231-232). He was the "head priest" of the official Roman religion of sun worship - "the cult of Sol Invictus" (DVC page 232).

- Constantine was not a life long pagan, a fact that even non-Christian historians and scholars agree (e.g. Elaine Pagel, who is the current proponent of Gnosticism and author of the "Gnostic Gospels").

¹² Unless otherwise noted, the content is taken from Richard Abanes' "The Truth behind the Da Vinci Code."

¹³ Norman L. Geisler, "Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics," (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), p 273-4.

¹⁴ Ibid, paraphrased.

¹⁵ Ibid, p 275.

Cracking the Da Vinci Code¹

Presentation by: Khoi To, US Army Chaplain Candidate and M.Div. student, Talbot Theological Seminary

- After his conversion, he was tolerant of the pagan religions and allowed people the freedom to choose their religion of preference (Edict of Milan and Edict of Toleration).
- Constantine was also the high priest of Sol Invictus but this was only in politics because he was the Emperor. This is like saying that the President of the United States is also the Commander in Chief.
- Is it possible that Constantine faked his conversion? Possible but not likely as he showed favor to the Christians by granting them back their confiscated property from previous persecution, at great risk because the Roman Empire was still mostly composed of Pagans.
- "Too weak to protest being baptized on his deathbed? He waited to be baptized because of a popular belief at the time that baptism washed away all previous sins and being unrepeatable, had to be postponed until as near death as possible.
- Constantine did not collate the Bible
 - The Old Testament was compiled before Jesus' time.
 - The New Testament was completed almost 200 years before Constantine (as evident by their usage in the writings of the church leaders. By the time of Irenaeus (ca 180), the fourfold Gospel had become orthodox. Origen (ca 230) had the listing of the Gospel and other New Testament books as authoritative.
 - Both major branches of Christianity (the church in the east - Constantine's - and the church in the west - based out of Rome) independently agreed on which books should be in the New Testament (both already had agreed on the Old Testament).
 - Final confirmation of the New Testament books did not occur until the 500's AD, many years after the death of Constantine.
 - Constantine did request from Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, 50 copies of the Scriptures. Eusebius did so with his own list of widely used books, listing them into three groups: accepted, disputed, and rejected; the list included all the books of today's New Testament and the Greek version of the Old Testament.

B.3. Reliability of the Bible

No definitive Bible. The Christian Scriptures "evolved through countless translations, additions, and revisions. History has never had a definitive version of the book" (DVC page 231).

- While it is true that we do not have the original manuscript, both the Old Testament and New Testament are well supported by countless copies. From the science known as textual criticism, copies are compared with one another, with those from the original Apostles (dated closest to the original) having more weight. In fact, a fragment of the Gospel of John is dated between 117-138AD. There are nearly 5600 Greek copies alone.
- Homer's *Iliad*, originally written in 800 B.C., there are 650 Greek copies today, copied during the second or third AD and yet no one disputes their integrity.¹⁶

B.4. Jesus' Humanity and the Council of Nicea

Rewriting the Scriptures. Constantine "commissioned and financed a new Bible, which omitted those gospels of Christ's human traits and embellished those gospels that made Him godlike. The earlier gospels were outlawed, gathered up and burned" (DVC page 234).

- There are no historical evidence showing the four Gospels were embellished by Constantine, Eusebius, or any of Eusebius' scribes.
- Jesus Christ's human traits are shown in the Gospel as evident by:¹⁷

¹⁶ Lee Strobel, "The Case for Christ," (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), p 78.

¹⁷ One of the most important reason for Jesus Christ to be truly human is so that He can be meet the divine wrath of God for mankind is to be the "substitution[ary] sacrifice," that is, He died in our place and paid the penalty that was

Cracking the Da Vinci Code¹

Presentation by: Khoi To, US Army Chaplain Candidate and M.Div. student, Talbot Theological Seminary

- 1) The virgin birth: "... gave birth to her firstborn, a son" (Luke 2:7).
 - 2) Jesus Had a Human Body: "the child grew and became strong" (Luke 2:40); "increased in wisdom *and in stature*" (Luke 2:52).
 - 3) His very human emotions; his amazement (Mat. 8:10), his anger (Mark 11:15-16), his hunger and fatigue (Luke 4:2; 8:23), and his sorrow (John 11:33-36).
- Arius did not write any gospels but argued that Jesus Christ was a created being. Hence, it is heretical since this would deny the fundamental doctrine of the Trinity.
 - His views were considered contrary to the other Church leaders and the assembly voted 316 to 2 to condemn Arius's. The whole council voted not just Constantine.¹⁸
 - The canonicity of the New Testament was not established by the various councils but rather, the councils only affirmed (publicly) what were already in use and accepted by the Church.¹⁹
 - Summary of the Church's beliefs (established pre- 340 AD²⁰) is summed up in the Apostle's Creed:

I believe in God the Father Almighty; Maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven; and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

- The whole creed goes against everything that is Gnostic, starting with the first line since they believe that the good 'god' cannot bring about evil by creating a material world.²¹

B.5. The Destruction of the "Older" Gospels.

Finding the scrolls. Some of the Gospels Constantine tried to destroy "managed to survive. The Dead Sea Scrolls were found in 1950's.... And, of course, the Coptic Scrolls in 1945 at Nag Hammadi." Further, "the Vatican, in keeping with their tradition of misinformation, tried very hard to suppress the release of these scrolls.... These are... [t]he earliest Christian records" (DVC pages 234, 245).

- The Dead Sea Scrolls contained no gospels.
- The Qumran community that kept them was an isolationist sect that split from Jewish Essenes and had nothing to do with Christianity.
- The latest date of the Scrolls is 68 AD and many were written centuries before Christ.
- The Nag Hammadi collection does contain Gnostic gospels, but they all dated after the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, in the second or third century AD.²²

To be continued... next presentation: "Mary Magdalene, the Church, and Goddess Worship."

due to us. For other definitive explanations for why it was necessary for Jesus Christ to be fully human, see Wayne Grudem's "Systematic Theology," (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994).

¹⁸ Ibid, p 243-4.

¹⁹ Earle E. Cairns, "Christianity Through the Centuries," 3rd ed., (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996) p 114.

²⁰ Ibid, p 115.

²¹ Ben Witherington III, "Why the Lost Gospels Lost Out," *Christianity Today*, June 2004, p 28.

²² Darrel L. Bock, "Breaking The Da Vinci Code," (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2004) p 64.

Cracking the Da Vinci Code¹

Presentation by: Khoi To, US Army Chaplain Candidate and M.Div. student, Talbot Theological Seminary

C. Mary Magdalene, the Church, and Goddess Worship.

C.1. Eliminating the “Sacred Feminine.”

Misrepresentation of divine symbol. “As part of the Vatican’s campaign to eradicate pagan religions and convert the masses to Christianity, the Church launched a smear campaign against the pagan gods and goddesses, recasting their divine symbols as evil.... Venus’s pentacle became the sign of the devil” (DVC page 37).

- The above passage contradicts what Brown later says about the use of pagan symbols by condemning that the church instead adopted the pagan symbols.²³

“Transmogrification... virtually all the elements of Catholic ritual were taken directly from earlier pagan mysterious religions” (DVC page 232).

- During the medieval era, the church used the pentacle or pentagram as a reminder of Christ’s five wounds (hands, feet, side, back, head), the five books of Moses, and the “five stones used by David and Goliath.”²⁴
- Eliphas Levi (1810-1875), a French Occultist, started using the inverted pentagram as a symbol for Satan. Later, Anton La Vey, the founder of the Church of Satan in 1966, used the pentagram, upside down and with a goat’s head in the center (called a Baphomet), as the symbol of his church.²⁵

The campaign against the goddess. Constantine and his successors “converted the world from matriarchal paganism to patriarchal Christianity by waging a campaign of propaganda that demonized the sacred feminine, obliterating the modern goddess from religion” (DVC page 124).

- Many different forms of paganism existed so there was no single “matriarchal paganism.” Some did not even involve a goddess.
- The idea of the single goddess took final form with the English poet Robert Graves’ “The White Goddess” (1948) and became “the most influential source of Goddess imagery and ideology for the modern pagan revival.”²⁶
- The older pagan civilizations never relied exclusively on goddess worship but these goddesses were always mated to male deities. These goddesses were always related to war, death, or both.²⁷ In other words, they were not peace-loving nature types.

C.2. The Witch Hunts

The Inquisition and women. The Malleus Maleficarum (“hammer of witches”), published by the Inquisition (an arm of the Catholic Church), “indoctrinated the world to ‘the dangers of freethinking women’ and instructed the clergy how to locate, torture, and destroy them” (DVC page 125).

- The book was used for both men and women. Also, the quote “the dangers of freethinking women” implies that it is in the book is false since the phrase is not found anywhere in the text.²⁸

²³ Richard Abanes, “The Truth behind the Da Vinci Code,” (Oregon: Harvest House, 2004) p 32.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid, p 33.

²⁶ Ibid, p 34.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid, p 35.

Cracking the Da Vinci Code¹

Presentation by: Khoi To, US Army Chaplain Candidate and M.Div. student, Talbot Theological Seminary

Persecution of the so-called witches. Those hunted down by the church “included all female scholars, priestesses, gypsies, mystics, nature lovers, herb gatherers, and any women ‘suspiciously attuned to the natural world.’ Midwives also were killed for their heretical practice of using medical knowledge to ease the pain of childbirth” (DVC page 125).

- Countless women in the listed categories were never targets for persecution. Indeed, many of the midwives were Roman Catholics.
- “Victims” of the witch hunts were both men and women.
- A vast majority of the witches were condemned and executed by local secular courts, not the Church.

The number of victims. “During the three hundred years of witch hunts, the Church burned at the stake an astounding five million women” (DVC page 125).

- The time of persecution was from the 1400 to 1800 (100 years more than Brown’s) and the total number is estimated at 30,000 to 80,000. Some modern neopagan and witches even estimate the number to be as low as 50,000. Moreover, 20 to 25 percent were men.²⁹
- Many of the accusations were originated in conflicts that normally opposed one woman to another, “To a considerable extent, then, village level witch hunting was women’s work.”³⁰

C.3. Jesus and Women.

A vote on Jesus’ divinity. It was at the Council of Nicea in 325 that Church leaders decided by vote to make Jesus divine.” [U]ntil that moment in history, Jesus was viewed by His followers as a mortal prophet” (DVC page 233).

- See the discussion in B.4. above.
- Numerous Scripture references ascribed Jesus as God:
 1. *Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!” (John 20:28)*
 2. *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1)*
 3. *While we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. (Titus 2:13)*
 4. *8 But about the Son he says, “Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom. 9 You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.” 10 He also says, “In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. (Hebrews 1:8-10)*
 5. *Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours (2 Peter 1:1)*
- Numerous Church Fathers of the second century attested that Jesus is God:
 1. Justin Martyr (about 150): “Being the first-begotten Word of God, is even God”; both God and Lord of hosts”
 2. Irenaeus (about 185): “our Lord, and God, and Saviour, and King”
 3. Clement of Alexandria (about 200): “truly most manifest Deity, He that is made equal to the Lord of the universe; because he was His Son”³¹

²⁹ Ibid, p 36.

³⁰ Ibid. Abanes used the quote which was taken from Deborah Willis’ book, “Malevolent Nurture.” Willis continues that Brown’s spin “is likely to portray the witch as a heroic proto-feminist resisting patriarchal oppression and a wholly innocent victim of a male-authored reign of terror designed to keep women in their place.” Indeed, this is Brown’s intentions.

³¹ Ibid, p 37.

Cracking the Da Vinci Code¹

Presentation by: Khoi To, US Army Chaplain Candidate and M.Div. student, Talbot Theological Seminary

Eve's role in the "Fall." The Church "demonized" the sacred feminine and the goddess by teaching the concept of original sin, "whereby Eve tasted the apple and caused the downfall of the human race" (DVC page 238).

- Christianity teaches that both Adam and Eve caused the Fall and especially Adam because he deliberately disobeyed. "21 For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. 22 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive." (1 Corinthians 15:21-22).

The threat of the feminine. Leaders of the "predominantly male" Church were so threatened by the power of women's reproductive capabilities that they labeled the sacred feminine and the goddess as unclean. "Women, once the sacred giver of life, was now the enemy" (DVC page 238).

- Woman is not man's enemy. See Genesis 2:18-25.
- Woman in Jesus' time were elevated to equal status as seen in Luke 10:38-39 where they were given direct access to Christ, a rabbi. This broke a Hebrew tradition that separated men and women in religious context.

Jesus' marriage. "One particular troubling theme kept recurring in the [Gnostic] gospels. Mary Magdalene.... More specifically, her marriage to Jesus Christ" (DVC page 24).

- None of the gospels in the Nag Hammadi library - the Gospel of Truth, the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Philip - contain any references to a marriage between Mary Magdalene and Jesus. The Gospel of Mary is also silent on this issue.

Jesus' companion. The Gospel of Philip says that, "the companion of the Savior is Mary Magdalene. Christ loved her more than all the disciples and used to kiss her often on her mouth. The rest of the disciples were offended by it and expressed disapproval. They said to him, "Why do you love her more than all of us?"' ...As any Aramaic scholar will tell you, the word companion, in those days, literally meant spouse" (DVC page 246).

- The Gospel of Philip was not written in Aramaic but Coptic, a late form of Egyptian, and even this is a translation of an earlier text in Greek. Moreover, according to professor Craig Blomberg of Denver Seminary, "no Aramaic or Hebrew word for 'companion' normally means spouse!" It is usually translated as friend or companion.³²

The Jewish view of marriage. Jesus being a married man makes "infinitely more sense than our standard biblical view of Jesus" because "the social decorum during that time virtually forbid a Jewish man to be unmarried" (DVC page 245).

- While it is true that Jewish customs in the Old Testament expected men to marry, by Jesus' time the custom was more flexible. For example, John the Baptist was single. And the Apostle Paul even addressed it: "Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I am." (1 Co 7:8)³³

Mary Magdalene and church leadership. The Gospels of Mary (Magdalene) reveals that Mary was given instructions by Jesus "on how to carry on His Church.... As a result, Peter expresses his discontent over playing second fiddle to a woman." According to the "unaltered" Gospel of Mary and Gospel of Philip, "It was not Peter to whom Christ

³² Ibid, p 39.

³³ Ibid, p 40.

Cracking the Da Vinci Code¹

Presentation by: Khoi To, US Army Chaplain Candidate and M.Div. student, Talbot Theological Seminary

gave directions with which to establish the Christian Church. It was Mary Magdalene” (DVC page 247-248).

- The Gospel of Mary was not in the Nag Hammadi collections and says nothing about Mary being chosen to take over the Church. It simply says that 1) Jesus loved Mary “more than the rest of women” and “more than” the other apostles, and that 2) Jesus shared with Mary certain truths he did not share with his other disciples.³⁴
- The actual Gospel of Mary has nothing to do with church leadership; it was about “metaphysical powers” and the form they take to conquer the soul – such as ignorance and wrath. Moreover, Peter does not express his irritation but challenges Magdalene claims [of these knowledge] because they were strange ideas.³⁵
- The Gospel of Philip also does not say anything about Jesus ordaining Mary Magdalene to take over for Him. The text is primarily about the “meaning and value of sacraments within the Gnostic paradigm.” Ironically, it cuts out the very heart of any assertion that they were wed since sexual relationships were inherently evil due to its physical nature.
- The Gospel of Philip goes on to say that marital relationships defile a woman. As Wesley Isenberg, the translator of the Gospel of Philip says, “‘Defiled women’ are all women who participate in sexual intercourse, i.e. in ‘marriage of defilement,’ which is fleshly and lustful (81, 34-29; 85; 24).”³⁶

C.4. Christ’s Descendants.

The documentation of Jesus’ lineage. “The royal bloodline of Jesus Christ has been chronicled in exhaustive detail by scores of historians” (DVC page 253).

- The so-called historians are listed as authors of “Holy Blood, Holy Grail” (Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh, Henry Lincoln), “The Woman with the Alabaster Jar” and “The Goddess in the Gospels (Margaret Starbird), and “The Templar Revelation” (Lynn Picknett and Clive Prince). However, none of these authors are in fact historians:
 1. Starbird has a MA in comparative literature and German
 2. Baigent (anagram source for Teabing) has an undergraduate degree in psychology and is pursuing a MA in Mysticism and Religious Experience
 3. Leigh is a novelist and writer of short stories
 4. Lincoln is a BBC personality and scriptwriter
 5. Picknett and Prince are conspiracy theorists with penchant for occultism, the paranormal, and UFO’s.³⁷

The Merovingians. “Christ’s line grew quietly under cover in France until taking a bold move in the fifth century, when it intermarried with French royal blood and created a lineage known as the Merovingian bloodline.... The Merovingians founded Paris” (DVC page 257).

- Paris was founded by the Celtic, specifically the tribe of Parisii, who settled there between 250 and 200 BC. The Merovingians did not exist at the time.
- The Merovingian lineage can be traced to King Merovech (who ruled between 447 to 457) and it was his son, King Clovis, that chose the existing city for his capital.

Mary Magdalene’s reputation. In order to eradicate the truth about Jesus’ marriage, the Church “outlawed speaking of the shunned Mary Magdalene,” which forced her followers to pass on the truth through “more discreet channels” (DVC page 261).

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid, p 41.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid, p 41-42.

Cracking the Da Vinci Code¹

Presentation by: Khoi To, US Army Chaplain Candidate and M.Div. student, Talbot Theological Seminary

- Magdalene was never “shunned.” She told the disciples of the risen Lord (John 20:17-18) and pictured meeting the risen Lord (John 20:11-17).
 - Pope Gregory I (540-604) confused Magdalene with “the woman who was a sinner” in Luke 7:37 and created the false impression of her in the Western Church. However, the Eastern church never accepted Pope Gregory’s view.
 - Dominican priests devoted themselves to Magdalene and initiated the Feast of St. Mary Magdalene in 1297.
 - It was never “outlawed” to speak about Mary Magdalene in the Western of Eastern Churches.³⁸
-

³⁸ Ibid, p 42-43.

Cracking the Da Vinci Code¹

Presentation by: Khoi To, US Army Chaplain Candidate and M.Div. student, Talbot Theological Seminary

D. The Grail, The Priory of Sion, and the Knights Templar.

D.1. The Holy Grail.

The Grail's most ancient meaning. Although the term for Holy Grail has usually been written San Greal (from Old French), "[i]n it's most ancient form" it was divided as "Sang Real... Royal Blood" (DVC page 250).

- The earliest reference to Holy Grail is simply *Graal* ("Grail") not *Sang Real*. *Sang Real* originated in the 1400 to 1500 as it was associated with the cup that Joseph of Arimathea (Matthew 27:57) caught the blood from the crucified Christ.³⁹
- The legend of the Grail apparently started with the book "Perceval" (ca. 1170) in which a knight discovered a damsel in a castle with a grail among many other valuable possessions. The grail was not associated with Christ until after 40 more years of stories from other period romantic writers.⁴⁰
- None of the aforementioned works associated the grail with a person as Brown claims. It must be noted that the legend started out as a pagan notion.

The symbol for female and "chalice." The icon for male ♂ (and the planet Mars) and female ♀ (and the planet Venus) "are not the original symbols for male and female." The original symbols were \wedge and \vee . The latter sign is a chalice (or cup), and as such, refers to the Grail - that is, Mary Magdalene (DVC page 237).

- There was no original female signs but a variety of them used by pagan religions. There was one by used by the Egyptians that mostly resembles Brown's (♀) and this was the uterus of a heifer representing the cow and the vulva. "Why would Mary Magdalene be associated with the Egyptian cow?"⁴¹
- Dating back to 3000 BC, the "original" male symbol was the chevron (\ggg) but the symbol was used more as a rank.⁴²

D.2. The Priory of Sion.

The nature of the Priory of Sion. Currently headquartered in France, this organization is one of the oldest surviving secret societies on earth (DVC page 113).

- There have been three societies called the Priory of Sion.
 1. The first, a Roman Catholic monastic order founded in Jerusalem in 1100 AD and ceased in 1617 when it was absorbed with the Jesuit.
 2. A second, founded by the Frenchman Pierre Plantard (1920-2000) in 1956, was anti-Jewish and anti-Masonic, and lasted for only a year. (Plantard was imprisoned for fraud and embezzlement in 1953.)
 3. The third was also founded by Plantard in the early 1960's. He was obsessed with the idea of being an occult master and a descendant of kings. He recruited some of his friends and they tried to revived the French monarchy. In order to accomplish this, they forged documents and inserted them in libraries, including the National Library in Paris.⁴³

Jesus and the Priory of Sion. The Priory learned of "a stash of hidden documents" that not only the true story of Jesus and Magdalene, but also traced their holy bloodline (DVC page 158).

³⁹ Richard Abanes, "The Truth behind the Da Vinci Code," (Oregon: Harvest House, 2004) p 46.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid, p 47.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid, p 48-49.

Cracking the Da Vinci Code¹

Presentation by: Khoi To, US Army Chaplain Candidate and M.Div. student, Talbot Theological Seminary

- This was taken from the story told in the book "Holy Blood, Holy Grail," where a priest named Saunière discovered four (possibly five) documents, two of which was dated in 1244, documenting the survival of the Merovingian's royal bloodline. The third document, dated 1695, was "Testaments" written by the local feudal lord. The fourth document contained what looked like a Latin form of the Gospels but was later discovered codes written with words taken from the four Gospels. After showing the documents to his superiors, Saunière's actions were suddenly suspicious as he took to doing some strange things. However, in 1917, he had amassed a small fortune. Rumors and speculations on how he received this were abounding. One of these stories, started later by the purchaser of Saunière's estate, Noel Corbu. He turned the guest house into a restaurant and claimed that Saunière's had discovered treasures on the property as a "catch" to bring in business.

Corbu then teamed up with a Pierre Plantard. Plantard embellished Corbu's story, adding the Merovingians bloodline and the "history" of the Priory of Sion. He planted forged documents throughout France to add to their authenticity.

This story was further enhanced and made popular by the book "Holy Blood, Holy Grail"⁴⁴ which added the Jesus and Mary Magdalene's story. In the book, it postulated that Saunière was paid off to keep silent about the documents he found because they contain the "proofs" of Jesus and Magdalene's marriage along with the continuation of their bloodline.⁴⁵

In 1993, Plantard "admitted that he had made it all up." A fact that the "Holy Blood, Holy Grail" and "The Da Vinci Code" never mentioned.

The founding of the Priory of Sion. The Priory was founded in Jerusalem in 1099 by the king of France, Godfrey of Bouillon, "immediately after he conquered the city" (DVC page 157). The Priory then "created a military arm - a group of nine knights... known as the Knights Templar" in order to retrieve the Magdalene documents "from within the ruins" of the temple (DVC page 158).

- The founding of the Priory was taken from the forged documents of Plantard.
- Earliest references to "knights" devoted to the Order dates 600 years later with the Knights of the Order of Our Lady of Zion, but their devotions was to the Virgin Mary and not Mary of Magdalene.

D.3. The Knights Templar.

The Knights true mission. It is a misconception that the Knights Templar were created to protect the Holy Land. Their public function of guarding pilgrims "was a guised under which the Templars ran their mission... to retrieve the documents [proving Jesus' bloodline and his relationship with Magdalene]."

- There is no historical evidence to support this assertion.

The location of the treasure. One point on which to "all academics" agree is that the Knights Templar "discovered something" beneath the ruins of the Temple and that this discovery "made them wealthy and powerful beyond anyone's wildest imagination" (DVC page 158). They took the treasure to Europe, "where their influence seemed to solidify overnight" (DVC page 159).

⁴⁴ Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh, Henry Lincoln, "Holy Blood, Holy Grail," (New York; Dell, 1983). NOTE: this book is categorized as non-fiction.

⁴⁵ Abanes, p 49-51.

Cracking the Da Vinci Code¹

Presentation by: Khoi To, US Army Chaplain Candidate and M.Div. student, Talbot Theological Seminary

- Knights were actually wealthy through donations and gifts given by grateful pilgrims.⁴⁶
- They were wealthy while in Jerusalem not when they returned.⁴⁷
- Their discoveries were thought to be the Ark of the Covenant to the Shroud of Turin. Some thought they were architectural knowledge which was then sold for it is about this time that the Gothic cathedrals were built all over Europe.⁴⁸

The Knights financial activities. The Knights' Templar became so powerful that they were able to establish "modern banking" (DVC page 159). They actually "invented the concept of modern banking" (DVC page 346).

- The banking system was already in used, originated from the reinvention of the banking system in 1156 from Italian city states like Rome, Venice and Genoa. The Knights used these systems as the vast distances from the Crusades made transporting gold and money dangerous.⁴⁹
- Modern banking originated in Europe in the 17th century.⁵⁰

The destruction of the Knights. Pope Clement V "decided something had to be done" about the Knights Templar, so working in concert with France's King Philip IV, the Pope "issued secret sealed orders to be opened simultaneously by his soldiers all across Europe" on October 13, 1307. The "letter" said that all Knights were to be rounded up and executed. "On that day, countless knights were captured" and killed, though some "managed to escape the Vatican purge" (DVC pages 159-160).

- "Actually, it was King Philip IV who initiated the move against the Knights, hoping to acquire their land and money." His soldiers, not the Pope's, which made the arrests.⁵¹
 - Pope Clement was a weak Pope and subservient to King Philip. However, when he heard the order, he had it annulled and suspended any bishops and their inquisitors. But through forced confessions under torture, the crimes were publicly published and the outcry for punishment was great.
 - Some of the trials resulted in the Knights being exonerated of all charges and released (in Portugal, Spain, Germany, Cyprus, and most of Italy).⁵²
 - In France, under Philip, all 54 Knights were found guilty and burned at the stake.
 - In 1312, under pressure by those wanting to full condemnation or continuation of the Order of the Knights of Templar, Pope Clement took the middle of the road decision and dissolved the Order.
 - Those Knights that maintained their innocence were allowed to join another military order or retire, a fact conveniently left out by The Da Vinci Code.
-

⁴⁶ Ibid, p 58.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid, p 59.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid, p 60.

⁵² Ibid.

Cracking the Da Vinci Code¹

Presentation by: Khoi To, US Army Chaplain Candidate and M.Div. student, Talbot Theological Seminary

E. Leonardo, the Mona Lisa, and *The Last Supper*

E.1. Leonardo's Beliefs and Activities.

The artist and alchemy. Leonardo believed "he possessed the alchemic power to turn lead into gold and even cheat God by creating an elixir to postpone death" (DVC page 45).

- "The great artist did not believe he had alchemic powers, nor did he claim to possess any elixir of life."⁵³
- He used alchemy "language" to hide his discoveries, e.g. "'describing a metal as having returned to its mother's breast'" meant that it "had to be returned to the fire."⁵⁴
- He "hated" alchemy labeling it as the "sister" to necromancy but did see some uses for it (i.e. production of glass).⁵⁵

A goddess-worshipper. Leonardo used "hidden symbolism that was anything but Christian" (DVC pages 45-46). He was a "well-documented devotee" of the ways of the goddess (DVC page 96).

- Leonardo's issue with the church (Roman Catholicism) was more in line with putting science over religion. He was offended by the Church's "commercial exploration" of the people through their sale of "holy relics."⁵⁶ (Note the similarities to one of the current of the Reformations.)
- He believed in a personal Savior and at the end of his life, returned to the Church. This was especially evident in his will which states, "[he] commends his soul to Almighty God" (not goddess), "to the Blessed Virgin Mary" (not Magdalene), and "to Saint Michael and all the angels and saints in paradise."⁵⁷

Involvement with the Priory of Sion. Leonardo "presided over the Priory between 1510 and 1519" (DVC page 113).

- This was based on the forged documents of Plantard.

E.2. Who is Mona Lisa?

The greatest work. Of the Mona Lisa, Leonardo claimed that it "was his finest accomplishment. He carried the painting with him whenever he traveled and, if asked why, would reply that he found it hard to part with his most sublime expression of female beauty" (DVC page 119).

- There are no documentation of "why" he carried had the Mona Lisa with him for so many years, though he did not carry it around with him every where he went. Some theorized that the original buyer may have cancelled the order or that the woman he painted died."⁵⁸

Man and woman blended. The Mona Lisa is "neither male nor female. It carried a subtle message of androgyny. It is a fusing of both" - and may actually have been a self-portrait of Leonardo as a woman!" "[C]omputerized analyst of the Mona Lisa and da Vinci's self-portrait confirms some startling points of congruency in their faces" (DVC page 120).

⁵³ Abanes, p 64.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

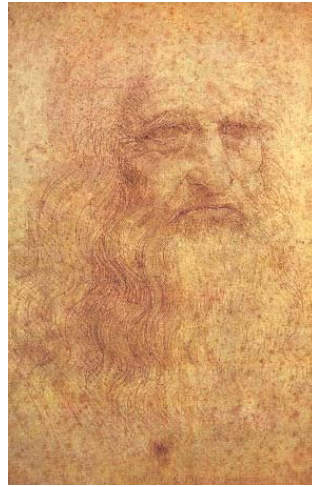
⁵⁶ Ibid, p 64-65.

⁵⁷ Ibid, p 65.

⁵⁸ Ibid, p 66.

Cracking the Da Vinci Code¹

Presentation by: Khoi To, US Army Chaplain Candidate and M.Div. student, Talbot Theological Seminary



- There are many rumors about the portrait, including that it is a “male lover.” However, most art historians believe that it is just a picture of a woman.
- There is no “congruency” since there is only one un-contested self-portrait of a 60 year-old Leonardo.
- X-rays revealed that that her face was more oval and there was no original smile.⁵⁹

The name's ancient origin. The name Mona Lisa comes from the names of two Egyptian deities: the god Amon, and the goddess Isis, whose “ancient pictogram was once called L’ISA.” Mona Lisa “is an anagram of the divine union of male and female” (DVC page 121).

- Leonardo did not name any of this painting and only refer to the Mona Lisa as “a portrait of a lady” in his inventory. The name originated from an author who wrote about artists in 1550.
- The original name was Monna Lisa, where “Monna is a contraction of madonna - that is madame. The name simply means Madame Lisa.”⁶⁰

E.3. Hidden Messages and Painted Codes.

Secrets of the Madonna. Leonardo’s true beliefs were reflected in the original *Madonna of the Rocks*, which was commissioned by nuns who asked him to paint “the Virgin Mary, baby John the Baptist, [the angel] Uriel, and baby Jesus sheltering in a cave.” But “rather than the usual Jesus-blessing-John scenario, it was baby John who was blessing Jesus... and Jesus was submitting to his authority.” And Mary’s hand was above the infant John “making a decidedly threatening gesture - her fingers looking like eagle’s talons, gripping an invisible head.” Finally, the angel Uriel is “making a cutting gesture” with his hands “[j]ust below Mary’s curled fingers” as if “slicing the neck of the invisible head gripped by Mary.” This original was later modified so that “everyone was arranged in a more orthodox manner.” The second version is now in London’s National Gallery under the name *Virgin of the Rocks*. But the original can still be seen in the Louvre. (All preceding quotes from DVC page 138-139).

⁵⁹ Ibid, p 66-67.

⁶⁰ Ibid, p 68.

Cracking the Da Vinci Code¹

Presentation by: Khoi To, US Army Chaplain Candidate and M.Div. student, Talbot Theological Seminary



ORIGINAL



The Second *Virgin of the Rocks*

- Both versions are called Virgin of the Rocks. The original was commissioned for painting of the Virgin Mary with *prophets*. For some unknown reasons, Leonardo altered the directions. Some say that Leonardo was dissatisfied with the nuns that commissioned the painting because they gave him explicit instructions. As a free thinking artist, Leonardo may have intentionally provoked the nuns' wrath to get back at them.
- There is also no record that the "nuns" bought them but that the picture may have been sold off by Leonardo during the time of arbitration for the lack of appropriate compensation to all the artists.
- If the painting was rejected, it was more than likely due to Leonardo's lack of following their instructions.⁶¹
- This painting is important for Brown's case because it undermines the divinity of Christ. Since Leonardo was the head of the Priory, he wanted to create a piece that demonstrated that Jesus Christ was not God but indeed, asked for blessings from John.

Leonardo's opinion of the New Testament. In his "notebook on polemics and speculations," Leonardo made the following comments about the Bible's New Testament: 1) "Many have made a trade of delusions and false miracles, deceiving the stupid multitude"; 2) "Blinding ignorance does mislead us. O! Wretched mortals, open your eyes" (DVC page 231).

- The first statement was made regarding alchemy, "The false interpreters of nature declare that quicksilver is the common seed of every metal, not remembering that nature varies the seed according to the variety of the things she desires to produce in the world. And *many have made a trade of delusions and false miracles, deceiving the stupid multitude.*"
- The second statement was also not about the Bible nor was it in the "notebook on polemics and speculations." Rather it was from Leonardo's "Morals" and it reads:

⁶¹ Ibid, p 64.

Cracking the Da Vinci Code¹

Presentation by: Khoi To, US Army Chaplain Candidate and M.Div. student, Talbot Theological Seminary

"The greatest deception men suffer is from their own opinions. Folly is the shield of shame, as unreadiness that of poverty glorified. Blind ignorance misleads us thus and delights with the results of lascivious joys. Because it does not know the true light. Because it does not know what is the true light. Vain splendor takes from us the power of being - behold! For its vain splendor we go into the fire, thus blind ignorance does mislead us. That is, *blind ignorance so mislead us that...* [Leonardo deliberately stops his sentence for effect] *O! wretched mortals, open your eyes.*"⁶²

Seeing through the artist's eyes. Leonardo's painting the *Last Supper* contains several hidden signs that Mary Magdalene was the Holy Grail and that the apostle Peter hated her:

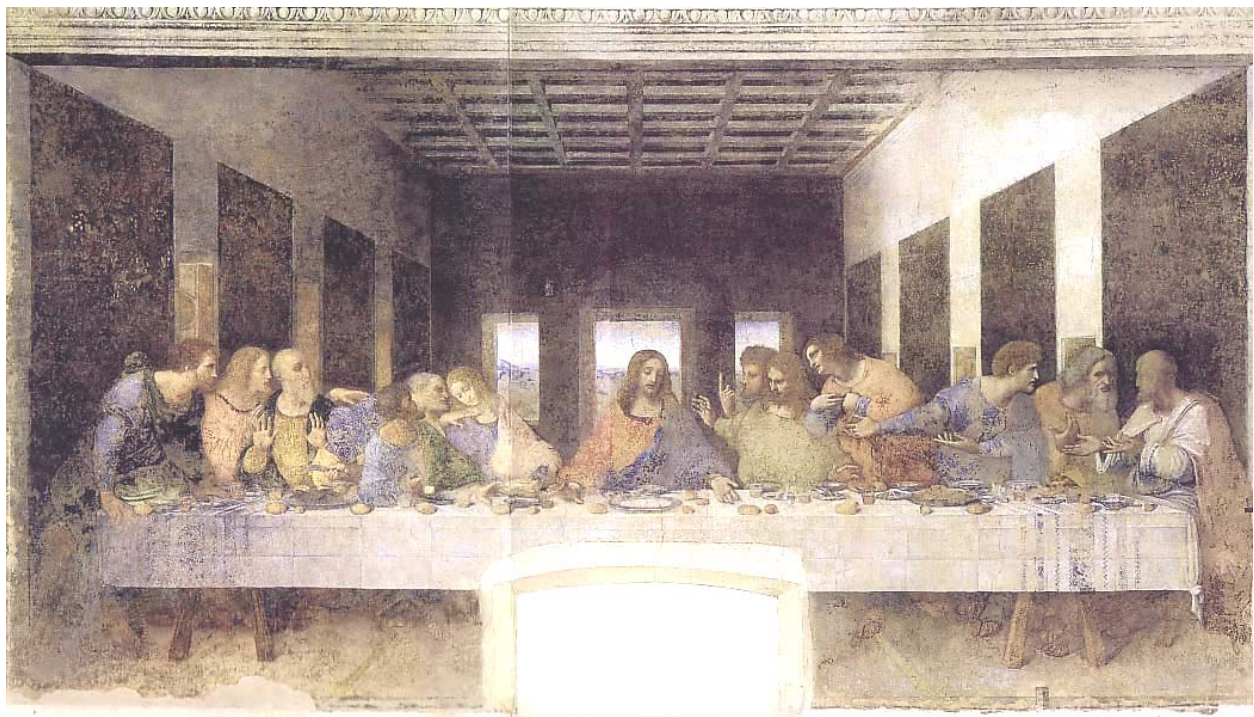
1) Magdalene is pictured to the right of Jesus. She has "flowing red hair, delicate folded hands, and the hint of a bosom.... [It is] without doubt... female" (DVC page 243).

2) Magdalene and Jesus are shown as a pair, "mirror images of one another"; Jesus, wearing a "red robe and blue cloak," is the inverse of Magdalene, who is in a "blue robe and a red cloak" (DVC page 244).

3) The figures of Jesus and Magdalene made not only a ✓, but also a "flawless formed letter M" (DVC page 245).

4) Peter is "leaning menacingly" toward Magdalene and "slicing his blade-like hand across her neck" (DVC page 248).

5) The painting depicts a dismembered hand "wielding a *dagger*" (DVC page 248)



- This is Brown's claim for the answer to the entire Holy Grail theory.

⁶² Ibid, 70-71.

Cracking the Da Vinci Code¹

Presentation by: Khoi To, US Army Chaplain Candidate and M.Div. student, Talbot Theological Seminary

- John, as the “favorite” disciple was painted in the popular style of the time, sitting next to Jesus and “beautiful.”
 - If he is left out of the picture, where is he since he is the “favorite” disciple?
 - If Jesus and Mary Magdalene were supposed to be emphasized, why is Jesus Christ the only one in the middle?
 - Are “Magdalene’s” and Jesus’ clothing and cloaks the inverse colors of one another?
 - There is the “v” shape formed, but it has already been proven that Brown’s symbology is incorrect. Maybe it means nothing at all...
 - The “M” shape is hardly flowing but must be forced.
 - Peter is talking to John, perhaps reacting to Jesus Christ’s announcement that one of them will betray Him, not slicing Mary’s throat. [Remember the idea that Peter hated Mary was taken from Gnostic sources, of which Brown also misquoted.] If we are interpreting Peter’s hand as “menacing” then what about James’ hand?
 - The hand with the “dagger” is not disembodied, rather it belongs to Peter.⁶³
-

F. Conclusion.

How fare Brown’s “FACT: All descriptions of artwork, architecture, documents, and secret rituals in this novel are accurate?” For the past three weeks, our research has demonstrated that there is little “fact” in *The Da Vinci Code* when it comes to the Christian and secular history. It makes one wonder why he put the “FACT” statements in the prologue at all! However, we do not have to wonder too long since the book is a fictional one and we can safely file it as such.

Taken for what it is - as a fictional novel - Brown does tell a good story. Perhaps the last four sessions have been more of “How to Spin the truth to Sell a NY Best-seller” rather than a class on “Cracking the Da Vinci Code.” If the selling volume is any indication, the book has attracted many “believers” and this is further emphasized by Brown’s continual insistence that he too has become a believer in his fictional accounts (how’s that for an argument, “I believe because I wrote it!”).

The danger lies though with those who are not attuned to the true facts of Christian history and may be led astray by the imaginative rewriting in Brown’s novel. It is for this reason that the class was formed and taught so that learners may be equipped to provide the answer to those who are not as informed (1 Peter 3:15-16). In the words of the Apostle Paul:

"But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent’s cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough." (2 Corinthians 11:3-4)

Did the novel not preached another Jesus? Even in the realm of fiction, evangelical disciples of Christ still needs to make sure that the line of fiction and fact are not blurred. As Peter says:

"Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings." (1 Peter 5:8-9)

Indeed, we need to have a firm grasp of our beliefs because, after all, which Jesus are you willing to die for? Please pray that it is the right one.

⁶³ Ibid, p 68-75.