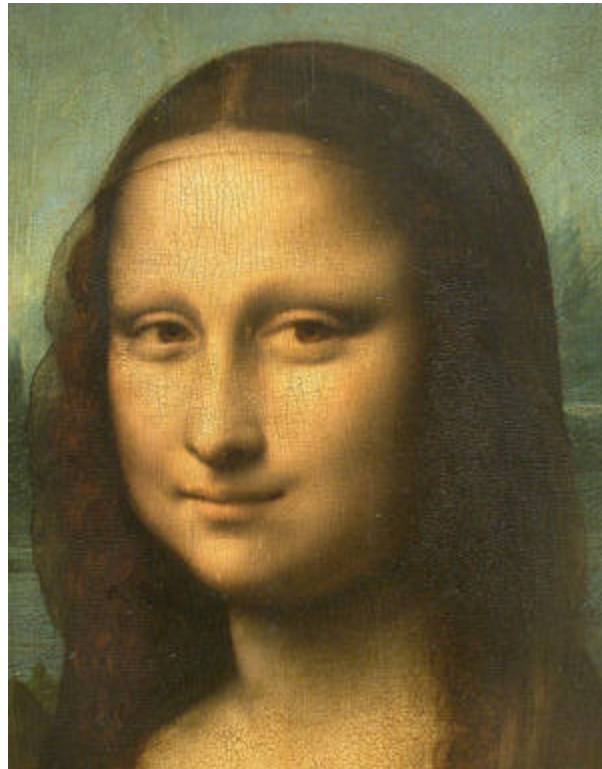


# RESPONDING TO THE DAVINCI CODE

AN OUTLINE RESOURCE FOR CHURCH LEADERS



COOPERATIVE BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP

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Cooperative Baptist Fellowship  
P.O. Box 450329  
Atlanta, GA 31145

[www.thefellowship.info](http://www.thefellowship.info)  
770.220.1600

### **Leadership Team**

Daniel Vestal  
Coordinator

Bo Prosser  
Coordinator for Congregational Life

### **Production Team**

Rick Bennett  
Associate Coordinator for Congregational Life

### **Contributors**

David Hughes  
Pastor, First Baptist Church  
Winston-Salem, NC

Rickey Letson  
Minister to Adults, Johns Creek Baptist Church  
Alpharetta, GA

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# 1. WHY RESPOND TO THE DAVINCI CODE?

“The DaVinci Code *is terrible history, terrible theology, terrible literature, and terrible cinema; but it does raise wonderful questions for Christians to discuss.*”

—Dr. Bill Hull

Whether you are offended by Dan Brown's best-seller, *The DaVinci Code (TDVC)* or embrace it, you'll have to agree that the cultural phenomenon is ripe with educational and missional opportunities. The book has raised issues for Christians and non-Christians around the origin of the Bible, the nature of Jesus, the role of women in the early church, and the revelation of modern-day Gnosticism. These issues present a “teachable moment” wherein churches might educate members and reach out to nonmembers. The information and links that follow have been provided as a way of helping your church, its members and community engage *TDVC*.

## **Opportunities for Christian Education**

- Church History
- The Nature of Jesus
- Ancient and Contemporary Gnosticism
- Origin of the Bible
- Women and the Early Church

## **Missional Opportunities**

Christians can ignore *TDVC* as a harmless work of fiction or demonize the *TDVC* as a work of the devil. But these approaches miss the mark because they squander a unique opportunity to initiate spiritual conversations with gullible Christians and curious non-Christians.

Millions of people have read or will read *TDVC*. Millions more will view the movie based on the book. People will be discussing the book and movie whether or not Christians join the conversation.

Missional churches will not publicly condemn the book and movie, or even plan in-house discussions for their own members. Instead, they will invite friends to join them in conversations about the divinity of Christ, authority of Scripture, and other issues raised by *TDVC*.

To fully leverage *TDVC* as a missional opportunity, consider the following:

- Read the book and watch the movie.
- Review the material in this resource and do your own research with the help of other resources cited.
- Schedule a time when you take church members and friends to see the movie. Arrange a discussion of the movie immediately after in a nearby coffeehouse.
- Alternately, encourage people to see the movie on their own; then plan a discussion.
- Publicize your discussion in the local media and/or give church members handouts to distribute to their friends.

- Plan follow-up events in the fall of 2006, especially with college students in your community.
- Establish an Inquirers Class in which people with little or no faith background can continue to explore the faith.

## **Dangers to Avoid**

**Poor Preparation**—Don't "fly by the seat of your pants" during your presentation. Make sure you get your facts straight about the formation of the biblical canon, the Council of Nicaea, Constantine, etc. Be prepared to discuss the issues with the well-read and the skeptical.

**Defensiveness**—Remain calm in the face of disagreement and doubt. Engage in "conversational apologetics" that remains friendly in tone and builds relationships. State your convictions; then prepare to listen to opposing points of view. Give permission for doubts to surface. Two comments from Brian McLaren come to mind:

"The Holy Spirit works through conversations (not just arguments). . . . The more we keep conversations open and going the more chances we give the Holy Spirit to work."

"Jesus has come through 2,000 years of questions, skepticism, and attacks, and he's gonna come through [*The DaVinci Code* phenomenon] just fine."

**Naiveté**—Don't be surprised if someone in your church or community criticizes you for dealing with a heretical book/movie in church. Emphasize the benefits in engaging in conversation rather than ignoring or attacking the book and movie.

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## 2. A SUGGESTED FORMAT FOR DISCUSSING THE DAVINCI CODE IN YOUR CHURCH (WITH TALKING POINTS)

### SESSION I: CAN WE TRUST THE NEW TESTAMENT?

In *TDVC*, the novel's theologian, Sir Leigh Teabing, says, "The Bible is a product of man, my dear. Not of God. Man created it as a historical record of tumultuous times, and it has evolved over countless translations, additions, and revisions. History has never had a definitive version of the book." Furthermore, says Teabing, "More than eighty gospels were considered for the New Testament, and yet only a relative few were considered for inclusion—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John among them" (p. 231).

Moreover, Teabing declares that "The Bible, as we know it today, was collated by the pagan Roman emperor Constantine the Great" (p. 231). In other words, "Constantine commissioned and financed a new Bible that omitted those gospels that spoke of Christ's human traits and embellished gospels that made him god-like. The earlier gospels (stressing Christ's humanity) were outlawed, gathered up, and burned" (p. 234).

If Teabing is right, we cannot trust the New Testament or its presentation of Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Instead, we must turn to "Gnostic gospels" like those discovered at Nag Hammadi in 1945 for a more accurate depiction of Jesus. But is Teabing right?

Historical research shows that the New Testament "canon," or the standard list of New Testament books, was established well before Constantine allegedly manipulated the Council of Nicaea in AD 325 to create a Bible of his choosing.

### **How Did the New Testament Canon Come Together?**

Stories about Jesus' life and descriptions of his teachings circulated as oral tradition for roughly twenty years after Jesus' death and resurrection. As eyewitnesses of Jesus' life began to die, the church continued to expand, and false teachings about Jesus began to circulate, it became obvious that a true account of Jesus' life and teachings needed to be written down for posterity.

The apostle Paul was the first to commit these accounts to writing, borrowing from the testimony of eyewitnesses. Later Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John wrote their biographies of Jesus over the last forty years of the first century.

As the second century began and competing philosophies about Jesus spread, early Christians quickly settled on the four Gospels and other writings as the most authentic accounts about Jesus based on the following criteria:

- **Genuine Connection to an Apostle**—Matthew and John were produced by those disciples (or by communities in contact with those disciples—this is a matter of debate among New Testament scholars). Mark was a student of Peter, and Luke was an associate of Paul.
- **Widespread use (catholicity)** among churches in Israel, Asia Minor, Rome, etc.
- **Consistency with Jesus' life and teachings.**
- **Proven to be edifying to the church** (Eph. 6:4).

A generation after the apostolic age every book of the New Testament had been cited as authoritative by some church father. And many were cited in the Muratorian Canon compiled near the end of the second century.

Remaining doubts or debates over certain books continued into the fourth century. The first time our list of twenty-seven books appears is in an Easter letter written in AD 367 by Athanasius (Athanasius is also the first to describe the list as a “canon”). Later the list of twenty-seven books was ratified by the Council of Hippo (393) and Carthage (397).

Obviously, history does not verify the claim that Constantine became the editor of the Bible or even that the Council of Nicaea created a Bible. Rather, the councils of the fourth century primarily recognized the writings that had been viewed as authoritative for two hundred years.

Bruce Metzger, professor emeritus of Princeton Theological Seminary, says that compared to other ancient documents (like the works of Homer, Plato, and Aristotle), the New Testament writings have extremely strong manuscript support, consisting of multiple manuscripts that can be dated extremely close to the original writings.

Theologian Bernhard Ramm has written, “A thousand times over the death knell of the Bible has been sounded, the funeral procession formed, the inscription cut on the tombstone, and the committal read. But somehow the corpse never stays put.”

### **Questions for Reflection**

1. Do you have confidence in the reliability of the New Testament?
2. If not, how do you account for the way the Scriptures have stood the test of time?
3. What would it take for you to see the New Testament as a reliable record of Jesus’ life and teachings?
4. What difference would it make in your life if you actually believed the New Testament was true?

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## SESSION 2: WAS JESUS GOD, A HUSBAND, A FATHER?

In *TDVC*, Professor Teabing says, “Almost everything our fathers taught us about Christ is false” (p. 235). Constantine and the Council of Nice in AD 325 are responsible for collating the Bible and voting for Jesus’ divinity when “until that moment in history, Jesus was viewed by his followers as a mortal prophet” (p. 233).

Teabing continues, “Christ as Messiah was critical to the functioning of Church and state. Many scholars claim that the early Church literally stole Jesus from his original followers, hijacking his human message, shrouding it in an impenetrable cloak of divinity, and using it to expand their power.”

Darrell Bock observes that according to *TDVC*, “Christianity as we now know it is really a creation of the fourth century, not the first.” A merely mortal Jesus was not useful to Constantine, so Constantine “upgraded” Jesus by suppressing the more human gospels and manipulating the Council of Nice to declare Jesus divine in what turned out to be a very close vote.

To be fair, Professor Teabing admits that Jesus was a “great and powerful man . . . who inspired millions to have better lives” (p. 234). But he was still a man who eventually married Mary Magdalene and had a child with her named Sarah.

Furthermore, *TDVC* says the early church knew Jesus was married but covered up the marriage along with other information that would reveal that Jesus was only human rather than divine. Eventually, a secret society of the Catholic Church named Opus Dei also attempts to conceal Jesus’ marriage and fatherhood to preserve his divinity.

According to *TDVC*, how can we conclude that Jesus was married? Because it was un-Jewish to be unmarried. And because the Gnostic Gospel of Philip implies that Jesus kissed Mary Magdalene on the mouth, indicating a relationship of which the disciples were jealous.

Other evidence cited to support marriage between Mary and Jesus includes the fact that Mary traveled with Jesus (Luke 8:1-3). Jesus would only relate to his wife as he did to the woman in Luke 7:36-5, and Mary “clung” to Jesus in John 20:11-18.

Professor Teabing maintains that Jesus’ marriage to Mary Magdalene is “part of the historical record” (p. 245). But is there any documented evidence to prove Jesus was married?

With remarkable unanimity, both liberal and conservative biblical scholars say there is no shred of evidence supporting Jesus’ marriage to Mary. Nowhere, not even in the Gnostic gospels, do we ever read that Jesus was married. Furthermore, many Jewish males including those living in the Essene community remained unmarried.

Other evidence cited to disprove marriage between Jesus and Mary includes: (1) the fact that Mary was never tied to a male when she was named (see John 19:25); (2) a minister’s right to marry was cited without reference to Jesus (1 Cor. 9:4–6); and (3) Jesus showed no special concern for Mary at the cross (see John 19:26–27). Rather, his main concern was for his mother.

Had Jesus been married, would it have compromised his divinity? Jesus was human in other ways (ate, drank, slept, etc.) that did not compromise his divinity. There’s nothing in biblical tradition to suggest sexuality in marriage is wrong so there was no need for a cover-up if Jesus was married. Even though marriage is not bad, it could be a distraction for those with a single-minded devotion to God (see 1 Cor. 7:32–35).

Ironically, the Gnostic gospels make Jesus into a magically powerful superman. For example, in one Gnostic gospel when Jesus comes out of his tomb, he is as large as Paul Bunyan. And after he comes out of his tomb, the cross he dies on follows, talking as it walks!

The New Testament Gospels on the other hand show the human side of Jesus. And yet hundreds of years earlier than the Council of Nicaea, the Gospels and the letters of Paul declare Jesus to be the divine Son of God (see Col. 2:9; Matt. 16:15–17; John 1:1–14).

Jesus' divinity was also affirmed through the second and third centuries by early church fathers like Ignatius ("God himself was manifested in human form"—AD 105) and Origen ("No one should be offended that the Savior is also God"—AD 225).

Professor Teabing is correct in saying that the Council of Nice was a pivotal moment in Christianity. But it is pivotal because it affirms the centuries-old testimony that Jesus is both God and man, not because it invents the divinity of Christ. Furthermore, the vote at the Council affirming Jesus' divinity and coeternity with God was hardly a cliffhanger—three hundred to two!

C. S. Lewis wrote, "Either [Jesus] was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman, or something worse. You can shut him up as a fool, you can spit at him or kill him as a demon; or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God. But let us not come up with any patronizing nonsense about him being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to."

### **Questions for Reflection**

1. Do you agree with Lewis (above), or do you think his either-or approach to Jesus is too dogmatic?
2. If you struggle with the divinity of Jesus, why is it so hard to accept?
3. Do you agree that marriage and fatherhood are not necessarily incompatible with divinity?
4. If you truly believed that Jesus was and is God in the flesh, how would your life change?

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## SESSION 3: JESUS, WOMEN, AND MARY MAGDALENE

Professor Teabing says, “Behold the greatest cover-up in human history. Not only was Jesus married, but He was a father. . . . Mary Magdalene was the Holy Vessel. She was the chalice that bore the royal bloodline of Jesus Christ. She was the womb that bore the lineage, and the vine from which the sacred fruit sprang forth!” (p. 249, *TDVC*).

Teabing argues that the more “earthly” gospels that revealed Jesus’ humanity, including his marriage to Mary Magdalene, were systematically suppressed. But despite the many attempts to suppress and destroy these gospels, the “truth” survived.

In AD 1099, a secret European society called The Priory of Sion was formed to preserve the truth about Jesus and Mary Magdalene. One of the grand masters of the Priory was Leonardo Da Vinci, who sought to express this truth in coded form in his masterpiece, *The Last Supper*. Noting the feminine-looking character leaning away from Jesus in the painting (creating a V shape, or the symbol of the feminine), Teabing says, “*The Last Supper* practically shouts that Mary Magdalene and Jesus were a pair” (p. 244).

Furthermore, Teabing claims that the early, “unaltered gospels” testify that Jesus—the “original feminist”—intended for Mary Magdalene to become the leader of the church, not Peter (p. 248).

Professor Teabing claims that Jesus and Mary not only have a child but also become the ancestors of the Merovingian kings of France. Believing this “truth” would undermine Jesus’ divinity. “The early Christian church ‘conned’ the world by propagating lies that devalued the female and tipped the scales in favor of the masculine” (p. 124). Religious writings that revered women and valued the concept of the “sacred feminine” were obliterated in favor of a patriarchal Christianity.

Moreover, to discredit Mary Magdalene, the Catholic Church labeled her a prostitute, following the lead of Pope Gregory the Great who declared in a sermon delivered in AD 591 that Mary was the woman “who had lived a sinful life” described in Luke 7:36–50.

We learned in our previous unit that the prospect of Jesus’ being married to Mary Magdalene, while providing a tantalizing story line, lacks any historical evidence. But who was Mary Magdalene according to Scripture? Was she really a prostitute? And is *TDVC* correct in saying that the church has mistreated and oppressed women? Was Jesus the original feminist? How did Jesus treat women?

Let’s begin with the identity of Mary Magdalene. In his book, *Breaking the Da Vinci Code*, Darrell Bock summarizes available information about Mary:

- She is one of seven Marys named in the New Testament.
- Mary is actually a modern form of the Jewish name, Miriam.
- Mary was not connected to any male (like Mary, the wife of Clopas in John 19:25); rather, she is identified by a place, the region of Magdala where she lived (like Mary of Bethany, in John 11:1).
- Mary was a disciple of Jesus who was the beneficiary of an exorcism by Jesus and was part of an entourage who supported and traveled with Jesus and his disciples (Luke 8:1–3).
- Along with other women, Mary Magdalene was present at the cross. Some texts place Mary at the tomb when Jesus was laid to rest.

- All four Gospels describe Mary as a witness of the resurrection of Jesus. Where Mary is concerned, the most compelling resurrection account is John 20:1–18, the only place Jesus and Mary are alone together. Mary clings to the resurrected Christ because she is so excited to see him alive. While such public displays between a man and a woman were unusual in Jewish culture, no evidence exists that anything sexual occurred in this encounter.

Because Jesus commissioned Mary to tell his male disciples where he was going, Mary has been called “the apostle to the apostles,” inspiring the belief that it is appropriate for women to proclaim the gospel. As Ben Witherington III observes, Mary in John’s Gospel is “not only the first to see the risen Jesus, but the very first to declare the Easter message.”

No evidence exists that Mary was a prostitute, contrary to the pronouncement of Pope Gregory the Great and the centuries-old perception among many Christians. This misconception arises from confusing the unnamed “sinful woman” of Luke 7 with Mary Magdalene introduced in Luke 8. Most scholars agree Mary wouldn’t have been introduced in Luke 8 if she were the woman of Luke 7. Recognizing its mistake, the Catholic Church announced in 1969 that Mary should not be thought of as the sinful woman of Luke 7.

Decades after the New Testament writings were complete, Gnostic gospels and other noncanonical writings present Mary in a different light. Some read the Gospel of Philip (in a passage mentioned earlier) as suggesting a romantic relationship between Jesus and Mary. But most critics do not agree because even if Jesus did kiss Mary, a kiss in Gnostic tradition symbolized not eroticism but the passage of wisdom and truth. Besides, insisting that Mary and Jesus had to be sexual partners ironically devalues women as being important only for their sexual roles.

Others understand the Gospel of Mary Magdalene suggesting that Mary is primary among the disciples, much to Peter’s displeasure. But as Darrell Bock observes, the Gospel of Mary only tells us Jesus appeared to Mary alone in a vision, not that Mary was Jesus’ wife and the designated leader of the church. And as Craig Blomberg adds, if Mary had in fact been Jesus’ wife and church leader-elect, given the church’s veneration of Mary the mother of Jesus, it is hard to believe Mary Magdalene “could have scarcely disappeared without a historical trace. She would have been celebrated and venerated instead, especially by the very strands of Catholicism that *TDVC* pit against the revelation of ‘the truth’ of Jesus’ marriage.”

Oddly enough, proponents of the “feminist” Gnostic gospels often overlook sexist themes in those gospels, like the infamous passage in the Gospel of Thomas where Jesus says, “Every woman who will make herself male will enter the kingdom of heaven.”

Unfortunately, *TDVC* is not altogether inaccurate in its claim that women have been mistreated by religious institutions, including the church. Rabbis of Jesus day understood women to be inferior, as witnessed by the first-century rabbinic prayer that said, “Blessed art Thou, O God, who did not make me a woman.”

In the third century AD, church father Tertulian likened all women to Eve, whom he called “the devil’s gateway” (because she convinced Adam to eat the forbidden fruit), adding that because of womankind, “God’s image, man” was condemned to death, and that the Son of God himself had to come and die. In the fourth century Ambrose argued that men by nature were superior to women. Augustine, probably the most famous

theologian in church history, believed that God did not create the woman for any other reason than procreation.

Jesus was not on a feminist crusade; his focus was to inaugurate the kingdom of God. Nevertheless, his treatment of women was revolutionary. Jesus traveled with women (Luke 8:1–3), a scandalous behavior in more ways than one. He was not threatened by the idea of women supporting him financially. John Ortberg observes that “Jesus was constantly surprising his disciples by the way he would speak with, teach, listen (to), and be approachable to women.”

In her book *Does Christianity Squash Women?* Rebecca Jones writes: “Jesus never slanders or belittles women. He does not make generalizations out of them. He does not shut them out of conversations or ignore them. He does not make them feel small or relegate them to inferior status. Everything he says and does in relation to women shows the utmost care and respect.”

Responding to Jones’s quote in his book (cowritten with Gary Poole), *Exploring the Da Vinci Code*, Lee Strobel writes: “Has the church always lived up to these ideals? Unfortunately, no, and it should repent when mistakes are made. But the church’s failures are a reflection on the human beings who run the institution, not on Jesus and his teachings. As for me, I believe both women *and* men can equally find hope in the real model of Christianity that’s reflected in Galatians 3:28: ‘There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.’ ”

### **Questions for Reflection**

1. *TDVC* asserts that the church has “demonized” Mary Magdalene. Do you agree?
2. How would you grade the church’s treatment of women?
3. If you could change the treatment of women inside and outside the church, what changes would you make?

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## SESSION 4: OPUS DEI, THE PRIORY OF SION, AND OTHER “FACTS” OF LIFE IN TDVC

On the opening “facts” page of *TDVC*, author Dan Brown writes, “The Priory of Sion—a European secret society founded in 1099—is a real organization. In 1975, Paris’ Bibliotheque Nationale discovered parchments known as *Les Dossiers Secrets*, identifying numerous members of the Priory of Sion, including Sir Isaac Newton, Botticelli, Victor Hugo, and Leonardo da Vinci.”

On the same facts page, Brown writes: “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 brainwashing, 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.” Finally, Brown adds, “All descriptions of artwork, architecture, and secret rituals in this novel are accurate.”

This “facts” page has sparked considerable controversy regarding *TDVC* because it blurs the line between fact and fiction in the book. Immediately, even the most discriminating reader is made to wonder if this book is simply a highly suspenseful and entertaining novel or a true description of the nature and history of the Christian faith.

What does independent research tell us about these “facts of life” in *TDVC*? Regarding the Priory of Sion, *TDVC* claims a French king founded the organization to protect the truth about his bloodline (that it originated with Jesus and Mary Magdalene) and to pass that knowledge secretly to his heirs. But in their book *Cracking Da Vinci’s Code*, James Garlow and Peter Jones write, “[Dan] Brown relies on a 1982 publication, *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*, for his information on the Priory of Sion. The authors of *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* relied on documents provided them by Pierre Plantard, who spent time in jail for fraud in 1953. Plantard and three other men started a small social club in 1956 called the Priory of Sion. . . . Throughout the 1960s and 70s, Plantard created (and planted in the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris) a series of documents (*Les Dossier Secrets*) ‘proving’ the existence of a bloodline descending from Mary Magdalene, through the kings of France, down to the present day including (surprise!) Pierre Plantard. . . . In 1993, Plantard, under oath, admitted he had made up the whole Priory scheme.”

*TDVC* portrays Opus Dei as a fringe branch of the Catholic Church whose mission is to destroy the “truth” safeguarded by the Priory of Sion so as to protect the divinity of Christ and the public image of the church. In the book, Opus Dei is led by a corrupt bishop whose will is carried out by a self-flagellating monk.

In a feature article, *Time* magazine (April 24, 2006) reports the following about Opus Dei: Opus Dei (Latin for “the work of God”) was founded in 1928 by a Spanish priest who envisioned a movement of pious laypeople who would, by prayerful contemplation and the dedication of their labor to Christ, extend the holiness of church on Sunday into their everyday work life. Controversial from the start, Catholic clergy threatened by such a dedicated movement of laity called the founding priest a heretic.

In 1982, Pope John Paul II heightened Opus Dei’s status when he declared Opus a “personal prelature,” or a global quasi-diocese, able to leapfrog local archbishops and deal directly with Rome.

Opus Dei has a comparatively small membership of eighty-five thousand Catholics worldwide, and a mere three thousand in the United States. Members take part in a rigorous course of spiritual formation and tend to embrace more conservative doctrinal positions like a ban on birth control.

Twenty percent of Opus Dei's members are called "numeraries" who take vows of celibacy and live in Opus Dei centers. They also voluntarily practice corporal self-punishment, wearing "cilices," or spiked chains around their thighs two hours a day, and flagellating themselves with a small, cordlike whip once a week during the recitation of prayer. The remaining members of Opus Dei members are called "supernumeraries" who follow a less formal regimen, have families, and live in their own homes.

Opus Dei is best known for being secretive. It does not identify its members, and many members prefer not to identify themselves. Also, Opus Dei prefers not to identify its institutions, which reportedly include fifteen universities and seven hospitals. Opus Dei says little about its financial resources, which reportedly total around \$2.8 billion, the rough equivalent of Duke University's endowment.

Opus Dei has been linked to several "conservative" politicians and government officials in Washington. And one Catholic historian estimates that Opus influences "about a million conservative Catholics" in American politics.

Collin Hansen, associate editor of *Christianity Today*, observes that despite negative press about its conservative views, zeal, and secretive practices, "there is no evidence that Opus Dei has resorted to murder; nor has the Vatican entrusted Opus Dei to violently guard the church's deepest secrets, as Dan Brown claims in *TDVC*."

What are we to make of other "facts" in *TDVC*? The May 29, 2006 issue of *Newsweek* magazine offers the following helpful comparisons:

*TDVC* says the Holy Grail was really Mary Magdalene, or more specifically, her womb. But conventional wisdom speaks of a number of Holy Grail myths, many of which identify it as the cup Christ used at the Last Supper to give wine to his disciples.

*TDVC* says the Knights Templar was a military arm of the Priory of Sion, formed to retrieve a stash of hidden documents that held the truth about Christ's bloodline. But history tells us the Templars were a monastic order of soldiers charged with protecting Christian pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem.

*TDVC* says the Paris "Rose Line" served as the prime meridian for the entire globe. At the church of Saint-Sulpice, a marking on the floor indicates its course. In reality, the line, commonly known as the Paris Meridian, does run through Paris and even through Saint-Sulpice, though the floor marking at the church doesn't quite match up.

*TDVC* says the six-pointed star is a marriage of pagan symbols for masculinity (the blade) and femininity (the vessel). But history tells us the star is best known as the Star of David. But before it became a symbol of Judaism, it may have been used to signify a fusion of opposing forces.

Another fact stated by *TDVC*: "Nothing in Christianity is original. The pre-Christian God Mithras—called *the Son of God* and *the Light of the World*—was born on December 25, died, was buried in a rock tomb, and then resurrected in three days" (p. 232). In his book, *The Da Vinci Deception*, Erwin Lutzer offers this response: "We can confidently say that Christianity did not borrow its teaching about Jesus from the legends of Mithras that were popular in ancient Rome. For one thing, the Old Testament predicted the life, death, and resurrection (see, for example, Isaiah 7:14; 52:14; 53:1-11; Psalm

16:10) of Jesus Christ hundreds of years before the superstitions of Mithras surfaced.” Noting that the cult of Mithras was composed of diverse and competing views and was continually evolving and morphing depending upon the host culture, Lutzer says, “What seems most probable is that the specific myths about Mithras’s miraculous birth and becoming a ‘savior god’ were modeled after the stories of Jesus and developed after Christianity came to Rome in the first century.”

Jeffrey Weiss, a reporter with *The Dallas Morning News* writes, “Experts agree: Dan Brown got most of his facts wrong.” To illustrate, Weiss notes that Ralph Langley is a Harvard professor in a department that doesn’t exist. The glass pyramid at the Louvre has 673 glass panes, not 666. The Dead Sea Scrolls were written by Jews and say nothing about Jesus. They were discovered in 1947, not the 1950s. The irrational number Phi is not precisely equal to 1.618. And if the figure to the left of Jesus in *The Last Supper* is really Mary Magdalene, then Leonardo left out an apostle. If it’s really John, as most art historians claim, Leonardo was neither the first nor only artist to paint him as a beardless, long-haired young man.

In his book, *The Truth Behind the Da Vinci Code*, Richard Abanes writes, “*TDVC* clearly contains many historical errors covering a wide array of issues: church architecture, religious symbolism, the Roman Empire, ancient Israel, and different belief systems. If Brown cannot be relied upon to accurately recount the most basic of historical facts, then how can he be trusted to correctly explain more complex subjects?”

### **Questions for Reflection**

1. What do you make of Dan Brown’s “Fact” page?
2. Do you agree that it confuses readers about the nature of the book?
3. How much of the book do you think is fact? fiction?
4. Is Richard Abanes fair in his criticism of *TDVC*?

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## SESSION 5: GNOSTICISM YESTERDAY AND TODAY

In *TDVC*, Professor Teabing says, “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” (p. 231). Professor Teabing is alluding to “Gnostic” writings, many of which were discovered in 1945 at a location known as Nag Hamada in the deserts of Egypt.

Darrel Bock, in his book *Breaking The Da Vinci Code*, says that Teabing’s declaration “may be the most misleading statement of ‘fact’ in the entire novel.” In fact, “there were not more than eighty gospel documents. *The Nag Hamada Library*, published in English in 1977, consisted of forty-five separate titles, not all of them gospels. In fact, it names five separate works as gospels. . . . The collection of *The Gnostic Scriptures* by Benton Layton has just short of forty works, three of which bear the title *gospel* and overlap with the Nag Hamada list. . . . The most generous account of extra-biblical documents” provided by Harvard Professor Helmut Koester offers “sixty, excluding the twenty-seven books in the New Testament. However, a vast majority of these works were not gospels.”

Most scholars date these Gnostic documents as being written throughout the second and third centuries AD, several generations after the life of Christ and the writing of the canonical gospels. Thanks to the writings of early church fathers who critiqued Gnosticism, the Christian church has known of Gnostic works for hundreds of years (Epiphanius, who lived in the fourth century AD was the first to coin the term *Gnostics*).

Because of diversity in content, scholars are not unanimous about what constitutes the body of Gnostic texts. For example, most agree that the Gospel of Thomas is Gnostic while the Infancy Gospel of Thomas is considered sympathetic to Gnosticism but technically not Gnostic. This is why scholars often refer to Gnostic “and other related” texts.

Much of the power of Dan Brown’s story is rooted in the “truth” of Gnosticism versus the “falsehoods” of Christian orthodoxy. What were the beliefs of ancient Gnosticism? Can they be reconciled with the tenets of Christian orthodoxy? What is the “neo-Gnosticism” that some observers say is a driving force in *TDVC* and much of New Age religion so prevalent today?

Because Gnosticism is a patchwork rather than a uniform set of beliefs, it is difficult to summarize neatly. Still, Bock offers the following key ideas that tend to tie Gnostic principles together:

Secret knowledge (*gnosis* is the Greek word for *knowledge*) or advanced teaching was given only to the select few that other Christians did not possess. For example, in the Apocalypse of Peter (like all Gnostic writings, the Apocalypse of Peter was written too late to be written by the apostle or person bearing its name), Peter is told he is the one “to whom these (secret) mysteries have been given.” And so it was revealed to Peter, for example, that the world of ideas and matter lived in a radical dualism since the world of ideas was pure and the physical world was corrupt.

The true, supreme God was utterly spiritual and had no contact with the physical world that was created by a fallen, wicked being often called the “Demiurge.” A great spiritual hierarchy of spiritual beings separated the supreme God from the Demiurge, the God of the Hebrew Scriptures. When the Demiurge created the physical world, our pure

spirits became imprisoned in fleshly bodies. Christ, one of the intermediate spiritual beings, took possession of the body of Jesus and came to free the Gnostics, or the enlightened, from their material prison. Meanwhile, the unenlightened were doomed. As well, the true God was androgynous, both male and female in nature.

There was not one Jesus but two. The living Lord and Savior was from the Father. He was a spiritual being who could have nothing to do with flesh, bodies, or death. The earthly, merely human substitute Jesus, who only represented the true Jesus, was crucified on the cross. The heavenly Jesus did not suffer on the cross; indeed, he stood off to the side and laughed at the world's ignorance. Jesus did not die for our sin because the issue of sin is not a matter of dealing with sin or being a sacrifice on behalf of others. Rather, salvation resides in proper knowledge of the great mysteries, the hidden gnosis. In short, our salvation hinges on our ability to grasp God's hidden knowledge within ourselves.

Gnostics refused to heed any church authority on spiritual matters, including Jesus, because they had direct access to God's revelation. They came to know God's truth by intense introspection that led them to true knowledge that could not be challenged by outside authority. The major spiritual problem was not sin but ignorance. Ignorance was not overcome by associating with Jesus and learning his teachings. Rather, it was overcome by discovering the particular knowledge God had planted within one's soul. The result, says A. F. Walls, was that "the church (became) the club of the illuminated, not the society of the redeemed."

Bock notes the stark contrast between first-century, canonical Christianity and second- and third-century Gnostic Christianity. Biblical revelation is not given to a select few but offered to all to consider. God's creation was good though fallen. Knowing God meant seeing oneself the way God did, not getting access to secret knowledge. God was not male and female but beyond gender. God did not avoid the world but became flesh and entered into our suffering to redeem the world. Jesus did indeed suffer and die on the cross to atone for our sin. God reveals himself to us through Jesus, not hidden knowledge planted in our souls.

For this reason, Bock objects to modern attempts by some scholars (like Elaine Pagels and Karen King) to argue that Christianity was a complex body of competing theologies consisting of equally valid canonical and Gnostic systems of thought by the second century A.D. Gnostic Christianity was not a complementary strand of faith rejected by orthodox Christianity because its Jesus was too human and its women too prominent. Rather, Gnosticism was a fundamentally different faith system whose core theological convictions were incompatible with canonical Christianity.

N. T. Wright, the bishop of Durham, offers further evidence that the Nag Hamada writings are vastly different and inferior to the canonical gospels. The Gnostic writings step away from the Jewish context of Jesus' ministry and toward the Greek philosophy of Plato. Jesus' idea of the kingdom of God coming on earth as it is in heaven is transformed into a kingdom teaching which is all about a private, detached spirituality.

The Gnostic writings take a large step away from a *narrative* world and into detached aphorisms and isolated teachings. There is no attempt to tell the story of Jesus or even stories about him in the context of the larger story of God and the world, God and Israel.

The Gnostic writings see Jesus not as the one who died on the cross and rose again but simply as a teacher. They make the message about Jesus not good *news* about something that has happened but good *advice* about one's life.

Modern apologists for Gnosticism, sometimes called "Neo-Gnostics," like Pagels and King argue that the Nag Hamada finds represent "new" evidence that should prompt the church to restore Gnostic theology to its rightful place as a valid alternative for Christian thought. Bock responds that this "new" evidence is hardly new since the church has been battling Gnostic thought in its earliest form since the first century (e.g., Paul was probably opposing early Gnostic thought in Colossians). Then he adds, "The texts, on each side of the debate, force a choice. Either the Gnostic texts reflect what Jesus was and is, or the four Gospels are the best witness to the movement that Jesus generated. One cannot have it both ways."

At heart, *TDVC* is an expression of "neo-Gnosticism" that wants to do far more than entertain. Its goal is to prompt a reconsideration of ancient Gnosticism and a rewriting of the Christian story based on the claim that the Gnostic side of the story was unjustly suppressed centuries ago. In other words it is an artistic work designed to offer another option for Christianity in our postmodern world that steadfastly craves options and avoids orthodoxy. As Marcus Borg writes, "There's a lot of interest in early Christian diversity (i.e., Gnosticism) because many people who have left the church—and some who are still in it—are looking for another way to be Christian."

In a recent address at Seattle Pacific University (reprinted in the summer 2005 issue of the *Seattle Pacific University Magazine*), N. T. Wright offers the following reflections:

*TDVC* is a symptom of something much bigger, a lightning rod that has throbbed with the electricity of the postmodern world. One of the fault-lines in the contemporary Western world is the line between neo-Gnosticism on the one hand and the challenge of Jesus on the other. . . . Neo-Gnosticism is the philosophy that invites you to search deep inside yourself and discover some exciting things by which you must live. It is the philosophy that declares that the only real imperative is that you should then be true to what you find when you engage in that deep inward search. . . . It corresponds . . . to what a great many people in our world want to believe and want to do, rather than to the hard and bracing challenge of the very Jewish gospel of Jesus. It appears to legitimate (what many yearn for): a free-for-all, do-it-yourself spirituality, with a strong though ineffective agenda of social protest against the powers that be, and an I'm-OK-you're-OK attitude on all matters religious and ethical. At least, with one exception: You can have any sort of spirituality you like . . . as long as it isn't orthodox Christianity. By contrast, the challenge of Jesus, in the 21st century as in the first, is that we should look away from ourselves and get on board with the project the one true God launched at creation and re-launched with Jesus himself. The authentic Christian gospel, which is good *news* about something that has *happened* as a result of which the world is a different place—this gospel demands that we submit to Jesus as Lord and allow all other allegiances, loves, and self-discoveries to be realigned in that light.

## Questions for Reflection

1. How important is it that the four Gospels and other canonical texts were written many years earlier than Gnostic texts?
2. Do you agree that the early church unjustly suppressed a valid Gnostic variant of the gospel, allowing the “winners” to write Scripture, Christian history, and theology? If so, do you believe the biblical canon and Christian theology should be revised?
3. Why are “secret” Christian teachings so appealing?
4. Would you agree that the Christian teaching of incarnation (Jesus is God in human flesh) is fundamentally incompatible with the Gnostic teaching that all matter is evil and to be avoided?
5. Respond to the final quote by N. T. Wright. Is he overstating the danger of a novel like *TDVC*? Does his analysis of neo-Gnosticism accurately explain the amazing popularity of the book and movie?

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### 3. A DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR DEBRIEFING THE FILM

#### **Plot**

Widely known Harvard religious symbologist Robert Langdon is called to the Louvre museum in Paris after the murder of the Louvre's curator Jacques Sauniere whose corpse is accompanied by numerous symbols and clues. Langdon ultimately teams with Sauniere's granddaughter Sophie Neveu, a French government cryptologist, in an attempt not only to solve the murder but also to unlock an age-old mystery connected to both Leonardo Da Vinci's *The Last Supper* and the Holy Grail. The amazing adventure leads Langdon, Neveu, and a cast of numerous other memorable characters through Paris, London, and Scotland.

#### **Author**

Dan Brown is the best-selling author of four adventure mysteries. Beyond *The Da Vinci Code*, Brown is also known for *Angels and Demons*, which features Robert Langdon in another mystery connected to the Catholic Church. His other two popular works, *Deception Point* and *Digital Fortress* center of mysteries connected to U.S. government agencies.

#### **Theme**

*The Da Vinci Code* gives individuals and congregations a wonderful opportunity to respond to the curiosity that has been peaked in everyday folks about a variety of issues including extra-biblical works, Gnosticism, basic aspects of church history, and the life of Christ. Obviously, it also affords the opportunity for the church to set the record straight when it comes to areas where Brown speaks incorrectly.

The book/movie also calls groups and individuals to wrestle with other questions that arise from the story such as Brown's assertion that history is written by the winners, the fact that several characters ultimately prove to be wolves in sheep's clothing and the question of what things we should keep private as opposed to what should be made public.

#### **Characters**

**Jacques Sauniere** (Jean-Pierre Marielle)—Grandfather of Sophie Neveu, curator of the Louvre, former head of the Priory of Scion.

**Jerome Collet** (Etienne Chicot)—Lieutenant in France's Direction Centrale Police Judiciare (DCPJ). He is Bezu Fache's second in command.

**Robert Langdon** (Tom Hanks)—Harvard religious symbologist drawn into the Da Vinci secrets after being summoned to the Louvre. Also the primary character in Brown's *Angels and Demons*.

**Bezu Fache** (Jean Reno)—Captain of the French Direction Centrale Police Judiciare (DCPJ) which is the criminal investigation police.

**Sophie Neveu** (Audrey Tautou)—Granddaughter of Jacques Sauniere, a French government cryptographer.

**Silas** (Paul Bettany)—Albino monk who is a devotee of the Catholic group Opus Dei.

**Bishop Aringarosa** (Alfred Molina)—Worldwide head of Opus Dei and patron of Silas.

**Andre Vernet** (Jurgen Prochnow)—President of the Paris Branch of the Depository Bank of Zurich.

**Remy Legaludec** (Jean-Yves Berteloot)—Leigh Teabing's butler.

**Leigh Teabing**/The Teacher (Ian McKellen)—British Royal Historian, Grail scholar and close friend of Langdon. He lives at Chateau Vilette outside of Paris. Teabing is also the shadowy character in the novel called "The Teacher."

## Questions for Discussion

1. From the beginning, *The Da Vinci Code* attempts to shed "new light" onto aspects of our history. Which "historical" elements were intriguing to you? Where did you have the most difficulty separating fact from fiction? (Opus Dei, The Priory of Sion, Leonardo Da Vinci, Constantine and the Council of Nicaea, The Holy Grail, The Knights Templar, Mary Magdalene, the Gnostic Gospels, etc.)
2. What is the traditional understanding of The Holy Grail? What is the nontraditional idea proposed by *The Da Vinci Code*?
3. The novel suggests that this new knowledge of the Grail and its contents would utterly change the world and Christianity? Do you agree with this? If so, what aspects of such a find would have been earthshaking?
4. In their search for the Grail, Langdon, Sophie, and Teabing discuss frequently the question of whether the true contents of the Grail should ever be made public. Had you been in their shoes, what would have been your perspective?
5. From your perspective, are there ever times when elements of history should be kept secret from the public at large? If so, do any specific instances/events come to your mind?
6. Brown suggests in this novel that Christianity has suppressed the role of women throughout the centuries. Do you agree or disagree with this suggestion?
7. Were you aware that other ancient texts existed that claimed to be gospels recounting the life and works of Jesus? How does it make you feel to know that such texts exist and yet are not a part of our Bible?
8. Throughout the book, lots of puzzles and riddles are solved. Were you able to solve any of them before the main characters did? If so, which ones?
9. Another primary aspect of this novel is the way that many of the main characters were ultimately not who we thought they were. Which characters fit this description? How do you think this element of the book relates to our faith?
10. On at least two occasions in *The Da Vinci Code*, the statement is made that "history is written by the winners." Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?
11. To date, at least ten books have been written as Christian responses to *The Da Vinci Code*. Do you see a value in these books? Having read this work, do you see it as a threat to modern Christianity? Is there any way that it can be an asset?
1. From your perspective, what is the ultimate lesson/value of this novel?

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## 4. RESOURCE HANDOUTS

## The Formation of the New Testament Canon

1st Century	Jesus' Teachings	c. AD 27–30
	Oral Tradition	c. AD 30–50
	Paul's Letters	c. AD 50–68
	Mark, "Q," Matthew, Luke	c. AD 60s–80s
	John	c. AD 90–100
2nd Century	Heresies	AD 100–200
	• Marcion	
	• Gnostics	
	• Montanus	
	• Tatian	
	Apologists	
	• Justin Martyr	
	• Irenaeus	
	Writings	
	• Muratorian Canon	
• Didache		
3rd Century	Tertulian, Origin	AD 200–300
4th Century	Diocletian's PersecutionI	AD 300–400
	Constantine Legalizes Christianity	AD 313
	Council of Nicea	AD 325
	Athanasius	AD 367
	Councils in Carthage	AD 393, 397

## **Criteria for Being Considered as Canonical (Authentic Scripture)**

- Apostolic Roots
- Widespread Use (Catholicity)
- Consistency with Jesus' Teachings
- Edified the Church (Eph. 6:4)
- Other Factors
  - Competing Views of the Faith
  - Persecution

The ultimate irony: the Gnostic gospels that supposedly emphasize the humanity of Jesus actually embellish his divinity.

## **New Testament Apocrypha: The Nag Hamada Library**

The Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles  
[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/actp.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/actp.html)

Allogenes  
[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/allogene.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/allogene.html)

The Apocalypse of Adam  
[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/adam.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/adam.html)

The (First) Apocalypse of James  
[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/1ja.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/1ja.html)

The (Second) Apocalypse of James  
[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/2ja.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/2ja.html)

The Apocalypse of Paul  
[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/ascp.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/ascp.html)

The Apocalypse of Peter  
[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/apopet.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/apopet.html)

The Apocryphon of James  
[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/jam.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/jam.html)

The Apocryphon of John  
[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/apocjn.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/apocjn.html)

Asclepius 21–29  
[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/asclep.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/asclep.html)

Authoritative Teaching  
[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/autho.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/autho.html)

The Book of Thomas the Contender  
[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/bookt.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/bookt.html)

The Concept of Our Great Power  
[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/cgp.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/cgp.html)

The Dialogue of the Savior  
[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/dialog.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/dialog.html)

The Discourse on the Eighth and Ninth  
[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/discorse.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/discorse.html)

Eugnostos the Blessed  
[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/eugn.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/eugn.html)

The Exegesis on the Soul  
[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/exe.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/exe.html)

The Gospel of the Egyptians  
[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/gosegypt.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/gosegypt.html)

The Gospel of Philip  
[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/gop.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/gop.html)

The Gospel of Thomas  
[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/gosthom.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/gosthom.html)

The Gospel of Truth  
[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/got.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/got.html)

The Hypostasis of the Archons  
[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/hypostas.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/hypostas.html)

Hypsiphron  
[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/hyphis.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/hyphis.html)

The Interpretation of Knowledge  
[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/intpr.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/intpr.html)

The Letter of Peter to Philip  
[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/letpet.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/letpet.html)

Marsanes  
[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/marsanes.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/marsanes.html)

Melchizedek  
[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/melchiz.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/melchiz.html)

On the Anointing  
[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/anoi.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/anoi.html)

On the Baptism A  
[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/bapta.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/bapta.html)

On the Baptism B  
[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/baptb.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/baptb.html)

On the Eucharist A  
[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/eucha.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/eucha.html)

On the Eucharist B  
[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/euchb.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/euchb.html)

On the Origin of the World  
[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/origin.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/origin.html)

The Paraphrase of Shem

Plato, Republic 588A–589B  
[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/plato.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/plato.html)

The Prayer of the Apostle Paul  
[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/prayp.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/prayp.html)

The Prayer of Thanksgiving  
[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/prat.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/prat.html)

The Second Treatise of the Great Seth  
[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/2seth.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/2seth.html)

The Sentences of Sextus  
[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/sent.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/sent.html)

The Sophia of Jesus Christ  
[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/sjc.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/sjc.html)

The Teachings of Silvanus  
[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/silvanus.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/silvanus.html)

The Testimony of Truth  
[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/testruth.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/testruth.html)

The Thought of Norea  
[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/nore.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/nore.html)

The Three Steles of Seth  
[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/steles.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/steles.html)

The Thunder, Perfect Mind  
[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/thunder.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/thunder.html)

The Treatise on the Resurrection  
[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/res.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/res.html)

Trimorphic Protennoia

[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/trimorph.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/trimorph.html)

The Tripartite Tractate

[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/tripart.htm](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/tripart.htm)

A Valentinian Exposition

[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/valex.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/valex.html)

Zostrianos

[www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/zostr.html](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/naghamm/zostr.html)

## **The Apostles' 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 Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on 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 Ghost; the holy catholic (universal) Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting.  
AMEN.

## **The Nicene Creed**

We believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father by whom all things were made; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made man, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried, and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father. And he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead, whose kingdom shall have no end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And we believe one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. And we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. AMEN.

## **Key Scriptures Regarding the Divinity of Jesus**

- John 7:46
- 1 Corinthians 8:5–6
- Philippians 2:9–11
- Colossians 2:9
- Matthew 16:15–17
- John 1:1–3, 14

## 5. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY

### **ART Web Links**

*The Last Supper*

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Last\\_Supper\\_%28Leonardo%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Last_Supper_%28Leonardo%29)

*Vitruvian Man*

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Vitruvian.jpg>

*Mona Lisa*

[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:Leonardo\\_da\\_Vinci\\_042.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:Leonardo_da_Vinci_042.jpg)

Dan Brown's Exhibition of DaVinci Art in *The DaVinci Code*

[http://www.danbrown.com/secrets/davinci\\_code/davinci\\_art.html](http://www.danbrown.com/secrets/davinci_code/davinci_art.html)

### **Audio Resources Available Through CBF**

*The DaVinci Code Part I and II* by Dr. William Hull, taped live at 2004 General Assembly in Birmingham, AL (available in audiotape and cd at

<http://www.thefellowship.info/TheCBFStore/cbfstore.icm>

Type in search "The DaVinci Code."

### **Bibliography and Videography (Abbreviated)**

Bock, Darrell. *Breaking The DaVinci Code*

Kellmeyer, Steve. *Fact and Fiction in the DaVinci Code*

Lutzer, Erwin. *The DaVinci Deception*

*The DaVinci Deception—Fact vs. Fiction: Your Guide to the Truth*

*Jesus, Mary, and DaVinci*—a video from ABC News

### **Web Links and Articles**

[www.christianitytoday.com](http://www.christianitytoday.com) (key word: The DaVinci Code, especially

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/history/special/davincicode.html>)

[www.BreakingTheDaVinciCode.com](http://www.BreakingTheDaVinciCode.com)

[www.JimGarlow.com](http://www.JimGarlow.com)

[www.danbrown.com](http://www.danbrown.com)

[www.ThomasNelson.com/BreakingtheDaVinciCode.com](http://www.ThomasNelson.com/BreakingtheDaVinciCode.com)

[www.ChristianBookguides.com/DaVinciDeception](http://www.ChristianBookguides.com/DaVinciDeception)

[www.opusdei.com](http://www.opusdei.com)