

THE DA VINCI CODE



Constantine, the Council of Nicaea and the Bible

Historian Leigh Teabing:

“What I mean is that almost everything our fathers taught us about Christ is false, as are the stories about the Holy Grail.” [235]

“At this gathering [Council of Nicaea in 325] many aspects of Christianity were debated and voted upon—the date of Easter, the role of the bishops, the administration of sacraments, and, of course, the *divinity* of Jesus.”

Sophie: “I don’t follow. His divinity?”

Teabing: “My dear, until *that* moment in history, Jesus was viewed by his followers as a mortal prophet . . . A great and powerful man. But a man nonetheless. A mortal”

Sophie: “Not the Son of God?”

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

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

Teabing: “A relatively close vote at that . . .” [233]

The Early Church Reply

Ignatius of Antioch: “God himself was manifested in human form.” (105 AD)



Justin Martyr: “The Father of the universe has a Son. And He . . . is even God.” (160 AD)

Irenaeus: “He is God for the name Emmanuel indicates this.” (180 AD)

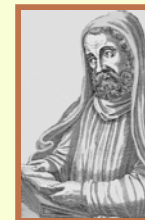


Tertullian: “Christ our God.” (200 AD)



Origen: “No one should be offended that the Savior is also God. . .” (225 AD)

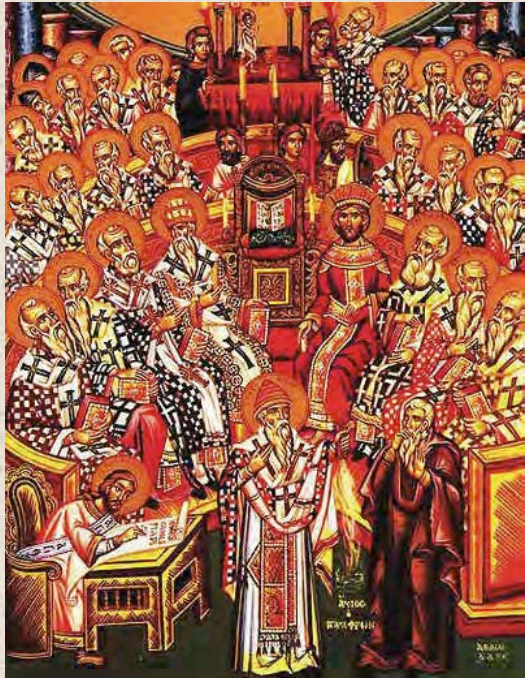
Cyprian: “Jesus Christ, our Lord and God.” (304 AD)



Lactantius: “We believe Him to be God: (304 AD) [Tutor to Emperor Constantine’s son]

Early Church Councils

Councils held to determine important doctrinal matters were not uncommon to the early Christians (Acts 15.) Councils were important in order to maintain an orthodox faith and prevent the spread of false doctrine.



- Arius taught that Jesus was a created being
- Bishop Alexander of Alexandria declared Arius a heretic in 321
- To settle the matter once and for all Constantine called a Council in 325 in the town of Nicaea.
- Over 300 hundred bishops participated. Many had suffered during the Great Persecution which ended only fourteen years previously.
- Only two bishops voted in favor of Arius' position

Left: Council of Nicaea. The Gospels are enthroned in the center and Constantine sits to one side.

The Nicene Creed That Resulted from the Council States:

“And in one Lord Jesus Christ, and the only begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father . . .”

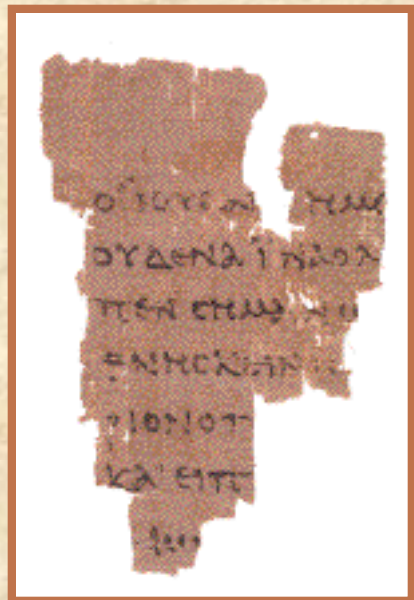
More from the Book

“The twist is this,” Teabing said, talking faster now. “Because Constantine upgraded Jesus’ status almost four centuries *after* Jesus’ death, thousands of documents already existed chronicling his life as a *mortal* man. To rewrite the history books, Constantine knew he would need a bold stroke. From this sprang the most profound moment in Christian history.” Teabing paused. Eyeing Sophie. “Constantine commissioned and financed a new Bible, which omitted those Gospels that spoke of Christ’s *human* traits and embellished those gospels that made Him godlike. The earlier gospels were outlawed, gathered up, and burned.” (234)

“Understandably, His life was recorded by thousands of followers across the land.” Teabing paused to sip his tea and then placed the cup back on the mantel. “More than *eighty* gospels were considered for the new Testament, and yet only a relatively few were chosen for inclusion—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John among them.” (231)

“Fortunately for historians,” Teabing said, “some of the gospels that Constantine attempted to eradicate managed to survive. The Dead Sea Scrolls were found in the 1950s hidden in a cave near Qumran in the Judean desert. And of course, the Coptic Scrolls in 1945 at Nag Hammadi. In addition to telling the true Grail story, these documents speak of Christ’s ministry in very human terms.” (234)

Early Church Reply



Above: Earliest known fragment of the Gospel of John c.120-130 BC., John Rylands Library, Manchester, England

2 Peter 3:16 refers to Paul's epistles as "the other scriptures."

Irenaeus: "So firm is the ground upon which these Gospels rest, that the very heretics themselves bear witness to them. . . (170 AD)

Ebionites used Matthew

Marcion used Luke and Mark

Valentinus used John

Irenaeus: "It is not possible that the Gospels can be either more or fewer in number than they are. For, since there are four zones of the world in which we live, and four principal winds, while the Church is scattered throughout all the world . . . It is fitting that she should have four pillars."

The Muratorian Canon (late 2nd cent.) Twenty-three of twenty-seven N. T. books accepted as canon, including the four gospels.

Origen: "Nevertheless, among all these we have approved solely what the church has recognized, which is that only the four gospels should be accepted." (200 AD)

The Holy Grail



Mary Magdalene by
Albrecht Durer

From *The DaVinci Code*:

“Langdon looked directly at her now. “Sophie, legend tells us that the Holy Grail is a chalice—a cup. But the Grail’s description as a *chalice* is actually an allegory to protect the true nature of the Holy Grail. That is to say, the legend uses the chalice as a metaphor for something far more important.”

“A woman,” Sophie said.

“Exactly.” Langdon smiled. “The Grail is literally the ancient symbol for womanhood, and the *Holy Grail* represents the sacred feminine and the goddess, which of course has now been lost, virtually eliminated by the Church. The power of the female and her ability to produce life was once very sacred, but it posed a threat to the rise of the predominantly male Church, and so the sacred feminine was demonized and called unclean. It was *man*, not God, who created the concept of ‘original sin,’ whereby Eve tasted of the apple and caused the downfall of the human race. Woman, once the sacred giver of life, was now the enemy.” (238)

The Holy Grail, cont.

From *The DaVinci Code*:

Teabring spoke more quietly now. “The quest for the Holy Grail is literally the quest to kneel before the bones of Mary Magdalene. A journey to pray at the feet of the outcast one, the lost sacred feminine.” (257)

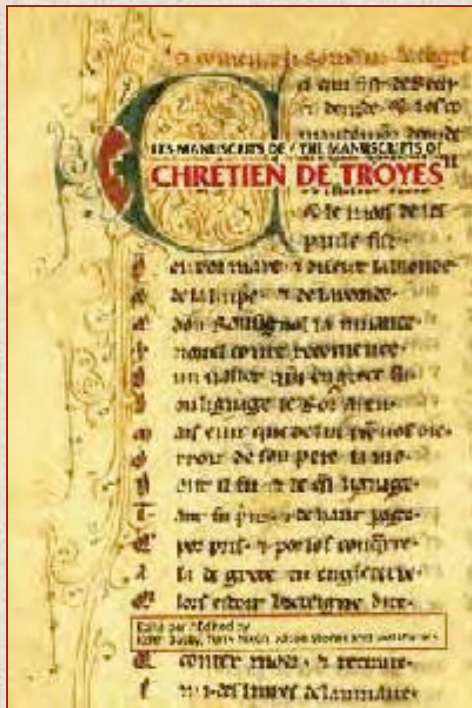


History of the Holy Grail

1. The Holy Grail became a part of popular romance fiction between 1190 and 1240.
2. Grail means dish or cup.
3. Perceval by Chretien de Troyes.
4. The Grail becomes sacred in later retellings
 - a. Joseph of Arimathea—blood of Jesus
 - b. Miraculous powers
 - c. Guarded by the Templeisen
5. Holy Grail stories fall into oblivion after the Renaissance only to be recovered from obscurity by the Romantic Movement in the 19th century (especially by Thomas Mallory.)
6. *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* (1982) by Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh and Henry Lincoln
 - a. “Sang Real” or “blood royal”—mistaken fifteenth century etymology of the Grail.
 - b. Bloodline theory collapses.

Brown has turned a story steeped in Christian lore and symbolism into a story that is anti-Christian.

The Sangreal Legend



The story of the *Sangreal* [Middle French: Saint Graal] or Holy Grail, although based on Celtic sources (Peredur,) was first written by the French poet Chretien de Troyes (d. ca.1165,) who added it to the Arthurian legend. He made Percival, a Welshman, the hero, but later Percival was replaced by Sir Galahad in later versions.

Thomas Mallory continued the story in his *Mort d'Arthur*, and Alfred Lord Tennyson in a long poem tells of Galahad's vision of three angels with the Grail.

The legend appeared in operatic form when Wagner wrote both the libretto and the music for *Parsifal*.



“Three angels bear the
holy Grail:
With folded feet, in stoles
of white,
On sleeping wings they sail.
Ah, blessed vision! blood
of God!”

Alfred Lord Tennyson

A Few Grails

Right: **The Great Chalice of Antioch**, believed at one time to be the Holy Grail, was discovered in Syria in 1910. Its elaborately worked covering deemed typical of first century work. It is now in the Cloisters Museum of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which now claims it more closely resembles a 6th century lampstand. The small interior cup is silver; the covering is silver-gilt.



Left: The **“Santo Caliz,”** a much traveled cup of red agate sits on an ornate stand made of gold and an inverted bowl of chalcedony. The cup is in a special chapel of the Cathedral in Valencia, Spain. Pope John Paul II thought it was the real thing and granted indulgences to pilgrims who make the trip to Spain to venerate it.

Right: From the many presumed “Grails” he sees in the hidden cave, **Indiana Jones** correctly picks the smallest, plainest cup to hold the water that heals his dying father.



The Templars

From *The Da Vinci Code*:

“The Priory of Sion,” Langdon began, “was founded in Jerusalem in 1099 by a French king named Godefroi de Bouillon, immediately after he had conquered the city.”

Sophie nodded, her eyes riveted on him.

“King Godefroi was allegedly the possessor of a powerful secret—a secret that had been in his family since the time of Christ. Fearing his secret might be lost when he died, he founded a secret brotherhood—the Priory of Sion—and charged them with protecting his secret by quietly passing it on from generation to generation. During their years in Jerusalem, the Priory learned of a stash of hidden documents buried beneath the ruins of Herod’s Temple. These documents, they believed, corroborated Godefroi’s powerful secret and were so explosive in nature that the Church would stop at nothing to get them.”

Sophie looked uncertain.

“....In order to retrieve the documents from within the ruins, the Priory created a military arm—a group of nine knights called the Order of the Poor Knights of Christ and the Temple of Solomon.” Langdon paused. “More commonly known as the Knights Templar.” (157-158)

and the Priory of Sion



Above: A Knight Templar.

Far Right: Seal of the Templars. Today, you can buy a reproduction of the seal to put on your keychain.

The Knights Templar (“The Poor Knights of Christ and of the Temple of Solomon,”) formed one of two chief military orders of medieval times. The Templars began in 1118 as eight knights under Hugh de Payens of Champagne. They bound themselves by solemn vow to protect pilgrims from bandits on the public roads of the Holy Land. They were given quarters at the site of Solomon’s Temple. Originally dependent solely upon alms, it was not long before they acquired great wealth. Philip IV (the Fair) of France coveted the wealthy of the Templars, executed their Grand Master and hastened their suppression.



Above: The Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem, on the site of the Temple of Herod. Supposedly, the site was guarded by the Templars.



The Priory of Sion

The Priory of Sion was an association founded in May of 1956, in the French town of Annemasse chiefly by Pierre Plantard (1920-2000,) a French con artist who created an imaginary “history” of the Priory of Sion, on which part of the DaVinci Code book is based. The Association was dissolved sometime after October, 1956, but intermittently revived by Plantard who was imprisoned three times for various offenses.



The Last Supper

From *The Da Vinci Code*:

“Hold on,” Sophie said. “You told me the Holy Grail is a *woman*. *The Last Supper* is a painting of thirteen men.”

“Is it?” Teabing arched his eyebrows. “Take a closer look.”

Uncertain, Sophie made her way closer to the painting, scanning the thirteen figures—Jesus Christ in the middle, six disciples on His left, and six on His right. “They’re all men,” she confirmed.

“Oh?” Teabing said. “How about the one seated in the place of honor, at the right hand of the Lord?”

Sophie examined the figure to Jesus’ immediate right, focusing in. As she studied the person’s face and body, a wave of astonishment rose within her. The individual had flowing red hair, delicate folded hands, and the hint of a bosom. It was, without a doubt ... female.

“That’s a woman!” Sophie exclaimed. (243)



Leonardo Da Vinci



Leonardo Da Vinci (1452-1519,) was born in Anchiano, Italy, about 3 km. from Vinci. He was a painter (oil and tempera); the picture at the left is a charcoal self-portrait. His most famous works are the fresco, *The Last Supper*, and the portrait we know as *The Mona Lisa*. Although an accomplished sculptor, he considered it dirty work. He was curious and inventive, devising prototypes for many modern inventions, such as the submarine. He also developed war machines for the government. Fanciful ideas have grown up around some of his works and Da Vinci would probably be both amused and appalled by the hidden meanings presented in the book, *The Da Vinci Code*.

Da Vinci's "Last Supper" fresco on the wall of the refectory of Santa Maria del Grazie, Milan, Italy.
Below: Before restoration. Right: After much criticized 1999 restoration.



Where the book ends . . .

Rosslyn Chapel, originally intended as the Collegiate Chapel of St. Matthew, was founded in 1446 by Sir William St Clair, third and last St Clair Prince of Orkney. It is only a portion of what was to have been a larger building. The chapel is in the village of Roslin not far from Edinburgh in Scotland. This is where the book's "hero" makes his world-shaking "discovery."



Left: The Prince's Pillar, later known as The Apprentice's Pillar. Is the Grail hidden inside this pillar? Lots of gullible people who visit Rosslyn Chapel sincerely believe that it is truly there!



Rosslyn Chapel is an active Anglican church holding regular services.

A new visitor's center opened at the Chapel in 1998. It includes a museum featuring a display of Templar, Church Guild, Masonic, Rosicrucian, Celtic and Gypsy artifacts. An interesting mix for a Christian church.