

## The Da Vinci Code: The book, the movie and the deception

*A review and response to some of the novel's most serious claims against the Bible, Christianity, and church history.*

### *The Da Vinci Code - What is it?*

*The Da Vinci Code* is a best-selling novel, a work of fiction, by author Dan Brown, that was first published in March 2003. A movie version was released in May 2006. By that time, the novel had sold more than 40 million copies worldwide, and had been on the New York Times best-seller list for more than two years.

*The Da Vinci Code* is a mystery story that threads together a mix of religion, history, mythology, symbology and cryptography, into a global conspiracy, pitting the Catholic Church against a list of secret organizations, in a storyline in which Christianity is represented as a false religion. Among other things, the novel claims:

- That Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene and had a child.
- That Magdalene and child moved to France and established a bloodline of kings.
- That Constantine created a radically new Christianity during the 4th century.
- That the Vatican became wealthy and powerful by hawking Constantine's new religion.
- That the Vatican conspires to destroy all guardians and evidence of "true" Christianity, including Jesus' descendants, the Priory of Sion, the so-called "sacred feminine," and the Knights Templar.

### *It's just a novel, so why do we care?*

- Because people often believe that there is some truth to the fictional novel.
- Because Christianity is a message of truth, that Jesus is salvation, and we have been entrusted with that truth, to evangelize to others. Any misinformation that affects that message needs to be clarified.
- Because the novel is partly based on books that are claiming to be historical fact.
- Because the novel itself blurs the line between fact and fiction by claiming that "*All descriptions of artwork, architecture, documents, and secret rituals in this novel are accurate.*"

With this in mind, let's take a look at the major claims presented by the novel. Our goal is not to bash the novel or its author, but to respond to the false information that it has helped to spread in regards to Christianity, the New Testament, Jesus, and church history:

## 1. Fiction: Jesus and Mary Magdalene were married and had a child

*"I shan't bore you with the countless references to Jesus and Magdalene's union." "... the marriage of Jesus and Mary Magdalene is part of the historical record." - Da Vinci Code, pages 247 and 245, respectively, of the (English) hardback edition.*

Perhaps the most controversial element of the *Da Vinci Code* is the fictional scenario in which Jesus is married to Mary Magdalene and has a daughter, whose descendants are now living in France.

To support the claims that there are "countless records" alluding to a marriage involving Jesus, and that the marriage was a matter of "historical record," the novel generically refers to the so-called Gnostic Gospels and specifically to the so-called Gospel of Philip.

But none of these writings mention any marriage or engagement involving Jesus.

Jesus lived during the first century of this era, about 2000 years ago. The oldest writings that refer to Jesus include:

- The New Testament of the Bible, which contains the life and teachings of Jesus.
- The writings of historians who were born during the first century, including Josephus, Tacitus, Suetonius and Pliny the Younger.
- The Talmud, a collection of ancient Rabbinical writings.
- Various letters, including the "First Epistle from St. Clement," which was written around 96 AD.

The authors of these documents ranged from believers who were willing to die for their faith in Jesus, to non-believers who were antagonistic and derogatory in their portrayal of Jesus. But none say anything about Jesus to alter the common view that he was unmarried and celibate.

## 2. Fiction: During the time of Jesus, men were required by law to be married

*Jesus as a married man makes infinitely more sense than our standard biblical view of Jesus as a bachelor. . . . Because Jesus was a Jew," Langdon said, taking over while Teabing searched for his book, "and the social decorum during that time virtually forbid a Jewish man to be unmarried.*

*According to Jewish custom, celibacy was condemned, and the obligation for a Jewish father was to find a suitable wife for his son. If Jesus were not married, at least one of the Bible's gospels would have mentioned it and offered some explanation for His unnatural state of bachelorhood.* - Da Vinci Code, page 245 of (English) hardback edition.

Despite the claim, some of ancient Israel's most pious men were celibate, and Jewish law allowed for exemptions and delays to marriage.

The prophet Jeremiah, for example, was called upon by God not to take a wife or have children: *Then the word of the LORD came to me: "You must not marry and have sons or daughters in this place."* (*Jeremiah 16:1-2 NIV*). Jeremiah lived about 600 years before the time of Jesus.

There is also a Jewish tradition that Moses was celibate during the 40 years in which the Israelites wandered in the desert. This is based on a passage in the Talmud (Shabbat 87a), and from a passage in the Bible itself, in Deuteronomy 5:27-28.

Paul, the evangelist, speaks of the wisdom of celibacy for some people, and marriage for others, in 1 Corinthians 7.

### **3. Fiction: A Gnostic writing, called the "Gospel of Philip" alludes to an intimate relationship between Jesus and Mary Magdalene**

*And the companion of the Saviour 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?"* - the Gnostic text of "Philip," as translated in the Da Vinci Code, page 246 of the (English) hardback edition.

The *Philip* text is a non-Christian document that was among the Gnostic writings discovered in 1945 at Nag Hammadi, in Egypt. Some scholars, including one who led the effort to translate the *Philip* text into English, believe that it was written about 100 to 200 years after the time of Jesus. The author of the *Philip* text is unknown.

Many of the Gnostic writings from that era borrowed concepts and names from the New Testament. In the *Philip* text, there is a Gnostic version of Jesus and Mary Magdalene who are described as having a relationship that was different than the relationship that he shared with his other disciples.

Despite the novel's translation of that key passage from the *Philip* text, the word "mouth" doesn't actually appear in the original document. According to page 49 of *The Da Vinci Deception*, by Erwin W. Lutzer:

*"You should know that because of the poor quality of the papyrus, a word or two is missing in the original. The text reads, 'Jesus kissed her often on the [blank].' So scholars fill in the blank with the word mouth, face, or forehead, etc. Actually, for all we know the text might have said 'the hand' or even 'the cheek' since the statement implies that he also kissed his other students – presumably on the cheek as is still done in the Middle East."*

The novel also claims that the Aramaic word for "companion" literally meant "spouse." However debatable this claim may be, it is worth noting that the *Philip* text found at Nag Hammadi was written in Coptic.

It is also worth noting that the *Philip* text actually speaks out against marriage:

*"Ironically, if this text does anything, it cuts out the very heart of any assertion about Mary and Jesus being wed. It does so by adhering to one of the basic tenets of ancient Gnosticism, which declares that all physical matter was inherently evil. Consequently, sexual relations were intrinsically debasing! The Gospel of Phillip goes so far as to say that marital relations defile a woman."* - The Truth Behind The Da Vinci Code, by Richard Abanes, page 41.

In any case, the *Philip* text fails to mention any marriage involving its Gnostic version of Jesus. In fact, none of the Gnostic texts ever claimed that their versions of Jesus and Mary Magdalene were married. Even the so-called Gnostic *gospel of Mary Magdalene* fails to make such a claim.

#### **4. Fiction: The Gnostic gospels and the Dead Sea Scrolls are "the earliest Christian records."**

*"These are photocopies of the Nag Hammadi and Dead Sea scrolls, which I mentioned earlier," Teabing said. "The earliest Christian records. Troublingly, they do not match up with the gospels in the Bible." Flipping to the middle of the book, Teabing pointed to a passage. "The Gospel of Philip is always a good place to start."* - Da Vinci Code, page 245-6 of the (English) hardback edition.

The *Da Vinci Code* claims that the New Testament is a forgery and that the Gnostic gospels and the Dead Sea Scrolls are the original Christian texts.

The Dead Sea Scrolls refer to a collection of about 900 documents, many of which are fragmentary scrolls written in Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic, that were discovered between 1947 and 1956 in caves near an ancient settlement called Qumran, which is on the shore of the Dead Sea, near Jerusalem, in the land of Israel.

The documents include some of the oldest known copies of portions of the Old Testament, as well as several writings from a religious group called the Essenes, which existed in Israel sometime

between 200 BC to about 100 AD, which is about 2200 years ago to about 1900 years ago.

Many scholars have attempted to show that there is a connection between the scrolls and Christianity, with an implication that instead of being the word of God, the New Testament supposedly grew out of the writings of the Essenes.

However, the Dead Sea Scrolls do not contain even a single mention of Jesus or of any other person mentioned in the New Testament, according to several sources. To provide an example, the Israel Museum web site says:

*None of the scrolls contain any explicit mention of Jesus or any other New Testament personality.*  
- from an Israel Museum web page about the Dead Sea Scrolls, which can be found here: <http://www.imj.org.il/eng/shrine/faq.html>

Another example:

*The relevance of the Dead Sea Scrolls for better understanding Jesus and the Gospels is a controversial topic. In this chapter, we have emphasized that there is no direct relationship between Jesus and the scrolls, and none of these ancient documents was written by or for Christians as far as we know. Attempts have been made to find direct connections, but in many cases these are speculative, sensational, or bizarre (e.g., John Allegro and the sacred mushroom, Barbara Thiering's peshar technique, and the scrolls and the New Age Jesus).* - "The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their Significance For Understanding the Bible, Judaism, Jesus, and Christianity," by James VanderKam and Peter Flint (Hardcover - Dec 1, 2002).

As for the claims related to the Gnostic writings, a little background might be useful. The Gnostic writings, especially the examples from the third, fourth and fifth centuries, often borrow names and concepts from the New Testament. In 1945, there was a discovery of several Gnostic writings buried in the town of Nag Hammadi, in Egypt. Some of the documents are called *The Gospel of Philip* and the *Gospel of Mary Magdalene*. No one knows who specifically wrote the documents. They were not written by Christians but by Gnostics who were emulating Christianity.

As for the novel's claim that these documents pre-date the New Testament, there is a great deal of evidence to show that the opposite is true. In fact, some of that evidence can be found within the Gnostic texts themselves. To find examples of this, *The Gospel of Philip* is always a good place to start:

*Those who say that the Lord died first and (then) rose up are in error, for he rose up first and (then) died. If one does not first attain the resurrection, he will not die.* - "The Gospel of Philip," from the Gnostic texts found at Nag Hammadi. [In contrast, the New Testament, which was written more than a century earlier, maintains that Jesus died and was resurrected, and that this is

the foundation of Christianity.]

*Some said, "Mary conceived by the Holy Spirit." They are in error. They do not know what they are saying.* - "The Gospel of Philip," a Gnostic text found at Nag Hammadi. [One New Testament source for the Christian belief that Mary did conceive by the Holy Spirit can be found in the book of Matthew.]

In the two examples above, we have evidence - not proof, but evidence - that the Gnostic texts were written after the New Testament, because they appear to respond directly to the teachings of the New Testament.

Various scholars have characterized the Gnostic-related claims of the *Da Vinci Code* as careless and misleading, including James Robinson, a professor of Religion Emeritus, Claremont Graduate University, and general editor of the Nag Hammadi Library. Robinson is quoted as saying, in regards to the *Da Vinci Code* and its references to the Gnostic texts, that:

*The book has a sensationalist kind of success, which worries scholars such as myself who are trying to stick to the facts. I think there is a certain built-in problem of this book being a novel, and therefore saying it's fiction but, at the same time, using enough facts, well-known names and things like the Nag Hammadi discovery to give it a semblance of factual accuracy. It is hard for the lay public to distinguish where one begins and the other leaves off. So, strictly from that point of view, it's very misleading.* - "Secrets of the Code," page 97, by Dan Burstein. (The "Secrets of the Code" is not a "pro-Christian" book. It is often antagonistic and inaccurate in its portrayal of Christianity).

Robinson might be best known for supervising the team of scholars who translated the Nag Hammadi texts.

There are major differences between the New Testament Gospels and the so-called Gnostic gospels. The New Testament Gospels contain details about life in the land of Israel during the first century. They also contain several references to Old Testament passages, prophecies and theological concepts. For Christians, the New Testament is the continuation of the Old Testament - the fulfillment of promises made in the Old Testament.

In contrast, the Gnostic texts contain very little detail to suggest that their authors had ever been to the land of Israel, or that they were even alive during the first century. And the theological concepts of the Gnostic texts sharply contradict those that are found in the Old Testament.

Consider this from pages 26 and 27 of the *Truth Behind the Da Vinci Code*, by Richard Abanes:

*"But were the Gnostic gospels written prior to the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John? Most scholars, Christian and non-Christian, would answer no. They date the Gnostic gospels (for*

*example, those in the Nag Hammadi collection) to about A.D. 150 to 250. Although many of these texts are Coptic translation of earlier Greek texts (that are no longer extant), most scholars agree that the material itself still does not date previous to the mid 100s to the early 200s.*

*They [the Gnostic texts] were late arrivals, which is one reason why church leaders rejected them. ... These Gnostic gospels not only disagreed with the older [New Testament] Gospels, which were already accepted by Christians, but they lacked authority since their authors were neither a) apostles of Jesus nor b) persons associated with apostles of Jesus. ... No one really knows who wrote the [Gnostic] texts."*

In contrast, Abanes says the New Testament Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were written during the first century, which is the century during which Jesus lived.

## **5. Fiction: Christianity stole ideas and concepts from Mithraism and other forms of paganism.**

The *Da Vinci Code*, on page 232 (of an early hardcover edition), claims: "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. By the way, December 25 was also the birthday of Osiris, Adonis, and Dionysus. The newborn Krishna was presented with gold, frankincense, and myrrh."

It is easy to make claims like those stated above, but try finding evidence to support them. For example, try finding ancient documents that provide any kind of details involving a birth date for Osiris, Adonis, or Dionysus.

In regards to the claims involving Mithraism and Christianity, consider the following from page 87 of *de-coding Da Vinci: The facts behind the fiction of The Da Vinci Code*, by Amy Welborn:

"Mithras was a god with many forms. By the centuries after Christ, his cult was primarily a mystery religion, popular among men, especially soldiers. Mithraic studies do not find any attribution of the titles 'Son of God' or 'Light of the World,' as Brown claims. There is also no mention of a death-resurrection motif in Mithraic mythology. Brown seems to have picked this up from a discredited nineteenth-century historian, who provided no documentation for his assertion. The same historian is the source for the Krishna connection to which Brown alludes. There is not a single story in actual Hindu mythology of Krishna being presented with gold, frankincense, and myrrh at his birth (see Miesel and Olsen, *Cracking the Anti-Catholic Code*)."

As for the matter of December 25th, it is true that many Christians choose that time of year to commemorate the birth of Jesus. But that doesn't mean that they believe that Jesus was actually

born on Dec. 25. The fact is, the Bible does not specify a birth date for Jesus.

There are many contradictory theories about the origins of the celebration of Christmas, but it is important to understand that none have any bearing on the Christian Bible, Christian beliefs, or Christian theology. For Christians, Dec. 25th is matter of tradition, not theology.

By way of comparison, consider the changes in the December celebration of Hanukkah in North America. It has become increasingly like the celebration of Christmas, involving sugary foods, wrapped gifts, and decorated trees. But no one accuses Judaism of "stealing" from Christianity. And rightfully so, because sugary foods, wrapped gifts and decorated trees, regardless of their origin, are matters of tradition, not theology.

## 6. Fiction: The sacred name for God has a paganistic origin.

*"The Jewish Tetragrammaton YHWH - the sacred name of God - in fact derived from Jehovah, an androgynous physical union between the masculine Jah and the pre-Hebraic name for Eve, Havah." - The "Da Vinci Code," page 309 of the hardcover edition.*

This is one of the more embarrassing errors within the *Da Vinci Code*. The word "Jehovah" is an English language convention that combines a Hebrew name for God, for which the consonants are YHWH, with the vowel sounds from another Hebrew word, which is pronounced "Adonai," meaning "Lord."

The fact is, the word "Jehovah" does not exist in the Hebrew language. It is the combination of two words, and it is pronounced in English with a "J" sound, which does not exist in Hebrew. Also, the English word "Jehovah" has three syllables whereas the Hebrew word YHWH has two.

The tradition of melding the consonants of YHWH with the vowel sounds of "Adonai" began long ago because Rabbis believed that it was not respectful to say out loud this particular name for God. For comparison, this is similar to the secular tradition of addressing a king as "Lord," or "your royal highness," rather than addressing him by name.

The derivation of YHWH, according to at least some Hebrew scholars, involves the past, present, and future tenses of the verb "to be." It alludes to God's eternal nature.

Brown, however, isn't the first person to mistakenly think that "Jehovah" was an actual Hebrew word. And given the popularity of his novel, he won't be the last.

## 7. Fiction: The Vatican killed an "astounding 5 million women" during the witch hunts



In order for the storyline of the *Da Vinci Code* to work, the Catholic Church, which the novel alternately refers to as the "Vatican," must be portrayed as an evil and oppressive institution that hates and murders women.

To accomplish this goal, the novel cites the witch hunts of Europe, which mostly took place between the 1400s and the 1800s, as evidence of the Vatican's murderous contempt for women. But, the historical evidence contradicts this claim. In fact, some scholars characterize the witch hunts as a persecution pitting *women* against women, not the Vatican against women.

For example, Deborah Willis, in her book, "Malevolent Nurture," on page 30, writes:

*The "typical" witchcraft case began when an older woman had a falling out with a neighbor - often another woman, usually a younger one. The older woman tended to be poorer, and frequently the falling out occurred after she had gone to her neighbor with a request for food or some domestic item or for access to land, and the neighbor refused her request.*

Many scholars also dispute the claim that 5,000,000 women died during the witch hunts, often suggesting instead that the number is somewhere between 20,000 and 100,000, and that 20 percent to 25 percent of the victims were male, and that the trials were handled by local secular courts, and that the majority of witch hunts took place in non-Catholic countries.

## 8. Fiction: Emperor Constantine shaped the New Testament.

This is essential to the plot in *The Da Vinci Code* because it requires that the reader believe that Constantine replaced the "original" Gnostic writings with what we now call the New Testament. But, Constantine could not have had a hand in shaping the New Testament for two reasons: He wasn't born soon enough and he didn't live long enough.

Based on writings from early church leaders, including documents dated from the year 96 through the year 112, at least 24 of the 27 books that comprise the New Testament were already regarded by early Christians as being authoritative, a full 200 years before Constantine convened the Council of Nicea.

And, the Council of Nicea didn't canonize anything. The canonization process actually occurred a full 70 years later, on a different continent (Africa). And it should be understood that the process of canonization wasn't intended to "create" or "construct" a New Testament, but to reaffirm the books that for centuries had already been acknowledged as authoritative by Christians.

In addition, there were several writings by early church leaders, who lived long before Constantine was born, that quote, paraphrase and expound upon all or virtually all of the passages found in

the New Testament. In fact, some scholars say that one could reconstruct the New Testament from these early writings by church leaders. Here are a few examples:

*" . . . as I possessed all the existing works of the Fathers of the second and third centuries, I commenced to search, and up to this time I have found the entire New Testament, except eleven verses." - "Our Bible: How We Got It," Charles Leach, Chicago, Moody Press, 1898, pages 35-36.*

*"Indeed, so extensive are these citations that if all other sources for our knowledge of the text of the New Testament were destroyed, they would be sufficient alone for the reconstruction of practically the entire New Testament." - "The Text of the New Testament," Bruce Metzger, New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1969, page 86.*

The fundamental beliefs of Christianity, including its message that Jesus was fully man and fully God, that he is the Son of God, that he is divine, etc., are part of the historical record that pre-dates the time of Constantine, by centuries.

Also, the novel is incorrect in claiming that Constantine made Christianity the official religion of his empire. He didn't. Instead, he made it illegal for pagans within his realm to continue persecuting Christians.

## 9. Fiction: The Vatican demonized pagan worship.

*"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' pentacle became the sign of the devil." - The "Da Vinci Code," page 37.*

The novel distorts history at the expense of Christianity.

Historically, during the first three centuries of Christianity, it was the pagans who persecuted the Christians. By the time the fourth century had dawned, the persecutions began to subside, in part because of the growing numbers of Christians, and the shrinking number of pagans, and because of government policies to ban the persecutions of Christians. Large numbers of people abandoned paganism and converted to Christianity, long before the Vatican was established.

As for Brown's claim about the pentacle, even that contradicts historical evidence. The fact is, many Christians actually embraced the pentacle:

*The truth is, during the later medieval era (the 1100s to the 1500s), Christians used the pentagram and pentacle as a reminder of Christ's five wounds (hands, feet, side, back, head). They also used it as a symbol for "the five books of Moses" and "the five stones used by David*

*against Goliath.*" - "The Truth Behind the Da Vinci Code," page 32.

There is nothing about a symbol, such as the pentacle or pentagram, that is inherently good or evil. Its meaning depends on who is using it and for what purpose it is being used. Some school teachers will mark a student's homework assignment with a star (a pentacle) to show that the student did excellent work. In this context, there is nothing demonic about the pentacle, it simply represents "stellar" work.

But, when the founder of the Church of Satan needed a symbol for his religion during the 1960s, he chose the pentacle, which he turned upside down. A symbol is what one makes of it.

So who was the first to "demonize" the pentacle? According to some scholars, it was a French occultist who lived during the 1800s.

## **10. Fiction: Constantine and the Vatican demonized Mary Magdalene and sought to degrade women as part of a "power grab."**

These claims are very important to the novel's storyline. The historical evidence, however, strongly contradicts them. Mary Magdalene is held in special regard by the Catholic Church, in part because she was the first person to witness the resurrection of Jesus Christ. If the Catholic Church wanted to tarnish the image of Mary Magdalene, and if it was willing to rewrite scripture to do it, then why would it allow Mary Magdalene to be the first person to have witnessed the most important event in all of Christianity, which is the resurrection?

Another problem for Brown's theory is that the Vatican exalts Mary Magdalene – as a saint! In fact, several churches are named in honor of Mary Magdalene, who is also honored with an annual celebration by Catholics.

And if someone can still think that Brown's theory is somehow true, that the Vatican allegedly hates women, then consider its regard for another woman named Mary – the mother of Jesus. And when you're finished contemplating that, apologize to yourself if you even momentarily thought that the novel was on to something.

## **11. Fiction: "Christianity's weekly holy day was stolen from the pagans."**

*"Christianity's weekly holy day was stolen from the pagans. Christianity honored the Jewish Sabbath of Saturday, but Constantine shifted it to coincide with the pagan's veneration day of the sun."* - The "Da Vinci Code," pages 232-3 of the hardcover edition.

Actually, long before Constantine was even born, there were Christian writings that made it clear that there was a Sabbath, which corresponds to what English speakers, and others, refer to as Saturday, and a "Lord's Day," which corresponds to Sunday.

Since the early beginnings of Christianity, Christians had an affection for the first day of the week, which we English speakers refer to as Sunday, because this is the day on which Jesus was resurrected.

Early references to the "Lord's Day" include Acts 20:7 and 1 Corinthians 16:2, which are books in the New Testament. These were written during the first century and pre-date the birth of Constantine by more than 200 years.

Outside of the New Testament, there are early Christian writings that confirm that Christians celebrated a "Lord's Day" (Sunday). These writings include those by Justin Martyr and Melito of Sardis. Both lived during the second century (during the 100s), and both had already died long before Constantine was even born.

As a side note, there seems to be a general confusion about how Christians view the Sabbath. Christianity has always regarded the last day of the week (Saturday) as being the Sabbath. That has never changed. But, Christians often go to church on the first day of the week (Sunday) because that corresponds to the day on which Jesus was resurrected. In other words, Christians didn't "move" the Sabbath to Sunday. They didn't change the Sabbath at all. The Sabbath always was, and still is, Saturday. Christians do not view Sunday as being the Sabbath. They never did. They view it as a separate day, the Lord's Day.

As for the claim that Sunday was tied to pagan worship of various pagan gods, please, be aware of the fact that each of the days of the week - all seven of them, whether it's Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday or Saturday - were at one time or another tied to the worship of various pagan gods.

## 12. Fiction: Leonardo da Vinci was an anti-Christian pagan

Although opinions and beliefs of people have no bearing on the integrity of the Bible or of Christianity, what better way to end an article about the *Da Vinci Code* than to at least briefly address some of the novel's claims regarding Leonardo da Vinci, the Italian artist and scientist of unequalled accomplishment who lived from 1452 to 1519.

The *Da Vinci Code* novel, aside from having a title that refers Leonardo's birth place, relies heavily on presenting the archetypal Renaissance thinker as being an anti-Christian pagan entrusted with a great secret that would undermine Christianity itself, and yet, contradictorily, was

surprisingly willing to divulge bits and pieces of this anti-Christian secret in his Christian-related art.

And so, in the vein of this novel, even a painting like the Last Supper is used as evidence that Christianity is a lie.

The main problem with this theory, regarding Leonardo's alleged anti-Christian beliefs, is the pesky evidence from Leonardo himself that undermines the *Da Vinci Code*.

According to Giorgio Vasari, who wrote the first known biography of Leonardo, which was published in 1550, Leonardo repented of his sins and confessed his belief in Christianity near the end of his life:

*According to Vasari's biography, he desired "to be informed of Catholic practice and of the good and holy Christian religion, then, after many tears, he repented and confessed." Lest anyone think this is just a Christianity-exalting legend, Leonardo's will seems to affirm his return to religion. In this document, dictated before witnesses, the artist "commends his soul to Almighty God" (not the goddess), "to the Blessed Virgin Mary" (not Magdalene), and "to Saint Michael and all the angels and saints in paradise." - "The Truth Behind The Da Vinci Code," by Richard Abanes, page 65.*

The source that Abanes cites for this information is *Leonardo: The Artist and the Man* (New York: Penguin Books, 1988, 1991 trans. ed.), p.387.

According to his biographer and to his own last will and testament, Leonardo da Vinci's code was Christianity.

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