

# The DaVinci Code

*The Da Vinci Code* is a masterpiece of mistakes and poor research in its historical backgrounds. According to the book, Jesus Christ was never regarded by His early followers as God but was simply “viewed by His followers as a mortal prophet . . . a great and powerful man, but a man nonetheless. A mortal!” (DVC p. 233) The author of this New York Times best-seller, Dan Brown, claims that Jesus was made a god by the vote of a religious council in A.D. 325 when he writes “Jesus’ establishment as ‘the Son of God’ was officially proposed and voted on by the Council of Nicaea . . . Jesus’ divinity was the result of a close vote. A relatively close vote at that . . .” (DVC p. 233) In short he claims that Jesus was only a man and is now nothing more than a dead one. But the surprising truth about this book is that it claims to be accurate. On the eighth page after the title page, the author makes this claim: “All descriptions of artwork, architecture, documents, and secret rituals in this novel are accurate.” Yet, Mr. Brown’s book contains 56 major errors and numerous other errors that suggest otherwise.

**BACKGROUND.** The opening chapter of the *The Da Vinci Code* is a thriller and it grabs one’s attention immediately.

The opening sentence begins with “curator Jacques Sauniere staggering through the vaulted archway of the . . . Grand Gallery” of the Louvre Museum in Paris, France.

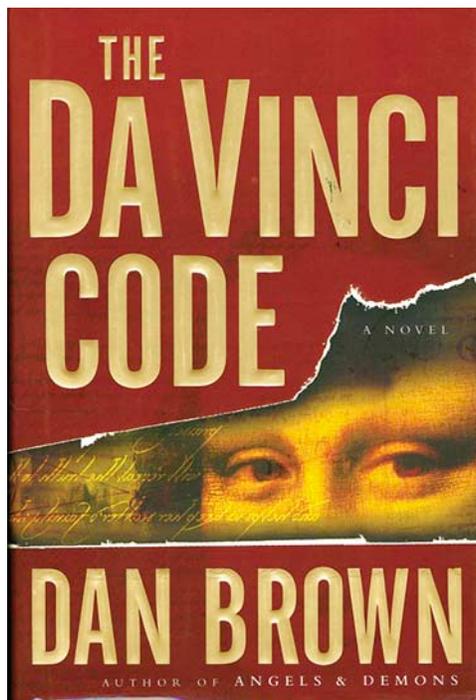
The seventy-six-year-old man has been attacked and his attacker is not finished with him yet. His attacker demands to know “. . . where it is.” The “it” is never explained in the first chapter. The curator refuses to reveal his ancient secret; as a result he dies due to a gunshot wound. The attacker flees, and the curator struggles to leave clues about the ancient secret before he dies. The position of his body is one of the clues.

When chapter two opens, Robert Langdon, a professor of religious symbolism, is awakened the next morning by the French “FBI.” The professor is asked to help solve the murder. Eventually the curator’s daughter Sophie Neveu joins the investigation and the ancient secret starts to unravel.

Throughout the book Mr. Dan Brown supposedly reveals to the reader the hidden and ancient secrets. The major secret is that Jesus was only a man who married Mary Magdalene, had a sex life, and had children.

The novel states their descendants are still alive today via the Merovingian royal line. The book weaves sex, the Knights Templar, the Roman Catholic Church, the Priory, the Holy Grail, the Opus Dei, Emperor Constantine, and Leonardo Da Vinci into the story. False statements are made about every group or individual mentioned.

**SOME MINOR ERRORS.** Mr. Brown’s first error occurs on the fourteenth page of the story when he states that the Pyramid at the main entrance to the Louvre Museum is constructed with 666 glass panes. Here is the quote from the Da Vinci



He wondered if Fache had any idea that this pyramid, at President Mitterrand's explicit demand, had been constructed of exactly 666 panes of glass - a bizarre request that had always been a hot topic among conspiracy buffs who claimed that 666 was the number of Satan. (DVC p. 21)

But according to the Louvre website, the pyramid is covered with 673 diamond-shaped panes of glass and not 666 (<http://www.louvre.or.jp/louvre/presse/en/activities/archives/anniv.htm>). This is a very minor error.

Some pages later the author states that the Olympic games were originally based on an eight year cycle and that the planet Venus traced a perfect pentagram in the ecliptic sky every four years. This error appeared in early editions of the book and was corrected in later printings including the April 2003 printing of the US hardback. His statement now reads,

... Venus traced a *perfect* pentacle across the ecliptic sky every eight years. So astonished were the ancients to observe this phenomenon ... As a tribute to the magic of Venus, the Greeks used her eight-year cycle to organize their Olympic Games. Nowadays, few people realized (sic) that the four-year schedule of modern Olympics still followed the half-cycles of Venus. Even fewer people knew that the five-pointed star had almost become the official Olympic seal ... (DVC p. 36-37)

Mr. Brown has finally corrected his error. Careful research would have discovered that the European Southern Observatory presents compelling data on their website that Venus completes a pentacle in eight years. This was a fact known to the ancients.

However, Mr. Brown is still not correct regarding the symbol of the Olympic Games. The following quote from the official website of the Olympic Museum makes this comment.

Even though Pierre de Coubertin intended the Olympic Games to be an international event from the time of their re-establishment in 1896 in Athens (Greece), it was only at the 1912 Games in Stockholm (Sweden) that, for the first

time, the participants came from all five continents. One year later, in 1913, the five rings appeared at the top of a letter written by Pierre de Coubertin. He drew the rings and coloured them in by hand. He then described this symbol in the Olympic Review of August 1913. It was also Coubertin who had the idea for the Olympic flag. He presented the rings and flag in June 1914 in Paris at the Olympic Congress. The First World War prevented the Games from being celebrated in 1916 in Berlin (Germany) as planned. It was not until 1920 in Antwerp (Belgium) that the flag and its five rings could be seen flying in an Olympic stadium. The First World War prevented the Games from being celebrated in 1916 in Berlin (Germany) as planned. It was not until 1920 in Antwerp (Belgium) that the flag and its five rings could be seen flying in an Olympic stadium. ([http://multimedia.olympic.org/pdf/en\\_report\\_672.pdf](http://multimedia.olympic.org/pdf/en_report_672.pdf))

The Greeks did not adopt the interlocking five rings as the Olympic seal. It was adopted in the nineteenth century by a Frenchman.

The Da Vinci Code implies that Leonardo named the "Mona Lisa" painting in order to communicate another secret. (DVC p. 121) But history tells us that Giorgio Vasari named the painting in AD. 1550 in a book titled "Leonardo; The Artist and the Man." (Serge, Bramly. Lives of the Artists. NY: Penguin Books. 1991. p. 362) Before that event, the painting was simply referred to as "a portrait of a lady" by Leonardo's pupil and heir. (Marani, Pietro C. Leonardo da Vinci: The Complete Paintings. NY: Harry N. Abrams, Inc. 2003. p. 198-199). In conclusion, the historical data states that Leonardo did not name the painting. The name "Mona Lisa" was given to the painting later.

Numerous other minor errors occur throughout the book. Here are a few more wrong statements: 1) God and His female counterpart, Shekinah, lived in Solomon's temple (DVC p. 309), 2) pagan symbols are hidden under carpet in the Chartres Cathedral (DVC p. 7), 3) Sunday worship was stolen from pagan ritual (DVC p. 232-233), and 4) the Priory of Sion is a secret organization (DVC p. 113).

**THE MAJOR ERRORS.** While there are fifty-six major errors in the book, we have chosen to focus on four key errors

in the rest of this discussion. There are currently numerous Christian and secular articles, books, and at least one excellent DVD which document these errors. We will provide recommendations in the conclusion.

**JESUS WAS ONLY A MAN.** The most significant error that *The Da Vinci Code* makes is to assert that Jesus was made a god at the Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325. The author claims that Jesus was only a man.

“Jesus’ establishment as ‘the Son of God’ was officially proposed and voted on by the Council of Nicaea” “Hold on. “You’re saying Jesus’ divinity was the result of a close vote?” “A relatively close vote at that,” Tebing added. . . . 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 own power . . . The vast majority of educated Christians know the history of their faith. Jesus was indeed a great and powerful man. Constantine’s underhanded political maneuvers don’t diminish the majesty of Christ’s life. (DVC p. 233-234)

Historical evidence disagrees with Mr. Brown. One of the major authors who lived at the time of Jesus was a man named Josephus. He was a Jew and a historian for the Roman Empire. In one of his works, the *Antiquities of the Jews* 18.3.3, Josephus says that Jesus performed miracles, died, and returned to life. Why would a Jew writing for Rome say this if it wasn’t true?

Secular writers such as Emperor Trajan (AD 53 - 117) in a letter to Pliny clearly indicate that Christians were worshipping Jesus as a god (*Pliny Letters* X, 97). Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secundus (AD 61-112) indicates in *Epistles* X96 that Christians worshipped Jesus as a god. Lucian of Samosata indicated that Christians worshipped Jesus (*The Passing Peregrinus*).

Early Christians also called Jesus our God. One such writer was Irenaeus (A.D. 185). He wrote that Jesus was “our Lord, and God, and Savior, and King” (*Against Heresies*, 1.10). Ignatius (A.D. 30-107) wrote “For our God, Jesus Christ, now that He is with the Father, is all the more

revealed [in His glory].” (*The Epistle of Ignatius to the Romans*, Chap 3).

The Council of Nicea did not make Jesus God by a vote. The early Christians already considered Jesus to be God and they worshipped Him as God. That is the factual evidence. In A.D. 325, the council only formally confirmed what the early Christians already believed.

It is also not true that the Council of Nicea decided to make Jesus God by a close vote. Historical documents tell us that almost 300 leaders from eastern and western churches met in order to discuss the false teaching of a North African pastor named Arius. This was the largest meeting in the history of the church at that point in time. Arius was teaching that Jesus was only a created being and was not God. The council affirmed the historic view of the church that Jesus was God by a vote of 318 to 2. The vote was not close. (Bruce, F.F. *The Spreading Flame*. Eerdmans Publishing. Grand Rapids. 1958. p. 304-306)

**THE EVOLVING BIBLE.** On page 231 Mr. Brown claims,

The Bible did not arrive by fax from heaven . . . it has evolved through countless translations, additions, and revisions.

There has never been a definitive version of the book . . . The fundamental irony of Christianity! The Bible, as we know it today, was collated by the pagan Roman emperor Constantine the Great. (DVC p. 231)

These statements ignore the facts of history and a document called the “Muratorian Fragment.”

First, Constantine (A.D. 274-337) was not a pagan. He became a Christian. This is a widely recognized conclusion by both Christian and non-Christian scholars. Mr. Brown is wrong.

Second, the Bible is composed of the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament scriptures were read and studied during the time of Jesus Christ. The accuracy and the number of books contained in the Old Testament scriptures has been verified by the Dead Sea Scrolls which were discovered in 1948. The Dead Sea Scrolls contain all of the books in the Old Testament. Since the Dead Sea Scrolls are recognized as having been written 100 years before Jesus

was born, there is not a reason to suspect that Constantine “collated” or collected these books and called them the Old Testament. They already existed as the Hebrew scriptures prior to Constantine.

The New Testament is a different story. The major evidence that the New Testament existed before Constantine is found in the “Muratorian Fragment” (A.D. 170) since it lists all the New Testament books, except for Matthew, Mark, Hebrews, James, 1-2 Peter and 3 John. The document is called a fragment because portions of the document have been torn off. Therefore, the well known biblical scholar Westcott says that the missing books were probably included initially because the document is torn where they should have been listed. The document indicates that there were only four gospels that were accepted by the early church.

The Bible had already been established prior to Constantine. The Old Testament scriptures had been approved by Christ (Luke 24:44) and the New Testament had been approved by His apostles. The Apostle Peter approved of Paul’s writings in 2 Pet. 3:15-16, and Paul endorsed Luke in 1 Tim 5:18 when he quoted Luke 10:7. Matthew, Luke, John, Peter, and Paul wrote 85% of the New Testament. The remaining books are Mark, Hebrews, James, and Jude. Mark wrote for the Apostle Peter, and James and Jude were brothers of Jesus. The author of Hebrews is unknown to us.

The early church father Irenaeus (about A.D. 120-202) names the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and defends the existence of only four (*Irenaeus Against Heresies*. 3.11 ). Origen listed all of the New Testament books in His works, except for Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, and Jude.

In short, the New Testament books were approved by the apostles. At the beginning of the second century, the canon or the Bible was complete. By the end of the second century, the early church fathers had quoted from all of the New Testament books and almost every verse.

In the years that followed, the authority of certain books was challenged, and church councils were convened to review and defend the contents of our Bible. The Council of Carthage (A.D. 397) is usually pointed to as the council which finally put the debates to rest. But unfortunately,

there will always be men who will challenge the authority of various books in the Bible.

A few pages later in *The Da Vinci Code*, Mr Brown writes these words,

. . . Almost four centuries *after* Jesus’ death, thousands of documents already existed chronicling His life as a *mortal* man. To rewrite history books, Constantine knew that he would need a bold stroke. From this sprang the most profound moment in Christian history . . . 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.

Fortunately, for historians . . . 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 story of the Grail story, these documents speak of Christ’ ministry in very human terms. (DVC p. 234)

But there is no historical evidence that Constantine did any of this. Constantine did order the writings of Arius, who claimed that Jesus was a created being, to be burned. That occurred by an edict in A.D. 325. Is Mr. Brown confused?

To claim that the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John ignore the human traits of Jesus is to deny the facts that these gospels speak of Jesus being hungry (Luke 4:2), tired (John 4:6), thirsty (John 19:28), and crying (John 11:35). The gospels demonstrate that Jesus had human traits. Mr. Brown is wrong.

The quotes from the early church fathers demonstrate that the New Testament books prove that the wording of our current gospels remains unchanged since the early centuries.

On page 245, *The Da Vinci Code* says that the Dead Sea Scrolls and Nag Hammadi are “the earliest Christian records.” But this is not true since the Nag Hammadi document texts were Gnostic documents and were written from about A.D. 250-350. They are not Christian and they were

written almost 200-300 years after Jesus. These texts were originally written in Greek and were later written in Coptic. The Dead Sea Scrolls were not Christian documents either and were written 100-200 years before Jesus.

In summary, Constantine did not change the Bible. The Bible was determined by the apostles and it has been defended by the saints ever since.

**JESUS MARRIED MARY MAGDALENE.** One old claim that has surfaced before by other authors is that Jesus married Mary Magdalene. Mr. Brown repeated the claim.

. . . the marriage of Jesus and Mary Magdalene is part of the historical record. (DVC p. 245)

The previous authors and Mr. Brown have no documents or “historical records” to show as proof. The truth is Jesus was never married.

Mr. Brown quotes the *The Gospel of Philip* as proof that Jesus and Mary Magdalene were married. Here is a quote from his book,

The Gospel of Philip is always a good place to start. Sophie read the passage:

And the companion of the Savior is Mary Magdalene. Christ loved her more than all the disciples and used to kiss her often on her mouth. (DVC p. 246)

*The Gospel of Philip* is a Gnostic document and not a Christian one. That is the first important point. Gnosticism had become common by A.D. 150 and was rejected by the early Christians. The Gnostics believed that secret knowledge was the key to life after death. They rejected the teaching of the apostles and Jesus Christ. Gnosticism was not Christian.

Mr. Brown’s quote from the *The Gospel of Philip* is misleading and inaccurate. Here is the actual wording. Brackets and dashes “[--]” are included in the place of missing words from the original document.

The S[--] [--]ed [--]ry Mag[--]lene more than [--] the disciples, and kissed on her [--] often. (*The Gospel of Philip*. New Testa-

ment Apocrypha. James Clarke and Co. Westminster/John Knox Press. 55b, p. 194)

Mr. Brown’s quote does not look like the statement from the existing document. The word “companion” does not even appear. It is true that the word “companion” does occur in section 32 of *The Gospel of Philip*. But the word “companion” comes from the Greek word KOINONIA which means friendship and not wife.

Notice that the word “kissed” occurs in the original but not the word “mouth.” The missing word could just as easily be “forehead” or “cheek.” But Mr. Brown has no supporting evidence to prove that *The Gospel of Philip* should be believed. It was written 100 years after Jesus. On page 246 Mr. Brown also claims that the Gnostic document *The Gospel of Philip* was written in Aramaic. Mr. Brown missed the facts once again. It was written in Coptic.

There is no substantive proof that Jesus married Mary Magdalene, that they kissed one another as husband and wife, or had children. If Jesus was married, why did He ask the Apostle John to take care of His mother and not His wife as He was dying on the cross (John 19:25-27)?

**MARY MAGDALENE AND THE LAST SUPPER.** The last error we will address is the following statement,

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 . . .

She 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. (DVC p. 243)

*The Da Vinci Code* continues claiming that the figure sitting to the right of Jesus is a woman . . . Mary Magdalene. This is the highlight and the journey of the book. Supposedly, this is the key . . .

. . . To the Holy Grail mystery (DVC page 236). But [Mr. Brown's] understanding of *The Last Supper* is highly skewed. For instance, the figure next to Jesus - historically identified as the apostle John - is not "obviously" a woman. It could easily be a man, as evidenced by Brown's own observation about it having only a "hint" of a bosom - and even that is being generous . . .

According to Bruce Boucher - Curator of European Decorative Arts and Sculpture at the Art Institute of Chicago - John's appearance reflects the way Florentine artists traditionally depicted Jesus' favorite disciple: "St. John was invariably represented as a beautiful young man whose special affinity with Jesus was expressed by his being seated at Jesus' right." *Slate* magazine bluntly pointed out, "If da

Vinci thought John looked like a girly man, that's one thing. But a girlish-looking figure in a painting isn't proof that Mary was present at the Last Supper, let alone that Jesus and Mary were married."

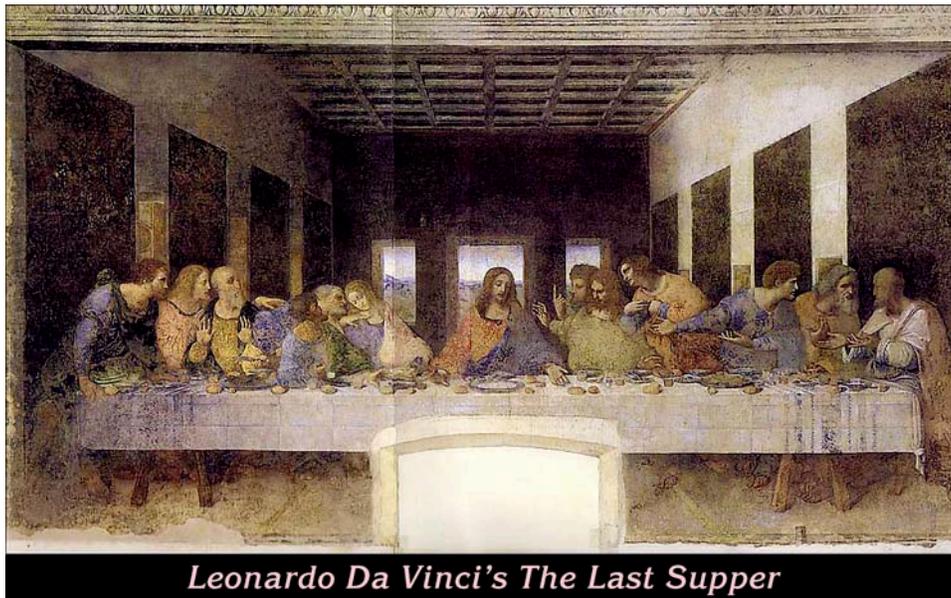
Moreover, if the figure next to Jesus is not John, then we need to know where the apostle really is. It is highly doubtful that Leonardo would have left John out of the picture . . . (Abanes, Richard. *The Truth Behind the Da Vinci Code*. Harvest house Publishers. Eugene Oregon. 2004. p. 72)

If the figure next to Jesus is not John, where is he in the painting? The truth is that the figure next to Jesus is John.

The *Last Supper* was painted from 1495 to 1497 on the Refectory wall of the Convent of Sta Marie Della Grazie in Milan, Italy. Da Vinci painted the *Last Supper* using a water based

tempera technique.

The painting, quickly deteriorated. In 1518, only 20 years after the completion, Antonio de Beatis, the secretary for the Cardinal of Aragon, reported th *Last Supper* as "almost excellent although it is beginning to be spoilt, either by dampness oozing from the walls, or from some other negligence." In 1568, Girgio Vasar, a painter . . . described the painting as being "so badly preserved that one can only see a muddle of blots." In 1642, only 150 years after the *Last Supper* was completed, Francesco Scannellis . . . visited the painting and later reported "that it was in such a blurred state that it was difficult to make out the well known subject of the picture." (*Answers to The Da Vinci Code*. Rose Publishing, 2006).



Leonardo Da Vinci's The Last Supper

Restoration work on the painting began in A.D. 1726. The painting today reflects Leonardo da Vinci's efforts, but we cannot be sure it looks like his original work. Therefore, Mr. Brown's statements about hidden

secrets and a woman seated to the right of Jesus is just speculation.

**CONCLUSION.** The official website for *The Da Vinci Code* features an interview with Mr. Brown. During the interview he is asked, "Are you a Christian?" Here is his answer,

Yes. Interestingly, if you ask three people what it means to be Christian, you will get three different answers. Some feel being baptized is sufficient. Others feel you must accept the Bible as absolute historical fact. Still others require a belief that all those who do not accept Christ as their personal savior are doomed to hell. Faith is a continuum, and we each

fall on that line where we may. By attempting to rigidly classify ethereal concepts like faith, we end up debating semantics to the point where we entirely miss the obvious -- that is, that we are all trying to decipher life's big mysteries, and we're each following our own paths of enlightenment. I consider myself a student of many religions. The more I learn, the more questions I have. For me, the spiritual quest will be a life-long work in progress. ([http://www.danbrown.com/novels/davinci\\_code/faqs.html](http://www.danbrown.com/novels/davinci_code/faqs.html))

Given his answer to the question, it is understandable why Mr. Brown wrote this book. He is finding what he feels is spiritual meaning in his life. For anyone who is wondering if he or she should be searching like Mr. Brown, the Apostle Peter warns us in the book of Acts that Jesus is the only way to get into heaven.

[And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved. \(NASB\) Acts 4:12](#)

One cannot be a Christian and be pursuing other religions according to Peter. [Jesus is God and there is no other.](#) Jesus confirms the statement of the Apostle Peter when He tells us that eternal life is found only in Him. It comes by [believing in Him.](#)

[For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life . . . He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. \(NASB\) John 3:16-18](#)

Mr. Brown has demonstrated that he knows how to write a great book of fiction - a thriller. But *The Da Vinci Code* is not factual. It is not historical. It is full of historical errors - minor and major. It is a novel and nothing more.

Remember the words of the Apostle Paul to Titus,

[. . . looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us](#)

[to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds. \(NASB\) Titus 2:13-14](#)

The early followers of Jesus declared Him to be God. They believed He was because of His life, miracles, and return to life. Jesus was and is God . . .

**RECOMMENDATIONS.** If you still have questions or are curious, the author of this article would like to encourage the reader to investigate some of the resources below. There are a number of excellent books which have been published which document many of the errors made in *The Da Vinci Code*. Here are a few recommendations:

Abanes, Richard. *The Truth Behind the Da Vinci Code*. Harvest House Publishers. Eugene Oregon. 2004.

Bock, Darrell L. *Breaking the Da Vinci Code*. Nelson Books. 2004.

Scheler, Jeffery L. *Debating 'Da Vinci.'* U.S. News & World Report. Vol. 140. No. 19. May 22, 2006., p. 44

Witherington, Ben. *The Gospel Code*. Inter-Varisty Press, Downers Grove, Il. 2004.

We would also recommend a DVD which is titled. *Da Vinci Code Deception*. Grizzly Adams Publishing. [www.grizzlyadams.TV](http://www.grizzlyadams.TV) (800-811-0548)

We trust that you find the recommendations helpful. May the Lord guide you into