



ASSOCIATED BIBLE STUDENTS

“WEEPING MAY ENDURE FOR A NIGHT, BUT JOY COMETH IN THE MORNING.” PSALMS 30:5

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Notwithstanding
The Da Vinci Code,
OUR BIBLE IS
The Inspired
Word of God



Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* is such a cunning attack on the Christian faith in several basic areas that it requires another issue to deal with it. Our last issue refuted Brown's assault on the nature of Jesus, as the Son of God. If you have not read that Spring issue, we urge you to do so. This Summer issue deals with Brown's attempt to negate our New Testament Scriptures as the inspired Word of God.

The Apostles completed the Divinely inspired New Testament and circulated it among the churches. After their death, the devil flooded the 2nd and 3rd centuries with spurious Scripture to challenge Apostolic Scripture. But the devil failed. The Apostles' New Testament together with the Old Testament completed the inspired Word of God, the Bible.

Satan's next strategy was to destroy the Word of God. From the compilation of the New Testament until our time, an incredible

history of faith and sacrifice played out. Believers raised by God to preserve the Bible carried its message of hope and salvation forward through the centuries.

The Scriptures were banned, burned or ridiculed by rulers of every age—Roman Emperors, Popes, monarchs, despotic rulers and communist tyrants of recent times. Many who dared to read and share the Bible met appalling deaths. Yet God's Word could not be crushed. Satan and his cohorts were no match for dauntless men of God—Apostles, faithful preachers, translators, reformers, Gospel workers, and printers dedicated to spreading the “Good News” of this Indestructible Book.

Our “Nothing is Sacred Era”

But the Devil is relentless. Thanks to him, we have entered what the philosophers call “The Post-Modern Age,” which

essentially means no moral absolutes. But it is more than a time of no moral standards. Our day could be labeled the “nothing is sacred era.”

For example, today’s media splash every apparent finding that contradicts the Bible across magazine covers, newspapers, airwaves, and e-waves, but ignores the numerous findings that support the Bible. The ongoing Jesus Seminar publicity, headline grabbing statements of “higher critics,” the Judas manuscript of purported scripture, and “fizz out” discoveries of science spin out “media sensationalism” that continues to battle the mounting evidence that the Bible is indeed the very Word of God.

Satan is especially out to discredit the New Testament and its message of salvation through the blood of Christ. *The Da Vinci Code* seems to be an effective tool to that end. A week after the movie version of Brown’s book, 17% of the Canadian public accepted Brown’s theory that Jesus’ death on the cross was fake; Jesus married Mary Magdalene and raised a family. Presto, the greatest event in the universe—Jesus’ death on the cross—is made null and void, and the resurrection becomes a fraud. Never mind that redemption through Jesus’ death is the hallmark of the New Testament. Never mind that the resurrection is the triumphant theme of the New Testament. This presents no problem for Brown. He creates his own New Testament.

Fiction, Fiction, Fiction

Why does anyone take these ideas seriously? Brown’s cunning methodology. Under a heading entitled “FACT,” Brown claims the concepts in his novel are accurate. Many scholars have refuted his false concepts.

Brown has a way of making the novel’s bizarre theories about Jesus and the history

of early Christianity seem credible. After all, his theories are pontificated by the novel’s two scholars—a British Royal Historian and a Harvard professor. A reality check is necessary! These fictitious scholars have no parallels in real life history. When conjectures are put in the mouths of these fictitious scholars, an unsuspecting public comes away thinking that these theories are actually true. But they are not!

Brown has Sir Leigh Teabing, his Royal Historian, shrewdly observe that the Nag Hammadi texts represent “the earliest Christian records.” These “unaltered Gospels,” Teabing claims, tell the real story about Jesus and early Christianity. The New Testament Gospels, he said, are a later corrupted version of these events. The problem with Teabing’s observation is that it is just as fictitious as Teabing, himself. No scholar claims the Nag Hammadi documents are “the earliest Christian records.” Every book in the New Testament is dated earlier. All of the New Testament documents were written in the 1st century AD. In contrast, the dates of Nag Hammadi text range from the 2nd to the 3rd century AD.

How did the early Church decide which books to include in the New Testament and which to reject? When were these decisions made and by whom? According to Teabing, “the Bible as we know it today was collated by the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great” then submitted to and approved by the Council of Nicea in AD 325. Again the fictitious Royal Historian is wrong! This council had nothing to do with New Testament canon.

New Testament Rapidly Recognized As Divinely Inspired

Contrary to Brown and the Catholic Church, it did not require centuries for the New Testament to become canon. The New Testament contains the teachings of Christ

written by his Apostles and their close associates. The early Church began at Pentecost in AD 33 when 120 followers of Jesus received the Holy Spirit in the upper room in Jerusalem. All the books of the New Testament were written in the 1st century. We know from Scripture that the Apostle Paul immediately circulated copies of his Epistles as soon as they were written. Colossian 4:15,16.

The Apostle Peter in 2 Pet. 3:15,16 observed that his readers were well acquainted with “all” of Paul’s Epistles. Peter also mentions “other scriptures”—evidently referring to the four Gospels and Book of James. Probably Jude and John’s three Epistles were not yet written. Of course, the Revelation of John was yet future. Following Paul and Peter’s precedent, no doubt these later books were copied and immediately circulated, as soon as written, to all the churches during the 1st century.

The fact that New Testament Scripture was being copied and circulated as soon as it was written is verified by the Apostle Paul in 2 Tim. 3:15-17. “All scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable...that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” Some feel the “scripture” mentioned here only applied to the Old Testament because the New Testament was not yet completed.

Verse 15 shows the Old Testament is included. But in no way can the Old Testament alone make the Christian perfect. Only through the blood of Christ is the Christian justified—reckoned perfect. In no way could the Old Testament thoroughly furnish or sanctify the Christian to every good work. Only by New Testament scriptures like the four Gospels and the writings of Apostles Peter and Paul and later the remainder of the New Testament could Christians be justified and sanctified. The phrase “all scripture” would make it

incumbent on the Apostles to have copies of all the books of the New Testament put into circulation as soon as they were written.

Why New Testament Was Accepted As Inspired?

Each generation of Christians would inform the next generation of the twenty-seven books of the inspired New Testament. But there was an additional problem. As noted, Satan flooded the 2nd and 3rd centuries with pseudo New Testament books. With so many pseudo books circulating, how would Christians recognize the valid twenty-seven books of Scripture?

Anyone hungering for truth and righteousness would recognize Jesus in the four Gospels as the “bread of life” that would satisfy their hunger. If any were feeling after God, divine providence would bring His Word, the Bible, to their attention. Like the Thessalonians they would recognize it not as “the word of man” but as “the Word of God.” 2 Thess.2:3. Like the Thessalonians the “gospel” would come to them “not in word only, but in power, and in the holy spirit, and in much assurance.” 1 Thess.1:5. Any who had the wrong heart condition would be duped by the pseudo scriptures of Satan.

Church History

William F. Albright, the dean of Biblical archaeologists, affirmed: “There is no longer any solid basis for dating any book of the New Testament after about A.D. 80.” Even heretics like Valentinus furnished proof that the New Testament had been written long before AD 150, and had already attained a place of authority in the Church. His heretical Gnostic writings (about 130-150) quoted extensively from the New Testament. (F.F. Bruce, New Testament Documents, p. 19.)

However, the Roman Catholic Church claims that it was not until the Synod of Hippo in AD 393 and the Synod of Carthage in AD 397 that the Catholic Church canonized the twenty-seven books of the New Testament. They assert that no one could know what the Divinely authorized books of the New Testament were until the Roman Catholic Church as God's spokesman issued this decree. This claim is not accurate. These synods merely stated that the twenty-seven books already recognized by the churches formed the New Testament canon.

It is absurd to think that the faithful Christians during this approximately 300 years between the death of the Apostles and the Synod of Hippo in AD 393 did not even know which New Testament was the inspired Word of God. This would mean they were not certain Jesus died for their sins. Remember the history of the developing "worldly church" which included many of the so-called Church Fathers that evolved into the Roman Catholic Church did not reflect the history of the true church during those first four centuries.

Our Day

We live in a multi-religious culture—Christian, Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist, etc. Each religion has a "holy book" or bible which they believe is inspired by their God. Like the Christians of the first four

centuries, we are faced with the problem— which Bible is really the inspired Word of the true God? However, we have the benefit of archaeology.

Once a skeptic, himself, Dr. William F. Albright wrote: "The excessive skepticism shown toward the Bible has been progressively discredited. Discovery after discovery has established the accuracy of numerous details." (W.F. Albright, *The Archaeology of Palestine and the Bible*, p. 127) As an agnostic, Sir William Ramsay became an archaeologist to discredit the New Testament. But in his extensive archaeological digs and research he found overwhelming evidence that compelled faith in the New Testament. He became its strongest defender. (Sir William Ramsay, *Archaeologist and New Testament Scholar*, p. 28.)

Send for the free booklet "Do We All Worship the Same God?" It contains scientific, prophetic and historic evidence that the Christian Bible is indeed the inspired Word of God. Additionally, send for the free booklet "Faith of our Fathers" which discusses the historical development of the Christian church and the selection of the books of the Old and New Testament.



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