

Craig's Da Vinci Code Article and Notes

1 Peter 3:15 Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have!

Background:

For some time now I have been reading and reviewing a collection of books by former atheist and investigative news reporter for the Chicago Tribune, Lee Strobel. His signature book "The Case for Christ" chronicles his investigation as he set out to disprove all the main aspects of Christianity. Recently, as everyone surely knows, the hype surrounding the novel "The Da Vinci Code" and subsequent movie begin to dominate conversations and the media. I soon realized that some of the evidence that I was studying in "The Case for Christ" coincided with much of the material in question by the "Da Vinci Code." So, I decided to expand my study to include the material being used to debunk the claims of the Da Vinci Code novel. You would not believe the number of books, websites, television documentaries and articles have been written and produced in rebuttal to this Novel. I myself have six books and 4 videos on the subject. I even attended a two day seminar.

I collected so much information that I felt I had to organize it and write it down. I want to be able to communicate what I have learned. I'll explain why in my Introduction.

Introduction:

Is it just a harmless novel? Novels are fiction, right?

Originally published in 2003, Dan Brown claims the Da Vinci Code is a Historical Novel based on fact. He begins the book by saying: "FACT" and goes on to say that "All the descriptions of artwork, architecture, documents and secret rituals in this novel are accurate." There are 4 lies, said to be Fact, just on the first page.

USA Today said the book consists of "historical fact with a contemporary storyline. In a June 9, 2003 interview with Matt Lauer on NBC's Today Show, Matt asks: "How much of this is based on reality in terms of things that actually occurred?" Brown answered: "Absolutely all of it. Obviously, Robert Langdon is fictional, but all of the art, architecture, secret rituals, secret societies – all of that is historical fact."

Many historically based novels have been written and made into motion pictures. Why then is this one so controversial?

The answer is this. Christians and Historians believe this novel is harmful because Dan Brown builds his historical novel not on historical fact but on multiple falsehoods that attack the Christian Church and the very core of our beliefs. Dr. Paul Maier, Professor of ancient history at Western Michigan University has written several historical books. Some are historical novels. Dr. Maier says when writing such a novel there is nothing wrong with fictional characters, but "I never contradict known historical facts. Only where the facts leave off do I then try to provide fictional mortar to hold the story together. And I'll own up to the reader at the end of the book. This is in total contrast to what Dan Brown did."

I agree that Dan Brown completely misrepresents the historical record and just plain lies over and over in his book.

I suppose if this were written about certain other subjects, probably no one would care. But because the so called facts of the book attack the foundation of Christianity, I believe the 2.1 billion Christians worldwide have reason to take note. Some 46 million copies of the book have been sold. The movie cost over 100 million dollars to make. This is no small matter. I believe as do others, that we should particularly be concerned for college aged and the 20 and 30 year olds. Most older Christians are not going to come away from the book or movie believing that Jesus was just a man and was married and had children. Dr. Scott Carroll, professor of archeology and ancient texts at the Cornerstone University in Michigan, says that when he speaks on the topic, college students "line up around the building" to ask him questions about the controversial subjects like those in the Da Vinci Code. People of all ages are asking the experts how they reconcile the claims in the novel.

One of the problems is that most readers of the book, my self included, are not sufficiently educated in the history of the early church enough to recognize even the most blatant historical inaccuracies. I have found that even among church goers many cannot correctly identify or express in words the central theme and focus of the Bible. As with most anything, knowledge is power. Granted the Da Vinci Code novel digs up some pretty obscure subjects. This can leave us sometimes all the more gullible to believe them if they are said with authority.

Are the arguments new? No. And clearly Christianity has survived much worse over the last 2000 plus years. My point is that this controversy is significant enough to warrant our attention. As Christians we are responsible to stand up the faith we have in Christ Jesus and enter the debate armed with the facts! People don't need more excuses why not to believe.

2 Tim 2:15 "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." KJV

Prov 14:25 A truthful witness saves lives, but a false witness is deceitful. NIV

1 Cor 16:13-14 Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong. Do everything in love. NIV

Eph 6:10-12

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. NIV

2 Tim 4:1-5

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage-with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

A Christian should be a student of the Word of God. Knowing what the Bible says will help us identify false teachings and false teachers. How do you spot a phony twenty dollar bill? First you have to study a real one. Only then will you know what the real thing is suppose to look like. The same is true with Christianity and the Bible. If you know what the Bible says you will be able to spot for yourself when it's misrepresented on television, in movies, documentaries, in books, and on the news.

More to come...