



Student Guide – Session 1

Introduction: Why Should We be Concerned about *The Da Vinci Code*?

- A. The novel has sold tens of millions of copies and been translated into over forty-four different languages.
- B. Millions more will be exposed to the novel’s message through the movie.
- C. Dan Brown represents his novel as more than just another work of *fiction*:

On the first page he states, “*FACT...All descriptions of artwork, architecture, documents, and secret rituals in the novel are accurate.*”

Later in the novel one of Dan Brown’s “experts,” the royal historian and Grail scholar, Sir Leigh Teabing, confidently asserts that “*almost everything our fathers taught us about Christ is false.*” (p. 235)

- D. If the novel is as accurate as it makes itself out to be, then biblical Christianity is false.

My Notes on Introduction –

Issue 1: Are There Secret Gospels?

- A. Consider these excerpts from *The Da Vinci Code*:
 - 1. “More than *eighty* gospels were considered for the New Testament, and yet only a relative few were chosen for inclusion -- Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John among them.” (p. 231)
 - 2. “These are photocopies of the Nag Hammadi and Dead Sea Scrolls ... the earliest Christian records. Troublingly, they do not match up with the gospels in the Bible.” (pp. 245-46)
- B. The Dead Sea Scrolls
 - 1. No New Testament documents were found among the Dead Sea Scrolls.
 - 2. No “secret gospels” were found there.
 - 3. The Dead Sea Scrolls are *not* “the earliest Christian records” as the novel asserts.

C. The Nag Hammadi Documents

1. These texts were written in the second and third centuries A.D. (By contrast, *all* the books of the New Testament were authored in the first century A.D.).
2. These are Gnostic documents. Gnosticism derives its meaning from the Greek word *gnosis* which means knowledge.

The key tenet of Gnosticism was that salvation comes through secret, esoteric knowledge.

Among other things, the Gnostics believed that reality consists of matter (which is evil) and spirit (which is good).

3. Although the Nag Hammadi library was discovered in 1945, scholars have actually known about many of these texts for centuries.
 4. Although *The Da Vinci Code* mentions *more than eighty gospels*, only a fraction of this number was found among the Nag Hammadi documents (e.g. *The Gospel of Philip*; *The Gospel of Thomas*; etc.).
 5. These documents were rejected by the early church because their Gnostic teachings were inconsistent with previous revelation.
 6. The unbiblical theology and mythical stories in these documents would lead one to conclude that they were *not* truly inspired by God.
 7. In contrast, the New Testament gospels are rooted in history. They accurately point to real people, places, and historical events.
- D. The foundational premise of *The Da Vinci Code* has been proven false.
1. There were *not* more than eighty gospels considered for the New Testament.
 2. The Dead Sea Scrolls and Nag Hammadi texts are *not* the earliest Christian records.
 - a) The Dead Sea Scrolls were written by the Essenes.
 - b) The Nag Hammadi texts were written by the Gnostics.

My Notes on Issue 1 –

Group Discussion –