



## ***Week 2: Secret Societies & Sacred Sex***

**With Special Guest Dr. James Beverley – Tyndale Seminary**

### **INTRODUCTION – Jesus The Evidentialist**

**Matthew 11:2-6**

#### **A “Modus Ponens” Argument:**

If X is true then Y is true. X is true. Therefore Y is true.

### **Secret Societies**

#### **#1. WHAT THE DA VINCI CODE CLAIMS:**

The Priory of Sion is a secret organization founded in 1099 to protect the Holy Grail.

#### **WHAT WE HAVE UNCOVERED:**

The Priory of Sion is the invention of Pierre Plantard in 1956 who later admitted to his hoax under oath in a French court in 1993.

(See Paul Smith's research at [www.priory-of-sion.com](http://www.priory-of-sion.com).)

#### **#2. WHAT THE DA VINCI CODE CLAIMS:**

Ancient documents discovered in the Paris Library about the Priory of Sion.

#### **WHAT WE HAVE UNCOVERED:**

The documents were forgeries, written by a friend of Plantard and planted in the Paris library. There are no ancient documents about The Priory of Sion in existence.

#### **#3. WHAT THE DA VINCI CODE CLAIMS:**

Leonardo Da Vinci was once head of the Priory of Sion.

#### **WHAT WE HAVE UNCOVERED:**

There is no evidence at all that Da Vinci was involved in anything called the Priory of Sion or that this organization even existed in Da Vinci's days.

#### **#4. WHAT THE DA VINCI CODE CLAIMS:**

The Holy Grail is real, but it is not the cup used at the last supper as the Bible claims but the body of Mary Magdalene holding the offspring of Jesus and carrying on his bloodline.

#### **WHAT WE HAVE UNCOVERED:**

The Bible mentions no “holy grail”, no “cup of Christ”. The “cup” of the last supper was a Jewish symbol in which everyone drank together (probably the third of four cups of wine imbibed during the Passover Seder), not one physical cup from which everyone drank (see the Passover *Haggadah*). The legend of the Grail does not appear until 1180 CE, long after the church was thoroughly Gentile and detached from its Jewish roots. The body-of-Mary version of the myth does not appear until modern times. Hence, it is a myth (the belief that the Holy Grail is Mary's body) based on a myth (the belief that there ever was a Holy Grail to begin with) based on a misunderstanding of Jewish custom (the belief that one special cup was used at the last supper).

#### **#5. WHAT THE DA VINCI CODE CLAIMS:**

Leonardo Da Vinci's painting of *The Last Supper* depicts Jesus sitting with Mary, the true Holy Grail.

#### **WHAT WE HAVE UNCOVERED:**

Leonardo's composition points, in fact, in another direction, for it conforms to traditional Florentine depictions of the Last Supper, stressing the betrayal and sacrifice of Jesus rather than the institution of the Eucharist and the chalice. At the same time, St. John was invariably represented as a beautiful young man whose special affinity with Jesus was expressed by his being seated at Jesus' right. Leonardo's St. John conforms to this type, and parallels for the absence of a chalice appear in earlier Italian examples.

A weak grasp of context also means that Mr. Brown misinterprets other pieces of "evidence" in the painting. Langdon draws attention to a dagger that seems to be wielded by a "disembodied" hand in the group around St. Peter; yet this hand is not disembodied. Both a preliminary drawing by Leonardo and early copies of "The Last Supper" show that the hand and dagger belong to Peter — a reference to a passage in the Gospel of St. John, in which Peter draws a sword in defense of Jesus.

~ Bruce Boucher, Art Institute of Chicago

*The Last Supper* is a painting by Leonardo da Vinci for his patron Duke Lodovico Sforza. It represents the scene of The Last Supper from the final days of Jesus as depicted in the Christian Bible. The painting is based on John 13:21, in which Jesus announced that one of his 12 disciples would betray him.

**MEDIUM:** Leonardo painted The Last Supper on a dry wall rather than on wet plaster, so it is not a true fresco. Because a fresco cannot be modified as the artist works, Leonardo instead chose to seal the stone wall with a layer of pitch, gesso and mastic, then paint onto the sealing layer with tempera. Because of the method used, the piece has not withstood time very well – within 20 years of completion it already began showing signs of deterioration. It has undergone significant restoration since the 16th century. Because of this it cannot be certain whether the faces still resemble Leonardo's original painting; at least one (Thomas) definitely differed from the original at least until the restoration which finished in 1999.

**DAMAGE AND RESTORATIONS:** By 1556 — less than sixty years after it was finished — Leonardo's biographer Giorgio Vasari described the painting as already "ruined" and so deteriorated that the figures were unrecognisable. In 1652 a doorway was cut through the (then unrecognisable) painting, and later bricked up; this can still be seen as the irregular arch shaped structure near the centre base of the painting. A first restoration was attempted in 1726 by Michelangelo Bellotti, who filled in missing sections with oil paint then varnished the whole. This repair lasted very poorly and another restoration was attempted in 1770 by Giuseppe Mazza. Mazza stripped off Bellotti's work then largely repainted the painting; he had redone all but three faces when he was halted due to public outrage. In 1796 French troops used the refectory as a prison; it is not known if any of the prisoners may have damaged the painting nor if their spirits were uplifted by it. In 1821 Stefano Barezzi, an expert in removing whole frescoes from their walls intact, was called in to remove the painting to a safer location; he badly damaged the centre section before realising that Leonardo's work was not a fresco. Barezzi then attempted to reattach damaged sections with glue. From 1901 to 1908, Luigi Cavenaghi first completed a careful study of the structure of the painting, then began cleaning it. In 1924 Oreste Silvestri did further cleaning, and stabilised some parts with stucco. During World War II, on 15 August 1943, the refectory was struck by a bomb; protective sandbagging prevented the painting being struck by bomb splinters, but it may have been damaged further by the vibration. From 1951 to 1954 another clean-and-stabilise restoration was undertaken by Mauro Pelliccioli.

**MAJOR RESTORATION:** From 1978 to 1999 Pinin Brambilla Barcilon guided a major restoration project which undertook to permanently stabilise the painting, and reverse the damage caused by dirt, pollution, and the misguided 18th century and 19th century restoration attempts. Since it had proved impracticable to move the painting to a more controlled environment, instead the refectory was converted to a sealed, climate controlled environment. Then detailed study was undertaken to determine the painting's original form, using scientific tests (especially infrared reflectoscopy and microscopic core-samples), and

original cartoons preserved in the Royal Library at Windsor Castle. Some areas were deemed unrestorable. These were re-painted with watercolour in subdued colours intended to indicate they were not original work, whilst not being too distracting.

This restoration took 22 years and on May 28, 1999 the painting was put back on display, although intending visitors are required to book ahead, and can only stay for 15 minutes. When it was unveiled, considerable controversy was aroused by the dramatic changes in colours, tones, and even some facial shapes. James Beck, professor of art history at Columbia University and founder of ArtWatch International, has been a particularly strong critic.

**THE LAST SUPPER IN CULTURE:** A fine 16th century oil on canvas copy is conserved in the abbey of Tongerlo, Antwerp, Belgium. It reveals many details that are no longer visible on the original. The Roman mosaic artist Giacomo Raffaelli made another life-sized copy (1809-1814) in the Viennese Minorite Church.

A play has also been written called *The Living Last Supper*, in which the painting is depicted on stage and the twelve disciples break from the group individually and address the audience.

**There is a theory, first publicized in *The Templar Revelation* by Lynn Picknett and Clive Prince, that the person to the left of Jesus (to his right) is actually Mary Magdalene, rather than the apostle John (as most art historians identify it). This theory is central to Dan Brown's popular novel *The Da Vinci Code*. Critics of this theory point out that:**

- While damage makes it impossible to be sure of the figure's gender, it is clearly wearing male clothing;
- There are only thirteen figures in the painting, so if one is Mary Magdalene, an apostle is missing. (Some have suggested that on the front of the figure of Simon Peter there is one hand with a dagger which is associated to nobody in the picture, but in clearer reproductions this is seen to be Peter's right hand, resting against his hip with the wrist turned inward);
- Some of the painting's cartoons (preliminary sketches) are preserved, and none show female faces; and
- The darkening in the centre of this figure's chest, which some have taken as evidence of breasts, is actually caused largely by a crack.

[Taken from: [http://encyclopedia.lockergnome.com/s/b/The\\_Last\\_Supper\\_\(Leonardo\)](http://encyclopedia.lockergnome.com/s/b/The_Last_Supper_(Leonardo))]

**Luke 8:1-3; Romans 16:1; Acts 8:3**

## Sacred Sex

### #6. WHAT THE DA VINCI CODE CLAIMS:

The ancient Jews and early Christians worshiped "*Shekinah*", the goddess consort of Yahweh/Jehovah.

#### WHAT WE HAVE UNCOVERED:

*Shekinah*, though not appearing in the Hebrew Bible, does appear in the Jewish commentaries on the Bible (the Talmud and Midrash). The word is used to denote the Spirit, Presence, Glory, and/or Light of God filling the Temple or resting on his people. There is no sense in any text of this being a separate goddess, but seems to refer to God himself through his manifestation. The Jewish and Christian faiths do not believe in two gods – one male and one female – but in one God within whom is complete maleness and femaleness. **Genesis 1:26-27**

### #7. WHAT THE DA VINCI CODE CLAIMS:

The ancient Jews and early Christians used ritualized sex to worship *Shekinah* in her temple.

#### WHAT WE HAVE UNCOVERED:

No ancient documents support this. In fact, sex is so thoroughly viewed as an act of marriage only, that it is considered a fracturing of God's order to experience it outside of marriage (an act worthy of the death penalty in Old Testament times).

**Hebrews 13:4; 1 Corinthians 6:15-20**

Sex is not a way to \_\_\_\_\_ intimacy with God but it is a way we \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ it (which is why covenant commitment is a necessary part of the expression).

We should c\_\_\_\_\_ sex while remaining c\_\_\_\_\_ about religious abuse.

e.g., 1. Followers of Adi Da (aka Franklin Jones); 2. Inner circle in Sai Baba movement; 3. Core members of the Family International; 4. Various pagan and witchcraft groups; 5. Buddhist and Hindu tantric groups; 6. Swift Deer; 7. Abusive priests, pastors, gurus, etc.

## CONCLUSION – What Will We Do With Jesus?

### #8. WHAT THE DA VINCI CODE CLAIMS:

The biblical gospels were chosen by the church based on the church's agenda to deify Christ. Those that didn't fit were omitted.

#### WHAT WE HAVE UNCOVERED:

The biblical gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, & John) were chosen because they are the oldest biographies of Christ in existence, dating to somewhere within the first century. The Gnostic gospels are dated mid-second century and onward, too late to be of primary historical value. Also, it is the *biblical* gospels that treat Jesus' humanness and Jewishness seriously, whereas many Gnostic gospels deify Christ in extreme ways (e.g., see Gospel of Thomas, sayings 77 & 113).

**John 14:6-7**

### FOR FURTHER STUDY...

If biblical mystery or historical Jesus studies interest you, check out Jim Beverley's new book, *Counterfeit Code*, or one of our audio series by Bruxy Cavey such as *God's Library; The Jesus Scandals; The Scene Of The Crime*.

For a studies in God's gender and human sexuality, check out *Is God A Boy or A Girl?* and *Is God Sexually Repressed?* (two sermons from our "Hot Potatoes" series) – available to download for free online or to purchase on CD Sundays at church.

### A PERSONAL NOTE FROM JIM BEVERLEY...

I am deeply honored to be at The Meeting House this second week. Once again, I value your feedback as you react to my teaching and my new book *Counterfeit Code*. I don't expect you to automatically accept everything I say because I say it. Rather, I urge you to examine the evidence noted during the two-part series and in my book.

~ Jim ([jamesbeverley@sympatico.ca](mailto:jamesbeverley@sympatico.ca) / [www.tyndale.ca](http://www.tyndale.ca) / [www.religionwatch.ca](http://www.religionwatch.ca))

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## HOME CHURCH QUESTIONS...

### WARM UP & REVIEW...

1. Use your notes to review this week's message. Talk about what challenged, perplexed, or encouraged you.

### LOOK TO THE BOOK...

2. Let's look at some New Testament teaching about sex. Read Paul's words in **1 Corinthians 6:12-7:9**. a) What verse stands out to you the most? Why? b) What are some possible ways that the principle of **6:12** could be applied to our sexual lives, whether single or married? Think of examples. c) According to Paul, is there any reason for seeing sexual sin as being in a unique category of sin? Why? d) Read in context, what makes **6:17** such a potentially *scandellous* verse? e) Knowing that Paul is writing during the days of first-century Judaism, what is decidedly *irreligious* about his statement in **6:19**? f) How are Paul's thoughts on sex and marriage radically *egalitarian* for his day and context?

### SO WHAT?...

3. In light of **7:7**, what is one way your marital status can be used to help you serve others at The Meeting House and beyond? Pray for each other in this area.

Jim Beverley & Bruxy Cavey @ THE MEETING HOUSE – Sunday, April 10<sup>th</sup> / 17<sup>th</sup>, 2005