

Text: II Peter 1:12-16

Title: “Cracking the Da Vinci Code” Pt.1

INTRODUCTION

How many of you have read *The Da Vinci Code* by Dan Brown? If you have, you are one of an estimated 100 million people have read this spell-binding novel since it was published in 2003. In a few weeks the movie directed by Ron Howard and starring Tom Hanks will be released.

But *The Da Vinci Code* it is more than a well-written work of fiction. It has also become a prime example of the attacks that have come upon the Savior, and the faith, that you and I hold dear. So for the next three weeks I’m going to try to answer some of the *The Da Vinci Code*’s misrepresentations of the words of the New Testament, as well as of church history.

Now I realize that many of you have not read, and may never read *The Da Vinci Code*. And that’s OK. I’m not here to preach *The Da Vinci Code*, but to preach God’s Word. But so you’ll understand the cultural issues that we’re facing, let’s let Lee Strobel to introduce the book to us in this way ... (VIDEO CLIP)

Open your Bibles to II Peter 1:12-15. I’ve interrupted the I Corinthians series, but if you’ll recall we have talked in that study about the clash between the world’s wisdom and the wisdom of God. We have before us a classic illustration of this cosmic battle going on today. Read text.

We’re going to let these verses give us God’s guidance and wisdom as we seek to engage others in the battle for the truth.

As we are faced with challenges to our faith Christians have four options:

- **EMBRACE IT** – And many have done this. They read books like *Da Vinci Code*, etc. and come away thinking, this makes sense. I was talking with a friend recently who had heard that one of his friends who has been exploring religion, read the *Da Vinci Code* and thinks he’s found the answers.
- **IGNORE IT** – This will be the approach of many believers. They have enough of their own problems, but don’t have time to think about how their faith is being misrepresented in the minds of their friends and colleagues.
- **BOYCOTT IT** – Another approach for believers is to write off stuff like this as evil and not have anything to do with it. And if that’s what your conscience tells you to do, fine. In fact, I was in this category until I became convicted that as a pastor, many people were going to see this and perhaps be swayed by the misrepresentations. So I have opted for the next option.
- **ENGAGE IT** – Challenge it. This will offer amazing opportunities to witness for Jesus Christ. Whether it’s a book, a movie, or an election issue, don’t be afraid to engage people in a discussion.

But we engage our culture, not with our own reasoning, but with the truth of God's Word. That's why it's important that we remember the things we have been taught. That's what Peter was saying. Look again at vv.12-15.

Peter knew his days were numbered, and he wanted his readers to retain all he would write in this epistle. Three times he spoke of this:

2 Peter 1:12-15 - So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have. 13 I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body, 14 because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. 15 And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things.

So one of the ways God uses His Word is to remind us of important matters through the careful teaching of the Scriptures.

Now, this is all about Jesus. The truth revolves around the Person of Jesus Christ. The problem that we have with the Da Vinci Code is the gross misrepresentation of the Lord Jesus Christ. Peter talks about this.

2 Peter 1:16 - We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

Two important pieces of information are contained here in this verse:

1. OUR FAITH IS NOT BASED ON CLEVER STORIES INVENTED BY MAN.

v.16 – “We did not follow cleverly invented stories...”

There are lots of “cleverly invented stories” out there today. The word for “stories” in the original language is the word from which we get our word “myth.” And “cleverly invented” is from the word that is translated “wise” or “wisdom,” for instance, in I Corinthians. And when it says, “We did not follow...” it literally means “we didn’t imitate those myths.

Our faith is not based on these clever stories that are invented by Dan Brown or anyone else.

2. OUR FAITH IS BASED ON EYEWITNESS TESTIMONIES OF ACTUAL EVENTS.

Instead, true faith is founded on historical facts, which eyewitnesses corroborated. Now we'll elaborate on this in a minute, but first, let me give you just one example of these “cleverly invented stories,” then we'll compare them to the eyewitness testimonies of actual events.

ILLUSTRATION – Let's just peek inside the book for a minute. There's a conversation that takes place between the one of the characters Sophie Neveu, a police cryptographer, and Leigh Teabing, a former royal historian. Quote from p.231.

Wow! “The Bible, as we know it today, was collated by the pagan Roman emperor Constantine the Great.” Is that the way it really happened? Constantine was emperor of Rome in the early 300’s.

For most Christians who know anything about the Bible, their knowledge ends with the last book of the Bible, Revelation. They don’t know what happened after about 90 A.D. (1st century). But the 2nd and 3rd and 4th century is totally unknown to most of us. And yet many of the attacks today on the Bible stem from a misrepresentation of what happened after the apostles died. And today, I’m grateful to have on the platform with me Dr. Craig Blaising, a man who has spend a good bit of his life studying how the church progressed under the leadership of men who have come to be called “the Church Fathers.” This is the time period that Dan Brown is playing with in *The Da Vinci Code*.

Craig Blaising is the Executive VP and Provost at SWBTS. He and Diane, and their children Emily and Jonathan are members of our church and came to Fort Worth in 2001. Craig is a prolific author and scholar.

Why is this time period important to us as evangelical Christians?

Was the description of the life and teachings of Jesus provided for us in the NT really the way it was?

Some scholars subscribe to the belief that there were a number of “versions” of Christianity that floated around in the 1st century, and into the 2nd century. And what we’ve come to believe today as orthodox in terms of the teachings of Jesus, His death, and resurrection, His deity, etc., really weren’t established until nearly 300 years after the death of Jesus when Emperor Constantine made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire. Is that the way it really happened?

Now what we believe and teach about Jesus Christ comes from the Gospels. Could you explain for us the process whereby these four Gospels came to be recognized as the “official biographies” of Jesus?

We have our NT, but many people do not know or understand how these 27 books came together. Of course, the Da Vinci Code’s storyline is based on the assumption that these books of the Bible were really not the “authorized version” of Christianity until 300 years or so after Jesus was born. What do you say to that?

What does the word “canon” mean?

Was there a time or place when the “canon” was formally sealed for all time?

CONCLUSION

Now look back with me to the Scriptures.

v.12 - So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have.

I want you to remain strong, which is what it means to be “firmly established.” I don’t want you to go through adversity in your life, and then crumble.

Inevitably, when you and I go through difficult times, we turn to God and His Word. We hang on to the things that we know about God from the truth of the Bible. But what happens if seeds of doubt are sown in our minds and hearts about God’s Word. Is it really God’s Word, or is it just some clever sayings of some people who lived a long time ago. And if that’s the case, what’s to say that their wise sayings are any more valid than my own reasoning. So we could easily get caught in this whirlpool of doubt that pulls you down and down. I want you to remain strong, firmly established.