

**THE BIBLE, THE DA VINCI CODE AND THE REAL JESUS**  
*A Historical Survey of Jesus Christ, His Followers and His Church*  
*Test everything. Hold on to the good. (1 Thess. 5:21, NIV)*

**Session 4**

**REVIEW**

Claim #3: "Constantine commissioned and financed a new Bible, which omitted those gospels that spoke of Christ's *human* traits and embellished those gospels that spoke of Him godlike. The earlier gospels were outlawed, gathered up and burned." (p. 234)

1. Did Constantine form the New Testament?
  - a. Constantine did not choose which books to include or exclude.
  - b. He did not order the destruction of the Gospels that were left out of the canon. Indeed, there were no imperial book burnings.

Claim #4: "...Everything you need to know about the Bible can be summed up by the great canon doctor Martyn Percy...The Bible did not arrive by fax from heaven...The Bible is a product of *man*...Not of God. The Bible did not fall magically from the clouds." (p. 231)

2. How was the New Testament Canon formed?
  - a. The Gospels
    - i. By the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century there is some noticeable evidence by churches to collect the sayings of Jesus/to record Jesus' ministry.
  - b. The Pauline Letters
    - i. It is clear that even in the NT there is reference to the authority of Paul's writings.
      1. 2 Peter 3:15
  - c. What was the catalyst for putting the New Testament documents together?
    - i. Book of Acts
  - d. Canon as a "will to power"?
    - i. The Church came to recognize, accept, affirm, and confirm the self-authenticating quality of certain documents that imposed themselves upon the Church.
3. The Internal Evidence
  - a. Equality of Prophets and Apostles
  - b. Their Apostolic Sayings are To Be Treasured

## MARY MAGDALENE, THE HOLY GRAIL, & THE CHURCH – PART 1

Claim 5: “The companion of the Savior is Mary Magdalene...As any Aramaic scholar will tell you, the word *companion* in those days, literally meant *spouse*.” (p. 246, referencing the *Gospel of Philip* found in the *Nag Hammadi Library*)

Claim 6: “Jesus as a married man makes infinitely more sense than our standard biblical view of Jesus as a bachelor...According to Jewish custom, celibacy was condemned, and the obligation for a Jewish father was to find a suitable wife for his son. If Jesus were not married, at least one of the Bible’s gospels would have mentioned it and offered some explanation for His unnatural state of bachelorhood.” (p. 245)

### 1. Any Aramaic Scholar? Not Really!

- a. This quote comes from the *Coptic Gospel of Philip*
  - i. The quote says in part: “The companion of the [gap in the manuscript] Mary Magdalene [gap] more than the disciples [gap] on her [gap].”
  - ii. As such, it comes as no surprise that this document was written in Coptic.<sup>1</sup>
  - iii. Moreover, the use of the word *companion* in this document is a loan word from another language – not Aramaic but Greek (*koinōnos*)!
- b. Nonetheless, does *companion* mean *spouse*?
  - i. The word does not mean *spouse* (or *lover*).
  - ii. Indeed, it means companion – commonly used of friends and associates.

### 2. Jesus’ bachelorhood – social faux-pas?

- a. The vast majority of scholars – both Christians and not - whose expertise is in the New Testament and Early Christianity have found no Biblical, historical or archeological proof substantiating the claims that Jesus was married.
- b. In fact, none of our early Christian sources contain any reference to Jesus’ marriage or to his wife.
- c. If Jesus were married, why would this not be mentioned in the New Testament Gospels?
  - i. Jesus’ earthly parents are mentioned.
    1. Matt. 1:18; Jn. 6:42; 19:25; Acts 1:14
  - ii. Jesus’ earthly brothers are mentioned
    1. Matt. 12:46; Mk. 3:31-32
    2. In one passage there is a reference to the wives of the apostles and to the wives of Jesus’ earthly brothers, yet there is no mention of a wife of Jesus (1 Corinthians 9:5)

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<sup>1</sup> The Afro-Asiatic language of the Copts, which survives only as a liturgical language of the Coptic Church

- d. If Mary Magdalene had this special place in the life of Jesus, why is she not singled out as special anywhere in the canonical Gospels?
  - i. With the exception of Luke 8:1-3, where Mary Magdalene is mentioned by name along with two other named women and several others, she is not mentioned during Jesus' ministry at all, let alone as one who stood in a special relationship with Jesus.
  - ii. Why is she identified as she is – Mary Magdalene?
    1. Scholars are widely agreed that she is called Magdalene to differentiate her from other Marys named in the New Testament.
    2. *Magdalene* indicates her place of origin – the town of Magdala.
- e. Unnatural State of Bachelorhood?
  - i. Recall the Essenes – most if not all of them were celibate men.
  - ii. The unnatural state of bachelorhood has no basis in historical reality.
  - iii. Consider the writings of the Apostle Paul - 1 Cor. 7:8, 26-27
  - iv. This belief came much later in Jewish writings and scholars.

### LET'S PROCESS

Take 10 minutes and discuss with your table the following questions. Assign someone who is willing to share with the entire group.

1. Why would Jesus as husband appeal to so many?
2. What motivations/needs are attempting to be addressed?

### MARY MAGDALENE, THE HOLY GRAIL, & THE CHURCH – PART 2

Claim 7: “At this point in the gospels (being used to refer to the *Nag Hammadi Library*), Jesus suspects He will soon be captured and crucified. So He gives Mary Magdalene instructions on how to carry on His church after He is gone...According to these unaltered gospels, it was not *Peter* to whom Christ gave directions with which to establish the Christian Church. It was *Mary Magdalene*.” (p. 247-248, referencing in particular the *Gospel of Mary* found in the *Nag Hammadi Library*)

Claim 8: “The threat Mary Magdalene posed to the men of the early church was potentially ruinous. Not only was she the woman to whom Jesus had assigned the task of founding the Church, but she also had physical proof that the Church's newly proclaimed deity had spawned a mortal bloodline. The Church, in order to defend itself against the Magdalene's power, perpetuated her image as a whore and buried evidence of Christ's marriage to her, thereby defusing any potential claims that Christ had a surviving bloodline and was a mortal prophet.” (p. 254)

1. Men in the Ministry of Jesus
  - a. The Canonical Gospels tell us that most of Jesus followers, and certainly his closest followers were men.
  - b. This is not surprising because women in the first century were typically under the authority of the men in their lives – their fathers and/or husbands – and would not be able to be away from home for long periods of time.
  - c. Conversely, men had more of a public profile outside the home.
  - d. At the same time, it should not be missed that those men closest to him (the 12 Apostles) were told that they would be the future rulers of God’s people.
    - i. Matthew 19:28, cf. Luke 22:30
  
2. Women in the Ministry of Jesus
  - a. It is clear that Jesus was accompanied by women in his travels.
    - i. Mark 15:40-41
  - b. It is clear that Jesus interacted compassionately and respectfully with women
    - i. Matt 15:21-29
    - ii. Mark 7:24-30, 14: 3-9
    - iii. Luke 10:38-42
    - iv. John 4:1-42, 12:1-8
  - c. In fact, it is clear that women provided Jesus with financial support during his ministry.
    - i. Luke 8:1-3 cf. Mk. 15:40-41
  
3. Mary Magdalene’s Portrayal as a Prostitute
  - a. This idea came about more than 500 years after the New Testament was written.
  - b. It was first taught by Pope Gregory the Great (c. 591) when he indicated that Mary Magdalene was none other than the women of ill repute mentioned in Luke 7:36-50 (cf. Luke 8:2).
  
4. Scriptural Verses about Mary Magdalene
  - a. Matt. 27:56, 61; 28:1
  - b. Mk. 15:40, 47; 16:1, 9
  - c. Lk. 8:2; 24:10
  - d. Jn. 19:25; 20:1, 18

**LET'S EXPLORE!**

1. Why would Mary Magdalene as Church leader appeal to so many?
2. What motivations/needs are attempting to be addressed?