

The Bible

"The Bible did not fall magically from the clouds. Man created it as a historical record of tumultuous times, and it has evolved through countless translations, additions and revisions. History has never had a definitive version of the book" - Leigh Teabing p 312

What does the Da Vinci Code say?

The Bible was rewritten and edited in 325 AD at Constantine's request. This was to include the "lie" that Jesus was divine (i.e. God).

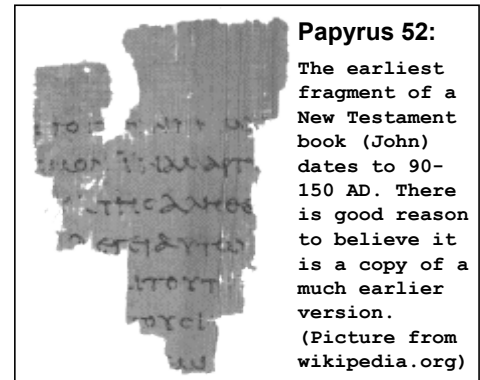
The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi Coptic books (*they weren't 'scrolls'*) portray the real Jesus (p. 331).

What are the facts?

The Bible

The Bible is a collection of books (*biblia* is Latin for "books") which Christians divide into two parts - The Old Testament and the New Testament. It was collected over many centuries as people wrote down messages and teachings from God. Leigh Teabing is correct in saying that the Bible records mostly tumultuous times, however as can be seen below, he is very wrong in saying there has never been a definitive version.

The Old Testament contains the Jewish Scriptures and the current books were accepted long before the time of Jesus. The earliest complete copy of the Old Testament is from 900 AD. The Dead Sea Scrolls, unearthed in 1947, were written by a Jewish sect (the Essenes) that existed between 150 BC and 70 AD. They contain fragments of every Old Testament book (except Esther), making them an amazing discovery, especially as they corroborate our 900 AD version. Since the scrolls were Jewish, and mostly predate Jesus, there is no mention of him or Christianity.



"The Apostles received the Gospel for us from the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ was sent forth from God. So then Christ is from God, and the Apostles are from Christ. Both therefore came of the will of God in the appointed order."

1 Clement 42: 1-2
Written c 95 AD
(Picture from www.earlychristianwritings.com)



Clement of Rome

The New Testament contains four accounts of Jesus' life (called Gospels), *Acts* (a history book), 21 letters and *Revelation* (a letter and prophecy of the future), all written by the close of the first century AD. These books were in common use by the second century and church leaders from this time make mention of them (e.g. Clement of Rome, Polycarp and Ignatius). There are lists of Christian documents from the late 100s onwards, and while they do actually vary from the current canon, the four Gospels are found in all.

The Christian Church was founded on the teachings of the Apostles (Jesus followers, commissioned for the task) and not a book, so the oral tradition was key. These teachings were written down by the Apostles or their close

associates and subsequently became books that were circulated around. This was important since the Apostles all eventually died and the teachings of Jesus had to be preserved. The four Gospels were known and quoted by Church leaders as early as 135 AD (Polycarp of Smyrna writing to the Philippians) and by examining the quotations of ancient writers we can be sure that the Gospels were the same as the versions we have now. This demonstrates that there were no embellishments of Jesus to invent his divinity.

The books of the New Testament were written and established long before Constantine. The basis for keeping a book in the collection was whether it fit into the three following categories:

1. Written by an Apostle or direct witness of Jesus
2. In agreement with the rest of the Scriptures (i.e. The Old Testament) and Christian teachings
3. Recognised and used by Christians in general

Conclusion:

The books of the Bible were completed and known by the end of the first century AD.

Further Reading:

"Is the New Testament History?" Paul Barnett

"The Dead Sea Scrolls in English" Geza Vermes, 3rd edition, JSOT Press, 1987

"Canon of Scripture" F F Bruce

For more details, check out the posters on Constantine, the Council of Nicea and Jesus

All page references to "The Da Vinci Code" are from the Corgi Books paperback.

The Bible

'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.' - Leigh Teabing p 313

'...these documents speak of Christ's ministry in very human terms.' Leigh Teabing, speaking of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi books p 317

What does the Da Vinci Code say?

At least 80 other accounts of Jesus' life were suppressed, including a lost Gospel written by Jesus himself. The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi Coptic books (*they weren't 'scrolls'*) portray the real Jesus.

Leonardo da Vinci hated the Bible (p. 312).

What are the facts?



It is not possible that the Gospels can be either more or fewer in number than they are. For, since there are four zones of the world in which we live, and four principal winds, while the Church is scattered throughout all the world, and the "pillar and ground" of the Church is the Gospel and the spirit of life; it is fitting that she should have four pillars, breathing out immortality on every side, and vivifying men afresh.
Against the Heresies Book 3, Chapter 11. Irenaeus c. 180 AD.

While Irenaeus' reasons may seem dubious to us, it is clear that by the end of the second century, Christians were accepting the four Gospels as an authoritative collection.

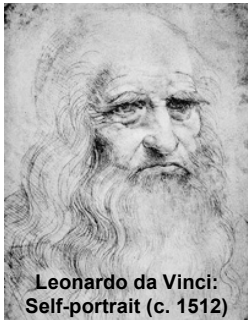
Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyon

(Picture from www.earlychristianwritings.com)

Other Gospels

Other Gospels do actually exist and copies of some are found in the Nag Hammadi collection (discovered in 1945 in Egypt). However, their authority was debated by the early Church and none of them appear in any of the lists of accepted books. In fact only a few are known to have been quoted by the early Church writers and almost always they are presented as subordinate to the four Gospels. In the mid-200s Origen spoke of "the four Gospels, which alone are undisputed in the church of God beneath the whole heaven." (*First book of the commentary on Matthew*). There is **no** evidence of 80 Gospels ever existing and the four Gospels were known and seen as authoritative long before Constantine. Also, the Q document supposedly written by Jesus is simply a hypothetical collection of Jesus' sayings that formed the source for the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.

The Nag Hammadi Gospels can be discounted from the Bible based on the three points as outlined on the other Bible poster. They were not written by eyewitnesses (they were recorded at least 50-100 years after the Apostles died), they stand in stark contradiction with the Bible (both Testaments) and they were not widely recognised by Christians.



Leonardo da Vinci:
Self-portrait (c. 1512)

(Picture taken from
wikipedia.org)

Leonardo da Vinci's view of the Bible

There is no evidence that Leonardo da Vinci was anti-Bible. The quotes used by Dan Brown are taken out of context and have nothing to do with the Bible - one is an attack on alchemy and the other is supposedly against those who don't appreciate mathematics.

Against alchemists: *The false interpreters of nature declare that quicksilver is the common seed of every metal, not remembering that nature varies the seed according to the variety of the things she desires to produce in the world. And many have made a trade of delusions and false miracles, deceiving the stupid multitude.*

Taken from Leonardo's Notebooks. The italicised sentence is what Dan Brown quotes

Conclusion:

The four Biblical Gospels were accepted early on and seen as an exclusive, sufficient collection. There's no reason to believe Leonardo was anti-Bible.

Further Reading:

"Is the New Testament History?" Paul Barnett

"Know Why You Believe" Paul E Little

"The Case for Christ" Lee Strobel

For more details, check out the posters on Constantine, the Council of Nicea and the Other Gospels

All page references to "The Da Vinci Code" are from the Corgi Books paperback.