

Introduction early
church portray jesus
as more emotionally



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Introduction

This paper is a personal reflection on the evidence Dan Brown uses in his book, and how he uses the same to support his case. For better understanding of the evidence, the paper contrasts the evidence brown uses to similar materials in the Gospel narratives of John, Mark and Luke. Brown gives special attention to the ' Gospel of Philip'. However, he treats the gospel in a wide conspiracy theory that generally affects ones appreciation of the Gospel.

In this paper, I look into the dangers of Brown's indiscriminating use of the Gnostic " Gospel of Phillip'. There are many positive things one can learn from the gospel of Philip leading to better understanding of Jesus' relationship with women in his inner circle, however, I feel that misrepresentation of the same, as evidenced in Brown's work, might lead to misunderstanding the gospels altogether.

Thesis Statement

After considering the evidence that Brown uses in the ' Da Vinci Code', especially the gospel of Philip, I am of the opinion that although Gnostic gospels rejected by the early church portray Jesus as more emotionally attached to women in his life, these gospels may contribute negatively to the understanding of Jesus' broader relationship to women.

Brown's Evidence

It is very interesting that Dan Brown uses Leonardo Da Vinci's painting depicting ' The Last Supper' as conclusive evidence that Mary Magdalene was the most beloved disciple of Jesus.

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In the book, through dialogue between Leigh and Sophie, we learn that the figure at the right hand of Jesus, in Da Vinci's painting, is the figure of Mary Magdalene. Additionally, through Leigh, we learn that at the time of Jesus' crucifixion, Mary Magdalene was pregnant with Jesus' child. According to Brown, the absence of a chalice in Leonardo's painting is a pointer and proof of link between Mary Magdalene and the Holy Grail.

Dan Brown builds on this evidence to illustrate that Mary Magdalene was actually pregnant with Jesus' child. In the book Leigh leads Sophie to accept that Mary Magdalene was the Holy Grail due to 'V' shape formed as per the sitting arrangement. The V shape is a symbol from Judaism that refers to feminism in a sacred sense. Although the theory is consistent, the evidence that Brown uses is not conclusive. For me, brown is using suppositions and circumstantial evidence. For example Brown argues that the apostle John, the beloved one as per bible gospels, is not represented in the Da Vinci Picture.

To what extent this was historically true; brown has no other evidence apart from the painting, which he is only but interpreting. The other evidence brown posits is the color schemes used to portray Jesus and Mary Magdalene in the Da Vinci's painting. In the painting, Jesus is presented wearing a red blouse and royal blue cap, while John (as per bible gospels) or Mary Magdalene (as per Brown) has a royal blue blouse with a red cap on. The interchange between the colors of the cap and blouse that Jesus and Mary Magdalene were wearing symbolizes their being one as a result of being joined in marriage. This is an interesting assertion but it left me wondering if that was the original intention of the painter. It appears like brown is making <https://assignbuster.com/introduction-early-church-portray-jesus-as-more-emotionally/>

up his own story and interpreting the color schemes in the painting to fit his schema.

Contrast between Brown's Evidence and Bible Gospel Narratives

For a person who understands the bible gospels, I could not help but notice the contradictions between Browns account and gospel accounts. All evidence presented by Dan Brown contradicts similar narratives in the gospel of Luke, John, Mathew and Mark. According to the Gospel, the Last Supper was the last meal Jesus shared with His disciples. There is no mention of a woman among them; the exact opposite of what Leonardo's painting, as interpreted by Brown, depicts. All the four gospels do not mention the presence of Mary Magdalene at the last supper. They all indicate that the beloved disciple, John, is the one who was seated at the right hand side of Jesus. The fact that the four gospels depict john as having been the beloved disciple, for me, discredit Brown's claims to a large extent.

Further, the gospel of Philip does not help Brown's case, either, because it does not mention Mary Magdalene as having been a beloved disciple. Brown alleges that Mary Magdalene was married to Jesus. Bible gospels only report that Mary Magdalene was healed of demons by Jesus. The full narrative of how Jesus met Mary Magdalene and healed her of demons is in the gospel of Luke, chapter eight. The gospels indicate that she was also present at Jesus' crucifixion and at the tomb early in the morning. On the morning when Jesus rose from the dead He sent her to go and announce the good news to the apostles.

According to the bible account, therefore, Mary Magdalene was a devoted follower of Jesus Christ and not His wife. Apart from his interpretation of the painting and writings in the gospel of Philip, brown does not provide any other convincing evidence to cement his claims.

The Gospel of Philip

Brown uses the painting and the gospel of Philip to portray Jesus as purely human in contrast to what the bible gospels tend to portray.

The gospel according to Philip comprises of collection of sayings of Jesus. This gospel is also said to have explored deeply the sacrament of marriage. The Da Vinci Code presents the Gospel of Philip as the main evidence that Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene.

According to me, by treating the content of the Gospel of Philip within the context of a broad conspiracy theory, brown does not do justice to the gospel. It is clear that he tries to interpret the gospel to fit his conspiracy. Generally, the gospel of Philip is full of parables which are not easy to interpret. There are many metaphorical statements that can easily be construed to mean anything (Smith, 2005, p. 9).

It's very hard to interpret and understand the texts. However, there are passages in the gospel that directly refer to Jesus and Mary Magdalene's close relationship. The only reason why Brown uses the Gospel of Philip to claim that Jesus and Mary Magdalene were married is the claim in the gospel that Mary was a companion of Jesus. The gospel does not have in-depth narration that can be used as evidence to this claim (Smith, 2005, p. xiv).

Conclusion

Considering the evidence presented by brown, I am convinced that use of the Gnostic Gospel of Philip and other Gnostic gospels rejected by the early church may contribute both positively and negatively to our understanding of Jesus' broader relationship with women. Several purported Gnostic Gospels, which were rejected by the church, e. g. the Gospel of Mary Magdalene portray Mary Magdalene as the special disciple of Jesus.

In the Gospel of Thomas, Jesus is reported to have said to Mary Magdalene that He will make her male like his male disciples. This can be interpreted in many ways but I think it basically meant that Mary Magdalene and, by extension, all women are equal to men. This is refreshing and it supports St. Paul's teaching that before God we are all equal, whether male or female. Although these gospels, rejected by the early church, portray Jesus as more emotionally attached to women in his life, which is good, on the other hand these gospels may contribute negatively to our understanding of Jesus' broader relationship to women.

When interpreted or used mischievously in conspiracy theories, they are construed to mean very different things. For example, Browns interpretation or portrayal of the personal relationship between Mary Magdalene and Jesus may raises eyebrows. According to me, the focus of the gospels can't have been on sexual intimacy but spiritual intimacy. Therefore, I personally feel that to the extent these gospels affirm gender equality i.

e. that all human beings are loving children of one Father or Mother in Heaven, they are welcome. However, to the extent that the writings are

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somehow confusing and can thus be construed wrongly as prove in conspiracy theories, I think the church leaders were right in rejecting them.

References

Smith, P., A., 2005, the Gospel of Philip Annotated & Explained, Skylight Paths Publishing, Woodstock