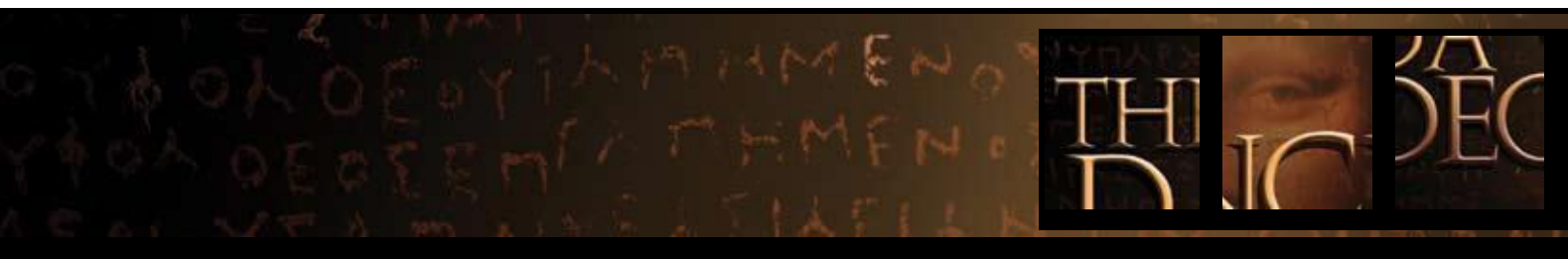


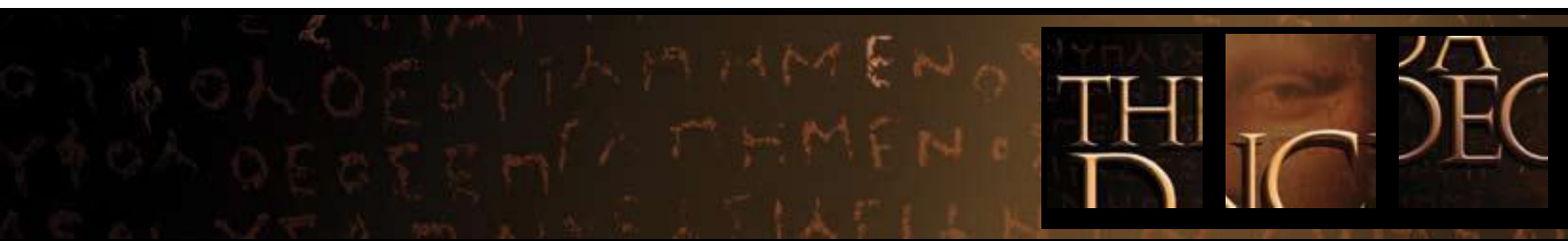
HOPEFM

MYSTERIES UNEARTHED

**The Da Vinci
Decode
episode 5**

Sex, Sexism...





Two Views of sex featured in The Da Vinci Code:

Notes...

1. 'Thou shalt not...'

- Church leaders celibate
- Some abuse children and cover up for colleagues
- Church teachings on sex seem hopelessly extreme

Church scholar Augustine (354-450):

- Borrowed Plato's ideas: body corrupt & sinful, soul good. 'Dualism'
- 'Platonic relationships' the ideal: soul and mind only, no sex except for reproduction

- Augustine emasculated himself
- Augustine's thinking, though unbiblical, became official doctrine

2. Free love

- Hieros Gamos - ritualistic sex as a spiritual act, "nothing to do with eroticism", Brown claims (p.410)
- Sex a pathway to God:

"...next time you find yourself with a woman, look in your heart and see if you cannot approach sex as a mystical, spiritual act. Challenge yourself to find that spark of divinity that man can only achieve through union with the sacred feminine." p.413

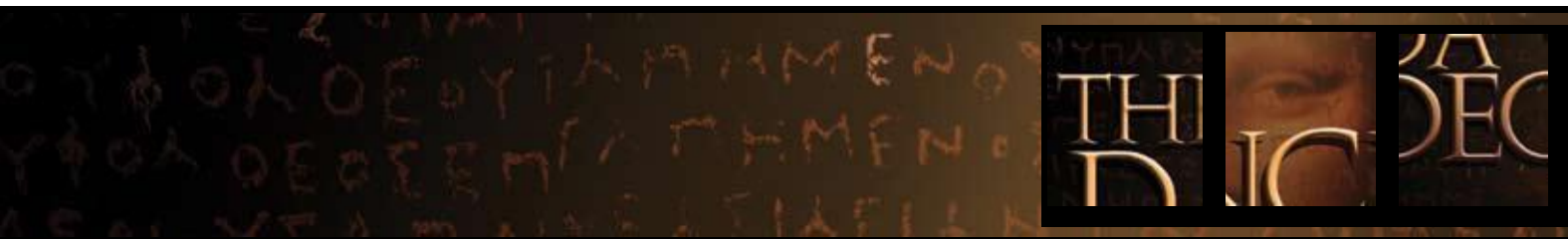
- Brown claims ritualistic sex was a Jewish tradition: "Men seeking spiritual wholeness came to the Temple to visit priestesses with whom they made love and experienced the divine through physical union." (p.411)

Checking Brown's claims:

- Israel did at times copy neighbouring countries and indulge in sacred prostitution, but it was condemned by their religion.

"While Israel was staying in Acacia, the men began to indulge in sexual immorality with Moabite women, who invited them to the sacrifices to their gods. The people ate and bowed down before these gods. So Israel joined in worshipping the Baal of Peor. And the LORD's anger burned against them." Moses, Numbers 25:1-3, NIV

'There were also male cult prostitutes in the land. They copied the abominations of the nations which the Lord drove out of the land before the sons of Israel.' 1 Kings 14:24



Notes...

- Judaism had laws against sex in worship

“None of the daughters of Israel shall be a cult prostitute, nor shall any of the sons of Israel be a cult prostitute.”

Moses, Deuteronomy 23:17 (see also Exodus 34:1-5)

- Brown claims God’s name Jehovah is an androgynous physical union between masculine Jah and the pre-Hebraic name for Eve, Havah. But Jehovah or Yahweh is from the verb ‘to be’ and means something like ‘I AM’ or ‘I WILL BE WHAT I WILL BE.’ Eve’s name not Havah (‘to be’) but Chava (from ‘life’)

The book doesn’t mention a balanced, middle option:

3. Spiritual sex as shown in the Bible

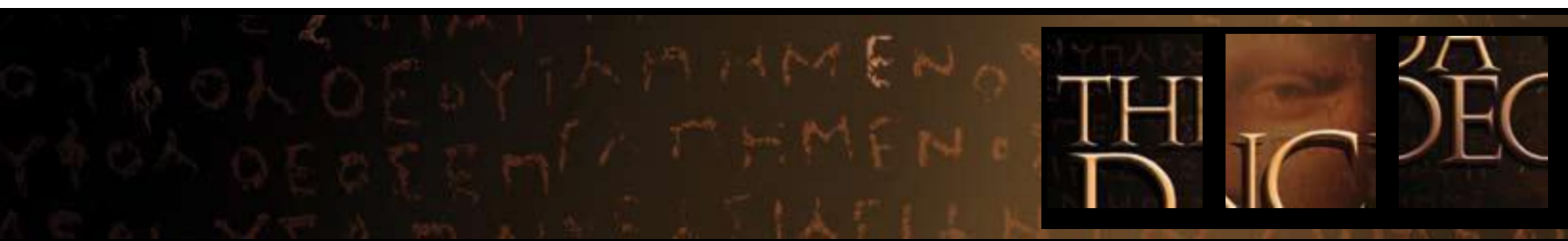
- Judaism viewed sex as God’s gift, to be enjoyed within the love and commitment of marriage:

Biblical sex advice for men:

“May you rejoice in the wife of your youth. She’s a graceful, loving deer—may her breasts satisfy you always, may you always be captivated by her love. Why be captivated...by an adulteress?” Proverbs 5:18-20, NIV.

- Jesus was raised on the Old Testament and had its healthy view of sex
- God wants humans to enjoy love and sex
- Love and companionship are the ideal in a marriage, and sex is meant to bring a couple closer
- God’s creation of the body is good
- Many Christians are still influenced by Augustine
- A human being is not a good soul in a bad body.

“God is interested in us as whole people. We are not souls encased in a husk of flesh. The Song [of Solomon] celebrates the joys of physical touch, the exhilaration of exotic scents, the sweet sound of an intimate voice, the taste of another’s body. Furthermore, the books explore human emotion—the thrill and power of love as well as its often attendant pain. The Song affirms human love, intimate relationship, sensuality and sexuality.” Duane Garret, WBC The Song of Solomon, p.59.



Jesus:

Notes...

- Spoke of Adam and Eve as an example of God's ideal (Matthew 19:4-8)
- knew the Song of Solomon (Matt 6:28; Rev. 3:20)
- performed his first miracle at a wedding (John 2:1-11)

Jesus the celibate

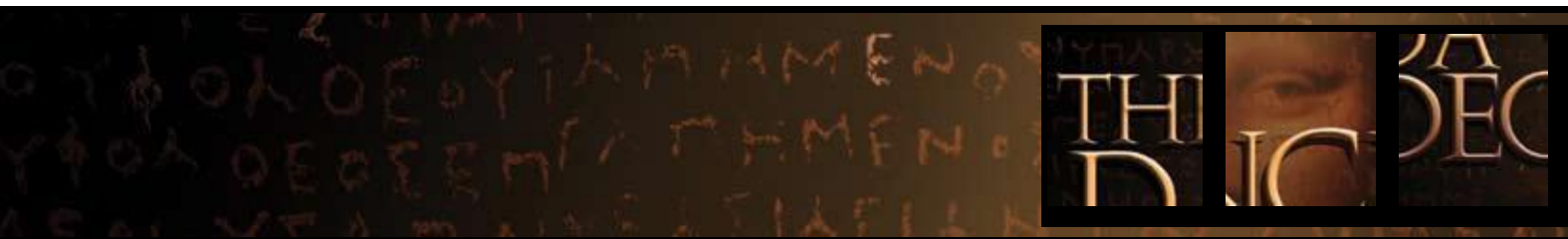
- Jesus knew He would die young (Matthew 16:20), so perhaps decided it would be irresponsible to leave a wife and children
- If Jesus had left descendants, they might claim special status ("Princess")
- Christ says some people might choose celibacy, but its' not for everybody (Matt 19:11,12; see also 1 Corinthians 7:7-9)
- Jesus' disciples were married, including Peter (Matthew 8:14), claimed by some to be the first Pope.

Early Christian attitudes towards sex, 60AD:

"Marriage is honourable for everyone, and the marriage bed is clean, but God will judge fornicators and adulterers." (Hebrews 13:4)

Paul on temple prostitution:

'Should a man take his body, which belongs to Christ, and join it to a prostitute? Never! ... the person who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Run away from sexual sin! No other sin so clearly affects the body as this one does ... Or don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God brought you with a high price. So you must honour God with your body.' 1 Corinthians 6:15-20



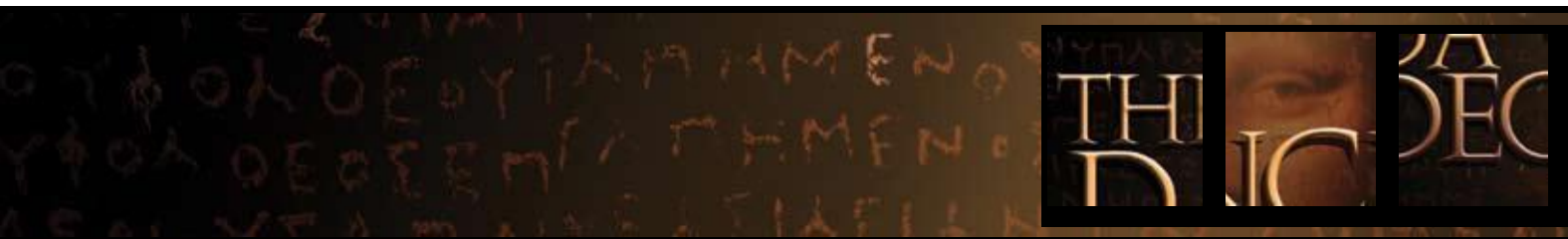
Is Christianity Sexist?

Notes...

- Dan Brown wants his novel to be “very empowering to women” (danbrown.com). Increasing the dignity of women is a worthy aim!
- He writes that modern religion leaves goddesses out of the picture and so women ‘in most cultures have been stripped of their spiritual power’.
- He aims to bring back the idea of goddesses and ‘the sacred feminine’ by making Mary Magdalene divine, and thus to raise the status of women.

“The Priory believes that Constantine and his male successors successfully converted the world from matriarchal paganism to patriarchal Christianity by waging a campaign of propaganda that demonized the sacred feminine, obliterating the goddess from modern religion forever.” The Da Vinci Code, p. 124

Dan Brown’s claims & assumptions	Historical reality
Society was gender-equal before sexist Christians.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Males have been dominant over women Christians throughout most known history. • This oppression existed long before Christianity.
2. Goddess worship liberates women.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • But goddess worship existed long before Christianity – in sexist societies! Did it really help women achieve equality? • The Biblical prophets were opposed to goddess-worshipping religions partly because they practiced fertility rites that pushed many women into prostitution. • The more Israel worshipped pagan goddesses in sexualised worship, the more women were devalued as playthings (e.g. see the Book of Judges, and Jeremiah 44:16-23)



Notes...

A male God?

- Saying 'It' is too impersonal
- God uses feminine images of himself – e.g. the Hebrew word '*rachumim*', from 'womb', means the tenderest mother-love (Isaiah 49:15, Deuteronomy 13:17)

Jesus:

- Appears in male form
- Can use female metaphors about himself (Matthew 23:37)
- Treats the Samaritan woman as a friend
- Taught Mary and other women alongside his disciples
- Appeared to women first after His resurrection, meaning the good news was first passed on by women
- Affirmed women in whatever role they chose: mothers (Luke 18:15-18); or with financial management gifts (Luke 8:3).
- The status of Christian women was elevated to a position of respect rarely seen in any culture.

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Galatians 3:28

Paul honours "...women who have shared my struggle for the cause of the good news about Christ, together with Clement also and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the books of life."

Philippians 4:3