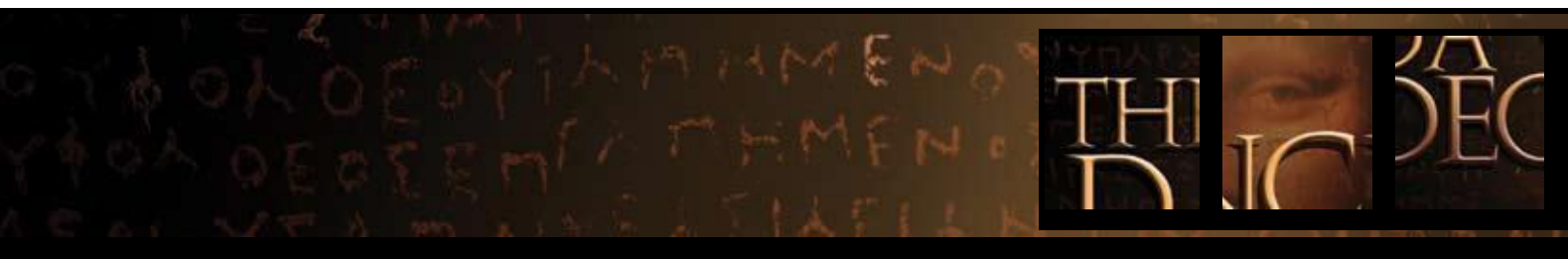


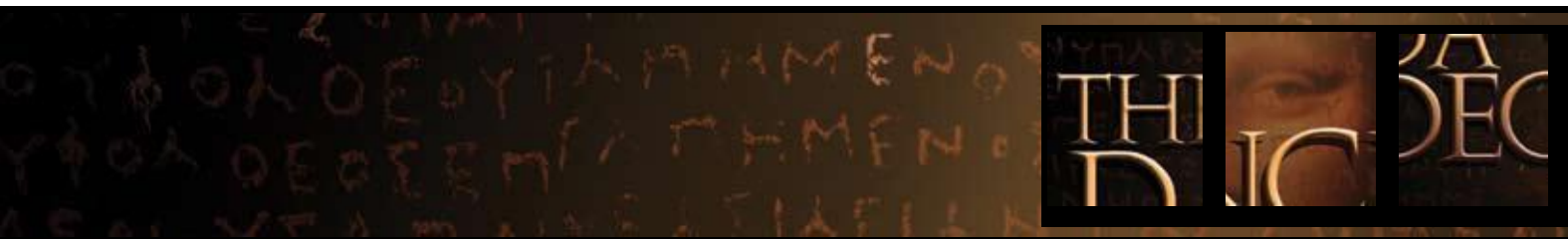
HOPEFM

MYSTERIES UNEARTHED

**The Da Vinci
Decode
episode 5_b**

Mary Magdalene





Did Mary marry Jesus?

Dan Brown's story hinges on this, and he claims solid historical evidence:

Notes...

1. CLAIM: Da Vinci's 'The Last Supper' shows Mary next to Jesus

FACT:

- If the person next to Jesus is Mary, then where is John?
- The person is more likely John, the youngest disciple. Renaissance art often feminized male beauty, and there was a tradition of painting John with fair skin and light or red hair.
- Da Vinci finished it in Italy in 1498, over 1400 years after the event. Why would he have special knowledge?
- Brown's claims based on Les Dossiers Secrets, widely regarded as 20th century forgeries.

2. CLAIM: The Nag Hammadi manuscripts and Gnostic 'gospels' give insight into the relationship between Mary Magdalene and Jesus

FACT:

- They do not say Jesus and Mary were married!
- These were written centuries after Jesus' death

3. CLAIM: Jewish culture 'condemned singleness'

FACT:

- A loving relationship and family was considered a great gift from God
- However, historians Josephus and Philo both mention Jewish individuals who were unmarried
- Jewish groups like the Essenes encouraged singleness
- Married women were usually referred to with their husband's name, yet Mary is never called "Mary, the wife of Jesus."

"the only relevant text for historical information about Mary Magdalene is the New Testament, and it does not go beyond saying that she was one of the circle of women who accompanied the wandering Jesus and his male followers." **James Robinson, Secrets of the Code, p. 99**



The gospel of Mary Magdalene

Notes...

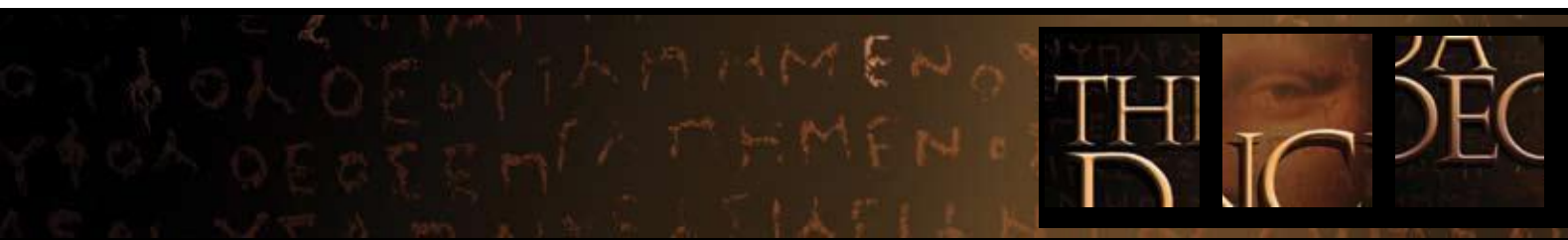
“In an era when ‘God talk’ has moved convincingly into the media/entertainment arena, observers say, her story is captivating because it encapsulates major unresolved issues facing Christianity – the role of women in the church, the place of human sexuality, and the yearning for the feminine aspect of the Divine.” Jane Lampman.

Mary according to Dan Brown:

- lover of Jesus Christ
- the divine Holy Grail
- escaped to France with their daughter Sarah
- sexist churchmen covered up this truth & trimmed her influence with the story of prostitution
- Brown uses this to argue for a gender-equal spirituality and the ‘sacred feminine’, the female side of God.

BUT...

- few historians take this story seriously.



Was Mary a Prostitute?

Notes...

- Some scholars say no, this was a sexist attempt to destroy her reputation. They say Mary was first labelled a prostitute in AD591, when Pope Gregory confused her with another unnamed female ‘sinner’ in the Bible. The Roman Catholic church changed its view in 1969, claiming that the Gospels do not call Mary a prostitute. Since then, she has often been portrayed as a wealthy married woman who befriended Jesus and supported him financially.
- But some contemporary scholars (Andrew Feuillet, John Wenham) see clues in the gospels that Mary was a prostitute. Three gospel writers covered up the name of woman with a sinful past, and only John, writing later, names her as Mary.

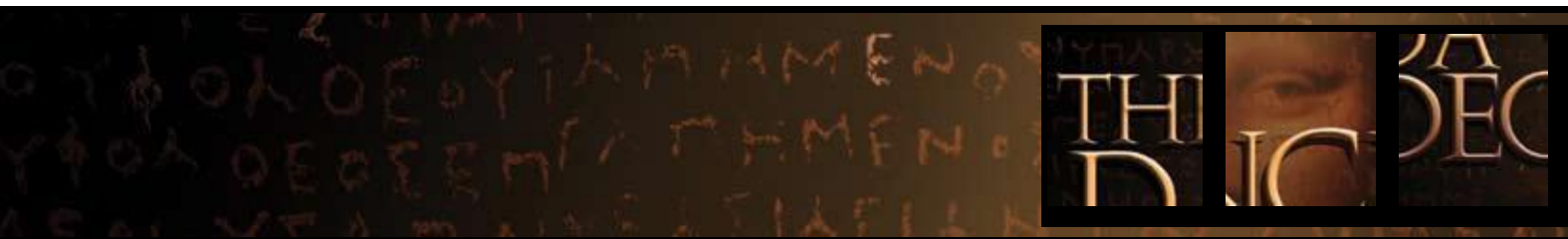
The key question is how to put the various stories together, and whether Mary Magdalene, Mary of Bethany and an unnamed ‘sinful’ woman are the same person.

Pope Gregory said, *“She whom Luke calls the sinful woman, whom John calls Mary [of Bethany], we believe to be the Mary from whom seven devils were ejected according to Mark.”*

Mary’s story

It is likely that Mary Magdalene = Mary of Bethany = the sinful woman of Luke 7 (see charts for evidence)

- A ‘sinner’ in that city, i.e. local prostitute. (Luke 7:37)
- Possessed by seven demons, until freed by Jesus (Mark 16:9; Luke 8:2)
- Worked on Jesus’ mission team, helping handle logistics and finances (Luke 8:1-3)
- Enjoyed sitting listening to Jesus and enjoying his company, to the annoyance of a workaholic sister. (Luke 10:38-42)
 - Saw her brother Lazarus resurrected by Jesus (John 11)
- Attended a feast at a Pharisee’s house and poured expensive perfumed oil on Jesus’ head (fairly standard hospitality, also used in enthroning Kings) and His feet (only done for dead loved ones) – which was her statement that He was king and she knew He would die. (Most male disciples could not handle the thought of him dying.) She also broke the perfume box, a Jewish tradition when grieving the dead
- Mary took the risk of being at Jesus’ crucifixion
- At dawn on Sunday morning, Mary Magdalene and ‘the other Mary’, the wife of Clopas, came to the sepulchre to anoint Jesus’ body for burial (Matthew 28:1). **He was already alive.**



Notes...

- Jesus appeared to Mary, and asked her to go back to the rest of the apostles and tell them he was alive again
- Thus, a woman was the first witness to the fact of Christ's resurrection
- The male disciples 'did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense.' (Luke 24:11)
- But Jesus confirmed the women's story by appearing in person.

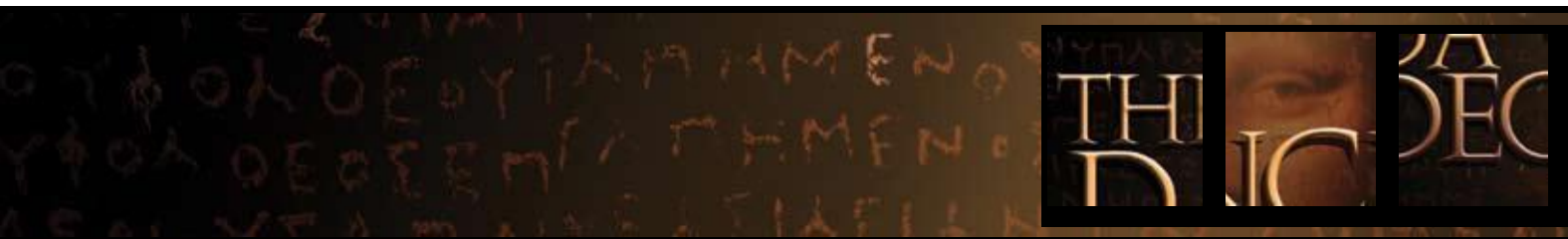
And so... Jesus and women

- Christ loved and valued Mary
- Mary showed Christ's power to change a life
- Mary responded with love for Jesus, and expressed that love even when criticised for it
- Jesus gave Mary and other women responsible roles in his organisation
- Of all the disciples, Mary best understood Jesus' death
- Men didn't believe at first! But they did later
- Jesus said that wherever his story was told, Mary's story would also be told. This is not putting down a woman; it is honouring her, despite her rough past
- The first reports of Christ's resurrection were delivered in a woman's voice.

"Since she was commissioned by Jesus to be in essence an apostle to the apostles, she provided the most crucial precedent in the New Testament for women to be teachers, preachers, or evangelists." **Dr Ben Witherington III**

Conclusion

- Core Christianity is about liberating women and men, and giving dignity and worth to every person equally
- The teaching of Christ liberates us from the spiritual consequences of past mistakes.
- Christianity makes sense as a set of ethics for living, being neither restrictive and unbalanced nor just fluffy talk that lets us go wherever our lusts lead us. It is balanced and sensible.



At a glance

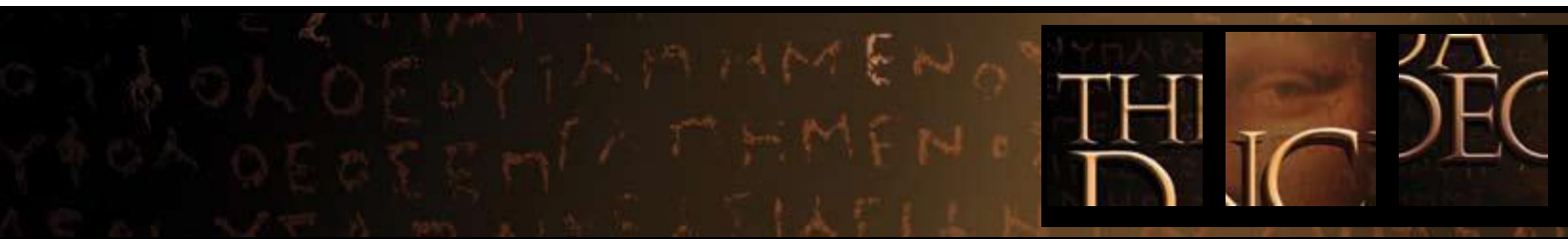
Notes...

Are these contradictory accounts, or the same story from different points of view? Are the differences, necessarily contradictions?

Read the gospel accounts, fill in the details and weigh the evidence for yourself.

(Key: a dash means no detail is given. V6 means verse 6 of the chapter.)

	MATTHEW 26:6-13	MARK 14:3-9	Luke 7:36-50	John 12:1-8
1. Town			–	
2. Location				V3
3. Timing	V2	V2	–	V1 (feast then or later?)
4. Host's name	V6	V3	VV39, 40	
5. Others present	–	–	–	Martha serves, Lazarus at table
6. name of woman			VV37, 39, 47	VV1-2, CF 11:1-2
7. Reclining at table				
8. Anointed what part of body?	V7, V12	V3	V38, 46	V3
9. Alabaster jar				
10. Broke jar	–		–	–
11. Expensive perfume				
12. Pure nard	–		–	
13. House filled with perfume	–	–	–	
14. Who voiced objections	V8	V4	–	V4
15. Judas' hidden motive	–	–	–	
16. Indignant		CF 14:4	–	
17. Why waste	V8		–	
18. Should be sold			–	



19. Cost			–	
20. Money to poor			–	V5
21. Jesus' first comment to defend her			–	V7
22. JC says she did		V6, V8	V47	–
23. Poor always			–	–
24. Prepare me for burial	V12	V8	–	V7
25. Faith saved you	–	–	V50	–
26. Wherever gospel preached			–	–
27. Result: Judas plots to betray	V14-16	V10	–	Mentioned indirectly, V4
28. Result: MM travels with JC, supports from own \$	–	(next chapter: Mark 15:40,41)	Luke 8:1-3	Luke 8:1-3
29. Mary Magdalene demons	–	16:9	8:2	–
30. Stories right before re: Mary of Bethany	–	–	–	(John 11)

The Simon sub-plot (written by Luke from Simon's testimony?)

a. She stood behind JC	–	–	YES	
b. She wet JC's feet with tears	–	–	YES	–
c. She wiped JC's feet with hair	–	–	YES	YES
d. She kissed JC's feet	–	–	YES	–
e. Simon thinks: if prophet...	–	–	YES	–
f. Jesus reads thoughts			Simon's, V39	
g. Two debtor's story	–	–	YES	–
h. You gave me no water etc	–	–	YES	–
i. Sins forgiven, loved	–	–	YES	–