

Common Misconceptions



Common Misconceptions

- *Tithing*
- *Cultural Depictions (part 2)*

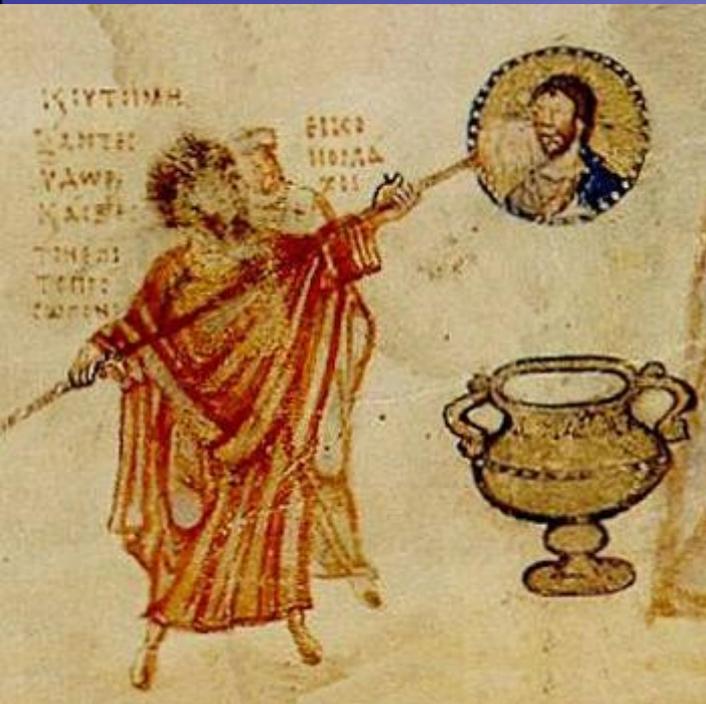
T or F Jesus had a brother named James.

- *Actually, it's not quite that simple...*



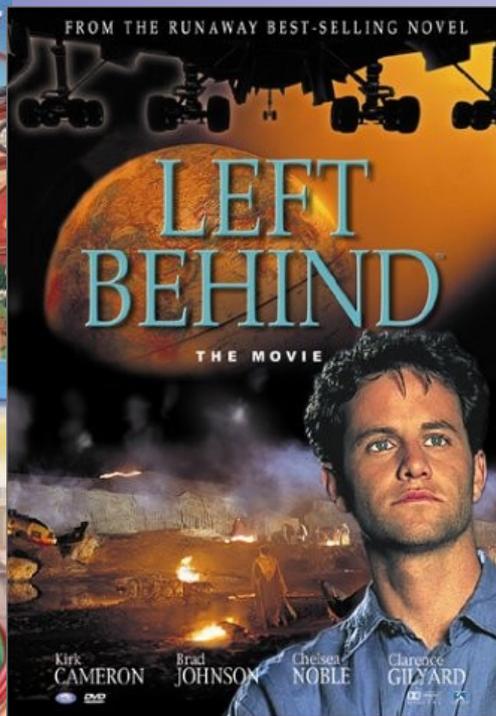
Cultural Depictions

- Take at least one note from the iconoclasts (the people who argued that all images of God were inherently inaccurate, limited and limiting by definition, and often end up being worshipped themselves instead of pointing people back to the Truth of God)



Cultural Depictions

- Take at least one note from the iconoclasts—depictions are tricky
 - The very simplicity that makes them accessible to people also makes them liable to over-simplify (or even flat-out *change*) their source material
 - Sometimes, instead of helping people, we can make people become more familiar with Bible *depictions* than with the Bible itself—which becomes a problem



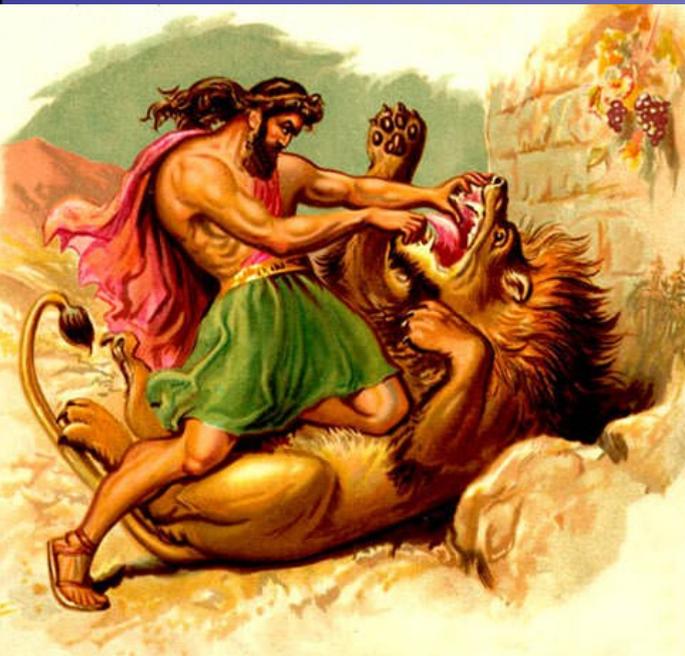
Cultural Depictions

- Take at least one note from the iconoclasts
- **Samson**
 - He's a big, buff-looking fellow with super-strength, until Delilah cut his hair, right?



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- **Samson**
 - He's a big, buff-looking fellow with super-strength, until Delilah cut his hair, right?
 - Please read Judges 13:2-5, and 14:5-6
 - Samson may very well have been big and buff, but we have no idea about his physical appearance (other than about his hair, which would've been long, due to the Naziritic vow he'd lived out his whole life)
 - But his supernatural strength is consistently shown to be a *spiritual* gift, not a *physical* one—and when his hair is eventually cut, he's shown to be as physically weak as any normal man—which means that we have *no idea* how “muscular” he *actually* was
 - So why do we always *picture* him as muscular? And why might that be detrimental to our understanding and application?



Cultural Depictions

- Take at least one note from the iconoclasts
- **Samson**
 - He's a big, buff-looking fellow with super-strength, until Delilah cut his hair, right?
 - Please read Judges 13:2-5, and 14:5-6
 - Please read Judges 16:18-21
 - Delilah never cut Samson's hair—some *other* Philistine man did it while Samson slept on her lap—but is that inaccuracy really that big a deal? I mean, that's how everyone *knows* the story...

(NOTE: This “well-known” Bible story is actually so *little-known* to most churchgoers that Christian comedian Tim Hawkins even made a joke out of how shocked people are to hear that the Philistines gouged out Samson's eyes, what with this being a “Bible story”)



Cultural Depictions

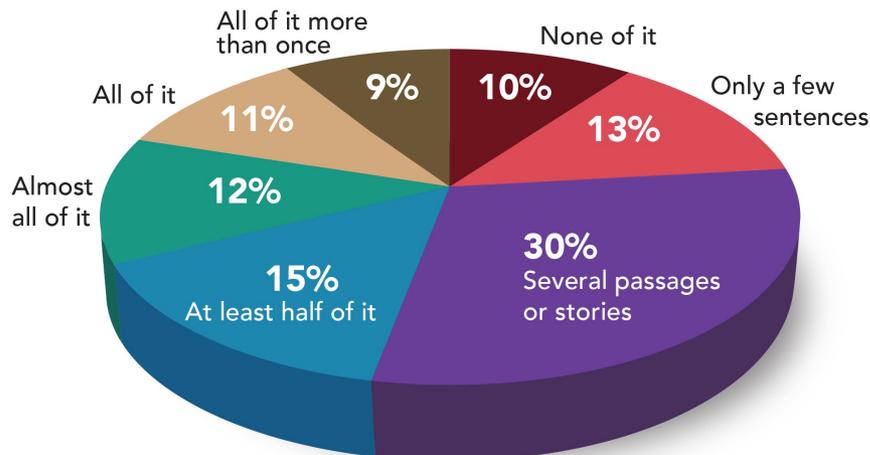
- Funky little teaching moment...
 - A recent study indicated that though 80% of Americans said they believed that the Bible is God's Word, 23% of them have never *really* read *any* of it—and only 20% have read *all* of it, even though most Christians believe the Bible should be obeyed
 - According to the study, more than 60 percent of Americans can't name either half of the Ten Commandments or of the four Gospels
 - And 80 percent of “born again” Christians believe that “God helps those who help themselves” is a direct quote from the Bible

- If, as the study also indicated, only 45 percent of those who regularly attend church read their Bibles more than once a week (i.e.; more than just at the church service they attend), then does that help explain why people have so many misconceptions?
- So where are most Christians getting their ideas about what's actually in the Bible?



Among Americans:

How much of the Bible have you personally read?



Cultural Depictions

- Take at least one note from the iconoclasts
- Samson
- **David and Goliath**
 - An example to all little kids, young boy David stood against giant Goliath with only a sling because he trusted God and didn't *need* any armor... right?



Cultural Depictions

- Funky little teaching moment...
 - Judges 20:15-16 tells us that the tribe of Benjamin—alongside whose territory David grew up—were renowned for using slingshots:

“The Benjamites mobilized twenty-six thousand swordsmen from their towns, in addition to seven hundred chosen men from those living in Gibeah. Among all these soldiers there were seven hundred chosen men who were left-handed, each of whom could sling a stone at a hair and not miss.”

- That may not sound like a particularly exciting or effective weapon, but when you realize that slings are still used by modern soldiers around the world today, with projectiles moving at 100 mph, that's significant (NOTE: That's about as fast as a golf ball is travelling as it leaves the tee immediately after being hit by a professional golfer—so yes, it's a deadly weapon)



Cultural Depictions

- **Funky little teaching moment...**
 - Judges 20:15-16 tells us that the tribe of Benjamin—alongside whose territory David grew up—were renowned for using slingshots
 - **But let's be honest—when we talk about David's slingshot, most people picture this toy (which is more mentally consistent with American boys) when they should be picturing *this*...**



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- **Funky little teaching moment...**
 - Judges 20:15-16 tells us that the tribe of Benjamin—alongside whose territory David grew up—were renowned for using slingshots
 - **But let's be honest—when we talk about David's slingshot, most people picture this toy (which is more mentally consistent with American boys) when they should be picturing *this*...**

(NOTE: David was not a “boy” at the time that he killed Goliath—

- 1) The word used here in 1 Samuel 17:32 can indicate anything from a child to a young adult
- 2) King Saul was using it against David derogatorily and disparagingly
- 3) We're told in verses 34-36 that David had, by that time, already personally killed lions and bears as part of his job as a shepherd
- 4) And in verse 51, he used Goliath's own massive sword to decapitate him)



Cultural Depictions

- Take at least one note from the iconoclasts
- Samson
- **David and Goliath**
 - An example to all little kids, young boy David stood against giant Goliath with only a sling because he trusted God and didn't *need* any armor... right?
 - **As for the armor, please read 1 Samuel 17:38-39**
 - So *why* didn't David wear any armor against Goliath? (NOTE: For more background on that decision, please read about King Saul himself back in 1 Samuel 9:2 —which suggests that even if David *had* been used to wearing armor, he wouldn't have been used to armor built for someone as unusually tall as *Saul*...)
 - Instead, savvy fighter David chose to use the weapons and the combat style that he was familiar with—speed, agility, and long distance attacks —which were better counterpoints to Goliath's massive strength and heavy armor anyway
 - So what can *we* learn from *this* version of the story today?



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 - As for the armor, please read 1 Samuel 17:38-39
 - **Again, those inaccuracies may not seem like a big deal to many of us, but when we think about how many *wrongly*-derived lessons have been taught from this story over the centuries**
(that children have their own hero in little boy David, that we don't need physical protection or planning like armor if we just have enough faith in God, that each of David's five stones clearly symbolized something spiritual, etc.)



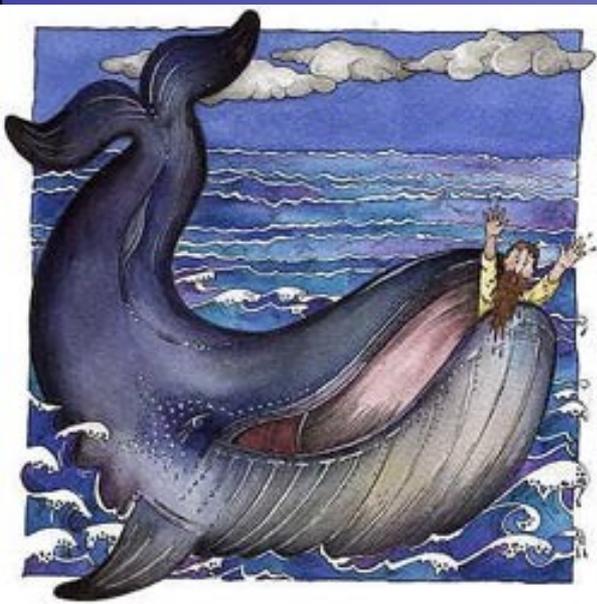
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 - As for the armor, please read 1 Samuel 17:38-39
 - **Again, those inaccuracies may not seem like a big deal to many of us, but when we think about how many *wrongly*-derived lessons have been taught from this story over the centuries, it's crucial to make sure that we know which story elements are actually *from* the Bible, and which are elements that we've just *read into* the Bible story...**



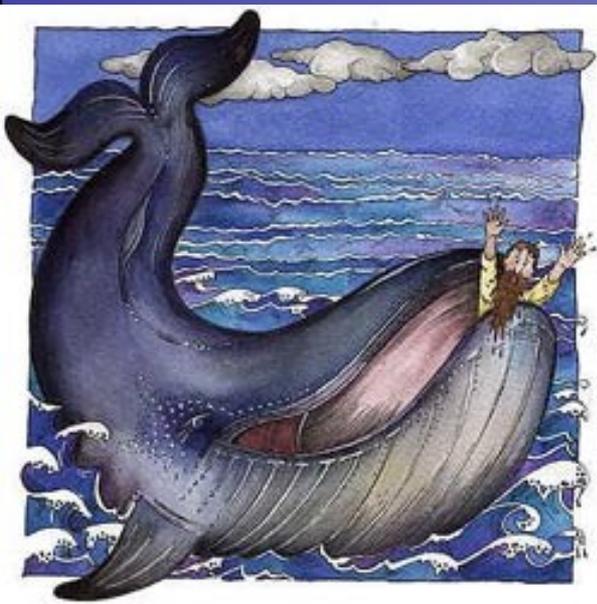
Cultural Depictions

- Take at least one note from the iconoclasts
- Samson
- David and Goliath
- **Jonah and the whale**
 - Jonah was swallowed by a whale as punishment for running away from God's leading, right?
 - Please read Jonah 1:1-5, 11-17
 - Note two crucial words here:
 - 1) דָּג ("dag," meaning "fish")
 - If it had been a "whale," the writer would've used the generic "big critter" Hebrew word, תַּן ("tan"), still used by Jews to refer to whales today



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 - Please read Jonah 1:1-5, 11-17
 - Note two crucial words here:
 - 1) דָּג ("dag," meaning "fish")
 - 2) מָנַח ("manah," meaning "to provide")
 - Please read Jonah's words in Jonah 2:5-6
 - God "provided" the fish to save Jonah, not to *punish* him
 - What kinds of applications do we lose out on when we ignore the *actual* Bible and remember only our extrabiblical cultural misperceptions?



Cultural Depictions

- Take at least one note from the iconoclasts
- Samson
- David and Goliath
- Jonah and the whale
- **Jesus**
 - Yes, Mary and Joseph laid Jesus in a manger



Cultural Depictions

- Funky little teaching moment...
 - Okay, strictly speaking, there *is* no Mary, Joseph, or Jesus in the Bible
 - There's a *Μαρία* (*Maria*) and a *Ἰωσήφ* (*Ioseph*) and a *Ἰησοῦς* (*Iesous*) in the Bible
 - Well, even those are just Greek versions of their *real* names, מִרְיָם (*Miryam*), יוֹסֵף (*Yosef*), and יְהוֹשֻׁעַ (*Yehoshua*)



Cultural Depictions

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 - There's a *Μαρία* (*Maria*) and a *Ἰωσήφ* (*Ioseph*) and a *Ἰησοῦς* (*Iesous*) in the Bible
 - And later, *Μαρία* (*Maria*) and *Ἰωσήφ* (*Ioseph*) had several other children—*Ἰάκωβος* (*Iakobos*, named after *Ioseph's* father), *Ἰωσήφ* (*Ioseph Jr.*), *Σίμων* (*Simon*), *Ἰούδας* (*Ioudas*), and several daughters
 - But once those names became translated into English, they were standardized as Mary, Joseph, Jesus, James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas
 - Thus, pretty much every modern English translation is going to tell you that Jesus had a brother named James, when in fact, *Ἰησοῦς* had a brother named *Ἰάκωβος*—or, to be the *most* accurate, *יהושוע* (*Yehoshua*) had a brother named *יעקב* (*Ya'aqob*)



Cultural Depictions

- Take at least one note from the iconoclasts
- Samson
- David and Goliath
- Jonah and the whale
- Jesus
 - Yes, Mary and Joseph laid Jesus in a manger but basically, no other part of this picture is Biblical
 - We're never told that there were angels present nor were we told that there was a star or wise men nor were we even told that they were in a stable with any animals present



- Please read Luke 2:1-7
 - So did they ride a donkey into town?
 - Then where did this indelible cultural depiction come from?
 - From the *Protoevangelium of James*, written 150-200 years later (the same fiction book from which we learn of Mary's perpetual virginity and Joseph's widower status—which is why he had other children, but Mary still never had sex)



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- Please read Luke 2:1-7
 - So did they ride a donkey into town?
 - For that matter, was Jesus born the same night that they came into town?
 - We don't know—it could've been days or even weeks after they came into town
 - They just didn't have a nice guest room to lay Jesus in (not necessarily an "inn"—see Mark 14:14 for the only other use of the word)



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 - Please read Luke 2:1-7
 - Please read Luke 2:8-15
 - So where were the angels when the shepherds went to the manger?
 - And, just as a side-note, did the angels specifically *sing*?



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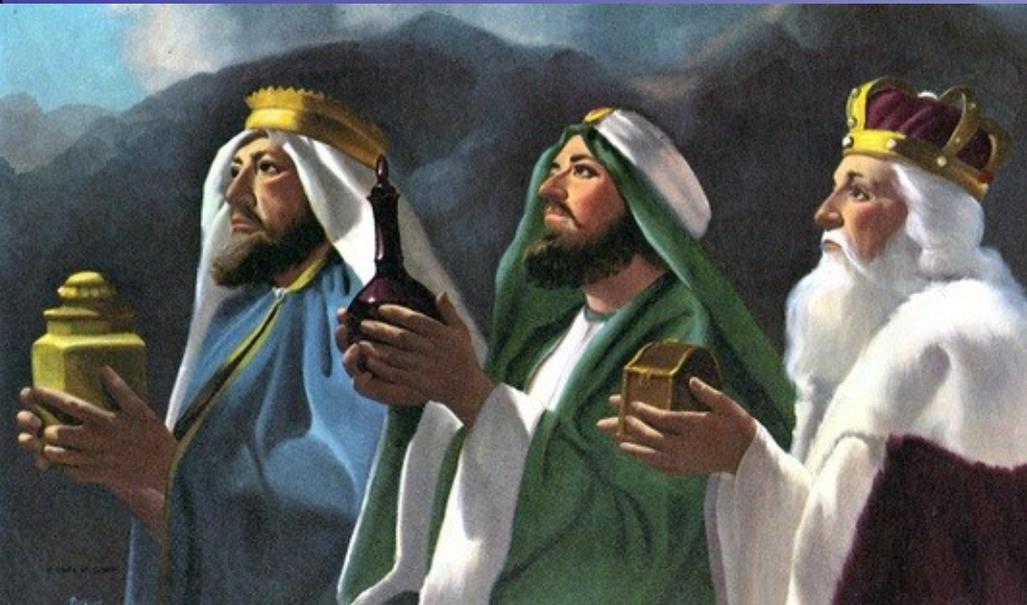


- Please read Luke 2:1-7
- Please read Luke 2:8-15
- Please read Luke 2:16-20
 - So where are the angels, or the wise men, or the star, or even the animals? And why is Jesus *glowing* like this?



Cultural Depictions

- Funky little teaching moment...
 - Please read Matthew 2:1-2
 - So *here's* our wise men and our star



Cultural Depictions

- Funky little teaching moment...
 - Please read Matthew 2:1-2
 - Please read Matthew 2:9-11
 - The word used here is *παιδίον* (“*paidion*” or “child”), not the *βρέφος* (“*brephos*” or “infant”) from Luke—it could've been even a few years after He was born
 - And the word in verse 10 is *οικία* (“*oikia*” or “house”), just in case people are still focused on stables
 - And how *many* wise men were there?
 - Why do we think of there being *three* of them?
 - Why do we think of them as being *kings*?
 - Please read Psalm 72:10-11 (surely this is the specific episode that Solomon wrote the Psalm about, right?) (we even have official *names* for them—Melchior, Gaspar, and Balthazar... from a popular fiction book written in the 5th century)



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- **Jesus**
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 - **But does any of that really *matter*?**
 - If people want to enjoy a fictionalized and conflated story about Christ's birth

(and consciously *further* conflate it with the Roman winter solstice and the subsequent pagan feast celebrating the birth of *Sol Invictus*—the popular Roman “Unconquered Sun” god)



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- **Jesus**
 - Yes, Mary and Joseph laid Jesus in a manger but basically, no other part of this picture is Biblical
 - **But does any of that really *matter*?**
 - If people want to enjoy a fictionalized and conflated story about Christ's birth, then so what?
 - Is it really *that* big a deal to get the story *right*...?

(I mean, so long as it *feels* good and it creates its own "*holy story*" via people's personal and cultural depictions of the historical event)



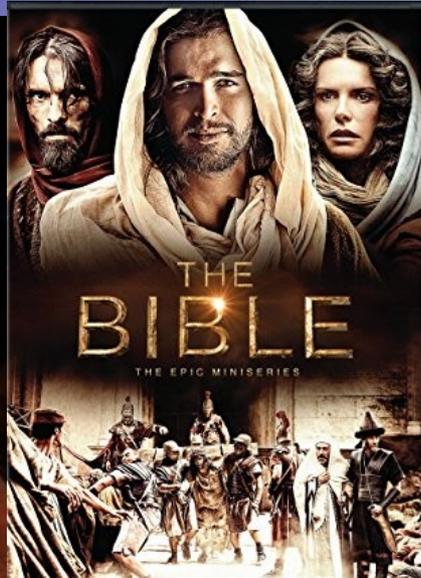
Cultural Depictions

- Take at least one note from the iconoclasts
- Samson
- David and Goliath
- Jonah and the whale
- **Jesus and Mary Magdalene**
 - **Mary had been a prostitute**
 - Except that the Bible never mentions anything about that—please read Mark 16:9
 - This is the *only* personal history information that we have about Mary Magdalene...
(because no, we're never told that the “sinful” woman who wiped Christ's feet in Luke 7 with her tears was Mary Magdalene)
(in fact, Matthew 26 and John 11-12 suggest that it was probably actually Mary of Bethany, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, who that “sinful” woman in Luke 7 who wiped his feet with her hair)



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- **Jesus and Mary Magdalene**
 - *Mary had been a prostitute, but she eventually became for all intents and purposes the 13th apostle (so say the producers of "The Bible" miniseries)*
 - *Except that the actual Bible only mentions her at Christ's crucifixion/resurrection, and as one of the women supporting Jesus in Luke 8:1-3*



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- **Jesus and Mary Magdalene**
 - Mary *had* been a prostitute, but she eventually became for all intents and purposes the 13th apostle —and maybe even the wife of Jesus Christ... right?
 - It's Christ's lineage, through Mary Magdalene, that formed the *sang réal* (“real blood” or “royal blood”) —which was miscopied as *san gréal* (“Holy Grail”) (and I'm not dignifying any of that utter malarkey with any more response...)

