

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:11,960

Tonight, a treasure coveted by everyone from Roman emperors to Hitler, even Indiana Jones

2

00:00:11,960 --> 00:00:14,180

tried to find it.

3

00:00:14,180 --> 00:00:21,080

It could be the most precious sacred object in history.

4

00:00:21,080 --> 00:00:23,680

It possesses miraculous healing powers.

5

00:00:23,680 --> 00:00:25,480

Key to immortality.

6

00:00:25,480 --> 00:00:27,480

Even supposedly resurrecting the dead.

7

00:00:27,840 --> 00:00:35,080

If you could touch the holy grail, maybe you could possess the power that Jesus had.

8

00:00:35,080 --> 00:00:37,520

But where is this miraculous vessel?

9

00:00:37,520 --> 00:00:43,200

And is it even a cup at all?

10

00:00:43,200 --> 00:00:48,040

I don't believe that it is the cup of the Last Supper that we should be seeking.

11

00:00:48,040 --> 00:00:49,040

Was it possible?

12

00:00:49,040 --> 00:00:55,120

It's not the cup of Christ, but it's something completely different.

13

00:00:55,120 --> 00:01:00,280

Now we uncover the top theory surrounding the world's most sought after relic.

14

00:01:00,280 --> 00:01:02,880

A stone of the purest kind.

15

00:01:02,880 --> 00:01:04,960

A stone with endless powers.

16

00:01:04,960 --> 00:01:05,960

It's not an object.

17

00:01:05,960 --> 00:01:10,160

It's something else more ephemeral as royal blood.

18

00:01:10,160 --> 00:01:13,000

What is the holy grail?

19

00:01:13,000 --> 00:01:16,000

And if it exists, can it ever be found?

20

00:01:25,120 --> 00:01:40,560

England, 1995.

21

00:01:40,560 --> 00:01:45,440

After years of intense investigation, British researcher Graham Phillips believes he knows

22

00:01:45,440 --> 00:01:51,080

the answer to a mystery that's long fascinated the world.

23

00:01:51,080 --> 00:01:53,640

I found something really astonishing.

24

00:01:53,640 --> 00:01:57,280

The last known whereabouts of the holy grail.

25

00:01:57,280 --> 00:02:00,280

What we're talking about is an actual relic.

26

00:02:00,280 --> 00:02:06,280

Phillips is convinced his discovery upends 2,000 years of speculation about the holy

27

00:02:06,280 --> 00:02:12,080

grail.

28

00:02:12,080 --> 00:02:14,640

Speculation that began long ago.

29

00:02:14,640 --> 00:02:16,120

In Jerusalem.

30

00:02:16,120 --> 00:02:20,120

In 33 AD.

31

00:02:20,160 --> 00:02:27,120

In what is then Judea, part of the all-powerful Roman Empire, Jesus of Nazareth gathers his

32

00:02:27,120 --> 00:02:31,360

followers for the Last Supper.

33

00:02:31,360 --> 00:02:36,640

Most scholars, including atheists, believe that Jesus was a real person, and they believe

34

00:02:36,640 --> 00:02:39,640

he was executed by the Romans.

35

00:02:39,640 --> 00:02:48,480

And the story of Jesus having a Last Supper, that is pretty much accepted to be authentic.

36

00:02:48,480 --> 00:02:50,680

At the center of the Last Supper is a cup.

37

00:02:50,680 --> 00:02:55,720

In fact, it's the only object that's mentioned in the Bible.

38

00:02:55,720 --> 00:03:05,280

The cup Jesus uses during that meal will come to be known as the holy grail.

39

00:03:05,280 --> 00:03:08,760

Jesus drinks from it and passes it around to his disciples, and he says, this is the

40

00:03:08,760 --> 00:03:12,720

last time we will drink together before we see each other in heaven.

41

00:03:12,960 --> 00:03:20,400

What has intrigued people, believers and non-believers for centuries, is the origin of that cup and

42

00:03:20,400 --> 00:03:24,120

what happened to it, where it ends up.

43

00:03:24,120 --> 00:03:28,920

After his death, Jesus' followers spread his teachings abroad.

44

00:03:28,920 --> 00:03:35,440

By 62 AD, disciples Peter and Paul are allegedly preaching in Rome.

45

00:03:35,440 --> 00:03:39,080

And according to one theory, the grail is with them.

46

00:03:40,080 --> 00:03:48,120

If you have a religion that's based on an individual, on Jesus, and he's gone, how do

47

00:03:48,120 --> 00:03:52,680

you convince people to join up with this new religion?

48

00:03:52,680 --> 00:03:54,040

You have to prove it to them.

49

00:03:54,040 --> 00:03:55,720

You have to convince them.

50

00:03:55,720 --> 00:03:56,800

How do you do that?

51

00:03:56,800 --> 00:03:59,280

You show them evidence.

52

00:03:59,280 --> 00:04:05,520

And this evidence comes in the form of relics.

53

00:04:05,520 --> 00:04:13,000

If you want something that Jesus has touched to cultivate a sense of loyalty to the church,

54

00:04:13,000 --> 00:04:18,960

that cup is a really good candidate.

55

00:04:18,960 --> 00:04:25,200

But in 64 AD, when the great fire of Rome destroys two-thirds of the city, Emperor Nero

56

00:04:25,200 --> 00:04:28,640

blames the disaster on Christians.

57

00:04:28,640 --> 00:04:34,960

He crucifies Peter, the new movement's leader, and its first pope.

58

00:04:34,960 --> 00:04:41,480

Despite continuing persecution, a line of popes replaced Peter, an unbroken succession

59

00:04:41,480 --> 00:04:44,880

for nearly 200 years.

60

00:04:44,880 --> 00:04:50,720

These men hold many secrets, among them the whereabouts of holy relics, including the

61

00:04:50,720 --> 00:04:51,720

grail.

62

00:04:51,720 --> 00:04:57,640

So you have this tradition about a cup that people revered as the holy grail.

63

00:04:57,640 --> 00:05:04,480

And if you could touch the holy grail, maybe you could possess the power that Jesus had.

64

00:05:04,480 --> 00:05:07,640

Like healing powers, resurrections, what have you.

65

00:05:07,640 --> 00:05:12,040

The church continues to grow in power, in membership, in influence.

66

00:05:12,040 --> 00:05:18,400

And these objects are certainly contributing to that mission.

67

00:05:18,400 --> 00:05:27,760

Then in 258 AD, Roman Emperor Valyrian tries to destroy the Christian movement.

68

00:05:27,760 --> 00:05:34,080

Valyrian orders the execution of anyone who doesn't worship the Roman gods.

69

00:05:34,080 --> 00:05:42,640

Valyrian's first execution of a Christian is Pope Sixtus II, who happens to be, according

70

00:05:42,640 --> 00:05:49,280

to tradition, the keeper of the holy grail.

71

00:05:49,280 --> 00:05:57,000

Before he's killed, Sixtus entrusts the treasures of the church to one of his deacons, Lawrence.

72

00:05:57,000 --> 00:06:03,440

And to keep them from being captured, St. Lawrence actually hands them out.

73

00:06:03,440 --> 00:06:08,280

The problem is, now you've got all of these sacred objects spread out all over the place,

74

00:06:08,280 --> 00:06:11,880

and it's going to be very difficult to get them all back.

75

00:06:11,880 --> 00:06:18,680

Whether or not you accept the idea of a holy grail beginning a journey from Jerusalem to

76

00:06:18,680 --> 00:06:25,600

Rome, what we can all agree on is now it's lost.

77

00:06:25,600 --> 00:06:32,040

There's this object that was regarded as having incredible power, but it got forgotten.

78

00:06:32,040 --> 00:06:35,560

But it won't be forgotten forever.

79

00:06:35,560 --> 00:06:42,720

The cup turns up again, and this time we have an actual date, December 14th, 1134.

80

00:06:42,720 --> 00:06:50,040

At the monastery of San Juan de la Pena in northeast Spain, a monk named Don Carreras-Ramirez

81

00:06:50,040 --> 00:06:52,440

is taking inventory.

82

00:06:52,440 --> 00:07:03,320

And on his list, he writes that he has a chalice in which Christ our Lord consigned his blood.

83

00:07:03,320 --> 00:07:10,640

So if you believe the Lord, the holy grail is back on the map.

84

00:07:10,640 --> 00:07:14,440

It's unclear who brings it to Spain, but the best part of this is, from 1134, when Don

85

00:07:14,440 --> 00:07:18,880

Ramirez writes his list, we know exactly what happens to the cup.

86

00:07:18,880 --> 00:07:25,880

The grail is mentioned again in 1399 when King Martin I of Aragon acquires it from the monastery.

87

00:07:25,880 --> 00:07:35,920

After his death, King Alfonso V of Aragon brings the cup to Valencia.

88

00:07:35,920 --> 00:07:41,440

This cup is made of red agate, 3.5 inches across.

89

00:07:41,440 --> 00:07:48,160

Its base has two curved handles and a knobbed stem, both thought to be more recent additions.

90

00:07:48,160 --> 00:07:54,680

But the main part of the cup, the central part, is the simple kind of cup that may have

91

00:07:54,680 --> 00:07:58,760

been present at the Last Supper.

92

00:07:58,760 --> 00:08:04,400

Researchers agree the stone likely comes from a Palestinian or Egyptian workshop, sometime

93

00:08:04,400 --> 00:08:11,280

between the 4th century BC and the 1st century AD.

94

00:08:11,280 --> 00:08:12,780

Region is correct.

95

00:08:12,780 --> 00:08:14,480

The timeline is correct.

96

00:08:14,480 --> 00:08:19,280

The documentary evidence is there with a nearly complete chain of custody.

97

00:08:19,280 --> 00:08:25,120

If the cup of Christ still exists, there's a very good argument that this is it.

98

00:08:25,120 --> 00:08:30,480

Currently held in the Cathedral of Valencia, the cup has even been sanctified by the highest

99

00:08:30,480 --> 00:08:33,680

authorities of the Catholic Church.

100

00:08:33,680 --> 00:08:37,080

According to them, this cup is the grail.

101

00:08:37,080 --> 00:08:42,680

It's been used by several popes to celebrate mass, which makes a lot of sense in Christian

102

00:08:42,680 --> 00:08:49,480

theory because Holy Communion comes from the idea of the Last Supper in the Gospels.

103

00:08:49,480 --> 00:08:52,840

Pope John Paul II certainly believed it was the cup of Christ.

104

00:08:52,840 --> 00:08:57,880

He actually called it a witness to Christ's passage on earth.

105

00:08:57,880 --> 00:09:04,960

And he and Pope Benedict XVI refer to the cup in Latin as un criclarum calitum, this

106

00:09:04,960 --> 00:09:12,800

beautiful cup, the term that the early popes used to refer to the Holy Grail.

107

00:09:12,800 --> 00:09:16,200

But not everyone believes it's the grail.

108

00:09:16,200 --> 00:09:21,280

Curiously, the Valencia cup and other cups like it have never been associated with any

109

00:09:21,280 --> 00:09:22,280

miracles.

110

00:09:22,280 --> 00:09:27,040

Most of the top Christian relics have long histories of being associated with miraculous

111

00:09:27,040 --> 00:09:29,280

healings or other kinds of supernatural events.

112

00:09:29,280 --> 00:09:34,200

And you would think that this cup, which Jesus himself blessed, you'd think that this cup

113

00:09:34,200 --> 00:09:37,720

would have a list of miracles a mile long.

114

00:09:37,720 --> 00:09:42,520

If this alleged cup of Christ lacks the power most expect, could the grail be something

115

00:09:42,520 --> 00:09:50,840

else entirely?

116

00:09:50,840 --> 00:09:58,240

According to many, including Pope John Paul II, this is the so-called Holy Grail.

117

00:09:58,240 --> 00:10:02,360

A cup used by Jesus during the Last Supper.

118

00:10:02,360 --> 00:10:03,840

But others have doubts.

119

00:10:03,840 --> 00:10:09,680

In the ancient legends, the grail possesses miraculous healing powers, even supposedly

120

00:10:09,680 --> 00:10:12,320

resurrecting the dead.

121

00:10:12,320 --> 00:10:20,720

Now there are some who believe that the Holy Grail, this chalice, made its way to Valencia.

122

00:10:20,720 --> 00:10:21,720

We don't know.

123

00:10:21,720 --> 00:10:26,400

The chalice is supposed to possess power to do miracles.

124

00:10:26,400 --> 00:10:31,720

But we don't see that chalice doing many miracles today.

125

00:10:31,720 --> 00:10:36,680

If the cup in Valencia doesn't demonstrate such powers, could the grail be something

126

00:10:36,680 --> 00:10:38,560

unexpected?

127

00:10:38,560 --> 00:10:44,360

Something ancient and mysterious and indeed separate from Jesus?

128

00:10:44,360 --> 00:10:48,720

So stories about the grail really predate Jesus' time.

129

00:10:48,720 --> 00:10:50,400

And this is what's interesting about it.

130

00:10:50,400 --> 00:10:55,280

We find the story that there is a magical object of some kind that can bring healing

131

00:10:55,280 --> 00:11:00,560

and immortality is a precious, sacred object that belonged to the Celts.

132

00:11:00,560 --> 00:11:03,960

There's no indication at all that they had anything like a sacred cup.

133

00:11:03,960 --> 00:11:06,600

But they do have something else.

134

00:11:06,600 --> 00:11:14,520

They have sacred stones.

135

00:11:14,520 --> 00:11:21,160

The Celtic civilization begins as early as 1200 BC and spreads to an area spanning England,

136

00:11:21,160 --> 00:11:26,280

Ireland and most of central Europe.

137

00:11:26,280 --> 00:11:31,600

Their spiritual leaders are powerful mystics called druids.

138

00:11:31,600 --> 00:11:37,240

The druids are the most respected of the classes in Celtic society.

139

00:11:37,240 --> 00:11:39,000

They're religious specialists.

140

00:11:39,000 --> 00:11:44,640

They believe supposedly in the immortality of the soul and they're practitioners in healing

141

00:11:44,640 --> 00:11:48,160

arts.

142

00:11:48,160 --> 00:11:52,560

The Roman authors who write about them are cowed by them.

143

00:11:52,560 --> 00:11:53,640

They're really impressed by them.

144

00:11:53,640 --> 00:11:55,440

They don't know what's going on with the druids.

145

00:11:55,440 --> 00:11:58,080

They're a little bit frightened, I think, with them because they know that the druids

146

00:11:58,080 --> 00:12:01,320

do these secret rites that are out there in the woods.

147

00:12:01,320 --> 00:12:09,480

This is one of the most un-Roman ways of being religious that you could think of.

148

00:12:09,480 --> 00:12:14,120

Could the Holy Grail be something entirely unexpected?

149

00:12:14,120 --> 00:12:20,520

Not a cup, but a sacred stone.

150

00:12:20,520 --> 00:12:26,000

So for the people who espouse this particular theory, the story of the grail stone comes

151

00:12:26,000 --> 00:12:31,800

directly from these Celtic druidic traditions of sacred stones.

152

00:12:31,800 --> 00:12:36,240

So it's clear that there's a pre-Christian tradition of some kind of a sacred stone.

153

00:12:36,240 --> 00:12:41,760

And once Christianity kind of grows and takes over, that story gets incorporated into another

154

00:12:41,760 --> 00:12:45,000

story about Jesus' cup.

155

00:12:45,000 --> 00:12:50,680

A sacred stone infused with mysterious power by the Celtic druids.

156

00:12:50,960 --> 00:12:53,240

This is the true Holy Grail.

157

00:12:53,240 --> 00:12:56,240

Where did it go?

158

00:12:56,240 --> 00:13:02,320

Now, Christians don't worship sacred stones.

159

00:13:02,320 --> 00:13:06,680

So after the Celts are conquered, there's no mention of this sort of thing for about

160

00:13:06,680 --> 00:13:09,200

a thousand years.

161

00:13:09,200 --> 00:13:15,280

But the idea of the grail stone and its mysterious powers doesn't entirely vanish.

162

00:13:15,280 --> 00:13:18,280

In the Middle Ages, it emerges once more.

163

00:13:18,280 --> 00:13:23,560

First in an unfinished 12th century romance by Cretien de Troyes.

164

00:13:23,560 --> 00:13:28,040

A few decades later, it resurfaces again.

165

00:13:28,040 --> 00:13:36,960

So it shows up in a 25,000 line-long poem by a German poet knight called Wulfren von

166

00:13:36,960 --> 00:13:40,040

Eschenbach.

167

00:13:40,040 --> 00:13:42,520

The poem is called Parcival.

168

00:13:42,520 --> 00:13:46,880

He refers to the grail stone as Lapis exilis.

169

00:13:46,880 --> 00:13:53,440

And just like in the ancient stories, this Lapis exilis brings youth and immortality.

170

00:13:53,440 --> 00:13:58,080

He also says in the poem that the stone itself is so powerful that if you approach it and

171

00:13:58,080 --> 00:14:05,280

you're wounded or you're sick, you'll be healed.

172

00:14:05,280 --> 00:14:10,000

But Parcival does more than just name the grail stone.

173

00:14:10,000 --> 00:14:15,080

Parcival claims to know what happened to the grail stone after all these years.

174

00:14:15,080 --> 00:14:21,560

And according to the text, this powerful relic may have ended up in the hands of one of history's

175

00:14:21,560 --> 00:14:31,000

most legendary orders, the Knights Templar.

176

00:14:31,000 --> 00:14:38,000

By the Middle Ages, there are multiple theories surrounding the mysterious holy grail.

177

00:14:38,000 --> 00:14:45,040

According to one, the grail is an ancient and powerful stone, once held by Celtic pagans.

178

00:14:45,040 --> 00:14:51,360

So the theory goes that the stone was once a precious sacred object that belonged to

179

00:14:51,360 --> 00:14:53,280

the Celts.

180

00:14:53,280 --> 00:14:59,040

But once the Celts are Christianized, that stone falls into the hands of the Christians.

181

00:14:59,040 --> 00:15:08,440

From there, the trail is lost until the stone reappears in a 12th century text called Parcial.

182

00:15:08,440 --> 00:15:12,440

It is an epic poem that claims to know what happened to the grail stone after all these

183

00:15:12,440 --> 00:15:14,480

years.

184

00:15:14,480 --> 00:15:20,400

Elder Wolfram von Eschenbach traces the stone's incredible journey.

185

00:15:20,400 --> 00:15:25,320

According to von Eschenbach, the Lapis exilis, the holy grail, is captured by the Christians

186

00:15:25,320 --> 00:15:33,040

that's taken to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem where it's guarded by the Knights Templar.

187

00:15:33,040 --> 00:15:38,560

The Knights Templar are a Catholic military order operating under the command of the Pope

188

00:15:38,560 --> 00:15:40,240

during the Crusades.

189

00:15:40,240 --> 00:15:45,760

Their official name is the poor fellow soldiers of Christ and of the Temple of Solomon.

190

00:15:45,760 --> 00:15:47,640

But don't let that name fool you.

191

00:15:47,640 --> 00:15:51,440

The Templar Knights become the wealthiest, most famous, and most powerful fighting force

192

00:15:51,440 --> 00:15:53,480

that the Church has ever had.

193

00:15:53,480 --> 00:15:57,080

It doesn't matter how many soldiers are in the opposing army.

194

00:15:57,080 --> 00:16:01,720

The Templar Knights' reputation and their execution of the reputation is so fearsome

195

00:16:01,720 --> 00:16:06,160

that when they're captured, for example, the other side rarely ransoms them.

196

00:16:06,160 --> 00:16:07,160

They execute them.

197

00:16:07,160 --> 00:16:09,440

They're that afraid of them.

198

00:16:09,440 --> 00:16:13,720

Because of this reputation, the Popes give them wide reign to conduct their business

199

00:16:13,720 --> 00:16:17,360

the way they want to in order to execute their job.

200

00:16:17,360 --> 00:16:22,080

Pope Innocent II gives them the responsibility of policing the pilgrim routes in the Holy

201

00:16:22,080 --> 00:16:27,560

Land to keep pilgrims and other Christians safe.

202

00:16:27,560 --> 00:16:35,760

The Templars set their headquarters on Jerusalem's Temple Mount, the source of their name.

203

00:16:35,760 --> 00:16:41,400

This is where the famed King Solomon built his temple nearly 2000 years before the Crusades.

204

00:16:41,400 --> 00:16:45,280

But the Templars get a lot more than a name from being in that location.

205

00:16:45,280 --> 00:16:48,640

It's a seat of power and prestige.

206

00:16:48,640 --> 00:16:51,540

It is reputed to be a seat of wealth.

207

00:16:51,540 --> 00:16:55,480

And Christian treasures are supposedly stored there, including, according to the story,

208

00:16:55,480 --> 00:16:57,760

the grailstone.

209

00:16:57,760 --> 00:17:02,400

Membership in the Templars eventually rises to maybe around 20,000 people.

210

00:17:02,400 --> 00:17:06,080

They form their own rudimentary bank system.

211

00:17:06,080 --> 00:17:10,160

They have hundreds of various buildings scattered throughout Europe, the Mediterranean, the

212

00:17:10,160 --> 00:17:11,360

Holy Land.

213

00:17:11,360 --> 00:17:15,680

They could be considered to be the world's first multinational corporation.

214

00:17:15,680 --> 00:17:19,440

The Templars thrive for nearly two centuries.

215

00:17:19,440 --> 00:17:23,880

And von Eschenbach thinks he knows the secret to their success.

216

00:17:23,880 --> 00:17:27,160

This isn't a coincidence, according to von Eschenbach.

217

00:17:27,160 --> 00:17:31,120

This is because of divine power.

218

00:17:31,120 --> 00:17:36,000

He says that the Templars live by a stone of the purest kind.

219

00:17:36,000 --> 00:17:46,200

A stone with endless powers that they possess, everlasting life, wisdom, wealth, the grailstone.

220

00:17:46,200 --> 00:17:50,920

Easy to think that von Eschenbach is making this whole thing up.

221

00:17:50,920 --> 00:17:53,640

And of course there's a lot of creative license there.

222

00:17:53,640 --> 00:17:58,280

But he is probably working from a few facts.

223

00:17:58,280 --> 00:18:01,840

von Eschenbach's poets in the Middle Ages had a patron.

224

00:18:01,840 --> 00:18:05,200

And von Eschenbach's patron was a man by the name of Count Hermann.

225

00:18:05,200 --> 00:18:11,160

He was a German knight, and he had fought in the Crusades alongside the Knights Templar.

226

00:18:11,160 --> 00:18:17,920

Von Eschenbach supplements Count Hermann's first-hand accounts with extensive research.

227

00:18:17,920 --> 00:18:22,840

Wolfram also goes to a Moorish library in Toledo, where he absorbs everything that he

228

00:18:22,840 --> 00:18:25,600

can about the Knights Templar.

229

00:18:25,600 --> 00:18:30,280

Wolfram is writing poetry, and he's creating fiction, but he also wants to ground it in

230

00:18:30,280 --> 00:18:32,960

some kind of historical reality.

231

00:18:32,960 --> 00:18:40,360

Unfortunately, within a few decades of parisable, the trail of the stone goes cold.

232

00:18:40,360 --> 00:18:47,480

On Friday, October 13th, 1307, the Knights Templar are brutally disbanded.

233

00:18:47,480 --> 00:18:52,320

The French King Philip IV, who's actually in significant debt to the Templars, forces

234

00:18:52,320 --> 00:18:57,600

Pope Clement V to remove their authority, to seize their assets.

235

00:18:57,600 --> 00:19:00,560

Some of them are executed rather brutally.

236

00:19:00,560 --> 00:19:06,240

Others are removed from the order of the temple and moved to other orders.

237

00:19:06,240 --> 00:19:14,480

And their great wealth, including perhaps the grail stone, ultimately disappears.

238

00:19:14,480 --> 00:19:19,920

If there was a grail stone in the Templar's treasures, as Eschenbach says there was, it

239

00:19:19,920 --> 00:19:23,240

could have gone to the French Kings, could have gone to the Pope, but it wouldn't be

240

00:19:23,240 --> 00:19:25,880

clear where it had gone.

241

00:19:25,880 --> 00:19:33,880

So the stone disappears, and the story of the stone, Lapis exilis, holy grail, also disappears,

242

00:19:33,880 --> 00:19:42,680

people stop reading it, and all that's left is this other tradition about the cup.

243

00:19:42,680 --> 00:19:45,640

And in a way, that's too bad, because who wouldn't rather find the stone?

244

00:19:45,640 --> 00:19:47,640

That's where all this power lies.

245

00:19:47,640 --> 00:19:53,560

And the key to immortality, just sitting in a storage room somewhere, or in a landfill,

246

00:19:53,560 --> 00:19:58,720

or who knows where, all thanks to a case of mistaken identity.

247

00:19:58,720 --> 00:20:02,360

Two theories, two different objects.

248

00:20:02,360 --> 00:20:05,320

But which one is the true grail?

249

00:20:05,320 --> 00:20:13,720

For 200 years, you have the cup, and you have the stone, and it basically stays that way.

250

00:20:13,720 --> 00:20:21,080

That is, until 1982, when a shocking new theory on the grail appears.

251

00:20:21,080 --> 00:20:31,440

What if the holy grail isn't a physical object at all?

252

00:20:31,440 --> 00:20:38,600

After 2,000 years of debate on what the holy grail is and where it could be, a new theory

253

00:20:38,600 --> 00:20:43,320

emerges in 1982, and it's a bombshell.

254

00:20:43,400 --> 00:20:48,640

A team of British researchers publish the best-selling book, *The Holy Blood and the*

255

00:20:48,640 --> 00:20:52,800

*Holy Grail*, which makes a bold claim.

256

00:20:52,800 --> 00:20:57,400

The holy grail isn't an object at all.

257

00:20:57,400 --> 00:21:04,480

The author's theory dates back to the Middle Ages, and it begins with a word.

258

00:21:04,480 --> 00:21:11,320

When medieval manuscripts refer to the holy grail, they call it sangriail.

259

00:21:11,320 --> 00:21:16,800

The term appears in writings beginning in the 12th century, with authors like Cretin

260

00:21:16,800 --> 00:21:19,440

de Troyes and Robert de Gordón.

261

00:21:19,440 --> 00:21:23,240

You've got a word that's already a combination in its etymology.

262

00:21:23,240 --> 00:21:27,800

You have sang that comes from Sanctus, from the Latin for holy, and you have grail, which

263

00:21:27,800 --> 00:21:32,680

is a Celtic word, which means a vase or a vessel of some kind.

264

00:21:32,680 --> 00:21:37,920

What could the term sangriail have been translated by mistake?

265

00:21:37,920 --> 00:21:43,880

So a lot of the words that we find in our common modern English come from older linguistic

266

00:21:43,880 --> 00:21:45,240

traditions.

267

00:21:45,240 --> 00:21:48,160

This is something that is part of how we get our language.

268

00:21:48,160 --> 00:21:52,920

Our language is made up usually of elements from a lot of different language groups.

269

00:21:52,920 --> 00:21:59,320

What they argue in this theory is that there's a mishearing here of what the word actually

270

00:21:59,320 --> 00:22:01,640

was.

271

00:22:01,640 --> 00:22:09,400

If correct, the grail is not the sangriail, it is the sangriail, which translates to royal

272

00:22:09,400 --> 00:22:10,480

blood.

273

00:22:10,480 --> 00:22:12,400

In this case, it's not an object.

274

00:22:12,400 --> 00:22:14,320

It's something else more ephemeral.

275

00:22:14,320 --> 00:22:21,880

It's royal blood.

276

00:22:21,880 --> 00:22:28,080

And the royal blood in question is that of Jesus of Nazareth and his alleged descendants.

277

00:22:28,080 --> 00:22:37,160

The idea of a bloodline of Jesus goes against 2,000 years of Christian teachings.

278

00:22:37,160 --> 00:22:41,480

At the same time, it's not completely out of the range of possibilities.

279

00:22:41,480 --> 00:22:47,320

When you consider that Jesus was a Jewish man in the Roman Empire, coming from a culture

280

00:22:47,320 --> 00:22:53,520

that very much valued family and marriage, he was in his 30s, and the idea that he wasn't

281

00:22:53,520 --> 00:23:01,400

married at all would have been quite unusual.

282

00:23:01,400 --> 00:23:06,000

Is it possible the many authors of the Bible have been trying to hide the secret family

283

00:23:06,000 --> 00:23:08,880

of Jesus for millennia?

284

00:23:08,880 --> 00:23:15,440

Jesus became for the church a model for priesthood, and so the church had a vested interest in

285

00:23:15,440 --> 00:23:18,400

presenting Jesus as chaste.

286

00:23:18,400 --> 00:23:20,200

They want him to be divine.

287

00:23:20,200 --> 00:23:25,760

The theory goes like this, that the historical Jesus marries Mary Magdalene and that the

288

00:23:25,760 --> 00:23:28,200

two of them had one or more children.

289

00:23:28,200 --> 00:23:32,560

Mary Magdalene is definitely a character that pops up in the Jesus tradition, and we see

290

00:23:32,560 --> 00:23:38,360

her not only in the canonical gospels, but she also pops up as a follower of Jesus in

291

00:23:38,360 --> 00:23:42,280

several non-canonical gospels written in the second century.

292

00:23:42,280 --> 00:23:44,840

She travels with Jesus.

293

00:23:44,840 --> 00:23:48,120

She's financially supporting his ministry.

294

00:23:48,120 --> 00:23:57,480

She is there for his death, and in some of the gospels is the first witness to his resurrection.

295

00:23:57,480 --> 00:24:00,920

But their connection might not end there.

296

00:24:00,920 --> 00:24:08,040

So the authors of this theory continue on to say that after Jesus' death, Mary Magdalene,

297

00:24:08,040 --> 00:24:13,760

possibly her family, traveled to France, and the bloodline of Jesus continues.

298

00:24:13,760 --> 00:24:19,880

The authors of *The Holy Blood and The Holy Grail* insist they have proof.

299

00:24:19,880 --> 00:24:26,840

There are these documents that have been miraculously found in Paris, buried in the French National

300

00:24:26,840 --> 00:24:35,400

Library, that connect the bloodline of Jesus to something called the Priory of Sion.

301

00:24:35,400 --> 00:24:40,840

According to the text, the Priory of Sion is a secret organization that's existed since

302

00:24:40,840 --> 00:24:44,280

at least 1099.

303

00:24:44,280 --> 00:24:51,360

Its illustrious members allegedly include Leonardo da Vinci and Sir Isaac Newton.

304

00:24:51,360 --> 00:24:58,120

That text even suggests that the Priory of Sion created the Knights Templar as its military

305

00:24:58,120 --> 00:25:04,280

and financial branch, and that their job, their entire reason for existence, was to protect

306

00:25:04,280 --> 00:25:06,640

the bloodline and the offspring.

307

00:25:06,640 --> 00:25:11,160

The Priory of Sion is essentially at war with the Catholic Church, because the Catholic

308

00:25:11,160 --> 00:25:18,080

Church and its system of popes want to hold onto their power and discredit or push away

309

00:25:18,080 --> 00:25:21,040

the story of the bloodline of Jesus.

310

00:25:21,040 --> 00:25:24,920

But could this be true?

311

00:25:24,920 --> 00:25:28,760

As it turns out, this is completely bogus.

312

00:25:28,760 --> 00:25:33,040

100% false.

313

00:25:33,040 --> 00:25:34,760

So there's one major problem here.

314

00:25:35,240 --> 00:25:37,200

I mean, there are a lot of problems here.

315

00:25:37,200 --> 00:25:42,720

But the biggest problem is that the Priory of Sion is a hoax.

316

00:25:42,720 --> 00:25:47,360

The Priory of Sion isn't created in 1099 AD.

317

00:25:47,360 --> 00:25:50,120

It's created in 1956.

318

00:25:50,120 --> 00:25:55,960

And despite the long list of famed members it claims, it's actually the work of a French

319

00:25:55,960 --> 00:26:00,160

con artist named Pierre Plantard.

320

00:26:00,160 --> 00:26:02,480

This guy, Plantard, wants to be royalty.

321

00:26:02,520 --> 00:26:06,120

I mean, he's not royalty, but he really wants to be royalty.

322

00:26:06,120 --> 00:26:12,360

So he pulls off what is still thought to be one of the greatest hoaxes in French literary

323

00:26:12,360 --> 00:26:13,520

history.

324

00:26:13,520 --> 00:26:20,640

Plantard creates a fake secret society, complete with an imaginative backstory.

325

00:26:20,640 --> 00:26:25,120

To add credibility, he plants false documents around France.

326

00:26:25,120 --> 00:26:29,880

He commissions a friend to make two forged medieval parchments, and they hide those

327

00:26:29,880 --> 00:26:32,680

in the French National Library.

328

00:26:32,680 --> 00:26:36,320

Plantard and his pal create a paper trail.

329

00:26:36,320 --> 00:26:42,640

They say that this Priory of Sion originated in the Middle Ages, that they produced a long

330

00:26:42,640 --> 00:26:53,360

line of grandmasters, and that they protected this whole bloodline, which remarkably, Plantard

331

00:26:53,360 --> 00:26:57,880

himself claimed to be a descendant.

332

00:26:57,880 --> 00:27:03,480

And it's this document that co-author Henry Lincoln discovers and uses to form the basis

333

00:27:03,480 --> 00:27:10,280

of the bestselling book, *The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail*, along with two colleagues.

334

00:27:10,280 --> 00:27:17,240

*Holy Blood, Holy Grail* was published by Michael Bajoran, Henry Lincoln, and Richard Leigh.

335

00:27:17,240 --> 00:27:19,880

It was an immediate bestseller.

336

00:27:19,880 --> 00:27:25,360

You can just imagine Henry Lincoln stumbling upon this and finding what he thinks is the

337

00:27:25,360 --> 00:27:31,440

*Holy Grail* itself, and it's all fake.

338

00:27:31,440 --> 00:27:35,760

To be fair, when Lincoln writes his book, Plantard hasn't been caught yet.

339

00:27:35,760 --> 00:27:43,280

It's not until 1993 that French police raid his house and find all kinds of documents that

340

00:27:43,280 --> 00:27:47,760

Plantard used to create this terrible hoax.

341

00:27:47,760 --> 00:27:51,560

Plantard eventually admits under oath that all of this was a lie.

342

00:27:51,560 --> 00:27:54,080

All of this was a hoax.

343

00:27:54,080 --> 00:27:57,040

Now some people have come forward and said, no, wait, wait, wait.

344

00:27:57,040 --> 00:28:02,760

Just because the Priory of Sion is a hoax doesn't mean that Jesus and Mary Magdalene couldn't

345

00:28:02,760 --> 00:28:05,480

have produced a child.

346

00:28:05,480 --> 00:28:11,200

The bloodline theory continues to inspire stories of the Holy Grail today, including

347

00:28:11,200 --> 00:28:15,560

Dan Brown's bestseller, *The Da Vinci Code*.

348

00:28:15,560 --> 00:28:21,040

But there's another more recent theory that also has Mary Magdalene at its center, and

349

00:28:21,040 --> 00:28:30,720

it puts the Grail over 3,000 miles from Jerusalem.

350

00:28:30,720 --> 00:28:35,800

When it comes to theories on the Holy Grail, researcher Graham Phillips has heard them

351

00:28:35,800 --> 00:28:36,800

all.

352

00:28:36,800 --> 00:28:42,680

I'm thinking to myself, I know every story about the Holy Grail, the cup of the Last

353

00:28:42,680 --> 00:28:54,080

Supper, the enchanted stone, the bloodline of Mary Magdalene, and more.

354

00:28:54,080 --> 00:28:57,680

So what does Phillips think the Holy Grail is?

355

00:28:57,680 --> 00:29:04,360

It's a powerful cup, yes, that much I believe, but I don't believe that it has anything to

356

00:29:04,360 --> 00:29:07,160

do with the bloodline of Mary Magdalene.

357

00:29:07,160 --> 00:29:14,280

However, I do think that Mary Magdalene once possessed the cup.

358

00:29:14,280 --> 00:29:19,600

According to Phillips, there is not one but two sacred cups used during the last days

359

00:29:19,600 --> 00:29:26,560

of Jesus Christ, and a majority of Grail seekers have been looking for the wrong one.

360

00:29:26,560 --> 00:29:32,640

I don't believe that it is the cup of the Last Supper that we should be seeking, but

361

00:29:32,640 --> 00:29:37,880

the cup that belonged to Jesus' follower Mary Magdalene.

362

00:29:37,880 --> 00:29:45,880

The Gospels describe how she anointed Jesus' body with oils, and these came in a small

363

00:29:45,880 --> 00:29:48,800

scent jar.

364

00:29:48,800 --> 00:29:54,560

Early Christian tradition states that Mary Magdalene visits the site of Jesus' crucifixion.

365

00:29:54,560 --> 00:29:59,160

There she collects some of his blood in a sacred vessel.

366

00:29:59,200 --> 00:30:03,520

That small jar becomes known as the Marian Chalice.

367

00:30:03,520 --> 00:30:11,520

The cup Graham Phillips believes is the true Holy Grail.

368

00:30:11,520 --> 00:30:15,400

Forget metaphorical bloodlines.

369

00:30:15,400 --> 00:30:21,680

What we're talking about is an actual relic which contained Jesus' blood, and if so,

370

00:30:21,680 --> 00:30:25,200

its value would be immeasurable.

371

00:30:25,240 --> 00:30:28,560

The question is, where does it go from there?

372

00:30:28,560 --> 00:30:35,400

That theory says that Mary Magdalene left the cup in Jesus' tomb, and that it remained

373

00:30:35,400 --> 00:30:40,480

there undisturbed, undiscovered for about 400 years, until the Roman Empire finally becomes

374

00:30:40,480 --> 00:30:44,960

Christian and people start to search for those kinds of things.

375

00:30:44,960 --> 00:30:53,720

Around 326 AD, Roman Emperor Constantine orders the excavation of the Holy Sepulchre, a potential

376

00:30:53,720 --> 00:30:58,280

site of Jesus' tomb in Jerusalem.

377

00:30:58,280 --> 00:31:03,720

So during the excavation, a vessel is uncovered, which is thought to be this Marian Chalice

378

00:31:03,720 --> 00:31:09,240

or the Holy Grail, and it's taken from there in Jerusalem to Rome, where the leaders of

379

00:31:09,240 --> 00:31:14,720

the church believe that it had special powers.

380

00:31:14,720 --> 00:31:22,760

It remains in Rome until 410 AD, when the city is sacked by barbarians.

381

00:31:22,800 --> 00:31:27,800

But the Chalice, along with other treasures, is taken out of Rome in a convoy of armed

382

00:31:27,800 --> 00:31:33,680

carts and eventually brought to the safety of one of the last outposts of the Roman

383

00:31:33,680 --> 00:31:36,960

Empire, Britain.

384

00:31:36,960 --> 00:31:43,000

From there, Mary Magdalene's Chalice becomes the inspiration for one of the most famous

385

00:31:43,000 --> 00:31:45,760

legends in history.

386

00:31:45,760 --> 00:31:52,480

This idea of the Marian Chalice in England is what inspires some of the Arthurian tales.

387

00:31:52,480 --> 00:31:57,000

In the story of King Arthur and his knights, the Holy Grail is kept in a secret chapel

388

00:31:57,000 --> 00:32:01,720

in a fortress called the White Castle, in a place known as the White Town.

389

00:32:01,720 --> 00:32:06,080

And as it turns out, those locations aren't entirely fictional.

390

00:32:06,080 --> 00:32:11,680

Actually, most of the Arthurian stories have a lot of historically accurate detail.

391

00:32:11,680 --> 00:32:16,640

They're mixed in with fantasy, but some of it is absolutely true.

392

00:32:16,640 --> 00:32:24,080

In the early 13th century, a real-life crusader knight by the name of Fouk Fitzwarri claimed

393

00:32:24,080 --> 00:32:27,760

to have possessed the Chalice of Magdalene.

394

00:32:27,760 --> 00:32:36,400

And he kept it in the chapel of his castle, which was known as the White Castle.

395

00:32:36,400 --> 00:32:40,640

Exactly the same as where the Grail is kept in the Arthurian romances.

396

00:32:40,640 --> 00:32:47,360

It's in a town known as Whittington, which is Old English for White Town.

397

00:32:47,360 --> 00:32:52,000

Exactly, once again, as in the Arthurian romances.

398

00:32:52,000 --> 00:32:58,760

Unfortunately, once Fitzwarri dies, his White Castle spends several centuries falling into

399

00:32:58,760 --> 00:33:00,400

disrepair.

400

00:33:00,400 --> 00:33:05,320

If the Marian Chalice was once held here, it's not likely it remains.

401

00:33:05,320 --> 00:33:11,640

Once society has fallen out with the idea of magic, the hope of something powerful and

402

00:33:11,640 --> 00:33:16,680

unexpected, the Holy Grail wasn't just going to show up.

403

00:33:16,680 --> 00:33:27,200

I was going to have to go and search for it.

404

00:33:27,200 --> 00:33:31,680

For thousands of years, the faithful have searched for the Holy Grail.

405

00:33:31,680 --> 00:33:36,440

A mysterious object believed to grant healing and eternal life.

406

00:33:36,440 --> 00:33:39,640

It pops up here, it pops up there.

407

00:33:39,640 --> 00:33:43,160

This person has it, that person has it.

408

00:33:43,160 --> 00:33:47,520

It's everywhere at once, yet nowhere at all.

409

00:33:47,520 --> 00:33:54,160

According to English researcher Graham Phillips, the Grail is a small oil jar that was used

410

00:33:54,160 --> 00:33:58,640

by Mary Magdalene to catch Jesus' blood.

411

00:33:58,640 --> 00:34:05,120

The last known whereabouts of the Chalice of Magdalene is with Falk Fitzwarine and his

412

00:34:05,120 --> 00:34:10,520

castle at Whittington in the early 1200s.

413

00:34:10,520 --> 00:34:15,280

And where the trail ends is where I begin.

414

00:34:15,280 --> 00:34:24,080

The Chalice resurfaces in the mid-19th century with one of Falk Fitzwarine's direct descendants,

415

00:34:24,080 --> 00:34:26,200

Thomas Wright.

416

00:34:26,200 --> 00:34:32,600

Thomas Wright actually claims that the cup had been handed down to him by his ancestors.

417

00:34:32,600 --> 00:34:39,400

It is described as a small stone cup made from alabaster or green onyx.

418

00:34:39,400 --> 00:34:45,960

And Thomas Wright is absolutely convinced that this was the very cup that Mary Magdalene

419

00:34:45,960 --> 00:34:51,320

used to collect drops of Christ's blood during the crucifixion.

420

00:34:51,320 --> 00:34:59,160

In 1855, with no children to hand it on to, Thomas Wright decides to hide the cup and

421

00:34:59,160 --> 00:35:08,880

leave a series of clues as to where it is hidden for some future generation to follow.

422

00:35:08,880 --> 00:35:17,560

Wright hides his clues in an 1855 poem he publishes called Sir Gawain and the Red Knight.

423

00:35:17,560 --> 00:35:23,240

It concerns Arthur's knight Gawain and his search for the Marian Chalice.

424

00:35:23,240 --> 00:35:31,280

And he finds it at the end of the poem and then hides it again, but we're not told where.

425

00:35:31,280 --> 00:35:36,920

To figure it out, Phillips analyses the poem as it was originally published.

426

00:35:36,920 --> 00:35:42,000

There are two lines of Roman numerals on the title page of the book.

427

00:35:42,000 --> 00:35:49,720

They seem to have absolutely no purpose and at the end of the poem are the final lines.

428

00:35:49,720 --> 00:35:52,720

The shepherd's songs to guide the way.

429

00:35:52,720 --> 00:35:55,960

The horn was blown, the treasure lay.

430

00:35:55,960 --> 00:36:01,640

The only thing that comes to mind about shepherd's songs is the Psalms in the Bible.

431

00:36:01,640 --> 00:36:10,320

They are said to have been written by the Israelite King David when he was a young man and just a shepherd.

432

00:36:10,320 --> 00:36:18,320

When Phillips compares the Psalms to the cryptic Roman numerals, Thomas Wright's secret message is finally revealed.

433

00:36:18,320 --> 00:36:29,800

I think perhaps the top line refers to the number of the Psalm and the second line might refer to the verse of that particular Psalm.

434

00:36:29,800 --> 00:36:35,520

Based on his theory, Phillips begins with Psalm 31 verse 3.

435

00:36:35,520 --> 00:36:43,320

For thou art my rock and my fortress, therefore for my name's sake lead me and guide me.

436

00:36:43,320 --> 00:36:46,640

A rock and a fortress, but where?

437

00:36:46,640 --> 00:36:51,480

At the end of the poem, Sir Gawain, when he is hidden the chalice of Magdalene,

438

00:36:51,480 --> 00:36:56,360

he stands on the battlements of a place called the Red Castle.

439

00:36:57,200 --> 00:37:07,200

Phillips visits the Red Castle and from there follows more clues left by the Psalms

440

00:37:07,200 --> 00:37:15,200

through a series of caves, which lead to a small church in the village of Hodnett.

441

00:37:16,040 --> 00:37:30,040

And when I enter the church, the next verse reads, I turn upon my right hand and behold.

442

00:37:30,040 --> 00:37:43,040

And when I look up, I see I am staring at a stained glass window and the window was designed and paid to be installed

443

00:37:43,880 --> 00:37:51,880

by Thomas Wright in 1855, exactly the year he wrote the poem.

444

00:37:51,880 --> 00:37:55,880

Unfortunately, Phillips arrives at the church too late.

445

00:37:55,880 --> 00:38:01,880

In the stained glass window, we have a figure that looks exactly like Mary Magdalene holding a chalice.

446

00:38:01,880 --> 00:38:05,880

And above her head is the figure of an eagle.

447

00:38:05,880 --> 00:38:13,880

And I discover that years ago, when the eagle statue at Hawke Stone Park in the caves is being moved,

448

00:38:13,880 --> 00:38:25,880

it falls over, breaks and in the base they discover what is described as an interesting curio, a small stone cup.

449

00:38:26,880 --> 00:38:31,880

This cup is found by a worker named Walter Langham.

450

00:38:32,880 --> 00:38:35,880

He didn't know what it was, but he found it interesting.

451

00:38:35,880 --> 00:38:46,880

So he kept it. I discover that his descendants still have it and it's kept amongst a load of junk in their attic.

452

00:38:47,880 --> 00:38:53,880

Phillips then tracks down Langham's descendants and acquires the cup.

453

00:38:54,880 --> 00:39:03,880

And here it is, a small stone cup made from green alabaster.

454

00:39:05,880 --> 00:39:08,880

It matches every description I've read.

455

00:39:17,880 --> 00:39:21,880

Next he has it analysed by the British Museum.

456

00:39:22,880 --> 00:39:29,880

It's found to have been a Roman cent jar dating from the first century.

457

00:39:29,880 --> 00:39:33,880

It's from the right time. It's made from the right material.

458

00:39:33,880 --> 00:39:43,880

It is the long lost chalice of Mary Magdalene once used to collect a few drops of Christ's blood.

459

00:39:43,880 --> 00:39:47,880

A holy stone, a grail stone.

460

00:39:48,880 --> 00:39:51,880

This is the holy grail.

461

00:39:56,880 --> 00:40:01,880

Although Phillips believes his cup is the true grail, we may never know the answer.

462

00:40:01,880 --> 00:40:05,880

If it turns out he's right, imagine the implications.

463

00:40:05,880 --> 00:40:10,880

The holy grail itself, perhaps the most coveted object in history,

464

00:40:11,880 --> 00:40:19,880

one day simply falls out of the base of a broken statue and is quietly purchased from an English attic.

465

00:40:19,880 --> 00:40:24,880

Or could it still be out there hiding in plain sight?

466

00:40:25,880 --> 00:40:27,880

I'm Lawrence Fishburne.

467

00:40:27,880 --> 00:40:31,880

Thank you for watching History's Greatest Mysteries.