



Student Guide – Session 3

Issue 4: Did Christians Believe Jesus was Divine from the Beginning?

- A. Consider some excerpts from *The Da Vinci Code*:
1. "...Constantine ... held a famous ecumenical gathering known as the Council of Nicaea... At this gathering," Teabing said, "many aspects of Christianity were debated and voted upon – the date of Easter . . . and, of course, the *divinity* of Jesus." (p. 233)
 2. "My dear," Teabing declared, "until *that* moment in history, Jesus was viewed by His followers as a mortal prophet . . . a great and powerful man, but a *man* nonetheless. A mortal." (p. 233)
 3. "Jesus' establishment as 'the Son of God' was officially proposed and voted on by the Council of Nicaea." "Hold on. You're saying Jesus' divinity was the result of a *vote*?" "A relatively close vote at that," Teabing added. (p. 233)
- B. Early Evidence that Christians Believed in the Deity of Christ
1. Evidence from the New Testament
 - a) John's Gospel, written between A.D. 85-95 (over 200 years before the Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325), declares of Jesus: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." (1:1, 14)
 - b) In his letter to the Philippians (c. A.D. 60), the apostle Paul described Jesus as One who is "in very nature God" – as well as human (2:6-8).
 2. Evidence from pre-Nicene Church Fathers
 - a) Justin Martyr (c. A.D. 100-165) in his First Apology wrote, ". . . the Father of the universe has a Son; who being the logos and First-begotten is also God" (63:15).
 - b) Irenaeus (c. A.D. 130-200) described Jesus as "our Lord, and God" (*Against Heresies* I, x, 1).
 3. Evidence from non-Christians
 - a) Pliny the Younger: In a letter to Emperor Trajan (A.D. 112), "(Christians) were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day . . . when they sang . . . a hymn to Christ, as to a god."
- C. The Council of Nicaea
1. Convened by Emperor Constantine in A.D. 325, the central issue concerned the nature of Christ.
 2. Arius taught that Christ was the Son of God, but also that He was the first thing *created* by God.
 3. After much debate, Arius' views were condemned and the bishops crafted the Nicene Creed, which affirmed that Jesus is the eternal Son of God. All but two of the bishops signed the Creed. It was hardly a "close vote." This creed reaffirmed what the church had *always* believed about Jesus.
- D. To sum up, Christians have believed in Christ's deity from the inception of the church.

My Notes on Issue 4 –

Issue 5: Goddess Worship, Ancient Israel, and the Church

- A. Consider some excerpts from *The Da Vinci Code*:
1. "...the early Jewish tradition involved ritualistic sex. *In the Temple, no less*. Early Jews believed that the Holy of Holies in Solomon's Temple housed not only God but also His powerful female equal, Shekinah. Men seeking spiritual wholeness came to the Temple to visit priestesses . . . with whom they made love and experienced the divine through physical union." (p. 309)
 2. "The Jewish tetragrammaton YHWH—the sacred name of God—in fact derived from Jehovah, an androgynous physical union between the masculine *Jah* and the pre-Hebraic name for Eve, *Havah*." (p. 309)
 3. "For the early Church," Langdon explained in a soft voice, "mankind's use of sex to commune directly with God posed a serious threat to the Catholic power base. It left the Church out of the loop, undermining their self proclaimed status as the sole conduit to God. For obvious reasons, they worked hard to demonize sex and recast it as a disgusting and sinful act." (p. 309)
- B. A Biblical Evaluation and Critique of the claims in *The Da Vinci Code's*
1. The Bible clearly teaches that there is only one God:
 - a) "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one." (Deuteronomy 6:4)
 - b) "Is there any God besides me? No, there is no other Rock; I know not one." (Isa. 44:8)
 2. The Hebrew word "shekinah" means "glory". This word does not imply a female consort for God.
 3. Ancient Jews put the vowels for the word Lord, "Adonai," under the tetragrammaton, YHWH, "I AM," creating "Jehovah." The idea that YHWH came from Jehovah and that Jehovah is made up of a male prefix and female suffix is false.
 4. Sexual rites may have entered into Jewish worship but this was due to Israel turning away from God and His law. This was a perversion of temple worship (1 Samuel 2, Isaiah 1, Jeremiah 19).
 5. The Bible teaches that sex is a gift from God. But the sacred feminine in the novel promotes an immoral use of sex. The Bible regards sex as honorable and protects its role as sacred in marriage (see Hebrews 13:4).
 6. The Bible teaches that men and women are equal in nature. We are designed by God to fulfill different roles, but we are equal in nature and value to God. Although at times Christians have misapplied the teachings of the Bible regarding women, it is the biblical teachings that led the church to correct itself and honor women as God taught in His word (see Gen. 1:27; Luke 8:1-3; Gal. 3:28; Eph. 5:25; etc.).
- C. To sum up, the Bible does *not* teach that God had a female consort, nor does it demonize sex, nor does it denigrate women. Most of what *The Da Vinci Code* says about the Bible, Jesus, and the early church is simply *false*.

My Notes on Issue 5 –