

FAITH FACT OR FICTION

Questions Raised by The DaVinci Code

Part 2 – Is Jesus Really God?

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WHAT DOES THE DAVINCI CODE SAY?

“Jesus establishment as ‘the Son of God’ was officially proposed and voted on by the Council of Nicaea.” P. 233

“A relatively close vote at that.”

“Because Constantine upgraded Jesus status almost four centuries after Jesus death thousands of documents already existed chronicling His life as a mortal man.” P234

“Constantine commissioned a new Bible, which omitted those Gospels that spoke of Christ’s human traits and embellished those gospels that made Him godlike. The earlier gospels were gathered up, and burned.” P 234

1. What did the secret gospels teach?

These secret Gospels were written by a group called Gnostics. The Gnostics believed all matter was bad and spirit was good. So, in essence they believe that Jesus was a man and Christ was the Spirit that came down on the man.

Do the Nag Hammadi and/or other non-canonical accounts of Jesus really emphasize the humanity of Jesus?

Jesus in the Gospels

- The canonical Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) actually emphasize Jesus’ humanity and usually only hint at his deity.

- What do the Gnostic Gospels tell us about Jesus?

Jesus in *Gospel of Philip*

For he [Jesus] showed himself not to be as he really was, but he appeared in a way that they could see him. To those ... he appeared, he appeared to the great as Great. He appeared to the small as small. He appeared to the angels as an angel and to humans as a human – *Gosp Phil 26*

In *Philip*, Jesus **only appeared** to be human.

Jesus in *Gospel of Peter*

Others standing there were spitting in his [Jesus’] face; some slapped his cheeks; others were beating him with a reed; and some began to flog him, saying, “This is how we should honor the Son of God!” They brought forward two evildoers and crucified the Lord between them. But he was silent, as if he had no pain. – *Gosp Pet 9-10*

Jesus is pictured as suffering no pain.

Docetism is a term used to refer to a theological perspective among some in the early church who regarded the sufferings and the human aspects of Christ as imaginary or apparent instead of being part of a real incarnation. The basic thesis of such docetics was that if Christ suffered he was not divine, and if he was God he could not suffer ...

Gnostics (at least Gospel of Thomas) see Jesus as a spiritual guide who leads others to the same divinity that He has. P. xx The Gnostic Gospels, Elaine Pagels

Image of God hidden within everyone. Beyond Belief, p 41

2. What did Nicaea decide?

In fact, nothing of the sort happened at Nicaea. There was no debate about—or vote on—the divinity of Christ at that council, because the council Fathers recognized that the divinity of Christ was already established in the pages of the New Testament.

What the Fathers of Nicaea voted on was not the divinity of Christ but the teaching of the priest Arius, who had recently promulgated the idea that God's Son, who assumed our humanity in Jesus, had not been God's Son from all eternity. There was God the Father before there was the Son, said Arius; the Father and the Son were two separate beings, the One prior to the Other. The question before the council was whether or not this novel teaching Arius was compatible with what the apostles taught in the Gospels and Epistles of the New Testament.

Constantine sat apart from the bishops, but close enough to participate in the discussions.

Someone called for the Arian position to be stated. Bishop Eusebius of Nicomedia stood before the council and read a clear and blatant denial of the deity of the Son of God, emphasizing that he is a creature and not equal with the Father in any sense. Before Eusebius finished reading it, some of the bishops were holding their hands over their ears and shouting for someone to stop the blasphemies. One bishop near Eusebius stepped forward and grabbed the manuscript out of his hands, threw it to the floor and stomped on it.

After some wrangling and little agreement, Constantine himself proposed that the new creed include the affirmation that the Son is homoousios—one substance—with the Father—that they share all the same essential attributes of deity.

They voted to affirm the statement that the Son was of the same substance as the Father – the vote 298-2.

They did not make Jesus anything, they simply affirmed what the church had always believed, what the Scriptures taught, that Jesus was God the Son.

Nicene Creed

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made.

Who, for us men for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets.

And I believe one holy catholic and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

3. What does the Bible teach?

(Mat 8:28-29 NIV) When he arrived at the other side in the region of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men coming from the tombs met him. They were so violent that no one could pass that way. {29} "What do you want with us, Son of God?" they shouted. "Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?"

(Mat 26:63 NIV) But Jesus remained silent. The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God."

Now where did Caiaphas, many of the Jews, and even demons get the idea that the Messiah was to be the Son of God? There is just one answer: from the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament. Its intent was to prepare the Jews and the whole world for this belief.

a. Old Testament

- i. (Isa 7:14 NIV) Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.
- ii. (Isa 9:6 NIV) For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
- iii. (Micah 5:2 NIV) "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."

b. Gospels

- i. **Matthew** (Mat 26:63-64 NIV) But Jesus remained silent. The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." {64} "Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."
- ii. **Mark** 5:7 He shouted at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Swear to God that you won't torture me!"
- iii. **Luke** (Luke 1:42-43 NIV) In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! {43} But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?"
- iv. **John** (John 5:18 NIV) For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

c. Other

- i. (Phil 2:5-7 NIV) Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: {6} Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, {7} but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.
- ii. (Col 2:9 NIV) For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form,
- iii. (Titus 2:13 NIV) while we wait for the blessed hope--the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,
- iv. (Heb 1:3 NIV) The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.
- v. (Rev 22:13 NIV) I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.... Rev 22:16 "I, Jesus,

4. What difference does it make?

a. If Jesus were just a man He could not forgive sins

(Mat 9:6 NIV) But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. . . ." Then he said to the paralytic, "Get up, take your mat and go home."

b. If Jesus were just a man He could not have died for all – His blood would not have paid for all.

(Mark 14:24 NIV) "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them.

c. If Jesus were just a man He would not be coming back to judge

(2 Cor 5:10 NIV) For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

C.S. Lewis put it so well when he said he was trying "to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: 'I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God.' That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic – on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg – or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him us for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that option open to us. He did not intend to." (Mere Christianity, pp. 55-56)

Jesus said you must make a decision. Who do you say Jesus is? This is where the rubber meets the road! A right confession of Jesus' identity is essential to our very salvation (Romans 10:9–10) Eternity hinges on Jesus' identity and your belief in it.

(Rom 10:9-11 NIV) That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. {10} For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. {11} As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame."