

Constantine



“. . . until [the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD], Jesus was viewed by his followers as a mortal prophet . . . Jesus' establishment as 'the Son of God' was officially proposed and voted on by the Council of Nicaea . . . Establishing Christ's divinity was critical to the further unification of the Roman empire and to the new Vatican power base."

--Teabing, *The Da Vinci Code*, 233.

“By officially endorsing Jesus as the Son of God, Constantine turned Jesus into a deity . . . Now the followers of Christ were able to redeem themselves *only* via the established sacred channel—the **Roman Catholic Church . . . the early Church literally *stole* Jesus from His original followers**, hijacking His human message, shrouding it in an impenetrable cloak of divinity, and using it to expand their own power. I’ve written several books on this topic.”

--Teabing, *The Da Vinci Code*, 233.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and **the Word was God**.

He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being . . .

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'")

John 1:1-3, 14-15

Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe."

Thomas answered him, "**My Lord and my God!**" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that **Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God**, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

John 20:27-31

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them **in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit**, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Matthew 28:18-20

Let the same mind be in you that was in **Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited**, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness.

And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death-- even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:5-11

Constantine (274-337 AD)

- Became ruler over all the Roman Empire in 312 after defeating his rival at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge
- Issued Edict of Milan in 313, making Christianity legal after two centuries
- Called First Ecumenical Council at Nicea in 325 to deal with Church disputes
- He was patron of both Paganism and Christianity.
 - He deferred his baptism until just before his death.
 - His sons had him deified as a god after his death.

Council of Nicea (325 AD)

- Arian view (Eusebius of Nicomedia)
 - Held that Christ did not exist co-eternally with the Father.
 - Instead, he was the first born of creation.
- Athanasian view (Alexander of Alexandria)
 - Held that “there was never a time when Jesus was not”

Council of Nicea (325 AD)

■ The Debate

- Most entered the council viewing the debate as an esoteric philosophical debate.
- When Eusebius presented his view that Christ was a mere Creature, however, the bishops were outraged, calling such a view blasphemous.

The Nicene Creed

- In response, the first part of the Nicene Creed was crafted to make it clear that Christ was not created.
- The Creed itself was slightly revised from a creed in current use in Palestine.
- All bishops present, save for three, signed the creed
- Those that did not were deposed by the Church and banished from their cities by the Emperor

. . . And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten of the Father, God of God, light of light, true God of true God, begotten not made, of **one substance [homoousios]** with the Father, through whom all things were made . . .

--Nicene Creed

But those who say that there was when He was not, and that before being begotten He was not, or that He came from that which is not, or that the Son of God is of a different substance or essence, or that He is created, or mutable, these the worldwide Church anathematizes.

--Anathemas with the Nicene Creed

The Aftermath of Nicea

- Eusebius of Nicomedia strikes back
 - Later convinced Constantine to lift the banishment on the Arians and request the Bishop of Constantinople to restore him to communion.
 - Constantine likewise banished Athanasius
 - Eusebius baptized Constantine on his deathbed.
 - Arianism continued throughout the fourth century, even extending to the bishop of Rome for a short time.

The Aftermath of Nicea

■ The Athanasian Clarification

- Most of the support for Arianism, however, came from bishops who saw the creed as holding that there was no distinction between the Father and the Son.
- Athanasius succeeded in clarifying that this was not the case.
- This led to the reaffirmation of the Creed at the Second Ecumenical Council in 381 at Constantinople.

“Because Constantine upgraded Jesus’ status almost four centuries after Jesus’ death . . . Constantine [had to create a] 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 outlawed, gathered up, and burned.”

--Teabing, *The Da Vinci Code*, 235.

Early Canons

- Marcion (mid II AD)
 - No OT, Luke, some Pauline epistles
- Irenaeus (Late II AD)
 - OT (including Apocrypha)
 - Matt, Mark, Luke, John
 - Acts
 - Romans, 1, 2 Cor, Gal, Eph, Phil, Col, 1, 2 Thess, 1, 2 Tim, Titus, 1 Pet, 1 John, Rev
 - *Maybe:* Heb, James, 2, 3 John, Shepherd of Hermas

Eusebius of Caesarea (early IV AD)

■ Universally Used

- OT (including Apocrypha)
- Matt, Mark, Luke, John
- Acts
- Romans, 1, 2 Cor, Gal, Eph, Phil, Col, 1, 2 Thess, 1, 2 Tim, Titus, Hebrews
- 1 John, 1 Peter

■ Disputed

- James, Jude, 2 Peter, 2, 3 John, Revelation
- Gospel of Hebrews

Present Canon

- First Attested in 367 AD by Athanasius
 - Mentioned casually in his Easter Letter to his Diocese, written during one of his exiles.

“Virtually all the elements of the Catholic ritual—the miter, the altar, the doxology, and communion, the act of “God-eating”—were taken directly from earlier pagan mystery religions . . . Originally . . . Christianity honored the Jewish Sabbath of Saturday, but Constantine shifted it to coincide with the pagan’s veneration day of the sun . . . To this day most churchgoers attend services on Sunday morning with no idea that they are there on account of the pagan sun god’s weekly tribute—*Sun-day*”

--Teabing, *The Da Vinci Code*, 232-33.

On the first day of every week, each of you is to put aside and save whatever extra you earn, so that collections need not be taken when I come. (1 Cor 16:2)

On the first day of the week, when we met to break bread, Paul was holding a discussion with them. (Acts 20:7)

I was in the spirit on the **Lord's day**, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet. (Rev 1:10)

But every Lord's day you should gather yourselves together, and break bread, and say the Eucharist after having confessed your transgressions, that your sacrifice may be pure. (Didache, c. 100 AD)

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

1 Cor 11:23-26

Now even the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly sanctuary. For a tent was constructed, the first one, in which were the lampstand, the table, and the bread of the Presence; this is called the Holy Place. Behind the second curtain was a tent called the Holy of Holies.

In it stood the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which there were a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant; above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot speak now in detail. Such preparations having been made, the priests go continually into the first tent to carry out their ritual duties . . .

But when Christ came as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation), **he entered once for all into the Holy Place, not with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption.** (Heb 9:1-6, 1-12)

Finally, brothers and sisters, farewell. Put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you.

The grace of the **Lord Jesus Christ**, the love of **God**, and the fellowship of the **Holy Spirit** be with all of you.

(2 Cor 13:11-13)