

Da Vinci Code and Jesus!

[Slide 1]

1. Jesus Christ and Deity

a. Constantine and Jesus?

i. [Slide 2] ***The DVC Claim: “Constantine commissioned and financed a new Bible, which...embellished those gospels that made Him godlike. The earlier gospels were outlawed, gathered up, and burned.”*** (p234)

[Slide 3] ***“The modern Bible was compiled and edited by men who possessed a political agenda—to promote the divinity of the man Jesus Christ and use His influence to solidify their own power base.”*** (p234)

[Slide 4] ***“Many scholars claim that 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.”*** (p233)

ii. [Slide 5] ***“Jesus’ establishment as the ‘Son of God’ was officially proposed and voted on by the Council of Nicaea...A relatively close vote at that.”*** (p233)

iii. [Slide 6] ***Was Jesus’ Deity A Deception Of Man To Gain Political Power?***

iv. [Slide 7] ***Did The Council of Nicaea Actually Decide The Question of Jesus’ Deity?***

v. [Slide 8] ***The Truth:***

1. Constantine had come to recognize another source of disunity in his empire. A forceful speaker named Arius had attracted a large following of people who were persuaded that Christ was something less than eternal God, something like a lesser God, created by the Father and sent to earth to enter humanity through his birth from Mary of Nazareth. Constantine felt both a political and religious desire to end this controversy, and called together over 300 Bishops from all over the empire. Lutzer describes, [Slide 9]

“He gave the opening speech himself, telling the delegates that doctrinal disunity was worse than war.

This intrusion of a politician into the doctrines and procedures of the church was resented by some of the delegates, but welcomed by others. For those who had gone through a period of bitter persecution, this conference, carried on under the imperial banner, was heaven on earth.” (Lutzer, DVD, 5)

2. Something else Brown doesn't mention is that Arius believed that Jesus was sinless, created the universe, and was a unique and special created being – not a mere man. Arius simply was reluctant to take the next step and classify Jesus as God in the full sense.
3. The Council of Nicaea was initiated by Constantine in order to settle a developing schism in the church.
 - a. With over 300 bishops present; the Da Vinci Code seems to tie this council to one main issue (deciding on Jesus' deity), and then seems to add a second: deciding what books to include in the canon.
 - b. The average reader with little background in ancient history is left helpless against such a claim.
 - c. Let's get the perspective of a real historian who has studied the sources regarding the Nicaean Council in A.D. 325: Professor Paul Maier, historian and researcher at Western Michigan University states:
[Slide 10]
“Jesus’ deity was attested by many New Testament passages, as well as by the earliest Christians and all the church fathers, even if there was some disagreement as to the precise nature of that deity. The Council of Nicaea did not debate over whether Jesus was divine or only mortal, but whether he was coeternal with the Father.”
(Hanegraaff, DVCF, 15)
4. So how close was this “...relatively close vote...”?

- a. **[Slide 11]** So just how close was the vote for Jesus' co-eternality with the Father? *"In fact,"* Dr. Maier, *"the vote was 300 to 2."* (Hanegraaff, DVCFF, 15)
 - b. That's quite a stretch: from *"a relatively close vote"* to 300 to 2. (Some sources say that the vote was 218-2)
 - c. What is important for people to know in the face of The Da Vinci Code claims is that this vote only affirmed what Christians had believed all along
 - d. How does it feel to be lied to so convincingly? In actuality, it was a landslide in favor of the position we have in the Nicene Creed today, Christ being **[Slide 12]** *"Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made."*
- b. **The Second Claim – Jesus was always viewed as just a man until Constantine's Day.**
- i. **[Slide 13] The DVC Claim:** *"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."* (p233)
 - ii. **[Slide 14] Was Jesus Always Viewed As Just A Man?**
 - iii. **[Slide 15] The Truth:**
 1. **[Slide 16] The Disciples regarded Jesus as God:**
 - a. Matthew was there when Peter made his famous confession in Matthew 16:13-16,
 - b. **[Slide 17]** The disciple, John wrote of Jesus, *"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 apart from Him nothing came into being.... And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."* (John 1:1-3,14)
 - c. **[Slide 18]** John was there when Thomas made the declaration *"My Lord and my God"*. (John 20:28)
 - d. These followers of Christ definitely regarded Christ as deity, and, as we saw last Sunday wrote down the only eye-witness gospel accounts of the life of Jesus preserved for posterity.
 - e. Jesus Himself allowed the disciples to worship Him as God:
 - f. Paul clearly affirms Jesus' status as deity—as the very Creator of the universe. **[Slide 19] (Philippians 2:6-7)**
 - g. These words from Paul were written well over 200 years before the council of Nicaea.
 - h. The view that Jesus was already widely regarded as God is hardly reflected in the DVC.
 2. **The early church fathers regarded Him as God:**
 - a. **[Slide 20] Justin Martyr [100-165]** wrote of Christ, *"being the first begotten Word of God, is even God"; "both God and Lord of hosts"*. (First Apology, Ch. 63 in Roberts, ANF, v. 1, 184)
 - b. **[Slide 21] Clement of Alexandria [153-217]:** Clement of Alexandria wrote, *"truly most manifest Deity, He that is made equal to the Lord of the universe; because he was His Son"*. (Clement of Alexandria, Exhortation to the Heathen, ch.10 in Roberts, ANF, v. 2, 202)
 - c. **[Slide 22] Ignatius of Antioch [50-117]:** *"There is one Physician who is possessed both of flesh and spirit; both made and not made; God existing in flesh; true life in death; both of Mary and of God; first possible and then in possible, even Jesus Christ our Lord."* (Ignatius of Antioch, Letter to the Ephesians, chap. 7)
- [Slide 23] "For our God, Jesus Christ, was, according to the appointment of God, conceived in the womb by Mary, of the seed of David, but by the Holy Ghost."** (Ignatius of Antioch, Letter to the Smyrneans, 10).

2. **The Third claim is that Jesus Christ and Mary Magdalene were Married.**

a. ***Their relationship according to the Gospel of Phillip:***

[Slide 24] *The DVC Claim:* “It’s a matter of historical record...and Da Vinci was certainly aware of that fact. The Last Supper practically shouts at the viewer that Jesus and Magdalene were a pair.” (p244)

[Slide 25] According to the DVC The Gospel of Phillip says -- “And the companion of the Saviour is Mary Magdalene. Christ loved her more than all the disciples and used to kiss her often on her mouth. The rest of the disciples were offended by it and expressed disapproval. They said to him, “Why do you love her more than all of us?”

[Slide 26] “As any Aramaic scholar will tell you, the word companion, in those days, literally means spouse.” (p246)

[Slide 27a] “As I said earlier, the marriage of Jesus and Mary Magdalene is part of the historical record.” (p245)

[Slide 27b] “I shan’t bore you with the countless references to Jesus and Magdalene’s union. That has been explored ad nauseam by modern historians.” (p247)

b. **[Slide 28] *Were Jesus and Mary Really Married?***

c. **[Slide 29] *The Truth:***

i. Simply on the face of this statement it seems to fall apart.

1. If Jesus were married to Mary Magdalene, wouldn’t he normally kiss her on her mouth?
2. Why should the disciples be offended by that?
3. In fact, the very asking of the question of why Jesus would show more love to Mary than the disciples is a proof against their having been married.
4. Otherwise, the answer would have been self-evident and the question unasked.

ii. Brown then tells us that the Aramaic definition for the word companion is spouse; Now we run into some hard core factual difficulties.

1. **[Slide 30]** First, as Abanes points out, “***The Gospel of Phillip is not written in Aramaic. It is written in Coptic—a late form of Egyptian. And even this is a translation of an earlier text in Greek.***” (Abanes, TBDVC, 39)
2. **[Slide 31]** Therefore the Aramaic definition of the word companion is useless here. Craig Bloomberg, professor at Denver Seminary tells us, “***no Aramaic or Hebrew words for ‘companion’ normally means spouse!***” (Bloomberg, DVC)
3. Margaret Mitchell, a professor of early church history at the University of Chicago Divinity School says that Brown is using “***a shaky translation***” of a word that “***is usually translated as friend or companion.***” (Kuhlman, JA)

iii. As for the “kiss”, there are two important pieces of information Brown has obviously overlooked.

1. **First** is the fact that the manuscript from which all translations are drawn is so badly damaged at this point that we don’t know for sure what it says. Lutzer explains: **[Slide 32]** “***You should know that because of the poor quality of the papyrus, a word or two is missing in the original. The text reads, ‘Jesus kissed her often on the [blank] ...’ So scholars fill in the blank with the word mouth, face, or forehead, etc. Actually, for all we know the text might have said ‘the hand’ or even ‘the cheek’ since the statement implies that he also kissed his other students—presumably on the cheek as is still done in the Middle East.***” (Lutzer, DVD, 49)

[Slide 33] A Newsweek magazine article concluded that “***the theory that Jesus and Mary Magdalene were secretly married has no historical basis.***” (Barbara Kantrowitz and Anne Underwood, “Decoding the Da Vinci Code,” Newsweek, December 8, 2003, p54)

2. **Second**, another passage in The Gospel of Phillip (58:34-59:4) says “***For it is by a kiss that the perfect conceive and give birth. For this reason we all kiss one another. We receive conception from the grace which is in one another.***”

Harvard Professor Karen King parallels that passage to the passage used by

Brown above (Phillip 63:32-64:10) and she says that it is speaking of the kiss of fellowship between believers. She says it refers to **“the intimate reception of spiritual teaching.”** (King, GMM, 204, n. 50)

3. One last thing presents a huge problem for anything at all reliable coming out of the *Gospel of Phillip* is that it is a part of those Gnostic Gospels we spoke of last Sunday.

d. **One last argument for Jesus being Married is the Social Argument**

The DVC Claim: [Slide34] **“The social decorum during that time virtually forbid a Jewish man to be unmarried. According to Jewish custom, celibacy was condemned, and the obligation for a Jewish father was to find a suitable wife for his son. If Jesus were not married, at least one of the Bible’s gospels would have mentioned it and offered some explanation for His unnatural state of bachelorhood.”** (p245)

[Slide 35] **Was Marriage In Jesus’ Day A Cultural Necessity?**

e. [Slide 36] **The Truth:**

- i. Here Brown goes way off the path, his evidence for this alleged marriage is based on **“...social decorum...”** and **“...Jewish custom...”**
- ii. According to his [Brown’s] thinking, if Jesus would have gone so far as to not go along with Jewish social decorum, one of the gospels would have definitely recorded it and given an explanation of why he was not married.
- iii. Once again, the theory does not match the evidence
 1. **Saul of Tarsus**, a Pharisee and **“Hebrew of Hebrews”**, indicates in 1 Corinthians 7:8 that he was single, and yet before his conversion he was regarded very highly in the Jewish community (Philippians 3:4-6). He even went on in 1 Corinthians 7 to encourage others to stay single, if possible.
 2. [Slide 37] **Josephus**, The first century historian expresses his admiration for **“the Essenes”** who **“neither marry wives, nor are desirous to keep servants”**.
 - a. He tells us that **“There are about four thousand men that live in this way”** (Josephus, Antiquities, 18.1.5.20-21).
 - b. So, once again, the attitude towards celibacy was not as harsh as Brown portrays.
 3. **When Jesus was crucified**, John 19:25 says that Jesus mother, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene were all standing by the cross.
 - a. Why at this crucial point was he concerned enough to have John care for his mother, but does not express any concern at all toward or for Mary Magdalene, his alleged wife? [Slide 38] (John 19:25-27)
 4. This list could go on but I think the point is clear Brown jumps to conclusions based on secular thinking with no knowledge of the history of the day.
- iv. As in every case of Brown’s claims of historical evidence he fails to back it up with any truth.
- v. Dr. Paul Maier, who has spent his whole academic career researching historical facts of ancient history, states concerning the evidence of Jesus being married, [Slide 39/40] **“In sober fact, Jesus never wed anyone, but for years sensationalizing scholars and their novelistic popularizers have played the role of dotting mothers trying to marry off an eligible son. Now, if there were even one spark of evidence from antiquity that Jesus even may have gotten married, then as a historian, I would have to weigh this evidence against the total absence of such information in either Scripture or the early church traditions. But there is no such spark—not a scintilla of evidence — anywhere in historical sources. Even where one might expect to find such claims in the bizarre, second-century, apocryphal gospels—which the Jesus Seminar and other radical voices are trying so desperately to rehabilitate—there is no reference that Jesus ever got married.”** (Hanegraaff, DVDF, 16)

Conclusion: Why is this important? Why is it so important that Jesus was who He said He was? Why is it so important that He wasn’t married?

Simple: If Jesus isn’t God as He claims and as the Bible claims then He was either a Liar or a Lunatic because He willingly went to the cross for me; took the stripes that were meant for me; took the nails for me all for no reason. If He isn’t God then His death didn’t pay my sin debt.

If He was married and had children then that means He wasn’t God because God would have reproduced other “half-god” children.