

AlbertMohler.com

A Good Answer to *The Da Vinci Code*

Wednesday, May 24, 2006

Larry Hurtado, Professor of New Testament Language, Literature, and Theology at the University of Edinburgh, offers an excellent scholarly rebuttal to *The Da Vinci Code* at [Slate.com](#).

Here are a few of his key arguments:

The belief that Jesus is somehow divine was not invented by the Roman Emperor Constantine in the fourth century, as Brown and movie director Ron Howard have Teabing say. Instead, this belief is attested in first-century Christian texts, such as the Gospel of John, and dates back even earlier to the letters of the apostle Paul, whose New Testament writings between A.D. 50 and 60 are the earliest Christian texts we have. Faith in the divine glory of the resurrected Jesus appears to have emerged amazingly soon after his execution, most likely among circles of his Jewish followers. Scholars commonly regard particular passages in Paul's letters as preserving early hymns about Jesus, in which he is praised as the one through whom the world was created, and as sharing in God's nature and glory.

Then:

In fact, in pretty much the entire body of early Christian writings from the first three centuries, Jesus' divinity is taken for granted. Christians differed not over that basic assumption but rather over how to understand his divine nature. At the Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325, the crucial question was how to reconcile Jesus' divinity with Christian monotheism.

Also:

To clear up another piece of history on which The Da Vinci Code is completely unreliable, the New Testament was not created at the Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325. The question wasn't even on the council's agenda. The formation of the New Testament had begun much earlier and continued on later than Nicaea. The familiar four Gospels, which scholars commonly regard as the earliest such texts, were treated as a completed set at least by A.D. 150 in many or likely most Christian circles. Still earlier, Paul's letters were collected and circulated as scripture.

Lastly:

In the book and the movie, Teabing asserts that other texts, such as the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Philip, and the Gospel of Mary, were cast out of the New Testament because Constantine and those mean old Nicaean bishops wanted to impose their beliefs on the rest of Christendom. These texts, however, reflect an elitist attitude disdainful of ordinary Christians and their beliefs. It is unlikely that their authors ever sought to have them included with the writings of the emergent New Testament. In any case, they weren't chucked from the canon in an act of suppression. They just never won the confidence of a sufficient number of Christians to make the grade in the first place.

Professor Hurtado's article is a great source to pass along to those asking questions in the wake of *The Da Vinci Code* — both the book and the movie.

My most extensive articles on *The Da Vinci Code* are found [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

Content Copyright © 2002-2010, R. Albert Mohler, Jr.