



## Adam, Eve, and the Serpent: Sex and Politics in Early Christianity

By Elaine Pagels

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**Adam, Eve, and the Serpent: Sex and Politics in Early Christianity** By Elaine Pagels

Deepens and refreshes our view of early Christianity while casting a disturbing light on the evolution of the attitudes passed down to us. How did the early Christians come to believe that sex was inherently sinful? When did the Fall of Adam become synonymous with the fall of humanity? What turned Christianity from a dissident sect that championed the integrity of the individual and the idea of free will into the bulwark of a new imperial order—with the central belief that human beings cannot *not* choose to sin? In this provocative masterpiece of historical scholarship Elaine Pagels re-creates the controversies that racked the early church as it confronted the riddles of sexuality, freedom, and sin as embodied in the story of Genesis. And she shows how what was once heresy came to shape our own attitudes toward the body and the soul.

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## **Adam, Eve, and the Serpent: Sex and Politics in Early Christianity By Elaine Pagels Bibliography**

- Sales Rank: #299036 in Books
- Brand: Pagels, Elaine H.
- Published on: 1989-09-19
- Released on: 1989-09-19
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.00" h x .60" w x 5.16" l, .52 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 189 pages



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## **Editorial Review**

From Publishers Weekly

The disgust felt by early Christians for the flesh was a radical departure from both pagan and Jewish sexual attitudes. In fact, as Princeton professor Pagels (The Gnostic Gospels) demonstrates, the ascetic movement in Christianity met with great resistance in the first four centuries A.D. Sex became fully tainted, inextricably linked to sin under the teachings of Augustine. This troubled sinner invoked Adam and Eve to justify his idiosyncratic view of humanity as permanently scarred by the Fall. Instead of being dismissed as marginal, Augustine's grim outlook took hold, according to Pagels, because it was politically expedient. Now that Christianity had become the imperial religion, Rome wanted its imperfect subjects to obey a strong Christian state. This highly provocative history links the religious roots of Western sexual attitudes to women's inferior status through the centuries.

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From Library Journal

Pagels explores the development of the ideas of human nature, moral freedom, and sexuality in the four centuries following Christ. Focusing on the various interpretations of the Genesis creation stories, she concludes that early Christians regarded their message to be one of moral freedom and human worth. In the 5th century, Augustine turned the tide with his view of human depravity and original sin (which he linked with sexuality). She argues that his interpretations, implying human incapacity for true political freedom, appealed to the interests of the emerging Christian state and forged the mainstream of ensuing Christian theology. In her analysis, Pagels does not convincingly deal with other foundational biblical material, although she does ably dismantle Augustine's identification of sexuality with original sin. Cynthia Widmer, Williamstown, Mass.

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From [The New Yorker](#)

This virtuoso study may disquiet some readers and refresh others; the debate it opens is not likely to leave and reader unmoved.

## **Users Review**

**From reader reviews:**

**Alyson Hardy:**

Have you spare time for a day? What do you do when you have much more or little spare time? Yep, you can choose the suitable activity regarding spend your time. Any person spent all their spare time to take a go walking, shopping, or went to typically the Mall. How about open or even read a book eligible Adam, Eve, and the Serpent: Sex and Politics in Early Christianity? Maybe it is being best activity for you. You recognize beside you can spend your time together with your favorite's book, you can wiser than before. Do you agree with its opinion or you have additional opinion?

**Anthony Vice:**

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**Rafael Perez:**

The book Adam, Eve, and the Serpent: Sex and Politics in Early Christianity has a lot info on it. So when you check out this book you can get a lot of help. The book was compiled by the very famous author. The author makes some research previous to write this book. That book very easy to read you can get the point easily after reading this book.

**Elbert Lupton:**

This Adam, Eve, and the Serpent: Sex and Politics in Early Christianity is brand-new way for you who has interest to look for some information mainly because it relief your hunger details. Getting deeper you upon it getting knowledge more you know or perhaps you who still having little digest in reading this Adam, Eve, and the Serpent: Sex and Politics in Early Christianity can be the light food in your case because the information inside this specific book is easy to get by anyone. These books develop itself in the form that is reachable by anyone, that's why I mean in the e-book contact form. People who think that in book form make them feel sleepy even dizzy this book is the answer. So there isn't any in reading a book especially this one. You can find actually looking for. It should be here for an individual. So , don't miss it! Just read this e-book type for your better life in addition to knowledge.

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