

# The Questioning of Galileo

*Summoned to Rome, Galileo Galilei appeared before Church officials in 1632 to answer to charges of heresy. The following is the transcript of the questioning:*

- Q:** Galileo of Florence, seventy years old, do you take a formal oath to tell the truth to the Fathers here today?
- A:** I do swear to tell the truth.
- Q:** For what reason did you come to Rome?
- A:** I am here as I was ordered to present myself to the Holy Office.
- Q:** Are you aware of the reason for which you have been called?
- A:** I imagine I have been ordered to account for my recently printed book. A few days before I was ordered to come to Rome, I was told not to issue any more of the books and to send the original copy to the Holy Office in Rome.
- Q:** What of the book do you think is of concern to Rome?
- A:** The book is of the world and the heavens.
- Q:** And when and where was this book composed?
- A:** I wrote it in Florence, beginning ten or twelve years ago. It took me seven or eight years to complete.
- Q:** Were you not in Rome in 1616?
- A:** I was in Rome that year. I came to hear what was proper to hold on the topic of Nicolas Copernicus's opinion on the earth's motion, the sun's position, and that of the heavenly spheres, to be sure of Catholic opinions.
- Q:** Did you come then of your own accord, or were you called?
- A:** In 1616 I came on my own and spoke with Church officials on the matter.
- Q:** What exactly did you discuss?
- A:** The Church leaders wanted to know about Copernicus's ideas, his book being difficult to understand. In particular they wanted to know how he places the sun at the center of the planets' orbits, staying still with the earth and other bodies circling around it.
- Q:** Was it not then decided that Copernicus's opinions went against the Holy Bible and that his book was to be added to the Church's Index of Prohibited Books?
- A:** I was told that Copernicus's opinion was in contrast to the Holy Bible. I do not recall that I was told anything else.
- Q:** After hearing of the decision about Copernicus's book, did you then obtain permission to write a book on the subject yourself?
- A:** I did not seek permission to write my book, since I did not think that doing so would in any way harm the Holy Roman Catholic Church.
- Q:** And so you have been called here to answer to charges of heresy for holding as true the false idea that the sun is the center of the world, and immovable, and that the earth moves! To say that the sun is the center of the world and does not move from its place is heresy, opposed to the words of the Holy Bible. It was only one time in Joshua 10, Verse 13 that "the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hastened not to go down the space of one day." This was only until the people defeated their enemies and was not so at any other time.
- A:** Yet I love the Holy Bible and wish the Church no harm. I am old and beg you to take into consideration my seventy years.
- Q:** I'm sorry, old man, but you must be punished for your teachings, sentenced to a life of imprisonment.

Adapted from "Galileo's Depositions," 1633 @ [www.law.umke.edu](http://www.law.umke.edu)



# Humanism & Heresy



1. Explain how/why Galileo's views were typical of Renaissance thinking. \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Explain how the Scientific Revolution was typical of Renaissance thinking. \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Explain why the Roman Catholic Church was opposed to Galileo's ideas. \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Why do you think the Church and those involved in the Scientific Revolution were likely to clash? \_\_\_\_\_

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