

The controversy: The four Gospels in the Bible

Controversy?

There is probably no other set of books written with so much controversy as the Bible. This Bible has, for thousands of years, generally been about the first 39 books called The Old Testament. Some of those books like Genesis and Leviticus have cause controversy within themselves. The stories of Noah and Sodom and Gomorrah have made people dispute the Bible. The miracles by prophets and worldwide floods made it hard to believe in this old dusty Testament. Then, 2000 years ago, was written a new collection of books and letters called the New Testament. These New books are also considered controversial.

The Old and New Bible combined has 66 books in total. The controversy appears in many ways. Different religious organizations recognize different Bible books as the inspired word of God. Who is right and wrong? Did God leave something out like the book of Thomas? Is the Catholic version more complete than the Protestant Bible is? The fact that we have only fragments of scripture might cause controversy. Can we add words to complete Gods word? Why isn't it complete in the first place? There is so much controversy here. During the early years of the first century four particular books were written about the life of Jesus. These four books called the Gospels have rocked the world.

The controversy comes in several forms. One: is that there are more books about Jesus than the four we know. The church fathers decided that only Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John accurately represented the life of Jesus. They all spoke the same message about who Jesus was. Two: is that Matthew, Mark, and Luke shared the same information. Who wrote the first book? Why did they copy so much of the same verses word for word? Some say there is a mysterious

“Q” book that those three gospels were copied from. Three: is that John is not like the other’s. Some scholars think this book should not be in the Bible.

The crazy part is that all the books in the Bible are written in themes or in a certain form. Each Gospel book has a theme too and a certain bent towards life. They are also written to certain audiences. Some stuff is left out in one book but added into another. I look at each Gospel like a window looking inside a house. They each are a different view. These books are not just the story of Jesus. There is so much more going on. Is it controversial to know that each Gospel book has an intended purpose to an intended audience? What do you believe?

Maybe?

Maybe there is controversy in the Gospels. Why is the book of John so different than the other three? Some people say it does not belong in the Bible. The problem is that much of what is said in the first three Gospels is expanded upon in John. This book is severely controversial but needed to compliment the other three. It begins with declaring Jesus is the word of God and that “He” has been here since the beginning of time. John 3:16 is the most quoted verse in history. The sections on the Spirit (John 14) go far deeper than any other. This book connects the Holy Spirit, God the Father, and Jesus together. Jesus statement in John 14:6 is very controversial. Jesus is the only way to God? Without this book of John Christianity would look totally different.

The book of Matthew just might be controversial. Matthew 5-7 quite possibly is the most argued chapter in the New Testament. First we have the beatitudes. Jesus sits down and draws deeper insight into sin. People believed they could follow the Ten Commandments and would be sinless and holy to God. Jesus blows that away with making it quite impossible to be good enough with his beatitudes. Jesus challenges us to love our enemies; pray in private; and give

with the heart. Jesus makes it clear as he did in John that the only way into heaven is through him. If that's not controversial then what is?

Luke talks about the human side of life. John talks about the Spiritual side. Mark on the other hand is like greatest hits of Jesus. It is small and goes fast from one scene to another. This Jesus is stone cold compared to the other three Gospels. The disciples appear to be dumb in this book. Is it controversial that the picture of Jesus and the disciples is so different in each book? Where is the consistency? Like I said before it's like looking through different windows. Have you ever said at a movie "That was great" but your spouse said it sucked? People see things differently and that is no different with the Gospels. Mathew, Mark, Luke, and John see Jesus as divine, human, a king, or the saviour. Still, the message of love, honesty, humility, and relationship play out in all these four books.

It is interesting that we have really no evidence on who wrote these books. There is no publishing number or an editorial rating by the written work of these men. Tradition says Matthew wrote his book. Mark is interesting because "Which Mark authored it": there are several choices. By tradition Luke writes the third Gospel and it appears he also wrote the book of Acts. There is no proof of this but in reading Acts it is clearly "Luke" like. It's the same with John, which John? There are several John's in the Bible. This writer talks about the one Jesus loved (Who is that)? Lack of authorship might be grounds for controversy. What do you believe?

Yes?

As with most books in the Bible the controversy swirls. That is no different with the Gospels. The first three books Matthew, Mark, and Luke are very similar. Most of these books are inside each other. It's the same verses and the same stories. The controversy might be that some of these stories are slightly different. The order that these stories are told is different. Some

seemingly important components are left out in one book while new important verses are only in another. Confused yet? Take for example the genealogy lists in Matthew and Luke. They are different because one points to Joseph and another to Mary: the parents of Jesus. There is such Godly controversy here.

How could Jesus feed 5000 twice? I say “Why not?” Why are there two women that seem to be Mary Magdalene but were not sure? Jesus family calls him crazy. Women are not prominent in those days yet women are present in many of Jesus biggest moments. Jesus talks with a Samaritan woman and that seems weird to Jews in those days because they did not associate with Samaritans. The religious authorities challenge Jesus with accusations against a cheating woman. What does Jesus write in the sand? There are tons of mysteries in the Gospels swirling around Jesus. Why not tell us more information? Inquiring minds (like us) want to know.

If Jesus is God then why tempt him in the desert? Why doesn't he just take over the earth and crush Satan? How can God win if his Son gets killed? Why must Jesus do impossible things? Yes, that might be controversial. Jesus walks on water. He calms a storm with words. This man raises a boy from the dead. He pulls food, for 5000, out of very empty baskets. Jesus tells people what they said in the past without being near them. Why is Jesus associated with the impossible?

I think the greatest controversy might be the Birth of Jesus. He is born from a virgin. Joseph, the husband of Mary, privately thinks Mary cheated on him. An angel appears in his dreams and tells him the baby is conceived by God's Spirit. The Baby is placed in prophesied places like Bethlehem, Nazareth, Galilee and Egypt. Wise men, shepherds, and the rulers of the day seek Jesus out. Angels appear, a shining star moves through the sky, and the Son of God is born in a stable. Yes, there is no shortage of controversy. What do you believe?

No?

No, there is no controversy. The Gospels in the New Testament are just books. These words were written 2000 years ago. They are very old. One of the oldest books in print is Sir Gwain and the Green Knight. It's based on King Arthur and the round table. That was written in the 14th century. The Gospels are 1400 years older than that and King Arthur might not even exist. Is King Arthur just a story? Is that the same with the Jesus story? We have no proof who wrote these Gospels. How can there be controversy if we have no scene of the crime. Who wrote them, is Jesus real, and are they just stories? In the first century, stories were normally passed on by memory and the spoken word. Writing things down, in those days, seems strange. That's not the way they told stories in the first century.

Why can't Jesus just be a good story like King Arthur? It's strange that these people called Christians (The way) followed a person that had never met and might not exist. To most Christians Jesus is a story in the Bible because they have never physically met him. It's possible there is no controversy but this story of Jesus has caused quite a stir. People gathered to hear his teachings found in these Gospels. What is also strange is that many of these people remained Jewish. A religion is usually different than another one. This Christian religion agreed with the Jewish faith for the most part. They followed the Jewish God. These people used the Jewish traditions. Jesus is said to be Jewish. Oddly enough Jews conspired to kill Jesus.

Why do Jesus followers help people? Why do they pray to the Jewish God for help? Why do Christians tell about Jesus to others? Aren't they afraid of getting beat up? Christians are persecuted for believing in Jesus for these past 2000 years. Could four stories, called Gospels, cause so much trouble? King Arthur does not have that affect. If Jesus is just a story then what's the big deal. Well it's because these four stories say Jesus is real. They say Jesus is the only way

to God. They claim power to heal. They claim they can talk with God. They say crazy things like “They will live forever.”

The Koran causes some to get angry and others to be nice. These four Gospels cause unbelievers to get angry. So angry at times that they jail, hurt, and kill Jesus believers. Why bother people for believing in four stories? Anti-Jesus people make up websites, cause demonstrations, and write books condemning Jesus followers. Don't Jesus followers help people, care for the sick, and give money to the poor. Why are they angry with them if it's just a story? There inlays the controversy. What do you believe?