

Synoptic gospels

[Religion](#), [Jesus](#)



Synoptic Gospels Introduction God used his four Gospels to accomplish a purpose. Each Gospel and author had a different purpose and each focused on the different facets of Jesus and his ministry. “ The first three Gospels “ are referred to as the synoptic gospels because of the large amount of overlapping materials. (In Greek, synoptic means “ seen together’). The Gospel of John is distinguished from the synoptic gospels due to the accounts on Jesus miracles and discourses. ” (Mueller 79). The Gospel of John is often used to compare and contrast the synoptic three gospels.

The synoptic gospels and their similarities has risen a growing suspicion if the authors had a common source or if they retrieved their information or it has even been argued they copied each other’s gospels. This has caused many growing issues among Christians over a p of time concerning the similarities and differences in each gospel. Between the earliest surviving Gospel and the death of Jesus, four decades had passed; knowing this gives a person reasonable belief Gospels were the true writings. They were written by the authors based on many writings as well as eyewitness testimony.

The similarities in Matthew, Mark and Luke can be explained by oral tradition meaning what they saw and heard for themselves; as well as stories and events told by communities during Jesus life and after his death. The first three Gospels are what are known as the “ Synoptic Problem”. “ The Synoptic Problem addresses the need to account for the similarities and differences in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. ” (Mueller 85) The “ Synoptic Problem” is not really a problem at all it is a question which consists of who wrote the first gospel and did one copy from the other?

How did the three gospels bear such a likeness to each other and not the Gospel of John? There is no real or correct answer to this question or problem. The synoptic gospels were obviously written in different places, by different people and at different times. Each Gospel was written with its own theme and emphasis on Jesus and reasoning behind it. “ These three books, which occupy perhaps 240 pages of the average edition of the New Testament, have been the subject of a weight of scholarly investigation, an analysis which leaves far behind that accorded to any other literature in the world. ” (Hanson) Similarities and Differences

While comparing Matthew, Mark and Luke there are similarities and differences between the gospels. There are significant numbers of exact wording, order of narrative and parenthetical material. Of 661 verses which belong to Mark all but 30 verses are found in Mark and/or Luke. Of the material common to Mark and in Matthew and Luke there are 8, 189 of the 10, 10650 words found in one or both of them. Matthew and Luke have 235 verses in common that is not found in Mark, leading us to believe that Matthew Mark and Luke depended upon each other or that two sources were used to produce these gospels.

It is not indicted or proven that they copied from each other. (Farmer) “ Since Matthew and Luke wrote independently but share so much of non-Markan material the “ other source” material called (“ Q”). ” (Mueller) Hypothesis and Theory There is a continuing debate regarding the composition of the Gospels. There are many theories and hypotheses based on biblical scripture and theological findings but there is no right or wrong answer. The Augustinian hypothesis states since Matthew was the first

written gospel the Gospel of Mark came after Matthew and Luke wrote his gospel based on theirs (Piper).

In addition, Griesbach accepted this theory and “ dismissed any kind of traditional attempt and was focused on the three Gospels literary dependence between gospel narratives”. (Smith), Griesbach dismissed traditional attempts to blend these accounts & focused attention on their literary dependence instead (Smith). Griesbach even published a thesis where Mark often followed Matthews writing as a guide to his writings. Second is the Two- source; this thesis shows the gospels of Matthew & Luke are independent writings. They each are based on Mark and Q.

Mark is identified as the main source of information to whereas Matthew and Luke had gathered their information for their gospels from because of the similarities in wording, events, and parallels A Philosophically trained British theologian & biblical exegete by the name of Mark Farrer held that Mark was Matthews’s sole literary source. (Smith) Farrer states that any writings from Matthew such as Sermon on the Mount that could not be traced back to Mark must be his own. Lastly the Q source hypothesis which is a written document composed in Greek is short for: Quelle: which is defined in German for source. Q contained sayings and discourses ascribed in to Jesus” (McConkey). There was never a copy of Q found but many scholars are convinced it did exist. This hypothesis states most of Q contents appear either both in Matthew and Luke or in one or the other. There are many other hypothesis and theories base on the solving the synoptic problem. Solution “ The prevailing solution to the synoptic problem for the past century among scholars trained in literary criticism of the gospels. The thesis is the gospels

of Matthew & Luke are independent compositions, each based on two earlier texts: Mark & Q. Smith) In comparing the Gospels in which points they are similar to other existing pieces. In the future, such comparison should identify the issues of composition, social context, and ideology the will be more useful than a sterile “ form/content/function” analysis. In addition, it should be also recognized that the closest parallels to the Gospel genre are most likely to be found within the same Jewish environment which gave rise to the church itself. (Thatcher) Conclusion The Synoptic Gospels all tell the story of Jesus, and proclaim him the Son of God.

Essentially what we believe in as Christians will not change whichever way the synoptic problem is solved. Whether we know him as the King, the Servant, the Son of Man or Son of God , we know he is one in the same; Jesus. As is shown by the writings of the Synoptic Gospels as well as the Gospel of John are a true testimony of the accounts of Jesus ministry. . Although each author may place emphasis on different facets of Jesus birth, life, death and resurrection the subject remains the same. Jesus died to save us from our sins.

Works Cited Farmer, William R. THE SYNOPTIC PROBLEM . Mercer University Press, 1981. Hanson, R P C. Bp. " Assessment of motive in the study of the Synoptic Gospels". Modern Churchman (1967.): ns 10 no 4 J1 1967, p 255-269. James McConkey, Robinson, Christopher, the Sayings Gospel Q: Mueller, J. J. , SJ, editor. Theological Foundations. Winona: Anselm Academic, Christian Brothers Publications, 2007. Piper, Ronald Allen. " The gospels behind the Gospels: current studies on Q. " Novum Testamentum (1995): 23. Smith,