

Preacher's Pen points

Are There “Other Gospels”?



Recently in our “Truth Chasers” Bible class we explored the claims of Dan Brown’s best-seller, “The Da Vinci Code”. As strange as it seems to us, this novel promotes the idea that Jesus was only a man and that He married (and even fathered a child by) Mary Magdalene, who He intended to be His “successor”. Serious students of the Bible would hardly give such bizarre viewpoints attention; but those who know little about the Bible and its development are being influenced by this novel to adopt an “alternative interpretation of Christianity”. For example, just the other day I met a young lady in a sandwich shop who was reading the book and had apparently bought into these ideas as if they were fact.

Origin of the Strange Views About Jesus

One of the underlying premises behind the novel is the idea that the NT gospels do not accurately present the real Jesus of history. Instead the real history is preserved in “other gospels” that were suppressed in the church’s early history but now have come to light. Some of these gospels include among others the “Gospel of Thomas”, “The Gospel of Phillip”, and the Gospel of Mary Magdalene”. Of course, the critical question is...

Where Can We Find the Real Story of Jesus?

It would seem reasonable that the authentic story of Jesus would have been preserved by those who knew and lived with Him. Moreover, it would be reasonable to conclude that those gospels which were authenticated earliest by the church would tell the truth about Jesus, since there were those living who were capable of verifying or falsifying the reports about Jesus in them. It would be reasonable to believe that the early church would not have been cavalier about such matters since they

faced imperial persecution for the possession of Scripture. Determining the true word of God was important to them not only for faith but even for preservation of life itself. After all, who would die for what was admittedly a false gospel?

The Facts of History

The early church authenticated four gospels that accurately tell the account of Jesus’ life, namely, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. They were first-century documents written by the apostles of Christ or those who had access to them. As for the other gospels mentioned, they are of much later origin and cannot be established as coming from those who lived with Jesus. Their authorship is uncertain, but clearly reflects the viewpoints of a heretical sect of the second century called the “Gnostics” who denied the deity of Jesus.

The Truth About the “Other Gospels”

The views about the other gospels expressed in the Da Vinci Code are, like the work itself, pure fiction! Though Dan Brown, the author, believes that Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene on the basis of these works, there is not a shred of evidence to support this hypothesis and numerous reasons to reject it.

As from the beginning, Satan’s first line attack against God’s cause has been to attack the word God has revealed, so today his methods have not changed. “The Da Vinci Code” is just one of the latest in a long line of attempts to discredit the reliability of the Biblical documents. The truth is, the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John alone preserve the real history of Jesus, the “other gospels” notwithstanding. —Johnny Felker