

# Dr. Robert C. Newman, Synoptic Gospels, Session 13, Controversy Passages Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

## 1. Abstract of Newman, Synoptic Gospels, Session 13, Controversy Passages, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

**Dr. Newman's lecture focuses on interpreting controversy and dialogue accounts within the Synoptic Gospels.** He emphasizes understanding the historical context of these passages, including the opponents' perspectives and Jesus' arguments. **The lecture provides a detailed list of passages that fall into this genre, ranging from John the Baptist's preaching to Jesus' dialogues on various issues.** Newman also highlights the importance of recognizing that Jesus might omit certain steps in his arguments, assuming his audience's familiarity. **Newman then analyzes the Beelzebul controversy in Luke 11:14-28, considering the narrative elements, the identity of Beelzebul, and the various arguments Jesus employs.** He concludes with applications for today, stressing the need for sound judgment, dealing fairly with evidence, and recognizing the importance of a proper relationship with God.

**2. 22 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Newman, Synoptic Gospels, Session 13 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament → Gospels → Synoptic Gospels).**



**Newman\_Synoptics  
\_Session13.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document: Newman, Synoptic Gospels, Session 13, Controversy Passages

Okay, here's a briefing document summarizing the main themes and ideas from the provided excerpt of Dr. Robert C. Newman's lecture on "Controversy Passages" in the Synoptic Gospels.

#### **Briefing Document: Exegeting Controversy Passages in the Synoptic Gospels**

**Main Theme:** This lecture focuses on how to properly exegete controversy and dialogue accounts in the Synoptic Gospels. It emphasizes understanding the historical context, identifying the opponents and their viewpoints, discerning Jesus' perspective (even if it challenges our own), analyzing Jesus' arguments, and recognizing potentially unstated assumptions in those arguments. Finally, it addresses how to apply the meaning of the passage to contemporary audiences.

#### **Key Ideas and Facts:**

- **Definition of Controversy Passages:** These can be either narratives in which Jesus responds to opponents in dialogue or discourses where Jesus addresses a controversial topic.
- **Importance of Historical Background:** Understanding the original controversy is crucial. "Jesus may not be addressing the particular controversy you are concerned about since his first concern is with the controversy going on at his own time."
- **Identifying Opponents and Their Ideology:** It's important to determine who Jesus' opponents are and what their theological, ideological, and practical viewpoints are.
- **Discerning Jesus' View:** This might require looking at other passages in addition to the primary one. It's important to recognize that "Jesus' view of the matter might not be my view."
- **Analyzing Jesus' Arguments:** How does Jesus argue for his position? Recognizing that his opponents do not necessarily accept his claims is key. "Can we understand his words as actually arguing from where they are to where he is?"
- **Unstated Assumptions:** Jesus may leave out steps in an argument that would have been obvious to his original audience.

- **Applying to Today:** "Once we understand what Jesus is saying to his original opponents and audience, we're ready to see how this might carry over to us and to others living today."
- **Walk-through of Controversy and Dialogue Accounts:** The lecture provides a comprehensive list of passages in the Synoptics that fall into this genre. Examples include:
  - John the Baptist preaching (Matthew 3, Luke 3)
  - The Temptation of Jesus (Matthew 4, Luke 4)
  - The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5)
  - Healing of the paralytic (Matthew 9, Mark 2, Luke 5)
  - Jesus as Lord of the Sabbath (Matthew 12, Mark 2, Luke 6)
  - The Beelzebul Controversy (Matthew 12, Mark 3, Luke 11)
  - Paying taxes to Caesar (Matthew 22, Mark 12, Luke 20)
  - The Good Samaritan (Luke 10)
  - Lost sheep, coin, and son (Luke 15)
- **In-Depth Example: The Beelzebul Controversy (Luke 11:14-28):**
  - **Narrative Elements:** The passage is analyzed for its actors (Jesus, unnamed opponents, the woman in the crowd), events (Jesus healing a mute, the accusation of using Beelzebul's power, the woman blessing Jesus' mother), and plot (responses to Jesus and attempts to discredit him).
  - **Background:** Beelzebul is identified as "the ruler of demons." The opponents accuse Jesus of using satanic power. Their motivations are likely both a genuine belief and a desire to discredit Jesus.
  - **Jesus' Arguments:** The lecture breaks down Jesus' response into several arguments:
    - **Divided Kingdom (verses 17-18):** A kingdom divided against itself cannot stand. Satan would not undermine his own power.
    - **Your Exorcists (verse 19):** If Jesus casts out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do the Pharisees' own exorcists cast them out?

- **Kingdom Come (verse 20):** If Jesus casts out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come.
- **Strong and Stronger (verses 21-22):** Jesus' power shows that he has defeated Satan.
- **No Neutrality (verse 23):** "He who is not with me is against me, and he who is not gathering with me is scattering."
- **The Spirit's House (verses 24-26):** This section is interpreted as a parable warning against rejecting Jesus, as the demonic forces will return with greater strength if the "house" (the individual or Israel) is left empty.
- **The Woman's Remark (verses 27-28):** This is interpreted not as a new incident, but as an opportunity for Jesus to emphasize that obedience to God's word is a greater blessing than even bearing the Messiah. "Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it."
- **Application to Today:**
  - Use sound judgment and avoid partiality.
  - Deal fairly with the evidence God provides rather than letting presuppositions control us.
  - There is no neutrality regarding Jesus.
  - Blessings cannot last without a proper relationship with God.
  - There is no greater blessing than knowing and loving God.

#### Quotes:

- "Jesus may not be addressing the particular controversy you are concerned about since his first concern is with the controversy going on at his own time."
- "Jesus' view of the matter might not be my view."
- "Can we understand his words as actually arguing from where they are to where he is?"
- "Once we understand what Jesus is saying to his original opponents and audience, we're ready to see how this might carry over to us and to others living today."

- "He who is not with me is against me, and he who is not gathering with me is scattering."
- "Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it."

**Implications:**

This lecture provides a valuable framework for understanding and interpreting controversy passages in the Synoptic Gospels. By carefully considering the historical context, the perspectives of the different actors, and the arguments being made, it is possible to gain a deeper understanding of Jesus' teachings and their relevance for today.

## 4. Study Guide: Newman, Synoptic Gospels, Session 13, Controversy Passages

### Understanding Controversy Passages in the Synoptic Gospels

#### I. Study Guide

This study guide is designed to help you understand and analyze controversy passages in the Synoptic Gospels, based on Dr. Newman's lecture.

#### A. Key Concepts

1. **Historical Background:** Understanding the specific historical and cultural context in which Jesus's controversies occurred.
2. **Opponent Identification:** Recognizing the identity and ideological/theological background of Jesus's opponents in a given passage.
3. **Jesus's Viewpoint:** Determining Jesus's stance on the issue at hand, potentially drawing from other relevant passages in the Synoptic Gospels.
4. **Argumentation:** Identifying how Jesus argues for his position, keeping in mind that his opponents do not accept his claims of authority.
5. **Implied Steps:** Recognizing that Jesus may leave out steps in his arguments that would have been understood by his original audience.
6. **Application:** Applying Jesus's teachings to contemporary situations and controversies.

#### B. Analysis of Controversy Passages

1. **Identify the Passage:** Choose a specific controversy passage from the list provided in the lecture.
2. **Historical Context:** Research the historical and cultural background of the controversy. Consider the social and political climate, religious beliefs, and common practices of the time.
3. **Identify the Opponents:** Determine who Jesus is arguing with (e.g., Pharisees, scribes, Sadducees) and what their motivations and beliefs are.
4. **Analyze Jesus's Arguments:** Break down Jesus's arguments into logical steps. Identify any implied premises or assumptions.

5. **Determine Jesus's Viewpoint:** Ascertain the main point Jesus is trying to make and how it challenges the views of his opponents.
6. **Consider Parallels:** If the passage has parallels in other Synoptic Gospels, compare and contrast the accounts to gain a more complete understanding.
7. **Apply to Today:** Consider how the principles and teachings in the passage can be applied to contemporary issues and controversies.

### C. Analyzing the Beelzebul Controversy (Luke 11:14-28)

This section provides a framework for analyzing the specific example of the Beelzebul controversy discussed in the lecture.

1. **Miracle Introduction (Luke 11:14-15):** Analyze the initial miracle and the crowds reaction.
2. **Opponent's Charge (Luke 11:15):** Identify the accusation made by Jesus's opponents and their reasoning.
  - **Jesus' Response (Luke 11:17-26):**
    - Argument 1: Divided Kingdom (Luke 11:17-18):** Explain the logic behind the argument.
    - Argument 2: Your Exorcists (Luke 11:19):** Explain the logic behind the argument.
    - Argument 3: Kingdom Come (Luke 11:20):** Connect the exorcism to the arrival of God's Kingdom.
    - Argument 4: Strong and Stronger (Luke 11:21-22):** Interpret the parable of the Strong Man and its implications for Satan's power.
    - Argument 5: No Neutrality (Luke 11:23):** Discuss the concept of commitment to Christ.
    - Argument 6: The Spirit's House (Luke 11:24-26):** Explain the meaning of the parable and its warning.
1. **Woman's Remark and Jesus' Response (Luke 11:27-28):** Analyze the significance of Jesus's statement about true blessedness.
2. **Application:** Identify the contemporary applications of each of Jesus's arguments and the overall message of the passage.

## II. Quiz

Answer the following questions based on the lecture material. Each answer should be 2-3 sentences long.

1. Why is it important to understand the historical background when interpreting a controversy passage?
2. According to Dr. Newman, what is the purpose of Scripture?
3. Why is it important to identify Jesus's opponents when studying a controversy passage?
4. Explain why Jesus might leave out steps in his arguments.
5. What should you do if you find a controversy passage in more than one of the Synoptic gospels?
6. In the Beelzebul controversy (Luke 11:14-28), what is the accusation made against Jesus by his opponents?
7. Briefly summarize Jesus's "divided kingdom" argument in response to the Beelzebul accusation.
8. What is the meaning of Jesus's statement, "He who is not with me is against me" (Luke 11:23)?
9. Explain the meaning of the parable of the unclean spirit returning to an empty house (Luke 11:24-26).
10. How can we apply the lessons learned from studying controversy passages to situations we face today?

### **III. Quiz Answer Key**

1. Understanding the historical background allows us to grasp the original context of the controversy and avoid misinterpreting Jesus's message through a modern lens. It helps us understand the specific issues Jesus was addressing at the time.
2. According to Dr. Newman, the purpose of Scripture is to correct where we are messed up, not just to find verses to use against our opponents. It is a tool for self-reflection and understanding God's teachings.
3. Identifying Jesus's opponents helps us understand their motivations, beliefs, and the specific issues they were raising. This allows us to better understand Jesus's responses and the underlying conflict.



4. Jesus might leave out steps in his arguments because his original audience would have understood the implied connections due to their shared cultural and religious background. This can be challenging for modern readers who lack that context.
5. If you find a controversy passage in more than one Synoptic Gospel, you should compare and contrast the accounts to gain a more complete understanding of the events and Jesus's teachings. This helps to ensure you don't contradict parallel passages in your interpretation.
6. In the Beelzebul controversy, Jesus's opponents accuse him of casting out demons by the power of Beelzebul, the ruler of demons, implying that his power comes from Satan rather than God. This was an attempt to discredit Jesus and undermine his authority.
7. Jesus argues that if he were casting out demons by the power of Satan, then Satan's kingdom would be divided against itself. This is illogical, as a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand, implying that Jesus's power must come from a different source.
8. Jesus's statement, "He who is not with me is against me," means that there is no neutral position when it comes to following Christ. You are either actively supporting and working with Jesus, or you are, in effect, opposing him.
9. The parable illustrates that merely ridding oneself of evil is not enough; one must also fill the void with good and remain vigilant against temptation. Otherwise, the evil will return with greater force, leaving the person in a worse state than before.
10. The lessons can help us approach disagreements with sound judgment and deal fairly with evidence rather than being controlled by our presuppositions. They also remind us that there's no neutrality when it comes to what we'll do with Jesus, both back then and today.

## IV. Essay Questions

Consider the following essay questions, drawing upon the lecture material and your own insights.

1. Discuss the importance of understanding the historical and cultural context when interpreting controversy passages in the Synoptic Gospels. Provide specific examples from the lecture and explain how neglecting this context can lead to misinterpretations.
2. Analyze Jesus's argumentation strategies in controversy passages. How does he appeal to logic, Scripture, and the common understanding of his audience? Provide specific examples from the lecture.
3. Examine the various responses to Jesus's ministry and teachings as portrayed in the controversy passages. What motivated the opposition, and how did Jesus address their concerns?
4. Discuss the significance of the Beelzebul controversy (Luke 11:14-28). What does this passage reveal about the nature of Jesus's ministry, the opposition he faced, and the spiritual realities at play?
5. Explore the contemporary relevance of controversy passages in the Synoptic Gospels. How can these passages inform our approach to ethical dilemmas, religious disagreements, and the challenges of following Christ in today's world?

## V. Glossary of Key Terms

- **Synoptic Gospels:** The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, which share a similar structure, content, and perspective on the life and teachings of Jesus.
- **Exegesis:** The critical interpretation or explanation of a text, especially of scripture.
- **Controversy Passage:** A passage in the Gospels that depicts a disagreement or debate between Jesus and his opponents (e.g., Pharisees, scribes).
- **Dialogue Account:** A narrative in the Gospels that features a conversation or exchange between Jesus and other individuals or groups.
- **Historical Background:** The social, political, religious, and cultural context in which the events of the Gospels took place.
- **New Perspective on Paul:** A reinterpretation of the apostle Paul's theology, emphasizing the social and historical context of his writings and challenging traditional understandings of justification by faith.
- **Pharisees:** A Jewish religious and political group in the time of Jesus, known for their strict adherence to the Law and their emphasis on oral tradition.
- **Scribes:** Jewish scholars and teachers of the Law, often associated with the Pharisees.
- **Sadducees:** A Jewish religious and political group in the time of Jesus, primarily associated with the Temple and known for their rejection of oral tradition and belief in resurrection.
- **Beelzebul:** A name for the prince of demons, used by Jesus's opponents to accuse him of casting out demons by satanic power.
- **Pericope:** A self-contained unit of text or passage in the Bible.
- **Mariology:** The theological study of Mary, the mother of Jesus, particularly in Roman Catholicism.

## 5. FAQs on Newman, Synoptic Gospels, Session 13, Controversy Passages, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Here is an 8-question FAQ based on the provided text:

### FAQ on Interpreting Controversy and Dialogue Accounts in the Synoptic Gospels

- **What are controversy passages in the Synoptic Gospels, and why is it important to understand them correctly?**
- Controversy passages are narratives or discourses in the Gospels where Jesus engages in dialogue with opponents or addresses controversial topics. Understanding them correctly is crucial because misinterpretations can lead to applying Jesus' words inappropriately to contemporary situations or missing the original intent of the passage. It is important to be sure you don't misunderstand what is happening.
- **What historical context should be considered when interpreting controversy passages?**
- It is important to understand the specific controversies occurring during Jesus' time and the perspectives of his opponents (ideologically, theologically, and practically). Jesus' primary concern was addressing the issues relevant to his original audience. Try to get a good feel for what's going on at the time.
- **How should we approach understanding Jesus' view in a controversy passage, especially if it differs from our own preconceived notions?**
- We should carefully examine Jesus' arguments and be open to the possibility that his perspective might challenge our own beliefs. The purpose of scripture is not looking for verses that you can use to lay on your opponents; it's for finding out what the Scripture is teaching, and you may have to lay that on yourself as well as on your opponents if you like. Scripture is meant to correct us where we are wrong.
- **How does Jesus argue his position in controversy passages, and why is this approach necessary?**
- Jesus often argues from the perspective of his opponents, using logic and reasoning to demonstrate the flaws in their arguments. This is because his

opponents do not accept his claims. He may leave out steps that the original audience would easily understand.

- **What are some of the specific controversies found in the Synoptic Gospels?**
- The Synoptic Gospels include controversies over topics such as: John the Baptist Preaching, the Temptation of Jesus, the Sermon on the Mount, the Man with Leprosy, the Cost of Following Jesus, the Healing of the Paralytic, the Calling of Matthew, Fasting, the Dead Girl and the Sick Woman, John the Baptist's Question, Jesus as Lord of the Sabbath, the Man with the Shriveled Hand, Jesus and Beelzebul, the Sign of Jonah, Jesus' Mother and Brothers, Clean and Unclean, the Canaanite Woman, a Demand for a Sign, Peter's Confession, Jesus Predicts his Death, the Demonized Boy, the Temple Tax Question, Debate Among the Disciples, Divorce, Little Children Coming to Jesus, the Rich Young Ruler, the Mother's Request, Cleansing of the Temple, Authority Questioned, Paying Taxes to Caesar, the Sadducee's Question about Marriage and Resurrection, the Scribe's Question about the Greatest Commandments, Jesus' Counter-Question: Who is the Messiah, the Anointing at Bethany, Peter's Denial Predicted, the Dialogue at Gethsemane, Jesus' Arrest, Jesus before the Sanhedrin, He that is not against us is for us, Jesus at age 12, Jesus' Rejection at Nazareth, the Great Catch of Fish, Jesus Anointed, the Good Samaritan, Mary and Martha, Jesus' Six Woes, the Parable of the Rich Fool, Repent or Perish, the Crippled Man, the Narrow Door, Herod the Fox, Jesus at the Pharisee's House, the Lost Sheep, Coin, and Son, Pharisees and Money, Ten Lepers, Zacchaeus, Daughters of Jerusalem, Two Thieves, the Road to Emmaus, and Appearance to Disciples.
- **What are the key elements to consider when analyzing a specific controversy passage, such as the "Beelzebul" controversy in Luke 11?**
- When analyzing a specific controversy, consider:
  - **Historical context:** Who are the opponents, and what are their motivations? (e.g., Pharisees accusing Jesus of using demonic power).
  - **Jesus' argument:** Identify the different arguments Jesus uses (e.g., a kingdom divided cannot stand, "your exorcists," the kingdom of God has come).
  - **Missing steps:** Fill in any unstated assumptions or background knowledge that the original audience would have understood.
  - **Narrative elements:** Who are the actors (Jesus, opponents, etc.), what are the events and actions?

- **Parallels in other Gospels:** Compare the passage with parallel accounts in Matthew and Mark to ensure a consistent interpretation.
- **How can the arguments Jesus uses in controversy passages be applied to contemporary situations and challenges?**
  - The arguments can be used to:
  - Use sound judgment rather than partiality
  - Promote fair dealing with evidence
  - Highlight the importance of a proper relationship with God
- **In the context of controversy accounts, what does the passage suggest about the importance of relationship with God compared to physical or inherited advantages?**
  - The passage suggests that obedience and a proper relationship with God are more important than physical birth or inherited advantages (e.g., being of Israelite descent or even being the mother of the Messiah).