

Do The Gospels Belong In The Old Testament?

There is a false doctrine gaining ground among brethren, the doctrine that the gospels belong in the Old Testament. There has been an attempt to convince people of this in order to get around the Lord's teaching on divorce and remarriage (Matthew 5:32; 19:9; etc.). It is not hard to see why this would catch on among many. However, it is an erroneous doctrine, as we shall see.

First, the Bible puts a demarcation point between the Old Testament and the ministries of John and Jesus. The Lord said, "The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it" (Luke 16:16). John was the one who came in the spirit and power of Elijah, the forerunner of the Lord; sent to prepare men to receive the teaching of Christ (Matthew 17:10-13). Just as John preached "the kingdom of God," so did our Lord. After John was put in prison, the Bible records, "From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand'" (Matthew 4:17).

Second, are we to believe that the One Who shed His blood to seal the New Covenant, never taught anything contained in that Covenant? If the gospels belong in the Old Testament, not the New, then everything Jesus said is without authority today, because we live under a New Covenant, as the Hebrew writer clearly set forth. The teaching of Jesus laid the foundation of truth for the New Covenant.

Third, if Jesus' teaching belongs in the Old Testament, then what are we to do with His conversation with Nicodemus about the new birth (John 3:1-15)? Does the new birth, baptism into the kingdom, belong to the ministry of death or the ministry of life, Old Testament or New (cf. 2 Corinthians 3:6-9)? The Spirit unmistakably reveals the new birth belongs to the New Covenant (1 Peter 1:22-23; James 1:18; Titus 3:5; Ephesians 5:26-27; Romans 6:3-4). Yet, we are told Jesus' teaching on the new birth belongs in the Old Testament.

Further, if Jesus' teaching belongs in the Old Testament, including the new birth into the kingdom, we are in the same kingdom as that found in the Old Testament. Yet, this cannot be true because Jesus said His kingdom was not of this world (John 18:36). The kingdom of the Old Testament was of this world; worldly headquarters in Jerusalem, worldly leaders in kings and priests. The Hebrew writer contrasted the kingdom

they received with the kingdom we have received (Hebrews 12:18-29). The Old Testament itself said Jesus would establish a new, different kingdom (Daniel 2:44-45). However, if Jesus' teaching belongs in the Old Testament, there is no new kingdom into which we enter by a new birth.

Friends, the gospels belong to the New Testament. As Mark said, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (Mark 1:1). Don't be swayed by men who teach to the contrary!

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