

THE FOUR GOSPELS: OLD OR NEW TESTAMENT?

Marc W. Gibson

There are those who argue that the four gospel accounts of the life of Christ – *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke*, and *John* – are part of the Old Testament, not the New Testament. It is argued that since Jesus lived under the Law of Moses, His teaching was directed to Jews about Old Testament doctrine, and that no New Testament doctrine was taught by Jesus before He died on the cross. In the Billingsly-Deaver debate held on January 24-25, 1995, Dan Billingsly affirmed the proposition, “The Scriptures teach that Matthew 19:9 is not New Testament doctrine.”

This assertion that the gospels are not part of the New Testament is **false**, which is demonstrated by the following facts:

- 1) Jesus announced that the “kingdom of God is at hand” (Mark 1:15) and went about “preaching the gospel of the kingdom” (Matthew 4:23). Though Jesus was born and lived under the Law of Moses (Galatians 4:4), He directed the attention of His disciples to principles about His approaching kingdom and covenant. He spoke parables concerning the kingdom of heaven and of matters about the church (Matthew 18:17). Jesus taught how one may enter the coming kingdom (John 3:3-5) and worship the Father (4:19-24). He contrasted Old Testament teaching with His own teaching (Matthew 5:31-32). Christians learn and follow the words of Jesus today.
- 2) A preparation for the transition from the Old covenant to the Messianic kingdom was clearly taking place during Jesus’ lifetime. “The law and the prophets were until John [the Baptist]. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it” (Luke 16:16). At the transfiguration when Moses (the Law) and Elijah (the Prophets) were present with Jesus, God declared that we should “hear” Jesus as our authority (Matthew 17:1-5).
- 3) The Holy Spirit was sent to assure that the apostles would remember what Jesus taught while on this earth. Jesus said to them, “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you” (John 14:26). The gospels are divinely inspired and accurate accounts of the life and words of Jesus (Luke 1:1-4) written in the Christian age for Christians to read, learn, and teach. Paul quoted the gospel of Luke as inspired Scripture (1 Timothy 5:18). All four inspired gospels of the New Testament continue to reveal the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and that He is the Christ, the Son of God and our Savior (John 20:30-31).