

It remains true, that "if you want to know something thoroughly, teach it to others." When my students ask me questions, either in class or on email, I am forced to study if I do not know the answer. Then I either reinforce what I know, or I learn something new for the first time. Either way, it is a pleasure to be immersed in the study, and application, of God's Word!

The meaning of cloth patches on garments and new wine in old wineskins was a tough one that came recently. I had to study. The questioner referred to two authors who disagreed on the meaning and wanted my explanation. Mine will be a third, no doubt, to add to possibly many others in print that I am not going to bother to look at, at least not now. The questioner referred to Luke 5:36-39. Thankfully, there are also Matthew 9:16-17 and Mark 2:21-22 to help out. The context of all three seems to be the same. Luke 5 calls the passage a parable. Therefore, we need to review what a parable is, from Matthew 13:10-17. A parable is not a simple story for children. Far from it!

After the parable of the Sower, the disciples question Yeshua's use of parables. Why not speak plainly? Yeshua's answer is that the disciples, the insiders, are given the ability to understand the parables, and the others in the multitude, the outsiders, are denied the ability to understand. How is this for prejudice, bias or discrimination? Or is it the prerogative of a Sovereign to make choices that He has the right to make? After all, salvation is by His Grace, not our choice or works. He says in 13:34 that He speaks to the multitude only by the use of parables. Yeshua wants to deliberately hide Truth from outsiders and at the same time reveal Truth to insiders. That is quite a "trick" to accomplish with the same speech, something I could never do! And does this indicate that "God loves everyone," as is the common expression today? I do not think so. "As many as I love," He says in Revelation 3:19, so others are left out, the same idea in His use of parables.

Additionally, when Yeshua explains the parables of the Sower and the Wheat & Tares, He gives a meaning to every part. There is an overall meaning and each part in the parable has its meaning that contributes to the whole.

By Roger Walkwitz

Cloth Patches and New Wineskins

Therefore, parables are a challenge, a spiritual challenge to approach the study from the right Foundation of Truth. Years ago I read a book on the new wineskins representing the charismatic movement that could handle its new wine teachings! To me this was from a prejudiced, wrong foundation that led to false teaching. The context of our text is totally Jewish, so no Gentile or church interpretation is possible.

Checking the context, after opening His teaching ministry with the Sermon on the Mount, Yeshua does many miracles in Matthew 8 and 9. Matthew, the tax collector, is called to discipleship and invites Yeshua & Co. for a meal, together with many of Matthew's fellow tax collectors "and sinners." Pharisees do not eat with such people, so they question why Yeshua should do so. Yeshua says in effect that His ministry is to those who need Him, the outcast of society, to call them to repentance. So here we see a difference in the practice of the Pharisees, who were highly respected by the people, from the practice of Yeshua, Who was also highly respected by the people. The goal would be living according to Torah, which the Pharisees assumed they were already doing. The "publicans and sinners" knew they were not living according to Torah. Yeshua explained this well in another parable in Luke 18:9-14, where the tax collector admitted his sinfulness and claimed the mercy of God, and was therefore justified. The Pharisee claimed his own outward goodness and was not justified. Yeshua in His ministry reached out to both, but especially to the tax collectors and sinners who needed his love and attention.

In Matthew 9:14-15, the question comes up about the difference in fasting observance followed by John the baptizer and the Pharisees, both of whom fast often, and that of Yeshua Who does not fast at all. His revelation that He is the Bridegroom apparently does not connect with anyone. However, after the departure of Yeshua back to heaven, then His disciples will also follow the fasting regulations. Then follows the parable of the cloth patches and new wine, as if this will help explain what He has been talking about, the difference between His application of Torah and the Pharisees application. To back up this last sentence, I refer to Matthew 5:17-20, where Yeshua says He did not come to destroy the Torah or the Prophets, but to "fill them full of meaning,"

which He did in the rest of Matthew 5-7. In the conversation in Matthew 9, Yeshua is continuing to explain what Torah is really all about.

Now for Matthew 9:16: If an old garment needs a patch, fine, patch it properly, but not with an unshrunk piece of new cloth. When washed, the unshrunk patch will shrink and tear the original garment and make it lumpy. So, shrink the new cloth first, then make the patch; and the garment will maintain its smooth appearance and not tear.

Let me suggest that the old garment represents the Torah understanding and application of the Pharisees. It differs somewhat from that of Yeshua, Whose Torah understanding and application would be exactly correct. Therefore, the understanding of the Torah by the Pharisees needs a patch to make it correct. This patch needs some time for the teaching of Yeshua to be complete, time to "shrink" the initial teachings into its unified whole, which the Apostles will be teaching to the Messianic Communities from Acts 2 onward, which was commanded in Matthew 28:18-20. This patch, Yeshua's expanded meaning of Torah and the fulfilled prophecies, will be patched onto the Torah & Prophets that the Jewish people are familiar with into a unified, completed whole.

Now for Matthew 9:17: The new wine is probably the same as the "new wine" of Acts 2:13, which is *gleukos*, grape juice several days old, beginning to ferment, from freshly picked grapes at the very beginning of grape harvest, June through August. Shavuot is usually in June. This *gleukos* would be put in skin "bottles" and the fermentation process would continue, producing pressure from the gasses produced. The new (*neos*) wine (*oinos*), is really brand new wine with very low alcohol content, just beginning to ferment. The new (*kainos*) wineskins are not said to be new (*neos*) wineskins, really brand new ones, never before used. *Kainos* means renewed or new quality and likely refers to wineskins that have been refurbished, softened, maybe by olive oil, ready to be used again. For this I quote, "new wineskins' (Matt 9:17; Luke 5:38), such as have not lost their strength and elasticity through age and use."¹

Let me suggest that the old wineskins again represent the Torah understanding and application of the Pharisees. The new wine is

¹ Trench, p 220, *Synonyms of the New Testament*. *Jewish New Testament* uses "freshly prepared wineskins" which could be brand new or reconditioned older ones.

the "Torah filled full of meaning" by Yeshua. The old wineskins cannot hold Yeshua's correct and full teaching of Torah. Therefore, the old wineskins need to be refurbished, softened, made fresh into a new quality wineskin able to handle the new wine of Yeshua's teaching, which is the fuller meaning of the written Torah. I think it is significant that God uses *kainos* rather than *neos* for the wineskins, focusing on the reconditioning or new quality of the original Torah, not on a brand new or different torah! God does not go back on His Promises or Covenants. The church teaches that the Torah has been thrown away and replaced with their church torah. Sorry, this will not fit!

Pharisees, tax collectors and sinners all need repentance to be restored to proper Torah living. They then will eat together. They then will fast together, as Yeshua's disciples will also resume fasting according to Torah after He has gone. There will be a "new quality" to the Torah understanding and application available for all of Israel, those who think they are righteous and those who know they are not and need mercy. His revelation that He is the Bridegroom may indicate more "new qualities" in the future, since He and His disciples ignored fasting while He was here with them, since by then He will have Returned and the prophetic aspect of the final 3 *moedim* ("Feast Days") will have been fulfilled.

Now lets go to Mark 2:21-22: The context is the same for the teaching in Levi's (Matthew's) house. The parables are the same; therefore, I have the same conclusions. After the encounter in Matthew, Yeshua continues doing miracles. In Mark, these miracles are skipped over, going rather to Yeshua and His disciples facing another conflict with the Pharisees over Shabbat practice. Yeshua is correct according to Torah. The Pharisees objection is according to their Oral Torah, or the Mishnah in the Talmud. Sometimes Yeshua goes along with the Mishnah and sometimes He is in conflict with its teaching. So we have another case where there is the need for a "new quality" of wineskin, or pre-shrunk cloth to patch garments. All of this will happen after Yeshua returns to heaven.

Now, to Luke 5:36-39: The context is expanded a bit to a big feast in Levi's house for tax collectors and "others." Do the "others" include the Pharisees? Some Pharisees are apparently there, or, if they do not want to be defiled by eating with these, maybe outside watching, a strange situation to our minds.

Again there are the same discussions about eating together, Yeshua's ministry to "sick" people, fasting, and the Bridegroom reference. The cloth and wineskin part is identified here as a parable; therefore, all details are important. Ordinarily, no one would tear a piece out of a new quality, refurbished (*kainos*) garment to fix an old one. The first would be ruined and the new piece may not match the old garment. Nothing is said here about unshrunk cloth, so a somewhat different meaning may be here. There is no need to fix the old one. The new quality garment is good the way it is.

The old garment that needs fixing is again the Torah understanding of the Pharisees. It is a garment, however, and somewhat useful. It has served its purpose. The new quality garment will also be a garment, not wholly different from the old, not to be torn but to be used as is. This would be the Torah teaching of Yeshua in its eventual fullness, as He is just beginning His teaching ministry and fulfillment of prophecy.

The part about the new wine (Yeshua's Torah fullness teaching) is the same as in Matthew and Mark. This new wine is put into new quality, refurbished, fresh wineskins, which I understand to be the Torah as written on the hearts of Yeshua's people in the New Covenant, stated in Jeremiah 31:31-34 and repeated in Hebrews 8. The understanding and application of The Torah, in its fullness, the new wine, will be the experience of those in the Kingdom, those in the New Covenant. I might also include the 3rd Cup of wine at the Passover Seder, which represented His blood that ratified the New Covenant. As we drink this 3rd cup of wine, we indicate our acceptance into the New Covenant, our acceptance of The Torah in our hearts, and therefore the pattern of our daily living, naturally, not forced or required.

Luke 5:39 is an addition not found in Matthew and Mark. Everyone used to drinking wine will prefer wine that has been aged, not brand new, beginning to ferment grape juice. (I happen to like both!) This may confirm that Yeshua's teaching fits perfectly with The Torah, the aged, old wine as His teaching is completed, and understood by the Spirit in the minds and hearts of His Family.