

3-2018

The Parables of Jesus Christ: Never Put the New On or In the Old

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Recommended Citation

Willmington, Harold, "The Parables of Jesus Christ: Never Put the New On or In the Old" (2018). *The Second Person File*. 190.

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THE PARABLES OF JESUS CHRIST

PARABLE SEVEN: Never Put the New On or In the Old (Mt. 9:16-17; Mk. 2:21-22; Lk. 5:36-39)

SURVEY

A new, unshrunk patch placed on an old garment will soon peel away from the old, leaving an even bigger hole than before. Likewise, new wine poured into old wineskins will soon cause the old to burst from the pressure.

SIGNIFICANCE

This is perhaps the most descriptive of all Jesus' parables illustrating just why His new teaching could not and would not fit into that of the Pharisees.

SPIRITUAL TRUTHS

- Warren Wiersbe writes:

"In these days of sanforized fabrics, and glass and plastic bottles, the illustration about cloth and wineskins may confuse some. The Jews did not have preshrunk cloth for their clothing, and they frequently kept their liquids in skins. If a woman sewed a patch on a garment that had already been washed, the next time it was washed the patch would shrink and ruin both the patch and the garment. If new wine was poured into dry, brittle skins, the pressure of the gas from the fermentation would break the skin and the wine would be lost. Jesus was neither a conformer (like the Pharisees) nor a reformer (like John the Baptist). He was (and is) a Transformer. He does not reject either the old or the new: He transforms the old so that it is fulfilled in the new. 'Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.' (Mt. 5:17). If I have an acorn, I can destroy it in one of two ways. I can put it on the sidewalk and beat it to a pulp with a hammer. Or, I can plant it in the ground where it will die and produce an oak tree. The acorn would be destroyed by being fulfilled. Jesus did

not come to patch up the old, worn-out Jewish religion. He came to fulfill it in His life, teaching, and death and resurrection. He transformed the old by fulfilling it in the new. To put new cloth on an old garment would destroy both. To put new wine in brittle wineskins would destroy both. To try to mix Law and Grace, Moses and Christ, would destroy both. But to permit the Law to be fulfilled in Grace, and Moses to be fulfilled in Christ, is what God accomplished." (*Meet Yourself in the Parables*, Victor Books, Wheaton, Ill., 1979, pp. 38-39)

- Jesus may have hinted at this new teaching during His very first miracle.

"When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now." (Jn. 2:9-10)