

**THE PARABLES OF JESUS, #004**  
A Chronological Study

**"The Un-carded Wool, The Old Garment"**

**"The Old Wineskin, The New Wineskin"**

Matthew 9:14-17; Mark 2:18-22

(The Old Covenant is replaced by the New Covenant)



**"To Him who opened His mouth in parables and  
uttered things hidden since the creations of the world."**

Psalm 78:2

---

**INTRODUCTION:**

The parables are the direct words of Jesus! Now, open your ears, sharpen your understanding, and hear what He has to say.

---

**OUR TEXT:  
MATTHEW 9:14-17 [NASB]**

Jesus Said:

**14 Then the disciples of John** (the Baptist) **came to Him, asking, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?"** **15 And Jesus said to them, "The attendants of the groom cannot mourn as long as the groom is with them, can they? But the days will come when the groom is taken away from them, and then they will fast** (Lit. be fasting)."

**16 "But no one puts a patch of unshrunk cloth** (Lit. uncarded wool) **on an old garment; for the patch pulls away** (Lit. will shrink) **from the garment, and a worse tear results. 17 Nor do people put new** (Lit. young) **wine into old wineskins; otherwise, the wineskins burst, and the wine pours out** (Lit. spills) **and the wineskins are ruined** (Lit. perish); **but they put new wine into fresh wineskins, and both are preserved."**

**[Comments on Matthew's Report]  
Vss. 14-15**

John the Baptist has been brought forth to give the members of the nation of Israel one last offer to repent of their sins and return to the Old Covenant relationship that God has ordained for that nation. While many listened to John's message it became clear that Judea and the Judeans are continuing to listen to the evil, broken, and twisted rabbinical leadership of the Sanhedrin that was made up of the Scribes, Pharisees, and the Sadducees. Each group had their reasons to keep their leadership under this corrupt old system of idolatry - love of self, power, and money. These disciples of John who came to Jesus were concerned about Jesus and His disciples being very different from the religious structure that they were a part of. In a paragraph earlier, Jesus

was having dinner with hated tax collectors and known sinners. When the Pharisees asked Jesus why this was so, He responded, "It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick... Now go and learn what this means: I desire compassion, rather than sacrifice,' for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

Now the disciples of John came and ask, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?" Jesus gives them a stark and truthful answer that they are just not going to understand, until after Jesus' resurrection and they themselves believe Jesus' message. That answer will remain hidden from them. It should be remembered that "Fasting," is to deny yourself food and unnecessary drink at a time of **sadness**. It is a precursor to confession of sins directly to The Lord. Fasting and Repentance go hand and hand.

The bridegroom is Jesus, the attendants are His disciples. In the time before Judas plants his kiss upon the cheek of Jesus in Gethsemane, His disciples are with Jesus at the "Stag Party," the "Bachelor Party," if you will. The time is coming when Jesus will leave them, like the groom must leave to join with his bride. And when He leaves them... they will mourn. So, you see, His disciples are not now fasting in sorrow - but they will, when Jesus is called to leave them, and begin the last steps to the Cross.

### **Vss. 16-17**

Those who sat around Jesus while he taught didn't live like most of us do today. They couldn't go down the street and go to a store and pick up a new wool shirt, or trousers, if they began to split down the side. Hidden in the literal translation is what is missing from most translations. It's not a question of new cloth versus old cloth. The "new" here is freshly cut sheep's wool, the literal calls it "un-carded" wool. It hasn't been cleaned, boiled, bleached, dyed, pulled through a comb to separate the hairs, made into threads, pre-shrunk, and woven into cloth. If you used unprocessed wool to make your threads and cloth, then the first

time you washed your garment all the new threads and cloth would shrink into a little bunch and rip away from the old cloth - thus ruining the garment you were trying to repair.

We need to keep in mind that Jesus is telling them about the coming change from the Old Mosaic Covenant, made with the nation of Israel, based upon the Law of God, to a New Covenant, made with the nation of Israel, based upon the Grace of God - through Jesus Christ - toward His people. The two covenants cannot be combined, the New Covenant is so remarkably different from the Old... that it cannot "Patch-up" the Old Covenant for great rips and tears would result. Law and Grace... just don't mix!

They also couldn't do the same in decanting new wine into an old container for their wine containers were made from leather. Over time the leather would begin to rot. When fresh wine was placed into the old wineskin it was "new wine," fresh grape juice with sugar added. It was placed someplace cool and allowed to ferment. The fermentation process both sterilized the wine and it also released large quantities of carbon dioxide gas. In order for the finished product to have a little sparkle to it - the wineskin had to be kept sealed until the fermentation process had ended. If your wineskin was old - it would burst under the pressure. So, you would know in those days that you don't repair your garments with un-carded wool, and you don't put new wine in old wineskins. Instead, you replaced the OLD with the NEW.

Jesus is, of course, speaking of a time coming (shortly for them) when, First - Jesus would be leaving His disciples, followed by a time of fasting. Second, The Kingdom of God was at hand and the whole Old Covenant system was due to be replaced with the New Covenant. We'll explore this idea in a moment, but first, I don't want you to miss the last few words of Matthew 9:17, *"Instead, they are pouring fresh wine into new wine-skins, and both are being preserved."* In their near future the nation of Israel is going to be set aside. The first elements of the New Covenant will be established with believing Jews and Gentiles, and they will become known as "The Church." But the setting aside of Israel is

not the end for them. They will be re-established as a believing people, their names already written in the book of life, and they will finally enter into their Promised land of rest under the Kingship of their 'Anointed One, Messiah, Christ, Jesus' in the millennial kingdom to come. As the Gentiles are grafted into Christ the Vine, so the believing nation of Israel will be re-grafted back into the Vine, as well [Romans 11:23]. As Jesus says, "**and both are preserved.**"

---



**MARK 2:18-22 [NASB]**

**18** *John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting; and they \*came and \*said to Him, "Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?"* **19** *And Jesus said to them, "While the bridegroom is with them, the attendants of the bridegroom cannot fast, can they? So long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.* **20** *But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast (Lit. be fasting) in that day.*

**21** *"No one sews (Lit. is sewing) a patch of unshrunk cloth (Lit. uncarded wool) on an old garment; otherwise, the patch pulls away from it (Lit. will shrink), the new from the old, and a worse tear (rent) results.* **22** *And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost and the skins as well; but one puts new wine into fresh wineskins."*

Since we covered the meanings in Matthew's telling, we'll now look for areas where Mark increases what we now know.

The first difference is that Mark is speaking to an audience that is very familiar with both the garment and the wineskin repair issues. Matthew's and Mark's telling of this story are very similar. Again, I really enjoy the freshness of Mark's literal translation. The words "rent," (the act of violent tearing or splitting) in verse 21 and "burst" (sudden and explosive) in verse 22 give a clarity of the image that Jesus is foretelling.

Certainly the Jewish synagogue leadership was about to become unglued as they recognize that their esteemed positions and elevated sense of authority were in jeopardy... if indeed this Jesus was the Messiah (and many believed He was). He was talking about their ungodliness to their faces and indicating that all they stood for, and all their false systems of religion were about to be replaced. Jesus was going to "rent" their lives from top to bottom - and they knew it.

Also in verse 21, Mark states that without a closing out of the Old Covenant, before the opening up of the New Covenant, the changes that were to come would have been much more difficult. He uses the phrase, "a worse tear would result." Think of the possible ramifications that would have resulted if Judaism and Christianity were both attempting to live side-by-side as official versions of worshipping God.

In verse 22 the literal says "bursting." The Sanhedrin, Sadducees, and Pharisees could see the population that had followed Jesus down from Galilee were thrilled with this new Messiah who had the ability to change people's lives and heal the sick... even the born blind could now see. He could even forgive sins! Yes, the population was about to be "bursting" open the old religious system - let alone the very possibility that this could cause a "religious uprising" and the Roman military would take everything away from the Jews - like they would do in 70 A.D.

---

## **COMMENTARY and APPLICATION(S):**

### **So, lets summarize:**

We need to make mention of some of the differences between the old and new covenants. The Old was based on the Jewish people, as physical descendants of Abram (Abraham). Abram's faith (his belief, and his willingness to sacrifice his own son) was so pleasing to God that a people of like faith would be Abram's legacy both in this life and the next. On the upside of this covenant was a promised people, a nation, and a promised land of rest. On the downside was the fact that this was a "conditional" covenant. It was an "I will bless you **if** you love me and keep the faith," and "I **will discipline you if** you don't." A covenant and personal salvation are two different things.

At the center of this old covenant was the three central aspects of the Law of God that was given to Moses by God on Mt. Sinai. Part-1 of the Law was the legal aspects of the Law. This was to educate every Hebrew as to the holiness of God and the sinfulness of mankind. It was a mirror.

As a mirror, the Law, and its sacrifices, was to get them to look upon God's holiness and then to reflect back upon themselves and their sinfulness. It was to teach them a specific lesson - in order to be free from their sinfulness, they needed a savior.

There would be two family lines (Moses/Aaron and Levi) that would make up the "Priesthood," who would be administrators of the Law. It would fall upon them (Moses/Aaron) to be the leadership of their priesthood in order to be mediators between God and the Hebrew people. Those from the line of Levi would be the functionaries who cared for the Tabernacle (their place of worship) and carried out the sacrificial process.

There was to be a system of animal sacrifices who had to give up their lives in order to find atonement for those who would bring their animals for substitutionary sacrifice (the shedding of the animal's as a substitute for their blood). These three portions of

the Mosaic Law were, in every sense, to point to a Messiah, literally an "Anointed One," who would be the final sacrifice (the blood sacrifice) and put an end to the sin and death that had entered into the world via Satan, Adam, and Eve. It should also be noted that the Law did not bring salvation without personal Abraham like faith.

Instead, the Law brought condemnation and then if they were faithful under the law and the sacrifices, they would find atonement for their sins - atonement is not salvation. It is only a release from the penalty of their sins. Salvation for all ages is only by Grace to those who "love God with all their heart, minds, and might" [Deuteronomy 6:5] (there are over 100 verses of scripture which speak of this mandate).

So what is **our** application from this parable? To start, let us ponder fasting. There's a lot of talk in today's world about "fasting" as a good health measure that helps with losing weight. Some even talk about using "fasting" as a way to get things from God - a way of pleasing Him so He will be good to you. This, of course, is all nonsense. You can't make God do anything! If you think you can manipulate Almighty God, the creator of the universe - you are seriously being misled by the evil one. If you desire to lose weight... don't eat so much, but don't call it "fasting." If you desire to have "God's blessing" in terms of "doing something that will win you favor," then your attempt at fasting is just WORKS. The way to God's favor is through His Son's sacrifice of Himself for you. Ephesians 1 teaches us that, if we are in Christ, we are already the possessor of "every spiritual blessing" through faith in Him. Biblical fasting is very specific. It is a private time of denying yourself so that you can focus upon your sorrow for sin, and to be in prayer to your heavenly Father seeking His presence and pleasure.

Then, we need to consider the plan of God as He reveals it through the nature of His Covenants:

**First,** His covenants are a contract between God and man whereby God figuratively writes the contract and signs it... They are **unilateral** contracts; the affected parties don't get to approve or sign them.

**Second,** some of these contracts are unconditional (God Promises and man receives). Other contracts are conditional (God Promises based upon man's performance... if this, then this... if not, then this).

There are many covenants in the scriptures but 5 of them are key.

**1. NOAHIC COVENANT** - Unconditional

Post universal flood – God promises He will never again flood the earth [Genesis 8:20-9:17].

**2. ABRAHAMIC COVENANT** – Parts Unconditional and Conditional

A redemptive partnership between God and Abram [Abraham]. God promises Abraham a huge family that will inherit land in Canaan and bring universal blessing to all humanity.

**3. MOSAIC COVENANT** – Conditional

God meets with Moses on Mt. Sinai and God promises to bring blessings **IF** they follow His Commands, and to bring curses if they do not.

**4. DAVIDIC COVENANT** – Unconditional

God chooses David to be His representative King over the nation of Israel and will provide a faithful descendant of David to eventually reign over Israel.

**5. THE NEW COVENANT** – Unconditional

The New Covenant is to be everlasting. God will write His law on the hearts of His people, bringing complete forgiveness of sin, and raise up a faithful king from the line

of David who will restore all that has been broken [Matthew 26:26-29; Luke 22:19-22].

### **JESUS IS THE COVENANTAL CLIMAX**<sup>[i]</sup>

The New Testament authors present **Jesus** as the offspring of Abraham who trusted his Yahweh, even to the point of death, and became a blessing to all nations. **He, Jesus**, is the greater Moses, leading us out of bondage, and **He** is the obedient Israelite who perfectly follows the laws of God. **He** is the royal son of David who inaugurated God's Kingdom in **His** life, death, and resurrection, and who now sits at God's right hand forever reigning as the one true **King**.

**Jesus** perfectly succeeded at every point where humanity failed. **He** is the guarantor and mediator of the new and better covenant [Heb. 7:22; 9:15; Hebrews 7:22; Hebrews 9:15].

Now people from every nation, tribe, and tongue who trust **Jesus** can become a part of God's covenant family.

In the new covenant, we receive the forgiveness of sins and God's empowering Spirit to help us live lives full of self-giving love. Because of **Jesus**, we can live righteously and partner with **Him** as **He** renews the world.

---

### **A Brief Commentary on the evil leading to the Cross**

The Bible tells a story with a single purpose – but that single purpose is also complex. Somewhere back before the creation of material things God made decisions concerning a material universe for His purposes. One of those purposes that the Bible reveals to us is to acquire a people for Himself who would not only say they loved Him, but also proved it. In His plan and purposes, He allowed evil to enter into His plan, first through one of His angels, Lucifer [Satan]. That evil element made possible the dividing line between those who would, and those who would not, willfully choose to serve, follow, be obedient to, and most of all Love the Lord God with all their hearts, minds, and wills.

Satan was cast down to earth to be master and ruler here. God established mankind here on this small insignificant planet on the far edge of a galaxy that was one planet in a galaxy of a hundred million stars in a universe where there are more galaxies than there are stars in our galaxy – seemingly insignificant – except for the master plan of God. Create a people destined to be His human children. With such a high calling there would be no salvation for those who rejected His master plan – to provide Himself as their savior.

### **The Fall [Genesis 3]**

Adam and Eve begin their lives here on this planet in a place that is without match – the wonderful Garden of Eden. A place where there is no evil, no pain, no suffering, no weeds, no animosity between the animals, and weather where no clothes are necessary – and no evil knowledge to make clothes emotionally necessary. It all ends when the Serpent [Lucifer, Satan] brings his evil and spreads it to mankind. And mankind is ejected from God's perfect environment. The nature of the whole world is changed including the nature of man and beasts.

### **Evil leading to the death of Abel [Genesis 4]**

Two young men, brothers, sons of Adam and Eve, and one is jealous of the other. Why? – He was born in a world of sin. A place where choices are no longer made because they are right, but often made because we benefit from our choice. Cain chose a life of raising food. When it came time to worship God, he took what he had raised and offered it to the Lord.

Able chose a life of raising animals. When it came time to worship God, he took the life of one of his animals and offered its dead body to the Lord. And the Lord was touched by Abel's offering, as it reminded the Lord of the plan of the ages to take the life of His beloved Son and offer it on behalf of the forgiveness of those who would receive it. Cain was not pleased with God's pleasure with Able, and not pleased with Abel's blessing – so Cain killed him.

### **Evil leading to the Flood [Genesis 6-7]**

There is not a lot of information as to the downfall of humanity leading up to the Flood. We are told that people had become uninterested in the worship of God. Society had moved away from righteousness in a Biblical sense and was only interested in self-interest. Sounds a lot like today.

The day came when God brought severe discipline for their complete occupation with things that were self-involved and self-interesting. Leaving God out of their worldview brought on enormous consequences... as it will again... The day came when there were only 8 people who loved the Lord God, Noah, his wife, and his 3 sons and their wives. Noah completed and loaded the Ark and **God** closed the door.

### **Evil leading to the slavery of Joseph [Genesis 37-50]**

You may, of course, remember the story of Joseph, the young son of Jacob. His dad loved him and gave him many special things. His brothers were envious of him to the point where they wanted to kill him. It was Ruben who first rescued him from murder [Genesis 37:21] and it was Judah who saved his life and persuaded the others to sell him into slavery instead [Genesis 37:26]. I love the line that Joseph said when He met them again in Egypt, "***you intended it for evil, but God intended it for good***" [Genesis 50:20]. That line would stand as the byline for all of time. Joseph loved the Lord and brought them into the time of Moses.

### **Evil at the foot of Sinai [Exodus 32, Numbers 13]**

Moses battled with Pharaoh and was able (through God's miracles) to lead his people to safety, across the dead sea (miraculously) and on to Mt. Sinai. Moses showed them great miracles and led them to a place of safety. But, when he left them and answered the Lord's command to join Him on the top of Sinai... the people rebelled and wanted a different God, one that would do what they wanted him to do. The golden calf – even Moses' brother Aaron was involved, "I melted the gold and the calf just appeared!" (... Sure ...) It was an 11-day journey from

Sinai to the border of Canaan. When they arrived at the edge of the Jordan river Moses sent 12 spies into the "Promised Land" to scout it out. When the spies returned only 2, Joshua and Caleb, believed God and wanted to cross over into that new land. Because of the nation's continuous rebellion against God's word, ending with these spies who rejected God's plan and leading, they were sent back into the wilderness... it took 40 years to get back and enter that "Promised Land."

### **Cycles of Evil throughout Israel's history**

Here in the AncientPath.net study of [The book of Ruth](#) there is an addendum which speaks to the recurring struggles with sin that the Nation of Israel traveled through ([Ruth - Addendum-6](#)). In that study you can see how Israel cycled around and around in sin that eventually resulted in first, the division of the nation and then later the complete dissolve of the nation in the captivity brought on by Babylon.

### **Evil leading to the Cross [The Gospels]**

With the reestablishment of the nation of Israel, first under the Persians, then a brief war and liberation, only to be reacquired by the nation of Rome, came the return of a corrupt religious leadership that had been brought about by previous generations of scribes and rabbis. They slowly turned the worship of God through the Law of Moses into a worship of works in keeping the law. Even the sacrifices had suffered the complete loss of meaning. They had become a way to buy a nonexistent forgiveness based on money and works. The people who were supposed to be free had become captives and the world that was supposed to be reached by this nation had become lost to them.

When Jesus arrives on the scene the local rulers seek to have him killed as a baby and His family fled to Egypt. It was the culture to kill anyone who might take the throne – even a little child. By the time Jesus and His family had moved back to Israel and He has been an adult and involved in His ministry to the Galileans, the Judean religious leadership had already plotted to Kill Him as an adult. Evil had spread all over the land. When He returns from

Galilee with hundreds of followers who know He is the Christ – who have seen Him heal, who have seen Him raise the dead, who have seen Him make the blind see. But there, His death is the foremost sought-after idea in the minds of all those who are evil – and so... they put our precious Lord Jesus to death... as planned by God, His Father, from before the foundations of the World.

---

**FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS WITH OUT ANSWERS**

1. Who asked Jesus why didn't He and His disciples fast?
  2. What was John the Baptist's main message?
  3. Why didn't Jesus' disciples fast (from Jesus' point of view)?
  4. What is the message about the Old and New Covenants.
  5. What is the main point of verses 21 & 22?
  6. What are the three main elements of the Mosaic Law?
  7. Why was Jesus so hated by both the religious and political leadership of His time?
-

## **FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS WITH ANSWERS**

**1. Who asked Jesus why didn't He and His disciples fast?**

The Disciples of John the Baptist.

**2. What was John the Baptist's main message?**

Repentance of the Jew, return to the Old Covenant.

**3. Why didn't Jesus' disciples fast (from Jesus' point of view)?**

Like in a wedding feast the groomsmen are enjoying the groom and have no reason to fast - that will come when He is taken away.

**4. What is the message about the Old and New Covenants.**

The two covenants cannot co-exist. The Old, the Law, only brought judgment and condemnation. The New, The King and His Kingdom, brought complete renewal. No more evil, sin, or death, in a people and a place prepared for Him.

**5. What is the main point of verses 21 & 22?**

The complete system change from the Old Covenant to the New.

**6. What are the three main elements of the Mosaic Law?**

First, the elements of the legal requirements (law). Second, a priesthood who would mediate God to man, and man to God. Third, a substitutionary atonement system to teach of a coming savior. The substitute sacrifice must die for the sinner to be forgiven - that substitute sacrificial savior is Jesus, the Anointed One, Messiah, Christ, The very Son of God.

## **7. Why was Jesus so hated by both the religious and political leadership of His time?**

The big picture is the evil of this world and the ruler of it, Satan (Lucifer), is completely and absolutely against the Substitutionary atonement brought about by Jesus.

Prevention of this moment in time would mean that God is not all He says He is, and that He is a liar. Therefore, Satan has a right to be lord over this world and all others.

Secondarily, is the evil greed of the rulers of that day. If Jesus was the Messiah and He came and made the world system righteous - they stood to lose everything - their power, their positions, even their lives. Jesus must die.

---

The "The Ancient Path" Study materials on this website are made available here free and may be copied for use in Bible study groups, in limited numbers, providing that no charge is made for them. Items that appear as copyrighted materials that are not of our authorship are not to be copied without the express permission of the original copyright holders. Every effort has been made to give proper footnote credit for items that are quoted. J. Deering [AncientPath.net] is the author and editor of this study.

AncientPath.net © 2024  
Jeremiah 18:15  
"Don't stumble from the Ancient Path"  
2023-06-12 updated  
2024-03-27

[\[1\]](#) The Bible Project, Covenants: The Backbone of the Bible, Whitney Woodllard