

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

Vol. XXIV

February 16, 2014

No. 7

Just Because It is New...

(Jerry Fite)

The disciples of Jesus were not fasting, while John’s disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fasted often with prayers. The Pharisees point out this difference with a critical eye, and murmuring heart just as they had done when they pointed out to Him that his disciples were eating and drinking with publicans and sinners. Jesus responded to this difference by saying He came to call the sinners, not the righteous (*Luke 5:32*). Jesus now responds to the lack of fasting by indicating it was not time to fast in sorrow while He, the bridegroom, was still with them. The appropriate time to fast would be coming when Jesus would be taken away from them by death. (*Luke 5:34-35*).

To drive home the principle of taking appropriate action for the occasion, Jesus speaks a parable with three illustrations from everyday life stressing the opposite. It is so inappropriate, that “no man” would ruin a new garment by taking a piece from it and put it on an old garment, to which it did not agree (*Luke 5:36*). It is so inappropriate that “no man” would put new wine into old wine skins; else the new wine burst the skins and cause

both the wine and wine skin to perish. (*Luke 5:37-38*). And if the thought pattern is still on the same track, then it is so inappropriate that “no man” having drunk old wine would not desire the new, but say instead, the old is good (*Luke 5:39*).

Surely the fresh tasting new vintage would be desired over the musty old. Surely to “*preserve*” both the wine and the wineskins, one would put new wine into new wine skins (*Matt. 9:17, Luke 5:38*). And surely preserving the new garment and not further damaging the old would be more prudent than rending from the new and in the process of attaching it to the old cause a bigger tear (*cf. Matthew 9:16*).

Jesus’ point regarding the wine skins is showing how new wine could be preserved as fresh grape juice, and not become fermented. “*New wine skins*” can burst from the carbon dioxide gas produced in the fermentation process if not vented (*Job 32:19*). However, by putting *the new wine* (unfermented grape juice) in “*new*” *fresh*” wine skins which would not have the pulp residue (like in the old) and lead to fermentation, the juice and the wine skin could be “preserved” from

the effects of fermentation when sealed.

The ancients were able to prevent grape juice from fermenting in various ways: *boiling* the fresh juice down to sweet syrup; *fumigating* jars by burning sulphur which eliminates the oxygen that carries the yeast, then seal the jars with pitch before placing them in cool water; and through *filtering* the fermentable pulp from the juice.

Jesus’ disciples’ action of not fasting was new and different from what the Pharisees were doing. Jesus, in every one of his illustrations, emphasizes the appropriate place for the “*new*”.

Today many new song writers are writing new songs for worship. Some Christians are critical. One older Christian criticized some of the new songs as “*ten words repeated eight times*”. Some of the new songs may be more simplistic than we like, but they may just focus our attention on a particular characteristic of God or drive home a single attitude we should manifest in worshipping God (*Jn. 4:24*). Jesus reminds us that just because something is new does not make it wrong or out of place.