

Matthew 9:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.

Analysis

The second parable extends the first: 'Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved' (οὐδε βαλλουσιν οινον νεον εις ασκους παλαιους ει δε μηγε ρηγνυνται οι ασκοι). 'Bottles' (ασκοι) were wineskins made from animal hides. New wine ferments, producing gas that expands flexible new wineskins but bursts old, brittle ones. The result: lost wine and ruined wineskins. Jesus teaches that new covenant realities require new forms and structures. The gospel's dynamic, expanding power cannot be contained in rigid old covenant structures. Attempting forced combination destroys both. The solution: 'new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.' Christianity requires new wineskins—new worship forms, new community structures, new theological frameworks appropriate to the gospel's revolutionary reality.

Historical Context

Winemaking was central to Jewish agricultural economy and religious life. Everyone understood fermentation and wineskin limitations. Jesus' audience would immediately grasp the illustration. The deeper application addressed Jewish Christians' attempt to retain temple worship, Sabbath regulations, dietary laws, and circumcision requirements while following Jesus. These old wineskins couldn't contain the gospel's explosive, boundary-crossing, Gentile-including reality. The book of Acts chronicles the painful process of recognizing that new covenant faith

required new expressions. The church's separation from Judaism was traumatic but necessary—the new wine of the gospel required new wineskins of Christian community.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What are the 'new wineskins' required for gospel ministry in contemporary culture?
2. How do we preserve biblical truth while allowing for new forms and methods?
3. What old wineskins might contemporary churches be clinging to that hinder gospel expansion?

Interlinear Text

οὐδὲ βάλλουσιν οἶνον νέον εἰς ἀσκοὺς παλαιούς· εἰ
Neither do men put the wine new into bottles old G1487
G3761 G906 G3631 G3501 G1519 G779 G3820

δὲ μήγε, ῥήγνυνται οἱ ἀσκοὺς καὶ ὁ οἶνον ἐκχεῖται
G1161 G3361 break G3588 bottles and G3588 the wine runneth out
G4486 G779 G2532 G3631 G1632

καὶ οἱ ἀσκοὺς ἀπολοῦνται· ἀλλὰ βάλλουσιν οἶνον
and G3588 bottles perish but do men put the wine
G2532 G779 G622 G235 G906 G3631

νέον εἰς ἀσκοὺς καινούς, καὶ ἀμφότερα συντηροῦνται
new into bottles new and both are preserved
G3501 G1519 G779 G2537 G2532 G297 G4933

