

What Jesus Said

9. Matthew 9:14-17 *John the Baptist's Disciples question Jesus about fasting*

This story is found in the 9th Chapter of St. Matthew, versus 14 through to 19 – we write it like this: **Matthew 9:14-17**. *BibleHomework* uses this format throughout its website.

The Scripture:

Matthew 9:14 - Then John's disciples came and asked him, "How is it that we and the Pharisees fast often, but your disciples do not fast?"

9:15 - Jesus answered, "How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast.

9:16 - "No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch will pull away from the garment, making the tear worse.

9:17 - Neither do people pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst; the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved."

The Explanation:

The disciples that followed John the Baptist ask Jesus as to why His Disciples do not fast. Jesus's reply is cryptic, designed to make them think through the answer. He explains the reason for changes are compared to old clothes and wineskins. He refers to Himself as the bridegroom and that he will not always be with the Disciples. He is the 'new wine', bringing new rules to the table, but states that the old rules still have their part to play.

Places and People Mentioned:

John The Baptist: In the Gospel of St. Luke he is described as a relative of Jesus. He was a travelling preacher, announcing the coming of 'The Messiah' and baptising people in the River Jordan.

Andrew: Brother of Simon, He is considered the founder and the first bishop of the Church of Byzantium. *He was also one of the disciples that followed John the Baptist, prior to Jesus' arrival.*

Pharisees: The Pharisees were at various times a political party, a social movement, and a school of thought among Jews.

The Disciples Jesus had twelve Disciples (also referred to as 'The Apostles), they are: 1. **Simon**, who is called **Peter**, 2. **Andrew** his brother, 3. **James** the son of **Zebedee**, 4. **John** his brother, 5. **Philip**, 6. **Bartholomew**, 7. **Thomas**, 8. **Matthew** the tax collector, 9. **James** the son of Alphaeus, 10. **Thaddaeus**, a(Iso known as Judas son of James or Judas the Good), 11. **Simon** the Zealot and 12. **Judas** Iscariot.

Questions:

1. Why do you think Jesus answered in this cryptic form?
2. Who do you think is the 'wine'?
3. Who do you think is the 'old wineskin'? What does this imply?
4. Who do you think is the 'new wineskin'? What does that imply?
5. What is Jesus telling the people about the way forward with Him?