

28/6/88  
CRAIG FORDS  
Sells JOHN CRAIG

# Difficult Scriptures

I. Scripture: Luke 5:36-39

II. How This Verse Is Misused By Some

These verses are difficult in the sense that their meaning can be obscure and unclear, rather than that they are used to support some false concept. The usual question is, What does this parable of the garments and the wine bottles mean, and what does it have to do with fasting?

III. True Explanation

- A. Jesus was answering a question. "Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink?" (verse 33). Jesus used this parable to help answer the question.
- B. "No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old" (verse 36). It doesn't make sense to put a new piece of cloth on an old garment to repair it. After washing, the new cloth will shrink and tear the old.
- C. "And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish" (verse 37). Strong's Concordance shows the Greek word here translated "bottles" really means "wineskins." It would be ridiculous to put new wine into an old wineskin. An old wineskin has already stretched and the fermentation of new wine would burst it.
- D. The new cloth and the new wine symbolize the new way of life Christ was bringing. We must change our total approach to God -- our methods and purposes in fasting, prayer and obedience -- when we are converted. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17).
- E. Jesus gave these two examples as a lesson in incongruities. It would make as little sense for His disciples to fast while He was there as it would to put new cloth on an old garment or new wine in an old wineskin. We can't fit God's truth into our old way of

life. For instance, if we try to mix the truth of the Sabbath with our old way of life and concepts learned so we may be like one of the churches of this world, it will indeed seem "hard" and "burdensome" to obey God and will cause a "rent."

The main reason for fasting is to get closer to God. Jesus' disciples didn't fast. They didn't need to fast to get closer to Him because He was already with them. "And he said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days" (Luke 5:34-35).

- F. "No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better" (verse 39). Christ had already explained why His disciples didn't fast at that time. This last analogy was to show why the Pharisees and John's disciples did fast. These men were not ready to accept the example of Christ and His disciples as being right. They didn't want to drink the "new wine" -- the new way of life that Christ was bringing -- because they felt the "old wine" of their customs, doctrines and practices was better.