

Luke 20:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

Analysis

Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder—Jesus extends the stone imagery to describe two forms of encounter with Him, both resulting in destruction, but with different implications. "Fall upon" (πεσὼν, *pesōn*) suggests stumbling over the stone in the path—those who encounter Jesus and reject Him will be "broken" (συνθλασθήσεται, *synthlasthēsetai*, shattered). This describes Israel's current stumbling over Messiah (Romans 9:32-33, 1 Peter 2:8).

The second image is more severe: "on whomsoever it shall fall" (ἐφ' ὃν δ' ἂν πέσῃ, *eph' hon d' an pesē*) describes active judgment—the stone falling on someone. This person will be ground to powder (λικμήσει, *likmēsei*, pulverized like wheat at threshing, crushed completely). This prophesies eschatological judgment at Christ's return (Daniel 2:34-35, 44-45, where the stone crushes the kingdoms). The stone is either stumbling block or crushing judge—there is no neutral encounter with Christ. To reject Him means destruction now (broken) and ultimate destruction later (pulverized).

Historical Context

This imagery combines Psalm 118:22 with Daniel 2:34-35, where the stone cut without hands crushes the kingdoms and becomes a mountain filling the earth. First-century Jews understood these prophecies messianically. Jesus applies them to Himself, warning that rejection brings judgment. The "breaking" occurred in 70

AD when Jerusalem fell. The final "grinding to powder" awaits Christ's return when every knee will bow (Philippians 2:10-11) and enemies become His footstool (Psalm 110:1). Those who reject the cornerstone face the crushing stone.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How do the two images (stumbling and crushing) represent both present and future judgment for rejecting Christ?
2. What does the certainty of destruction either way teach about the urgency of embracing Jesus as cornerstone?
3. Why is it impossible to encounter Jesus neutrally—why must every person either build on Him or be destroyed by Him?

Interlinear Text

πᾶς	ὁ	πέση	ἐφ'	ἐκεῖνον	τὸν	λίθον
Whosoever	G3588	it shall fall	on	that	G3588	stone
G3956		G4098	G1909	G1565		G3037
συνθλασθήσεται·	ἐφ'	ὃν	δ'	ἂν	πέση	λικμήσει
shall be broken	on	whomsoever	but	G302	it shall fall	it will grind
G4917	G1909	G3739	G1161		G4098	G3039
αὐτόν						
him						
G846						

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 21:44 (Parallel theme): And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

Zechariah 12:3 (Parallel theme): And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.

Matthew 21:34 (Parallel theme): And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it.

From KJV Study • kjevstudy.org