

Luke 6:49

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great.

Analysis

But he that heareth, and doeth not (ὁ δὲ ἀκούσας καὶ μὴ ποιήσας)—The aorist participles emphasize decisive hearing followed by decisive non-doing. This isn't ignorance but willful disobedience—hearing Jesus's words without implementing them. James later warns against being 'hearers only, deceiving your own selves' (James 1:22).

Without a foundation built an house upon the earth (ὠκοδόμησεν οἰκίαν ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν χωρὶς θεμελίου)—the preposition *epi* (upon) contrasts with the previous verse's foundation *epi* *petra* (upon rock). Building 'upon the earth' suggests surface-level construction, expedient but catastrophically inadequate. **Immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great** (εὐθέως ἔπεσεν, καὶ ἐγένετο τὸ ῥῆγμα τῆς οἰκίας ἐκείνης μέγα)—the dramatic collapse (*rhēgma*, breach, ruin) illustrates eschatological judgment. Profession without practice ends in 'great' ruin, echoing Jesus's warning about those who prophesied and cast out demons in his name yet are condemned as workers of iniquity (Matthew 7:21-23).

Historical Context

Luke wrote to a largely Gentile audience facing pressure to compromise Christian ethics for social acceptance. This parable warned against cultural accommodation

—maintaining Christian profession while abandoning Christian practice. The 'great ruin' anticipates final judgment when false professors face eternal consequences for superficial faith.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What teachings of Jesus do you 'hear' regularly but consistently fail to implement—what's your area of willful disobedience?
2. How might cultural Christianity (religious identity without transformed behavior) represent building without a foundation in modern contexts?
3. Does the warning of 'great ruin' affect how urgently you pursue obedience, or have you grown desensitized to biblical warnings of judgment?

Interlinear Text

ὁ	δὲ	ἀκούσας	καὶ	μὴ	ποιήσας	ὅμοιός	ἐστίν
G3588	But	he that heareth	and	not	doeth	like	is
	G1161	G191	G2532	G3361	G4160	G3664	G2076
ἄνθρωπῳ	οἰκοδομήσαντι	οἰκίας	ἐπὶ	τὴν	γῆν	χωρὶς	
a man	built	an house	upon	G3588	the earth	that without	
G444	G3618	G3614	G1909		G1093	G5565	
θεμελίου	ἣ	προσέρρηξεν	ὁ	ποταμός	καὶ	εὐθὺς	
a foundation	which	against	G3588	the stream	and	immediately	
G2310	G3739	G4366		G4215	G2532	G2112	
ἔπεσεν	καὶ	ἐγένετο	τὸ	ῥῆγμα	τῆς	οἰκίας	ἐκείνης
it fell	and	was	G3588	the ruin	G3588	an house	of that
G4098	G2532	G1096		G4485		G3614	G1565
							G3173

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 33:31 (Parallel theme): And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.

Proverbs 28:18 (Parallel theme): Whoso walketh uprightly shall be saved: but he that is perverse in his ways shall fall at once.

Matthew 23:3 (Parallel theme): All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.

1 John 2:19 (Parallel theme): They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

Mark 4:17 (Parallel theme): And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended.

John 15:2 (Parallel theme): Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

Luke 12:47 (Parallel theme): And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.

Luke 6:46 (Parallel theme): And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?