

Luke 8:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

Analysis

Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

Jesus identifies the first soil as the hardened path where seed cannot penetrate. The Greek word *hodos* (ὁδός) refers to a trampled roadway—compacted, impenetrable earth representing hardened hearts. The devil (*diabolos*, διάβολος, 'slanderer' or 'accuser') actively **taketh away the word** (*airei ton logon*, αἶρει τὸν λόγον), snatching it before it can take root.

The purpose clause is critical: **lest they should believe and be saved** (*hina mē pisteusantes sōthōsin*, ἵνα μὴ πιστεύσαντες σωθῶσιν). Satan's strategy is preventing saving faith by immediate removal of God's word. The verb *pisteusantes* (believing) precedes *sōthōsin* (be saved), establishing faith as the instrumental means of salvation—precisely what Satan seeks to prevent. This reveals spiritual warfare in evangelism: behind human unresponsiveness stands demonic opposition working to keep hearts hard and minds closed to gospel truth.

Historical Context

In first-century Palestinian agriculture, footpaths cut through fields where countless feet hardened the soil. Broadcasted seed falling on these paths sat exposed on the surface, vulnerable to birds (representing Satan, v. 5). Jesus spoke this parable to crowds including Pharisees, scribes, and common people—vastly

different soil conditions. The parable's agricultural imagery was immediately comprehensible, yet its spiritual meaning required explanation (vv. 9-10). Luke's Gospel, written for Gentile audiences (Theophilus, 1:3), emphasizes salvation themes. This verse's explicit mention of being 'saved' (sōthōsin) connects hearing God's word with eternal salvation, a central Lukan concern throughout Acts as the gospel spreads from Jerusalem to Rome.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. What specific factors today create 'hardened heart' conditions where God's word cannot penetrate?
2. How does recognizing Satan's active role in preventing faith change how we pray for unbelievers?
3. Why does Jesus explicitly connect hearing the word with 'belief' and 'salvation' rather than mere intellectual knowledge?

Interlinear Text

οἱ	δὲ	παρὰ	τὴν	ὁδόν	εἰσιν	οἱ	ἀκούοντες	εἴτα
G3588	Those	by	G3588	the way side	are	G3588	they that hear	then
	G1161	G3844		G3598	G1526		G191	G1534
ἔρχεται	ὁ	διάβολος	καὶ	αἶρει	τὸν	λόγον	ἀπὸ	τῆς
cometh	G3588	the devil	and	taketh away	G3588	the word	out of	G3588
G2064		G1228	G2532	G142		G3056	G575	
καρδίας	αὐτῶν	ἵνα	μὴ	πιστεύσαντες	σωθῶσιν			
hearts	their	G2443	G3361	they should believe	and be saved			
G2588	G846			G4100	G4982			

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 12:9 (Evil): And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Mark 4:15 (Word): And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts.

Matthew 13:19 (Word): When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.

Proverbs 4:5 (Word): Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth.

Proverbs 1:29 (Parallel theme): For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: