

Luke 8:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture.

Analysis

And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture—The Greek *kai heteron epesen epi tēn petran* (καὶ ἕτερον ἔπεσεν ἐπὶ τὴν πέτραν, "and other fell upon the rock") describes seed falling on shallow soil over limestone bedrock, common in Palestinian highlands. The phrase *kai phyen exēranthē dia to mē echein ikmada* (καὶ φυὲν ἐξηράνθη διὰ τὸ μὴ ἔχειν ἰκμάδα, "and having sprung up, it withered because of not having moisture") reveals the problem.

The verb *phyen* (φυέν, aorist participle of *phyō*, "to spring up/grow") indicates initial germination, but *exēranthē* (ἐξηράνθη, "withered away") shows rapid death. Luke uniquely mentions *ikmada* (ἰκμάδα, "moisture")—Mark 4:6 attributes withering to sun and lack of roots, while Luke emphasizes insufficient water retention. The shallow soil lacks capacity to sustain life despite enthusiastic initial growth. Jesus explains (v. 13) this represents those who receive the word with joy but have no root, believing temporarily but falling away in temptation or trial. The rock-soil warns against superficial faith lacking depth for endurance.

Historical Context

Galilean and Judean terrain features limestone bedrock often covered by thin topsoil. Seeds germinating in such soil sprouted quickly due to warmth from underlying rock but died rapidly when roots hit stone and moisture evaporated. Farmers recognized this soil type's deceptive productivity—impressive initial

growth masking fatal structural deficiency. Jesus' audience immediately understood the image. Spiritually, this represents emotional conversions lacking genuine repentance and transformation. Such "believers" show initial enthusiasm, perhaps even joy (v. 13), but possess no deep root of authentic faith. When persecution, testing, or cost of discipleship appears, they abandon profession. This parable challenges easy-believism and superficial evangelism that produces decisions without disciples, converts without genuine conversion. The rocky soil warns that not all apparent faith is saving faith—depth matters more than initial appearance.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How can we distinguish between genuine conversion with deep roots and superficial enthusiasm that lacks the depth needed for long-term perseverance?
2. What does the rapid withering of rock-soil growth teach about the dangers of emotional decision-making without genuine repentance and transformation?
3. In what ways does modern evangelistic practice sometimes cultivate shallow, rock-soil conversions by emphasizing immediate response without counting the cost of discipleship?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ἕτερον	ἔπεσεν	ἐπὶ	τὴν	πέτραν	καὶ
And	some	fell	upon	G3588	a rock	And
G2532	G2087	G4098	G1909		G4073	G2532
	φυεῖν	ἐξηράνθη	διὰ	τὸ	μὴ	ἔχειν
	as soon as it was sprung up	it withered away	because	G3588	it lacked	G2192
	G5453	G3583	G1223		G3361	
	ἰκμάδα					
	moisture					
	G2429					

Additional Cross-References

Luke 8:13 (Parallel theme): They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.