

Luke 8:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it.

Analysis

And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it—The Greek *kai heteron epesen en mesō tōn akanthōn* (καὶ ἕτερον ἔπεσεν ἐν μέσῳ τῶν ἀκανθῶν, "and other fell in the midst of the thorns") describes seed scattered among dormant thornbush roots. The phrase *kai sympyeisai hai akanthai apepnixan auto* (καὶ συμφυεῖσαι αἱ ἄκανθαι ἀπέπνιξαν αὐτό, "and growing together the thorns choked it") uses *sympyeisai* (συμφυεῖσαι, "growing together/simultaneously") indicating parallel development.

The verb *apepnixan* (ἀπέπνιξαν, "choked/strangled") vividly portrays suffocation—thorns competed for nutrients, water, and sunlight, preventing the crop from maturing to fruitfulness. Jesus explains (v. 14) that thorns represent *merimnas kai ploutou kai hēdonōn tou biou* (μερίμνας καὶ πλούτου καὶ ἡδονῶν τοῦ βίου, "cares and riches and pleasures of life")—worldly anxieties, wealth, and sensual gratifications. Unlike path-soil (immediate satanic theft) or rock-soil (temporary faith ending in apostasy), thorn-soil represents ongoing profession that never produces fruit due to spiritual competition. The plant lives but remains unproductive, choked by competing priorities.

Historical Context

Palestinian farmers recognized the challenge of thorny ground—roots remained after surface clearing, regenerating to compete with crops. Common thornbushes included thistles, briars, and thorny shrubs. Jesus' interpretation reveals this soil

represents those who hear and apparently believe but allow worldly concerns to prevent fruitfulness. The three specific thorns—cares (anxieties about provision), riches (pursuit of wealth), and pleasures (sensual gratification)—encompass the spectrum of worldly distraction. This category warns that religious profession can coexist with practical worldliness. Such people attend services, profess faith, perhaps even participate in ministry, but produce no spiritual fruit because competing priorities strangle their growth. The Reformed tradition particularly emphasizes this danger—nominal Christianity where the word is heard but worldliness prevents transformation. Fruitlessness evidences false profession (Matthew 7:16-20).

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How do cares, riches, and pleasures function as spiritual thorns that choke out fruitfulness while allowing religious profession to continue?
2. What does the simultaneous growth of seed and thorns teach about the subtle, gradual nature of worldliness choking out spiritual vitality?
3. In what ways does affluent Western Christianity particularly struggle with the thorn-soil danger of material comfort and entertainment preventing fruitful discipleship?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ἕτερον	ἔπεσεν	ἐν	μέσῳ	τῶν	ἄκανθαι	καὶ
And	some	fell	among	G3319	G3588	the thorns	And
G2532	G2087	G4098	G1722			G173	G2532
συμφυεῖσαι	αἱ	ἄκανθαι	ἀπέπνιξαν	αὐτό			
sprang up with it	G3588	the thorns	and choked	it			
G4855		G173	G638	G846			

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 4:3 (Parallel theme): For thus saith the LORD to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns.

Luke 8:14 (Parallel theme): And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

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