

Mark 4:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

Jesus explains the path-seed: '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.' The path (hardened by constant trampling) represents hardened hearts impervious to gospel penetration. Seed remains on surface where birds devour it. Satan actively opposes gospel reception—'cometh immediately' ($\varepsilon\bar{\nu}\theta\bar{\nu}\varsigma \ \xi\rho\xi\tau\alpha\iota$) shows his swift response to thwart salvation. The verb 'taketh away' ($\alpha\bar{\iota}\rho\epsilon\iota$) indicates forceful removal. This reveals spiritual warfare's reality: gospel proclamation provokes satanic opposition. Hardened hearts provide Satan easy access to snatch truth before it roots.

Historical Context

Paths through fields became hard-packed from constant traffic. Scattered seed on such soil couldn't penetrate, remaining vulnerable to birds. Jesus reveals spiritual reality: some hearts are so hardened by sin, unbelief, or worldliness that gospel never penetrates. Satan works through distraction, deception, alternative explanations, and false teaching to prevent conversion. Early church experienced this—opponents disrupted preaching (Acts 13:45; 17:5; 18:6), false teachers spread heresies (2 Corinthians 11:13-15), persecution intimidated hearers. Church history records satanic opposition to every gospel advance.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What 'paths' of hardness in your heart prevent God's word from penetrating deeply?
2. How does Satan attempt to snatch away truth you hear in Scripture or preaching?
3. What spiritual disciplines help protect your heart from satanic theft of God's word?

Interlinear Text

οὗτοι δέ εἰσιν οἱ παρὰ τὴν ὁδὸν· ὅπου
these And are they G3588 by G3588 the way side where
G3778 G1161 G1526 G3844 G3598 G3699

ἐσπαρμένον ὁ λόγον καὶ ὅταν ἀκούσωσιν εὐθὲως
is sown G3588 the word and when they have heard immediately
G4687 G3056 G2532 G3752 G191 G2112

ἔρχεται ὁ Σατανᾶς καὶ αἴρει τὸν λόγον τὸν
cometh G3588 Satan and taketh away G3588 the word G3056
G2064 G4567 G2532 G142 G3588

ἐσπαρμένον ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν
is sown in G3588 hearts G2588 their G846
G4687 G1722 G2588 G846

Additional Cross-References

1 Peter 5:8 (Parallel theme): Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

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.

Mark 4:4 (Parallel theme): And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up.

2 Corinthians 2:11 (Parallel theme): Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

Luke 8:12 (Word): 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.

Isaiah 53:1 (Parallel theme): Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?

Acts 5:3 (Parallel theme): But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?

Matthew 22:5 (Parallel theme): But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise:

Revelation 20:10 (Parallel theme): And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Revelation 20:7 (Parallel theme): And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,