

Matthew 13:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;

Analysis

He that received the seed into stony places (ο ἐπὶ τὰ πετρώδη σπαρείς)—rocky ground with thin topsoil over limestone bedrock. Seed sprouts quickly in shallow soil warmed by underlying rock, creating impressive initial growth. **Anon with joy receiveth it** (εὐθὺς μετὰ χαρᾶς λαμβάνει αὐτόν)—euthus means 'immediately, at once.' Emotional, enthusiastic response without depth characterizes this hearer.

This describes superficial conversions—impressive external response lacking internal transformation. The 'joy' is genuine but immature, based on benefits (healing, community, emotional experience) rather than Christ Himself. Modern 'decisions for Christ' that produce no lasting change fit this category. The issue isn't the joy (which should accompany salvation, 1 Peter 1:8) but its shallowness, rooted in rocky soil incapable of sustaining growth.

Historical Context

Galilean limestone bedrock often lay just inches beneath topsoil. Farmers recognized rocky ground produced quick germination but poor harvest. Jesus's agricultural metaphor would immediately resonate—everyone knew the disappointment of promising sprouts that withered when summer heat came. This parable warns against measuring conversion success by initial enthusiasm rather than persevering fruit.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How can you distinguish between genuine conversion and emotional response that lacks root?
2. What role should 'joy' play in authentic Christianity—and what are its limitations as evidence of salvation?
3. Where might your spiritual life be 'rocky'—showing impressive initial growth in some area without depth to sustain it?

Interlinear Text

ο	δὲ	ἐπὶ	τὰ	πετρώδη	σπαρεῖς,	οὗτός	ἐστιν
G3588	But	into	G3588	stony places	he that received the seed	the same	is
G1161	G1909			G4075	G4687	G3778	G2076

ο	τὸν	λόγον	ἀκούων	καὶ	εὐθὺς	μετὰ	χαρᾶς
G3588	G3588	the word	he that heareth	and	anon	with	joy
		G3056	G191	G2532	G2117	G3326	G5479

λαμβάνων αὐτόν
receiveth it
G2983 G846

Additional Cross-References

John 5:35 (Parallel theme): He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.

Isaiah 58:2 (Parallel theme): Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God.

Mark 6:20 (Parallel theme): For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.

2 Chronicles 24:2 (Parallel theme): And Joash did that which was right in the sight of the LORD all the days of Jehoiada the priest.

Acts 8:13 (Parallel theme): Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.

2 Chronicles 24:14 (Parallel theme): And when they had finished it, they brought the rest of the money before the king and Jehoiada, whereof were made vessels for the house of the LORD, even vessels to minister, and to offer withal, and spoons, and vessels of gold and silver. And they offered burnt offerings in the house of the LORD continually all the days of Jehoiada.

2 Chronicles 24:6 (Word): And the king called for Jehoiada the chief, and said unto him, Why hast thou not required of the Levites to bring in out of Judah and out of Jerusalem the collection, according to the commandment of Moses the servant of the LORD, and of the congregation of Israel, for the tabernacle of witness?