

# Matthew 13:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth:

## Analysis

'Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth.' Jesus describes second response-type: shallow soil. 'Stony places' (τὰ πετρώδη/ta petrōdē) refers to thin soil layer over bedrock—not soil mixed with stones, but shallow earth concealing rock beneath. Seeds germinate quickly ('forthwith sprung up') because shallow soil warms faster, but lack of depth prevents root development. Jesus explains (v.20-21): these receive word immediately with joy but have no root; tribulation or persecution causes them to fall away. Reformed theology identifies these as false converts—emotional response mistaken for genuine conversion, temporary enthusiasm without lasting transformation. They appear to believe but lack perseverance proving authentic faith (1 John 2:19). The parable warns against superficial evangelism producing false assurance, and against mistaking emotional experience for regeneration. True faith perseveres; shallow faith withers when tested.

## Historical Context

Palestinian limestone terrain often featured thin soil over rock shelves. Farmers recognized this problem: plants sprouting in such areas looked promising initially but quickly withered when roots hit rock and couldn't access water. Jesus uses this familiar agricultural frustration to describe spiritual reality. The immediate sprouting resembles enthusiastic converts who quickly profess faith, show early

excitement, perhaps even display initial fruit. But when cost becomes clear—persecution, suffering, rejection, sacrifice—they abandon faith. Early church experienced this extensively: persecution sorted genuine from false believers (Matthew 24:10-13, 2 Timothy 4:10). Every spiritual awakening produces mixture of authentic and temporary conversions. Parable of the Sower helps churches recognize this pattern without despairing: some apparent converts will fall away—not because gospel failed but because their response was never genuine. Modern Western church, offering comfortable Christianity without mentioning cost, produces many shallow-soil professors who abandon faith when difficulty arises.

## Related Passages

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**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

## Study Questions

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1. How do you distinguish genuine conversion from temporary emotional enthusiasm or shallow profession?
2. What role does testing and tribulation play in revealing authenticity of faith?
3. How should churches evangelize in ways that produce deep-rooted faith rather than superficial emotional responses?

## Interlinear Text

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ἄλλα δὲ ἔπεσεν ἐπὶ τὰ πετρώδη ὅπου οὐκ ἔχειν  
G243 Some fell upon G3588 stony places where not they had  
G1161 G4098 G1909 G4075 G3699 G3756 G2192

γῆς· πολλήν, καὶ εὐθέως ἐξανέτειλεν διὰ τὸ μὴ  
earth much and forthwith they sprung up because G3588 no  
G1093 G4183 G2532 G2112 G1816 G1223 G3361

ἔχειν βάθος γῆς·  
they had deepness earth  
G2192 G899 G1093

## Additional Cross-References

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**Ezekiel 11:19** (Parallel theme): And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh:

**Ezekiel 36:26** (Parallel theme): A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.