

The Two Foundations

Understanding the WORDS of JESUS

John 6:63b

1. What does the foundation of rock represent? Luke 6:48; Matthew 7:24; Deuteronomy 32:1-4; Psalm 18:2, 46; I Corinthians 3:10-11.

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Matthew 7:24-29

24 “Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock.

26 Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. 27 The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall.”

28 When Jesus had finished these words, the crowds were amazed at His teaching; 29 for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

Luke 6:48

48 he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid a foundation on the rock; and when a flood occurred, the torrent burst against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built.

Deuteronomy 32:1-4

32 “Give ear, O heavens, and let me speak;
And let the earth hear the words of my
mouth.

2 “Let my teaching drop as the rain,
My speech distill as the dew,
As the droplets on the fresh grass
And as the showers on the herb.

3 “For I proclaim the name of the Lord;
Ascribe greatness to our God!

4 “The Rock! His work is perfect,
For all His ways are [a]just;
A God of faithfulness and without injustice,
Righteous and upright is He.

Psalm 18:2

2 The Lord is my rock and my fortress and
my deliverer,

My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge;
My shield and the horn of my salvation, my
stronghold.

Psalm 18:46

46 The Lord lives, and blessed be my rock;
And exalted be the God of my salvation,

Luke describes the wise builder as digging deep and laying the foundation on a rock.

The Rock on which we build is Christ Himself. In this parable, Christ teaches us the importance of doing as well as hearing. In His description of the two builders, He judges them, not only by their care in building their houses, but also by the foundation on which they build.

A rock foundation represents true understanding and right action—true conviction and commitment manifested in righteousness. Only in obedience and dedication to a personal relationship with Christ the Rock can we find emotional and spiritual stability—without which even our most dedicated purposes rest on shifting sand.

2. What does the foundation of sand represent? Matthew 7:26; Luke 6:49; II Samuel 22:4-5.

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Matthew 7:26

26 Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.

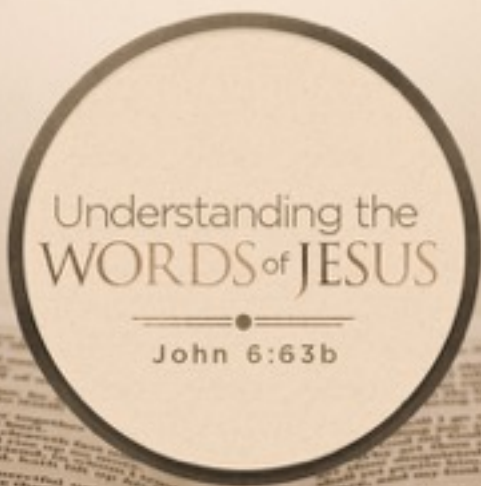
Luke 6:49

49 But the one who has heard and has not acted accordingly, is like a man who built a house on the ground without any foundation; and the torrent burst against it and immediately it collapsed, and the ruin of that house was great.”

Christ knew that some coming to build would be attracted to a ready-prepared level surface of sand rather than to sites that must be excavated to reach the hard and rugged rock. Human nature often chooses what looks easy on the surface.

But after the seasonal floods, representing trials and tests, such a builder would have nothing left but a heap of ruins. A sandy foundation represents empty preference and mere external religion based on false knowledge. The sand reflects the shifting, uncertain feelings some foolish people possess, the only ground upon which they act.

Here we have a compact and instructive presentation by our Lord, illustrating for us a distinct likeness of two sorts of people, both of whom pay at least some attention to what Jesus says. The context of this parable is that of a true disciple vs. one that is false. The contrast is given in three ways in Matthew 7:



First we see two trees (Matthew 7:15-20). “The good tree produces good fruit but the bad tree produces bad fruit.”

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Next we see the contrast of two claims of true discipleship. “Not everyone who says to me, „Lord, Lord,” will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father in heaven will enter” (Matthew 7:21-23).

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And finally, there is the subject of the parable itself (vs. 24-27), the wise man builds his house on the rock while the foolish builds his house on the sand.

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This parable is not the only place in Scripture where the concept of hearing vs. doing is presented. Two of the most notable examples are found in Ezekiel and James:

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Ezekiel 33:31-33

31 They come to you as people come, and sit before you as My people and hear your words, but they do not do them, for they do the lustful desires expressed by their mouth, and their heart goes after their gain.

32 Behold, you are to them like a sensual song by one who has a beautiful voice and plays well on an instrument; for they hear your words but they do not practice them.

33 So when it comes to pass—as surely it will—then they will know that a prophet has been in their midst.”

James 1:22-25

22 But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; 24 for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was.