

PARABLE OF HOUSES ON ROCK AND SAND

(Mt 7:24-27; Lk 6:46-49)

Explained by Robert Ferrell

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This is the final parable spoken in Jesus' famous Sermon on the Mount. It reads: "Everyone therefore that cometh unto me and heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man who digged and went deep, and laid a foundation, and built his house upon the rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house and the stream broke against it, and could not shake it: and it fell not because it had been well builded: for it was founded upon the rock. And every one that heareth these words of mine and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand, upon the earth without a foundation: the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and smote upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall (and) ruin thereof."

The contrast is between two philosophies of construction; one sound, and the other unsound. The idea of a house being built upon a rock is reminiscent of Peter's great confession. In Matthew 16:13-18 this exchange takes place between Jesus and Peter: "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am? ...And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou Simon Bar-Jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell will not prevail against it."

It is clear that Jesus calls Simon 'Peter', which means 'rock', because the Father in heaven revealed Jesus' true identity to him.

He then goes on to say that he will build the Church on this 'rock'. This 'rock' then, means spiritual perception, or listening to the Father. If the foolish builder failed to dig deep enough to reach the rock, then he failed to hear the Father as well. In other words, There is a building that looks well built, at least as far as appearances go. But what specifically does this unsound building represent? Jesus says that: "...upon this rock I will build my Church."; so the building built upon the bedrock is the Church. The corresponding building must then represent an unsound Church.

If one contemplates that sand is granulated rock, then one has a great contrast between God's word--the solid rock; and men's words--the sand. And if this is so, then it becomes evident that in order to get to this rock of spiritual understanding, one must go beyond the sand--that is the unsure foundation that is our present theological framework. The only support that sand receives is from the sand that surrounds it. Likewise, the various teachings that have come down to us have only the support of other, loosely held teachings. If the Church only has its foundation in these often contradictory and unsound teachings, then we can expect many of our assumptions about what constitutes truth to be incorrect.

Let us now consider the testing that will soon come upon this Church. 'To do this, we need to be able to decode a few words. First of all, in Ephesians 5:26, we read: "That he (Jesus) might sanctify and cleanse it (the Church) with the washing of water by the word.", so the rain and floods and the stream have to do with God's word. Next we read in Ephesians 4:14: "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of hand, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive:". So it is evident that winds have to do with teachings, or doctrine.

Rain is water in a form that comes from above. If we think, rather, of words coming from above, we can perceive in this some kind of revelation from God at the end of time having to do with ‘new’ Scriptures. This might seem to rule out the apocrypha, since they aren’t really new, but consider the water cycle. Just as water gets ‘recycled’ through evaporation and condensation, so these ‘profitable’ books might **“have been lost to [us] for a season, that [we] should receive [them] forever.”** (Philemon 15.) After all of these Scriptures begin to rain down upon the present Church, the cumulative effect **(the flood)** will spell disaster for any theological framework unprepared for such a judgment. Not so if any Church now chooses to hear these words of Jesus and build on this solid foundation--by doing as Jesus' words here indicate.

As for the winds that smote upon these houses, these are doctrines that accompany the rains, or the Scriptures to be given at the end of time. There is a wonderful passage in Enoch 60:21&22 which makes this much clearer: **“When the rain wind becomes activated in its reservoir, the angels come and open the reservoir and let it out: (i.e. there is a dispensation of words and doctrine that is being held back, as it were by a reservoir, until the proper time.) and when it is sprayed over the whole earth, it becomes united with the water which is upon the earth; (The apocryphal books will be combined with the canonical books that we already have, since the water that is upon the earth would correspond with the Scriptures we already have.) and whensoever it unites with other waters, it unites with the water upon the earth which is for the use of those who dwell upon the earth, for it is nourishment for the earth sent from the Most High in heaven.”**

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