

The Wise and Foolish Builders

Matthew 7:24-27 and Luke 6:46-49

DIG: How do the similarities and differences between the two **house** builders reflect the people who heard Jesus? What kind of commitment is Yeshua calling for here? What does the storm represent? What kind of **righteousness** is necessary to enter **the kingdom of Heaven**? What is the alternative? What is it based on? Where does it lead?

REFLECT: If we confess Christ as our Savior, do we make Him **Lord**? Why or why not? During the last storm that hit your life, what did you learn about your life's foundation? What would you have to tear down in order to shore up that foundation? How do you need others to help you in the process? At this point in your life, is your pressing need to learn more or to practice what you have already learned?

In His sixteenth and last example of true righteousness, the Good Shepherd gave His listeners a choice. If they continued building on the Pharisaic interpretation of righteousness, it would be on a foundation of sand and would collapse. Or they could build on His interpretation of the righteousness of the Torah and build upon the solid rock of the Messiah and survive.

What seems at first glance to be a very simple story is in fact a powerful commentary on people who have heads full of knowledge, but hearts devoid of faith. It makes a distinction between those who obey and those who don't. There are those who hear **the Deliverer** and respond to **His** message, while others hear the same exact message and ignore it. Our **Lord's** obvious lesson is that the difference between the two has eternal consequences.

To begin with, we need to understand the importance of **the lordship of Messiah**. The Bible demands that we acknowledge that **He** is **Lord**, and bow to **His** lordship. **He** is ever and always **Lord**, whether or not anyone acknowledges **His** lordship or surrenders to **His** authority. We don't *make Him Lord* - **He** already *is Lord*! **He** is called **Lord** (Greek: *kurios*) no less than 474 times in the New Covenant. The book of **Acts** alone refers to **Him** 92 times as **Lord**, while calling **Him Savior** only twice. Unmistakably, then, in the early messianic community, **the lordship of Messiah** was the heart of its message. It is indisputable that the **His lordship** is part of the Good News to be believed for salvation. To be clear, the decision to trust **Messiah** as your **Savior** and to make **Him** your **Lord** are NOT two separate decisions, but one and the same.⁶⁰⁴

Again **Jesus** picks up the theme of the **righteousness** of pharisaic Judaism, a **righteousness** that is totally unacceptable to **ADONAI** and that will in no way qualify a person for **His Kingdom**. Earlier in **His Sermon on the Mount**, **He** had said: **For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the Torah-teacher, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 5:20)**. In **the Lord's** first illustration of this (see **Dx - Watch Out for False Prophets**), we saw a contrast of true and false professions of faith. Here, in **His** second illustration, we see a contrast between obedient and disobedient hearers of the Word.

Those who reject **His lordship** or give mere lip service to **His** sovereignty are not saved. This does not mean that it is impossible for an unbeliever to say the words, "Jesus is Lord," for obviously they can. But **Yeshua Himself** pointed out the paradox of those who called **Him Lord** but did not really believe it. **Why do you call Me, "Lord, Lord," and do not do what I say (Luke 6:46)?** Even the demons know and admit who **He** is (**Mark 1:24, 3:11, 5:7; James 2:19**). Words are not nearly so important as obedience. **As for everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and puts them into practice, I will show you what they are like (Matthew 7:24a; Luke 6:47)**. A disciple not only **hears the words** of **Jesus**, but also is the one who acts on them **and puts them into practice**.

Yeshua had just told the listening crowd to turn the other cheek, to go the extra mile, to forgive enemies, and to sell their possessions to give to the poor (**Matthew 5:39-44**). But just getting the instructions wasn't enough. The key is act on them. **Jesus** said that those who hear **His** words and act on them **are like a wise man who built his house on the rock (Matthew 7:24b; Luke 6:48a)**. Building on **the rock** is equivalent to building ones life on **the foundation** of **Christ** (see **Fx - On This Rock I Will Build My Church**).

The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house. These do not represent specific types of physical judgments but simply sum up the final judgment of **Ha'Shem**. The storm pictured here is the ultimate test that **the house** of every human life will face. Just as **when ADONAI** went **through the land to strike down the Egyptians, He saw the blood on the top and sides of the doorframes and passed over that doorway, and would not permit the destroyer to touch the firstborn of Isra'el (Hebrews 11:28)**; so the same judgment that harmlessly passed over them will also pass over **the house** that has **its foundation on the rock** of **Christ** and **His** Word (**Matthew 7:25; Luke 6:48**). **Those** whose **foundation** is **Messiah** will be saved, but **those** who base **their** lives on anything less will be like building a **house on sand** and will be lost.

But everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand (Matthew 7:26; Luke 6:49a). The sand is composed of human opinions, attitudes, and wills, which are always shifting and always unstable. To **build on sand** is to **build on** self-will, self-satisfaction, and self-righteousness. To build on **sand** is to be unteachable, to be **always learning but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth (Second Timothy 3:7).**⁶⁰⁵

The moment the rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete (Matthew 7:27; Luke 6:49b). The judgment that came upon **the firstborn of Egypt** will come upon those who **build their house on the sand. Their house** will be utterly demolished, leaving its builder absolutely nothing. That is the destiny of **those** who **build their** lives on human ideas, human philosophies, and human religion. It is not that **they** have little left - **they** have nothing left. **Their** way is not inferior to **God**, but no way to **God** at all. It always leads to hell. Both of these builders had similarities:

First, they both heard the Gospel.

Second, they both proceeded to build a **house** that represents **their** lives. Both builders had confidence that **their houses** would stand, but **one's** confidence is in **the Lord** while **the other man's** confidence is in **himself**.

Third, both builders **built their homes** in the same general location, evidenced by **their** apparently being hit by the same storm. In other words, the outward circumstances of **their** lives were essentially the same. **One** had no advantage over **the other**. **They** lived in the same town, heard the same message, went to the same Bible study, worshiped and fellowshiped together with the same friends.

Fourth, the implication is that **they built** the same kind of **house**. Outwardly **their houses** looked alike. From all appearances **the foolish man** lived in much the same way as **the wise man**. We might say **they** were both religious, moral, served in **their** place of worship, supported it financially, and were responsible citizens of the community. **They** seemed to believe in the same things and live in the same way.

But their one difference is profound. The man who **built his house on the rock** of **Messiah** was obedient, and **the one** who **built his house on the sand** of self-reliance was disobedient. **One built his house** on divine specifications, and the other **built** on his own self-righteousness. **The Pharisees and the Torah-teachers** had a complex and involved set of religious standards that **they** believed had great value before **ADONAI**. But **they** were

shifting **sand**, composed entirely of opinions and speculations (see **Ei - The Oral Law**). **Those** who followed **the traditions of men**, valued them over and above **God's Word**.⁶⁰⁶

The shifting morals of our present world can be confusing. We may be tempted to let culture or the opinions of society be **the foundation** for the decisions we make. If so, our moral compass will become broken. But obeying the unwavering truth of **God's Word** brings stability unavailable anywhere else. **Therefore, the Lord** said: **Everyone who hears these words of Mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock (Matthew 7:24)**.