

SELF DECEPTION #2

Matt. 7 ²⁴ “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. ²⁶ 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. ²⁷ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”
NIV

Self deception leads people to build on the wrong foundation.

Here we see contrasts between obedient and disobedient hearers.

Both groups hear God’s true Word, but some hear and obey, and some hear and disobey; some turn their trust to God’s righteousness, and some continue trusting in their own, though that does not become visible until the judgment.

Like those who say, “Lord, Lord,” and do amazing religious works but really “practice lawlessness,” the false hearers build their religious house, but are self-deceived as to its viability.

In these **two groups** we see many **similarities** but also some **radical differences**.

I. Similarities

A. Both builders have heard the gospel.

Vs. 24,26 Everyone who hears these words of Mine applies both to the wise man and to the foolish man.

They both know the way of salvation.

B. Both proceed to build a house after they have heard the way of salvation.

The **wise man** builds his house, which represents his life, on **these words of Mine**.

The implication is that the **foolish man**, although he **does not act upon** Christ's **words**, thinks that his **house** is secure simply because he has heard and acknowledged the **words**.

He believes the life he lives is Christian and therefore pleasing to God.

He does not intentionally build a **house** he thinks is going to **fall**.

Both builders have confidence their houses will stand; but one man's confidence is in the Lord and the other man's is in himself.

C. Both builders build their houses 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 and possibly attended the same church, heard the same preaching, went to the same Bible study, and fellowshiped with the same friends.

D. The implication is that they built the same kind of house.

Outwardly their houses were very much alike. From all appearances the **foolish man** lived much in the same way

as the *wise man*. We might say they were both religious, theologically orthodox, moral, served in the church, supported it financially, and were responsible citizens of the community. They seemed to believe alike and live alike.

II. Differences

The differences between the two builders and the two houses they built were not noticeable from the outside.

One builds using the divine specifications, the other uses his own.

A. By far the greatest difference is in the foundations they laid.

1. The wise man builds on the rock.

Petra (**rock**) does not mean a stone or even a boulder, but a great outcropping of rock, **a large expanse of bedrock. It is solid, stable, and unmovable.**

Building on the **rock** is equivalent to obeying God's Word. After Peter confessed, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus said, "flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church" (Matt. 16:16–18).

This "rock" (*petra*) is the same **rock** as that in Matthew 7:24–25..

The mark of true discipleship is **not** simply hearing and believing, but believing and doing. The true disciples of Jesus Christ, the only true converts of the gospel, are those

who are “doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.

The **house** built on the **rock** is the life of obedience, the life Jesus has been explaining throughout the Sermon on the Mount.

It is the life that has a scriptural view of the world, and sees itself as God’s means for preserving and enlightening the world while not being a part of it.

It is the life that has the divine view of Scripture and that determines not to alter God’s Word in the slightest degree.

It is a life that is concerned about internal righteousness rather than external form.

It is a life that has a godly attitude toward what is said and what is done, toward motives, things, money, and other people. It is a life of genuineness rather than hypocrisy, and of God’s righteousness rather than self-righteousness.

The **house** built on the **rock** is the life that empties itself of self-righteousness and pride, that is overwhelmed by and mourns over its own sin.

Such a builder does not build his life or place his hope on ceremony, ritual, visions, experiences, feelings, or miracles but on the Word of God and that alone.

2. The foolish build upon the sand.

Sand, by contrast, is loose, unstable, and extremely movable.

James 1:22–24 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; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was”.

He glimpses Christ, and glimpses what Christ can do for him, but his image of Christ and of the new life in Christ soon fade. His experience with the gospel is shallow, superficial, and short-lived.

Titus 1:15–16 “To those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled. They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient, and worthless for any good deed”.

To profess knowledge of God and His truth but not follow God obediently and live His truth is to be deceived. It is to have a house built upon the sand.

To build on **sand** is to build on self-will, self-fulfillment, self-purpose, self-sufficiency, self-satisfaction, and self-righteousness.

To build on **sand** is to be unteachable, to be “always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Tim. 3:7).

To build the **house** of one’s life on the **sand** is to follow the ultimate deception of Satan, which is to make a person believe he is saved when he is not. Because that person is under the delusion that he is safe, he sees no reason either to resist Satan or to seek God.

Besides the great difference in the foundations they lay....

B. The **wise man** builds his house the hard way, whereas the **foolish man** builds his the easy way.

The easy way is attractive for several reasons

1. It **is quick**. The foolish person is always in a hurry.
2. He is he **is basically superficial**.

In His parable of the sower Jesus spoke of the person who Matt. 13:20–21 “hears the word, and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away”

He receives quickly and falls away quickly. **He likes God’s promises but not His requirements.**

The **foolish man** always has excuses when Jesus makes demands on his life. When he first hears the gospel he says to the Lord, “I will follow You wherever You go.” But when he hears, “The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head,” he suddenly remembers that he has to bury his father (that is, await his father’s death in order to receive the inheritance) or “say good-bye to those at home.” Such a person who puts his hand to the plow and then looks back, Jesus says, is “not fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:57–62).

The rain, the floods, and the winds do not represent specific types of physical judgment but simply sum up God’s final judgment. The storm is the ultimate test that the **house** of every human life will face.

C. The only difference about the storm in regard to the wise and the foolish men is in **the way it affects their houses**.

The house of the wise man may have been **shaken, yet it did not fall, for it had been rounded upon the rock**.

But when the same adversity came upon the house of the foolish man **it disintegrated-and great was its fall.**

The greatest problem in evangelism is not follow-up but conversion. Right follow-up is not nearly as difficult as right conversion. Follow-up is the hardest when conversion is the easiest, because easy conversion is frequently no conversion. It results from seed falling on rocky soil, where it springs up quickly and dies just as quickly. The unconverted are indeed hard to follow up, whereas those who have truly come to Christ are eager to learn from His Word and associate with His people.

The **wise man** builds carefully, because there is substance and great importance to what he is building. In the parallel passage in Luke, Jesus says, he “dug deep and laid a foundation upon the rock” (6:48).

C. The most tragic difference between the builders is in their final destinies.