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## The Scriptures become a Stumblingblock when we don't believe them (Stumblingblock Pt 1)

### Introduction.

This is our first study on the word "stumblingblock" in the Scriptures.

Three points are established from the Scriptures for this study.

1. Beware of those who cast a stumblingblock in the pathway of believers, and
2. That which was meant for our welfare can become a stumblingblock, and
3. Beware of false teachers that cause the Scriptures to become a stumblingblock.

Meanings and or occurrences of key words.

\* There are twelve occurrences of the word stumblingblock and two of the word stumblingblocks.

\* The two Greek words that are translated stumblingblock are also translated: offence, stumbling, stumblingstone, occasion of stumbling, occasion to fall, and things that offend.

The one Hebrew word is also translated: ruin, cause to fall, offence, and nothing shall offend.

\* According to the Scriptures a stumblingblock makes a person fall or perish (Jer.6: 21 & Rom.14: 13), makes them sin (Rev.2: 4), and is an obstacle to faith in God (Num.31: 16).

Our three points in more detail.

1. Beware of those who cast a stumblingblock in the pathway of believers.

Supporting Verse.

Rev.2:14 "But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication."

Context and meaning of our verse.

\* Our verse is from chapter 2 in the book of Revelation of Jesus Christ given to John. Verse 1 is the beginning of what is written about the seven churches which are the seven candlesticks that he saw. Verse 2 says "I know thy works...and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles...and hast found them liars". They have fallen away from their first love (verse 4), and are encouraged to repent (verse 5). In verse 7 it is they which overcome that will be given the tree of life.

\* In verse 8 he is writing about the church in Smyrna, the Lord Jesus (the first and the last) says, He knows their works, tribulation, and poverty (yet they are rich), and they which say they are Jews yet are of the synagogue of Satan (verse 9). In verse 10 he promises to give a crown of life unto them that are faithful unto death.

\* In verse 12 he is writing about the church at Pergamos: he knows "thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is". Then we have our verse, which is like a 'nevertheless': "I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication." Hence, Balaam taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel to make them fall (see Num.31: 16).

Application of our verse today.

\* The revelation of Jesus Christ to John in chapter 2 is looking back to the seven types of churches in this age, and looking ahead to future churches in the tribulation. And with the reference to there being some in the church at Pergamos that hold to the doctrine of Balaam indicates that there have been churches where leaders cause their people to commit fornication.

Illustration.

\* I once had a friend who I went sailing with, worshipped with at the local Presbyterian church, and then later lost contact with for 15 years. When I finally caught up with him on email it was to remove his name from the Protestant mailing list, because he felt the publication was anti-Pope, who he felt was loving. He completed their RCIA classes but they did not teach him their own Catechisms, but rather deceived him and others by showing them the love of the Pope, his mercy and compassion, and so he was baptised into the Roman Catholic institution that calls herself the true Church of Christ, whilst holding to her doctrines of devils.

Learning from our Illustration.

\* Stumblingblocks are anything that cause us to sin, they can be put in front of us by ourselves, or others including Satan. In our illustration, Papal Rome is attacking the weak in our Protestant churches who are dissatisfied with the liberalism of Protestantism, and see the love of a Jesuit Pope as a reason to come under his headship. But let us never forget that love without truth can actually cover up sin (Prov,10: 12).

Challenge & or encouragement.

\* Be not deceived by the allures of movies or anything that propagates evil as truth. In our **illustration the visible head of Papal Rome is subtly using love (that Christians identify as fruit of the Spirit) as a stumblingblock to cause the weak to fall (Ez.33: 31).**

\* Be not deceived when expressions of love are founded on evil, and doctrines of devils. For such lack of discernment will be your stumblingblock as we see with those who believe Rome and are baptised into her fornications, they are as Israel was when she stumbled in the matter of Peor.

## 2. That which was meant for our welfare can become a stumblingblock, a trap.

Supporting Verse.

Rom.11: 9 "And David saith, Let their table be made a snare...and a stumblingblock...unto them".  
c.p. Ps.69: 22 "Let their table...and that which should have been for their welfare...become a trap."

Context and meaning of our verse.

\* Paul asks the question: "Hast God cast away his people?" He then goes on to answer his own question: "God forbid", and he points to himself who is an Hebrew. Verses 2 – 4 Paul refers to Elias' experience where he fled Jezebel, and he thought he was the only one that was not serving Baal, but God assured him that He had "reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal." Paul then draws a comparison between the time of Elias and the present time, where there is also a "remnant according to the election of grace." Paul confirms his teaching of Eph.2: 8, that "if by grace, then is it no more works". Verse 7 Paul asks another question: "What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded...unto this day". In between verse 7 and "unto this day" in verse 8, there is a quote in brackets: "According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;" , then we have our verse in which David said "Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompense unto them:" When we read these words as David wrote them in Ps.69: 22, we see that verse 11 of Romans 11, is verse 23 in Ps. 67 where David is referring to his enemies, but Paul is using it to refer to Israel. Hence, their table, their meat, God has used as a stumblingblock that "through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles" (verse 11b).

Other scriptural support.

Ez.7: 3, 4, 8 & 9, 11: 21 and also Hos.8: 11 – "altars shall be unto him to sin."

Application of our verse today.

\* Paul is writing to the Gentile church in Rome using the examples and illustrations of Elias and David, and so this point is applicable to us in the church today.

Illustration.

\* When I was a young boy I wanted to be a Policeman. A good job that would put food on my family's table. But imagine if I had followed that dream and spent the last 35 years of my life, apprehending people that are drunkards and seeing filth that my eyes would only lust after. Where would my heart be today after being exposed to such evil over an extended period of time?

Learning from our Illustration.

\* What would have been meant for my welfare, would have become a stumblingblock, like the internet is to so many today, a snare, that causes believers and teachers alike to fall, but many do not get up. Because their table, that has become their stumblingblock, has also become a recompence of their error (Rom.1: 27).

Challenge & or encouragement.

\* The Jew today who rejects the Lord Jesus Christ as their Messiah has stumbled over that which was given for his eternal welfare. Let us beware of that which we have been given that is meant for our table yet gradually leads us away from the things of the Lord to become a stumblingblock.

### 3. Beware of teachers today that cause the Scriptures to be a stumblingblock.

Supporting Verse.

Mal.2: 8 "But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of hosts."

Context and meaning of our verse.

\* Verse 1 is clear that this address from the prophet Malachi is to the priests. In verse 2 the Lord asks the priests to take to heart what they hear and if they do not he would (i) curse their blessings (verse 2), and (ii) corrupt their seed (verse 3), and (iii) spread dung upon their faces. Verse 4 "And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you, that my covenant might be with Levi". Malachi points out that the Lord's covenant was with Levi "of life and peace". They were given to him to fear Him and His name (verse 5). "The law of truth was in his mouth" (verse 6), and in Levi's lips there was no iniquity. Why? "the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth". Why? – "he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts" (verse 7). Then we have our verse "But ye have departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of hosts." Hence the priests have departed from the way of the law, and caused others to stumble at the law.

Other scriptural support.

2Pet.2: 1.

Application of our verse today.

\* The prophetic writings of Malachi were written for the children of Israel, but in all ages there are priests, prophets, and teachers who are false, and turn away from God's word, then teach others to do the same, and so cause the Scriptures of truth, the law of truth to become a stumblingblock.

Illustration.

\* Laidlaw college and others that teach the teachers, are today teaching our mainstream churches that God did **not** give His pure words, He did **not** preserve every one of them, and what we have today is the best the scholars can find. The fruit of their teaching, is that the teachers of our churches teach their flocks to believe **not** the words of God, and so their lips do **not** "keep knowledge" and they are **not** "messengers of the LORD of hosts". In doing so they make the Scriptures a stumblingblock.

Learning from our Illustration.

\* Any teacher today that uses one or more imperfect counterfeit copies of the Scriptures has bought into Satan's plan to deny, challenge, and believe not the words of God, and hence such teachers are no longer the messengers for the Lord God. Who are they the messengers for?

Challenge & or encouragement.

\* Peter reminds us in 2Pet.2: 1 that, just as "there were false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily bring in damnable heresies", the teachers have first turned away from the Scriptures of truth, and then taught others to do the same. The corrupt versions bring in damnable heresies and for those who choose to teach their flock from them cause the Scriptures to be a stumblingblock because they do **not** believe God's word. Let us speak against their "pernicious ways", and encourage those that God sends to us to recognise them as teachers that cause the scriptures to be a stumblingblock.

**Question to think about: What is your stumblingblock?**

Summary of our three points.

1. Beware of those who cast a stumblingblock in the pathway of believers, and
2. That which was meant for our welfare can become a stumblingblock, and
3. Beware of false teachers that cause the Scriptures to become a stumblingblock.