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Our Stumblingblocks cause God to be deaf (Stumblingblock Pt 2)

Introduction.

This is the second study on the word “stumblingblock” in the Scriptures.

Three points from our previous 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 stumblingstone, a trap, and
3. The Scriptures can become a stumblingblock.

Three points are established from the Scriptures for this study.

1. God Almighty will lay stumblingblocks before his children.
2. Put not a stumblingblock in your brother's path.
3. God is deaf to those who put stumblingblocks up and then enquire of Him.

Our three points in more detail.

1. God Almighty will lay stumblingblocks before his children.

Supporting Verse.

Jer.6: 21 “Therefore thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will lay stumblingblocks before this people, and the fathers and the sons together shall fall upon them; the neighbour and his friend shall perish.”

Context and meaning of our verse.

* In chapter 2 the Lord speaks against Judah, in chapter 3 against Israel, and then in chapter 6 the “children of Benjamin”. In Jer.6: 1 He warns them of a “great destruction coming from the north, and in verse 6 he says “Hew ye down trees, and cast a mount against Jerusalem”. Then in verse 10 He points out that “the word of the Lord is a reproach”, and in verse 11 you have the first of four uses of the word “therefore” in chapter 6.

i) “Therefore, am I full of the fury of the Lord”. Verse 13, “every one is given to covetousness”.

“Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination?” The answer is in the same verse:

“not at all”. ii) “therefore”: “shall they fall among them that fall”. The Lord told them to walk in the old paths (verse 16), but verse 17 the people reply: “we will not walk therein.” The Lord's watchman said: “Hearken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, We will not hearken.”

iii) “therefore”: (verse 19) “I will bring evil upon this people...because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it.” Hence, their burnt offerings and sacrifices are not acceptable to the Lord. iv) “therefore” (verse 21, our verse) “thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will lay stumblingblocks before this people”. Verse 22 identifies one of them as their enemies.

Other scriptural support.

Ez.3: 20, Is.8: 14 & 15.

Application of our verse today.

* The verse is addressed to the children of Israel, but we make application for the verse today for those who are in the body of Christ and are backslidden, disobedient children.

Illustration.

* The donkey was a stumblingblock for Balac, and so when it stopped on the road (because the Spirit of God told him to stop) he kicked the donkey, because he wanted to maintain his course. Sometimes in life, God can lay a stumblingblock in front of us that causes us to sin before we are proud and he wants to humble us (that has happened to me). On other occasions the stumblingblock He puts in front of us is to stop us from sinning, where we do not appear to have enough strength to stop (that has happened to me). And finally the Lord can put a stumblingblock in front of us because we want to do something, or go somewhere and our desire for what we want is greater than our desire to obey Him and I have had that happen as well.

Learning from our Illustration.

* Regardless of the type of stumblingblock that the Lord lays in front of us, the reason He does so, is no different to why He did it to Israel, i.e.: they would not hearken to His words. Maybe we hear

His words, but they are too difficult for our heart to obey, so He helps us to change by putting up small stumblingblocks, especially if we desire to obey, but lack the strength to do so, as I learnt from experience. Knowledge of sin, accepting disobedience is one thing, but having the strength and wisdom to know how to stop or change to do what the Lord requires is another. And so the Lord will lay before us stumblingblocks.

Challenge & or encouragement.

* For those of us with children who have gone off the rails, walked away from the faith of their youth, let us be fervent in prayer, seeking the Lord that he would “lay stumblingblocks” in their path. And for us, may He give us eyes to see the stumblingblock He places before us and obey His will.

2. Put not a stumblingblock in your brother's path.

Supporting Verse.

Rom.14: 13 “Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in [his] brother's way.”

Context and meaning of our verse.

* Paul identifies that he is speaking to the Gentile church about the weak brethren, verse 1: “Him that is weak in the faith”. Then verse 2, he believes he can eat all things, but another, “who is weak, eateth herbs.” The whole point is not to judge our brother for what they eat, “for God hath received him” (verse 3). We are not to judge another man's servant (verse 4). These four verses detail to the Jew who wants to hold to the dietary laws because he is a Jew, yet he is no longer required to do so, as with Peter when he received the vision of the sheet in Acts 10: 9–15.

* Next Paul talks about those who regard the day (being the Sabbath), “One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike” (verse 5). Verse 6 summarises the new way of looking at things of old: “He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord...He that eateth to the Lord..and giveth God thanks.” Verse 7 is the verse that links the eating and days to doing what we do unto the Lord, and whether we live or die, we are the Lord's, and this is the purpose of Christ dying and being raised from the dead (the gospel) “that he might be the Lord both of the dead and the living” (verse 9). Then in verse ten, we have a link back to judging our brother, with the question: “why dost thou judge thy brother?...for we will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.” Verse 12, follows on with another reason for not judging your brother, pointing out that “every one of us shall give account of himself to God.” And it is in this context, that we have our verse, where Paul reiterates that believers do not judge their brother any more, “but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.” Therefore, if you are tempted to judge your brother for what he is saying or doing, think again and focus on **not** putting a stumblingblock in his way that will cause him to fall.

Other scriptural support.

Rom.14: 21.

Application of our verse today.

* Paul is writing to the Gentile church at Rome and hence our point is applicable to us today.

Illustration.

* When a man knows the truth of the Holy Scriptures and uses this knowledge to judge those in the body for their lack of knowledge, those who are often affected for the worse are the weak brother, who sees a critical tongue, which can later become a stumblingblock to the weak.

Learning from our Illustration.

* When teachers become the measure of right and wrong and not the Scriptures then they could unwittingly be putting stumblingblocks before their weaker brother.

Challenge & or encouragement.

*Knowing that it can take years of prayer, and dying to ourselves to purge things that end up becoming stumblingblocks to our growing in grace, let us be mindful not to put stumblingblocks before our brother, whether inadvertently or purposefully.

3. God is deaf to those who put stumblingblocks up and then enquire of Him.

Supporting Verse.

Ez.14: 3 “Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumblingblock of their iniquity before their face: should I be enquired of at all by them?”

Context and meaning of our verse.

* In verse 1 the elders of Israel (men who were supposed to be teachers, wise men of God), came to the prophet to enquire of him. In verse 2 Ezekiel mentioned that “the word of the Lord came unto me”, and then we have our verse, which are the words of the Lord: “Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumblingblock of their iniquity before their face: should I be enquired of at all by them?” And the answer the Lord gives to this rhetorical question is in the following verse: “Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I the Lord will answer him...according to the multitude of his idols” (verse 4), and verse 6: “Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord, Repent, and turn [yourselves] from your idols”.

Other scriptural support.

Ez.14: 4, 7 20: 1-7 & Jer.18: 15.

Scriptural examples.

Ez.7: 19 Their silver and gold were a stumblingblock of their iniquity,

Application of our verse today.

* Our verse may have been written to the Jew but an idol in the Old Testament is still a false god today, and those who worship them have put a stumblingblock before their face.

Illustration.

* Do you see God answering your prayers sometimes and not others? What do you think would be the case with a minister of God who was also a vampire by night? Just because he didn't have a line up of Buddhas or statues of Mary, would God be enquired of him?

Learning from our Illustration.

* NO, his iniquity is a stumblingblock to the Lord hearing his prayers. If he read and believed the Holy Scriptures he would see that drinking blood is a sin (Acts 15: 29). And God only requires him to repent and believe in his heart the gospel, until he does so, even his prayers are an abomination (Prov.28: 9). You could be in the body of Christ and the response would be same, because his sin would still put up a stumblingblock, as we see in the example in 1Cor.5: 1.

Challenge & or encouragement.

* Any false god is an idol (1Ch.16: 26), and all idols are stumblingblocks to God hearing a man's prayers. When the Muslim goes to the Mosque 5 times a day, his prayers are an abomination. In our previous study, we asked: “what is your stumblingblock?” What makes you fall? For Israel, they put man-made golden images, burnt incense to other gods, which had a spiritual impact on their heart, and their iniquity became a stumblingblock before their face. Hence, when they came to the seer to enquire of God, the only response from the Lord, was “repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations.” So today, if a man is saved, but snared by the stumblingblocks of his iniquity, or an unsaved man comes to you and asks how do I get to speak with the Lord, and you neglect to tell him of the need for repentance, for turning away from his idols, then you are not speaking the words of the Lord. Let us remember that God is deaf to our prayers when we refuse to turn from our iniquities that become stumblingblocks.

Question to think about: What is a stumblingblock to all non-believers?

Summary of our three points.

1. God Almighty will lay stumblingblocks before his children.
2. Put not a stumblingblock in your brother's path.
3. God is deaf to those who put stumblingblocks up and then enquire of Him.