

Luke 17:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come!

Analysis

Jesus warns about causing sin: 'Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come!' The word 'offences' (σκάνδαλα, skandala) means stumbling blocks, enticements to sin, or causes of spiritual ruin. Jesus states these are 'impossible' not to come (ἀνένδεκτόν ἐστιν τοῦ τὰ σκάνδαλα μὴ ἐλθεῖν, anendekton estin tou ta skandala mē elthein)—in a fallen world, temptations are inevitable. However, 'woe' (οὐαί, ouai) is pronounced on those 'through whom they come' (δι' οὗ ἔρχεται, di' hou erchetai). While temptation is inevitable, being the source of temptation brings divine judgment. This applies especially to teachers and leaders whose false doctrine or bad example causes others to stumble.

Historical Context

This warning follows Jesus' teaching about the rich man and Lazarus, perhaps suggesting that those who live selfishly and materialistically cause others to stumble by their example. In context, religious leaders who taught that wealth indicated divine favor were causing people to stumble into false security. Throughout Scripture, causing others to sin brings severe judgment (Matthew 18:6-7, 1 Corinthians 8:9-13). Leaders bear particular responsibility since their influence multiplies—false teaching or bad example doesn't just harm them but everyone they influence. James warns 'be not many masters, knowing that we shall

receive the greater condemnation' (James 3:1). Christian liberty must be constrained by love that refuses to cause weaker believers to stumble.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does this warning apply to Christian leaders whose teaching or example might lead others astray?
2. What contemporary 'offences' or stumbling blocks do Christians create for others?
3. How should concern for not causing others to stumble shape Christian behavior and teaching?

Interlinear Text

Εἶπεν	δὲ	πρὸς	τοὺς	μαθητὰς	Ἄνενδεκτόν	ἐστιν	τοῦ
said he	Then	unto	G3588	the disciples	impossible	It is	G3588
G2036	G1161	G4314		G3101	G418	G2076	
μὴ	ἔρχεται·	τὰ	σκάνδαλα	οὐαὶ	δὲ	δι'	οὗ
but	they come	G3588	that offences	woe	Then	unto him through	whom
G3361	G2064		G4625	G3759	G1161	G1223	G3739
ἔρχεται·							
they come							
G2064							

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 18:7 (Parallel theme): Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!

Romans 14:13 (Parallel theme): 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.

1 Corinthians 8:13 (Parallel theme): Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.

1 Corinthians 11:19 (Parallel theme): For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

Matthew 16:23 (Parallel theme): But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

Romans 16:17 (Parallel theme): Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

1 Corinthians 10:32 (Parallel theme): Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God:

Revelation 2:14 (Parallel theme): 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.

Revelation 2:20 (Parallel theme): Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.