

# Matthew 18:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

## Analysis

Jesus issues a severe warning about causing 'little ones which believe in me' to stumble. The Greek 'skandalizo' means to entrap, cause to sin, or destroy faith. The proposed punishment—drowning with a millstone—illustrates the seriousness of leading believers into sin. Reformed pastoral theology takes seriously the responsibility of spiritual leadership and the dangers of false teaching or immoral example. Those who influence others bear weighty accountability for the spiritual damage they cause.

## Historical Context

Millstones were large stones used for grinding grain, turned by donkeys ('mulos onikos'—donkey-turned millstone). Drowning with such weight ensured death. While hyperbolic, Jesus' language emphasizes the gravity of spiritual harm. In Roman law, drowning was a punishment for serious crimes. Jesus elevates spiritual offense against believers to the level of capital crime.

## Related Passages

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

## Study Questions

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1. How seriously do you consider your influence on other believers?
2. What examples or teachings might cause weaker Christians to stumble?
3. How does this warning shape your responsibility as a parent, teacher, or leader?

## Interlinear Text

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Ὄς δ' ἀν σκανδαλίσῃ ἔνα τῆς μικρῶν τούτων τῆς  
whoso But G302 shall offend one which little ones of these which  
G3739 G1161 G4624 G1520 G3588 G3398 G5130 G3588

πιστευόντων εἰς ἐμέ συμφέρει αὐτοῦ ἵνα κρεμασθῇ  
believe in me it were better for him that were hanged  
G4100 G1519 G1691 G4851 G846 G2443 G2910

μύλος ὄνικὸς ἐπὶ τῆς τράχηλον αὐτοῦ καὶ  
a millstone about which neck for him and  
G3458 G3684 G1909 G3588 G5137 G846 G2532

καταποντισθῇ ἐν τῆς πελάγει τῆς θαλάσσης  
that he were drowned in which the depth which of the sea  
G2670 G1722 G3588 G3989 G3588 G2281

## Additional Cross-References

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**Mark 9:42** (Faith): And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.

**Matthew 18:10** (Parallel theme): Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

**Matthew 18:14** (Parallel theme): Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

**Psalms 105:15** (Parallel theme): Saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.

**Romans 14:21** (Parallel theme): It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.

**Zechariah 2:8** (Parallel theme): For thus saith the LORD of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.

**Zechariah 13:7** (Parallel theme): Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.

**Acts 9:5** (Parallel theme): And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.