

in Mark and Luke. After teaching that the kingdom of heaven is made up of those with the character of children, Jesus warned—**"Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!"** (Matt. 18:7, cf. Luke 17:1). Jesus acknowledges here that in this world there will be those people and things that lead people to do wrong, but He gives a serious warning to those who would be the cause of offense to another. All three gospels echo this warning: **"But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea."** (Matt. 18:6, cf. Mark 9:42; Luke 17:2). So serious is this warning, that Jesus teaches us to do whatever is necessary to "cut off" from ourselves anything that might cause us to sin (and by extension, influence others to sin). Matthew and Mark relate: **"If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the everlasting fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire"** (Matt. 18:8, 9, cf. Mark 9:42, 43, 45). This is the same remedy to avoid sin that Jesus offered in the Sermon on the Mount after His teachings on lust (see Matt. 5:29-30). This shows us that our own soul can be jeopardized by a failure to carefully guard the kind of influence we have on others. We can't lead others to sin without being accountable for it ourselves.

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Let us know if you have any questions.

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BULLETIN OF THE OLSEN PARK CHURCH OF CHRIST

Faithful Sayings



Services

Sunday: 9:00 AM
10:00 AM
11:00 AM
Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:
Pat Ledbetter
Jeff Nunn

Deacons:
Steve Dixon
Ryan Ferguson
Arend Gressley
Ben Hight
Blake McAlister
Brady McAlister
Walker McAnear
Sam Nunn
Lance Purcell
Rusty Scott
Justin Smiley
Trevor Yontz

Evangelist:
Kyle Pope

"Things That Offend"

By Kyle Pope

When Jesus described the judgment scene in Matthew 13:41 He promised that on that day—**"The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness"** (NKJV). The word translated "offend" comes from the Greek word *skandalon* (from which we get the word "scandal"). It is defined to mean, "properly *a trap-spring… a stumbling-block;* metaphorically *a cause of ruin … an occasion of sinning"* (Moulton, 368) and "*that which gives offense* or *causes revulsion*" (BAGD, 753). Together with its verb *skandalizō*, these words are used 41 times in the New Testament in reference to both what God has done and what man should avoid doing.

The Meaning of the Word Group

The ancient root of the word referred to the *stick* used to spring a trap. In ancient Sanskrit (a sister language to ancient Greek) the word *skand* meant "*to leap, jump…to leap upon"* and even "*to fall down, perish, be lost"* (Monier-Williams, 1256). In the Greek Old Testament *skandalon* and *skandalizō* were used to translate two words. The first, : *yaqash* meaning "*to lay snares*" (BDB, 430), as in Psalm 38:12a—**"Those also who seek my life LAY SNARES for me."** And the second, *kashal* meaning "*to stumble*" (BDB, 505) as in Leviticus 19:14—**"You shall**

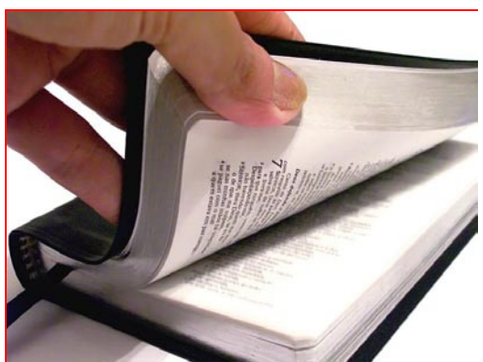
not curse the deaf, nor PUT A STUMBLING BLOCK before the blind…" This Old Testament usage seems to establish the use of these words in the New Testament.

When God "Offends"

Of the 41 times these words are used in the New Testament fourteen of them refer to what Deity has done (*skandalon* – Rom. 8:33; 1 Cor. 1:23; Gal. 5:11; 1 Pet. 2:8; *skandalizō* – Matt. 11:6; 13:57; 15:12; 17:27; 26:31, 33; Mark 6:3; 14:27, 29; Luke 7:23; John 6:61). Notice what we can see from these examples. Jesus' Himself is a Divine "rock of offense." Quoting Isaiah 8:14 Paul says of Jesus, **"Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock OF OFFENSE, And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame"** (Rom. 9:33, see also 1 Pet. 2:8). Jesus offended many people in two ways. First they were offended by His teachings. They didn't expect the word of God to come from a Galilean carpenter's son (Matt. 13:57; Mark 6:3), so they rejected Him. When He taught that true defilement was not external, but a condition of the heart, the hypocritical Pharisees were offended (Matt. 15:12). When He spoke of Himself as the bread from heaven, many of His simple-minded hearers took offense and turned away (John 6:61). For the few who looked deeper into Jesus' words He declared, **"blessed is he who is not offended because of Me"** (Matt. 11:6; Luke 7:23). Beyond just His teachings, the very death He died to atone for man's sins was too great an obstacle for the proud minds of many to accept. How could the Son of God suffer the dishonor of crucifixion? Paul declared, **"but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a STUMBLING BLOCK and to the Greeks foolishness"** (1 Cor. 1:23). This began on the night of His death. Those who told Him they would "die for Him" ran away in fear and disgrace from the threat of the cross (Matt. 26:31, 33; Mark 14:27, 29).

When Man "Offends"

The text with which we began describes the Lord on the day of judgment winnowing out of His kingdom **"all things that offend"** (Matt. 13:41). Those who are repulsive to the Lord because of their sin and those who would influence others to turn to sin or those who would hinder others from doing what is right will be separated and cut off from the presence of the Lord. The majority of instances in which these words are used in the New Testament address man's "offense" of others or being "offended" by something in such a way that it jeopardizes the soul. We can categorize these in four groups: 1. *Temptation to sin.* 2. *A hindrance to doing what is right.* 3. *Falling away or into sin* and 4. *That which is repulsive.*



Olsen Park church of Christ

1. Temptation to Sin. In Jesus' epistle to the church in Pergamos, He warns of those acting like Balaam, who **"put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality"** (Revelation 2:14). Paul warned the Romans to "note" and "avoid" those who would cause **"divisions and offenses"** within the church (Rom. 16:17).

2. Hindrance from Doing What is Right. As Jesus prepared to go to the cross, Peter became a hindrance to Him when he told him that He would surely never suffer in such a way. Jesus rebukes him saying, **"Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men"** (Matt. 16:23). In both Corinth and Rome, as Jesus teaches the brethren to respect the conscience of others in the matter of eating meats he urges them to **"resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way"** (Rom. 14:13, cf. 14:21 and 1 Cor. 8:13). We must always live our lives and use our liberties in such a way that we never make it difficult for those around us to do right. This might mean avoiding doing things that might give the wrong appearance, or acting in such a way that tempts others to have the wrong thoughts or attitudes as well as guarding the words that come out of our mouths.

3. Falling Away or Into Sin. In the Parable of the Sower Jesus warned of the seed sown on the stony places, explaining that it referred to one who has, **"no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles"** (Matt. 13:21, cf. Mark 4:17). Jesus warns that when times of tribulation come, **"many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate each other"** (Matt. 24:10). We must guard against those things that could lead us to fall into sin and away from the Lord.

4. That Which is Repulsive. We observed above that the death of Jesus itself was a "stumblingblock" to many. In the Galatian letter, as Paul shows that circumcision is no longer binding, he spoke of the **"offense of the cross"** (Gal. 5:11). In this text, the focus is not on how the cross was an obstacle to belief for the proud, but instead the fact that it was itself a horrible and repulsive thing. Those who would return to the Old Law treat the horror of the cross as if it was nothing. Thus the **"offense of the cross has ceased"** if Paul still taught circumcision and the Law was still binding.

"Offense" in Matthew Eighteen

The largest portion of Scripture that addresses these "things that offend" is found in Matthew 18 and its parallels