

October 1983  
Letter on Stumbling

*(Letter from Marsha to Kirsten containing some notes from a teaching Yoneq gave.)*

Dear Kirsten,

I was reading in John 14 the other night and I noticed something I had never seen before.

Yahshua said in verse 30, "the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in me." May it be said of each of us that, "he has nothing in me." For if he does have something in us, then on the day he comes, we will not be able to stand as Yahshua did.

What could it be that Satan has in us?

It could be any small foothold that he has gained in our soul. It is like a small offense in our heart — it is this that will cause us to stumble (Heb 3:10), we stumble over His ways. The Sovereign wants us to know His ways — the way things are going to go for us, the trouble we will have to face as His disciples — so we won't stumble. After John 14:30 He went on in John 15 to tell them about abiding in the vine, loving one another, and how they would be hated and rejected, then He said, "I told you these things that you may be kept from stumbling." (John 16:4-6) "I have spoken to you that when their hour comes you may remember that I told you of them." He doesn't want us to stumble, but if Satan has "something in us," we will stumble. Thought it may not seem like a big thing to us, only a small offense in our heart over this or that, it is still "something in us." It just might be that we didn't like the way the authority over us did a certain thing and we harbor a small grudge, or we resisted the "small hint" from a prophet in our midst keeping our own opinion instead, or just wishing things would have worked out a little bit differently for us in a certain situation. These "little things," in your heart show that you are not vitally linked to the Vine and trusting in the Sovereign's all-wise power. These are the "something in us" which will cause us stumbling.

The word stumble is also translated as "take offense at" or "get offended at." There are many things which will happen to us as follow the way of the Sovereign which will go against our reasoning, which just doesn't seem right, and which will want to offend us. Yahshua forewarned

us of our hardships so when they begin to happen we won't be able to say, "Why is this happening to poor me?" Or, "This just can't be right!" Yahshua said we are blessed if we don't take offense at Him. (Matt 11:6)

James 3:2 — says we all offend (stumble) (get offended) in many ways. But if you a teacher (verse 1) your offense will be transmitted to those under your teaching, even without consciously realizing it.

It is like the story of Judas Iscariot. He was a wonderful brother in the midst of the other disciples. He walked and lived among them as a beloved friend. They shared their struggles together and sat under the Sovereign's teachings. He was trusted as an honest man to carry the common purse for the disciples. Judas had a bad conscience though, at least near the end of the 3 1/2 years, because (John 12:6) he often times had used the money in his care for selfish things. Now surely he didn't buy himself a new car or fancy clothes with it (that would have been much too obvious and probably the amount of money they had was very small anyway) but he just took out a little now and then to buy himself a cup of coffee or a cold beer after a long hot day on the road (this qualified him as a thief) or perhaps he just bought a Lipton tea bag and stashed it under his tunic. But whatever it was, it couldn't have been anything obvious because his close friends never detected what he was doing, believing him to be honest and as devoted to Yahshua as they were (because when the Lord said that one of them would betray Him, none of them said, "it must be Judas" — Matt 26:21-25).

Judas own bad conscience left him as "open ground" for an offense to take root. And 6 days before Passover (John 12:1-8) — and the crucifixion — it did take root. Judas saw that things weren't working out as he had hoped. Everyone was turning against them, and the religious leaders were plotting to kill their Leader. Judas had thought He was their Messiah but He wasn't doing the things he expected the Messiah to do. And at seeing the selfless act of worship and adoration of Mary for her Master, Judas was offended, he stumbled. Satan had something in Judas. Yahshua rebuked the disciples for scolding the woman (Mark 14:5,6) for her waste. But

Judas didn't receive the rebuke from his Master — he was offended — it says (Matt 26:14-16; Mark 14:10) that then he went off to betray Yahshua.

Yet in Yahshua's great love, just a few days later, Yahshua reached out still to Judas' offended heart. He loved His disciples to the "uttermost" (John 13:1-5, 10,11). He wanted to cleanse his betrayer but Judas was beyond repentance — even that great act of love couldn't pierce his offended heart. Judas had stumbled....Betrayal is the outcome. (Matt 24:10)

It is sure that we are fallen men and are not of the stature of our Messiah who could say "Satan has nothing in me." But if we are judging ourselves and confessing our sins, thus keeping our garment without stain, then the Ruler of this world won't have anything in us.