

The Church of the Servant King
Survey of the Bible Series
The Gospel of Luke

SB_22C_Judas' Betrayal and Peter's Denial

Jesus Prays in the Garden (22:39-46)

Luke refers to the place that Jesus prayed prior to His trials and crucifixion as the Mount of Olives. Matthew refers to it as Gethsemane (Matt 26:36) and John refers to it in more general terms as a garden (John 18:1). Evidently, there was an olive grove at the foot of the Mount of Olives to which Jesus was accustomed to retire (Lu 22:39) with His disciples.¹ He went there frequently with His disciples. This may in part account for the disciples' having not been very alert this last night of Jesus' life. It may also account for Judas' knowledge of where Jesus would be when Judas decided to lead the religious types to Jesus.

Jesus instructed His disciples to pray that they not enter into temptation (Lu 22:40 cf. 22:46). This instruction reminds us of Jesus' model prayer for His disciples where He includes the phrase "and do not lead us into temptation" (Matt 6:13; Lu 11:4). This is a request that God would deliver them from situations that would cause them to sin. Such a request would imply that the disciple realized his weak and depraved nature while at the same time demonstrate the disciple's desire to live a holy and righteous life. In the context of the events of Luke 22, the temptation would be to forsake Jesus. God does not tempt nor lead into temptation (Jas 1:13-14). He allows an individual's volition to respond based upon the thought content of that individual's soul. If a believer's soul is filled with divine viewpoint and the realization of the need for divine strength, that believer will be more likely to resist temptation.²

Some ancient manuscripts omit verses 43-44; however, the verses seem to have some strong contextual support for their authenticity in addition to the fact that they are included in most texts of the Greek New Testament.³ Luke has mentioned angels on several occasions in his Gospel (e.g. the announcement of John's birth in 1:11-20; the announcement of Jesus' birth in 1:26-38; the announcement to the shepherds in 2:9-14; and on other occasions such as 9:26; 12:8-9; 15:10; 16:22). So the appearance of an angel in Gethsemane is not unusual. In addition, Luke describes Jesus' agony in physical terms as a physician would be prone to do. The sweating of Jesus was so profuse that it looked like blood dripping from a wound (v. 44).

Note regarding "stress": I believe that it is possible for one to experience "stress" or "adversity" that poses a temptation to be filled with anxiety, worry, depression or a number of other sins. However, we know that Jesus never sinned; therefore, what do we call this? I call this "stress" in Jesus' soul as He mentally prepared for the adversity He was to face. Matthew 26:37 states that Jesus was "deeply distressed." However, Jesus knew the principle of 1 Peter 5:7 – "casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you." He knew the principle of Philippians 4:5 – "be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your

¹ Merrill F. Unger, *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary* (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1984), 469.

² When Jesus instructed His disciples to pray that they enter not into temptation, He was using a figure of speech called a *litotes*. In a *litotes*, a positive idea (i.e. not succumbing to temptation) is expressed using a negative idea (i.e. do not lead). God does not lead into temptation (i.e. the negative idea); He provides us with the means to not succumb to it (i.e. the positive).

³ Frank E. Gaebelin, gen ed, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing, 1989-1998).

requests be made known to God.” He had taught His disciples principles related to God’s providential care for His Own as recorded in Matthew 6:25-34 – “do not worry about your life.” The sin is not in being stressed or under adversity; the sin is when stress (dealing with temptation) or adversity becomes anxiety or another mental sin. Compare Jesus to His disciples who slept because of their “sorrow” (v. 45).

Judas’ Betrayal (22:47-53)

Jesus made it a point to highlight the irony of being betrayed with a kiss (v. 48). Peter’s actions of cutting off the right ear of the servant of the high priest are more understandable in view of Jesus’ instructions in verses 36-38. We know it was Peter who did this based upon John 18:10. Among the Gospel writers, Luke alone takes special note of the restoration of the man’s ear by Jesus.

The details of the makeup of the crowd (i.e. religious, political and military leaders) are peculiar to Luke’s Gospel. These details seem to be Luke’s way of showing that it wasn’t the believing Jews who brought about Jesus’ crucifixion, but Jesus’ crucifixion was orchestrated by the arrogant religious/political mafia of Jerusalem.⁴

Jesus’ statement that “this is your hour and the power of darkness” indicates Jesus’ willingness to allow Satan the exercise of his authority for a time in order to accomplish the divine plan of salvation for mankind. Note that Satan accomplished his plan through the actions of unbelieving mankind. This truly is an invisible battle for the mind of man for it is through man that the angelic conflict is resolved.

Peter’s Denial (22:54-62)

What is so interesting about Peter’s denial is that Jesus predicted it (v. 34), but note the grace of our Lord in verse 32 – “I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and *when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.*” Our Lord knew that Peter possessed the type of transparent personality that would be a great encouragement to discouraged disciples later. I’m sure that the others knew of Peter’s failure (as well as their own), but Peter had the type of personality that was open enough to acknowledge it and not attempt to maintain any false pretenses. This would position Peter to be a source of encouragement to others.

Though he followed Jesus at a distance, Peter is the only disciple who, so far as we know, followed Jesus at all. This shows Peter’s deep love for Jesus even if he did show cowardice when questioned by a servant girl. Jesus knew that Peter loved Him and had what it took to make a great contribution to the body of believers after Jesus’ death. I have great respect and admiration for Peter for I know I would have been among the silent and shrinking group of Jesus’ followers. How many of the original group of 12 disciples/apostles to Israel ended up writing letters that eventually became a part of the Canon of Scripture. In describing how Jesus looked at Peter (v. 61), Luke uses the word ἐπιθεωρᾷ (*emblepo*) which usually signifies a look of interest, love or concern.⁵

Jesus Mocked and Beaten (22:63-65)

Luke probably inserted this comment to underscore the contrast between Jesus’ sufferings and Peter’s attempt to avoid any identification with Jesus. In addition, there is contrast between Luke’s clear portrayal of Jesus as a prophet and the soldier’s taunting Jesus about prophesying who hit Him while He was blindfolded.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

Jesus Faces the Sanhedrin (22:66-71)

This is Jesus' third trial. The first was before Annas and the second was before Caiaphas, the high priest. We'll look at all six trials of Jesus in our next lesson.