

# THE GREAT TEMPTATION

*The Fall of the Disciples and the Fulfillment of Isaiah 53*

- Luke 22:31      “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat,
- 32** but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.”
- 33** Peter said to him, “Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death.”
- 34** Jesus said, “I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me.”
- 35** And he said to them, “When I sent you out with no moneybag or knapsack or sandals, did you lack anything?” They said, “Nothing.”
- 36** He said to them, “But now let the one who has a moneybag take it, and likewise a knapsack. And let the one who has no sword sell his cloak and buy one.
- 37** For I tell you that this Scripture must be fulfilled in me: ‘And he was numbered with the transgressors.’ For what is written about me has its fulfillment.”
- 38** And they said, “Look, Lord, here are two swords.” And he said to them, “It is enough.”
- 39** And he came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him.
- 40** And when he came to the place, he said to them, “Pray that you may not enter into temptation.”
- 41** And he withdrew from them about a stone’s throw, and knelt down and prayed,
- 42** saying, “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.”
- 43** And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him.

- 44** And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.
- 45** And when he rose from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow,
- 46** and he said to them, “Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation.”
- 47** While he was still speaking, there came a crowd, and the man called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He drew near to Jesus to kiss him,
- 48** but Jesus said to him, “Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?”
- 49** And when those who were around him saw what would follow, they said, “Lord, shall we strike with the sword?”
- 50** And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear.
- 51** But Jesus said, “No more of this!” And he touched his ear and healed him.
- 52** Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders, who had come out against him, “Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs?”
- 53** When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness.”
- 54** Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest’s house, and Peter was following at a distance.
- 55** And when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat down among them.
- 56** Then a servant girl, seeing him as he sat in the light and looking closely at him, said, “This man also was with him.”
- 57** But he denied it, saying, “Woman, I do not know him.”
- 58** And a little later someone else saw him and said, “You also are one of them.” But Peter said, “Man, I am not.”
- 59** And after an interval of about an hour still another insisted, saying, “Certainly this man also was with him, for he too is a Galilean.”

- 60 But Peter said, “Man, I do not know what you are talking about.”  
And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed.
- 61 And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered  
the saying of the Lord, how he had said to him, “Before the  
rooster crows today, you will deny me three times.”
- 62 And he went out and wept bitterly.

### Luke 22:31-62

## The Sons of God and the Swords of Men

IN THOSE DAYS, when the children of man had multiplied, it happened that there were born unto them handsome and beautiful daughters. <sup>2</sup> And the angels [the “sons of God,” Gen 6:4], the children of heaven, saw them and desired them; and they said to one another, “Come, let us choose wives for ourselves from among the daughters [lit. “children”] of man and beget us children.” <sup>3</sup> And Semyaza, being their leader, said unto them, “I fear that perhaps you will not consent that this deed should be done, and I alone will become responsible for this great sin.” <sup>4</sup> But they all responded to him, “Let us all swear an oath and bind everyone among us by a curse not to abandon this suggestion but to do the deed.” <sup>5</sup> Then they all swore together and bound one another by the curse. <sup>6</sup> And they were altogether two hundred; and

they descended into 'ArDOS, which is the summit of Hermon. And they called the mount Armon, for they swore and bound one another by a curse. [Shemyaza and Azazel fell from heaven and were on earth in those days.]<sup>1</sup> ... And Azaz'el taught the people the art of making swords and knives, and shields, and breastplates.

(1Enoch 6:1-6, Targ. Jonathan Gen 6:4; 1En 8:1)

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Last time, we saw that after the Supper, Jesus began to give a last will and testament to his disciples. As his words moved forward, we saw greater and greater connection to the divine council and the motif of the “sons of God,” which makes sense, because wills are all about sons inheriting things. It’s all implicit throughout the discourse, but to see it, you have to know what you are looking at.

It began with Gentile kings (Luke 22:25) who were all said to have been descended from the heavenly sons of God. It continued with the disciples being granted a kingdom as Jesus, the Son of God, was granted a kingdom by his heavenly Father (29). It moved forward again when he told them

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<sup>1</sup> This is Targum Pseudo-Jonathan of Gen 6:4, which I insert here because vs. 7 of 1 Enoch 6:7 is too long for sermon purposes. The Targum summarizes the twenty or so names of 1 Enoch Watchers with these two: Shemyaza and Azazel.

that they would **judge** the twelve tribes of Israel (**30**), language that properly belongs in the divine council and is the prerogative only of sons of God. The storyline becomes rife and palpable with the imagery as **Satan** then reenters the picture (**31ff.**) in the prediction of the denial of Peter and the sifting like wheat which alludes back to Job 1-2 and the divine council scene with the sons of God and *the satan* in that story. Satan is regarded as **Beelzebul**—Baal, earlier in Luke (**Luke 11:15**), and as such he is one of these heavenly sons of God. Finally, Jesus concluded by returning to his instructions to the **seventy** (**Luke 10:4**), the number emulating the number of heavenly sons of God, where he apparently overturned that teaching in light of a new circumstance that was coming into being (**Luke 22:35-38**).

But we were left there with a **puzzling statement**. After asking them if they lacked anything even though he told them not to take a moneybag or knapsack, they said no, we lacked nothing (**35**). They had **enough**. Jesus then commands them to take their moneybag and knapsack, sell them and **buy a sword** (**36**). He immediately says that Scripture must be fulfilled that he will be numbered among the transgressors (**37**), a text that comes from **Isaiah 53:12**). Then then turn

around and say, “Here are two swords” (38a), and Jesus says, “It is enough” (38b).<sup>2</sup> The puzzle is, what did Jesus mean?

I suggested last time that the Lord was saying that he has had enough of their constant misunderstanding. They never seem to get it. I also said that the sword discussion shows that there will be a change in circumstances from the earlier ministry ... *but not yet*. Jesus was with them, but soon he would be gone and they would be left to the wolves as it were. So the sword reference here is a kind of prediction of how they will need to defend themselves in the future. This has been a main line of interpretation, especially in recent times.

But after this week’s study, I think this latter idea is more likely a right doctrine from the wrong text. The Biblical ethic *never* tells you to let a robber come into your house and steal all of your stuff and murder your wife and children because this is somehow a Christian response to evil. We do see in the NT that as the Gospel goes out, the only sword we know that they disciples carry is that sword of the Spirit because they now realize that the kingdom grows through the

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<sup>2</sup> Curiously, “it is enough” seems to be a line taken from Mark 14:41, which has as its context “The Son of Man is betrayed” right after he finds Peter sleeping. The parallel is Luke 22:47 rather than 38.

spiritual sword, not the physical sword. Those are totally different kinds of circumstances. The doctrine of self-defense is certainly true. But is that what Luke is really up to?

I opened with reading [the text of 1 Enoch](#), which summarizes as well as any place the universal Jewish understanding of the heavenly sons of God story of Genesis 6:1-4. Hopefully, with the whole of the sons of God motif going on in this part of Luke's Gospel, you can see why this might be relevant. But let me just add a last piece from that story that becomes incredibly relevant to where Luke goes from here. In all the ancient apocalyptic traditions, it is always [the angels or watchers](#) or sons of God (same thing for our purposes) [who teach men the making of swords](#) and warfare. And since Satan is the chief of the sons of God (i.e. the prince of this world; [John 12:31](#)) in the NT, those who carry the sword, particularly when he is in the immediate context, are part of his army.

Again, this [doesn't mean it is always wrong to carry a sword](#) any more than it is wrong to write a book or put on makeup or use plants for medicine, all of which are also taught to us by the Watchers in these ancient traditions. Rather, it's that these things belong, properly speaking, to the

kingdom of men, not the kingdom of God, and **God's upside-down** kingdom expands and grows very differently from those of men. The Watchers had evil intents for things that are not necessary evils, but can be used for good or for evil, depending on the circumstance. The Last Supper meal was dominated by Kingdom language. And now, Jesus is about to suffer. And the way it unfolds has everything do with swords and Satan and the fulfillment of prophecy in ways that will probably make your head spin from the wonder and joy of what your Savior is saying, doing, and undergoing.

## Luke 22:31-62 – The Literary Structure and Setting

We finished last time at **Luke 22:38**. In my mind, this is the formal end of the Testament Jesus is giving to his disciples. However, today we are going to begin in **vs. 31** and to through **vs. 62**. This gives us **several verses of overlap from last time**. This is because these overlapping verses are Luke's **transition** to a literary structure that is unique to his Gospel and which brings the whole Satan storyline, which began back in **Luke 22:3** with Satan entering Judas to a climax.



Let's begin with **the structure**. It is very clearly **chiastic**. It begins with Jesus predicting that Satan has demanded to sift them like wheat (31), and especially Peter (32). So Jesus is **foretelling Peter's denial (31-34)**. Jesus then **foretells the disciples' denial**, in that unique set of verses to Luke (35-38) that we have just discussed. In the middle is **Jesus' praying in the Garden** of Gethsemane. As we leave the Garden, Jesus is betrayed and we see **his disciple's denial (47-53)**, and finally, Luke takes us to **Peter's denial (54-62)**. This last section is very important, because Luke actually switches the material found after the arrest in Matthew and Mark and puts it later just so this chiasm will work. If he didn't do that, you have no structure. It's very deliberate.

- A. Jesus Foretells Peter's Denial (22:31-34)
- B. Jesus Foretells Disciples' Denial (35-38)
- C. Prayer not to be Led into Temptation (39-46)**
- B'. The Disciples' Denial (47-53)
- A'. Peter's Denial (54-62)<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> This chiasm is from **David A. Burnett**, "[The Sword and the Servant: Reframing the Function of the 'two swords' of Luke 22:35-38 in Narrative Context](#)," *Society of Biblical Literature, Synoptic Gospels* (Nov 23, 2015). The discussion which I will follow in this sermon is "[Naked Bible 205: The Sword and the Servant with David Burnett](#)," *Naked Bible Podcast* (Mar 3, 2018). With transcript found [here](#).

So that's the basic structure. But there are **three very important things from earlier in Luke** that we need to remember. The first is the *temptation of Jesus*. In that temptation, recall that Satan was the instigator (there he was called the Devil). Luke told us that **"he departed from [Jesus] until an opportune time"** (**Luke 4:13**). Importantly, this differed from Matthew who said, **"Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him"** (**Matt 4:11**). Luke was foreshadowing something, and that something is now upon us. We know this because Luke took that **"angels ministering"** part from Matthew and puts it right at the end of Jesus praying in the Garden in our story. **"And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him"** (**Luke 22:43**). This is not found in Matthew or Mark, because Luke took it from the Temptation of Jesus story for his own purposes now.

Second, recall that Luke has his version of *the Lord's Prayer*. It began with the disciples asking Jesus, **"Lord, teach us to pray"** (**Luke 11:1**). Luke again differs from the others here. His much shorter prayer ends, **"And lead us not into temptation"** (4). Now, Jesus will take his disciples into the

Garden where he wants them to, “Pray that you may not enter into temptation” (22:40). Same exact thing.

Finally, recall the story of the *Good Samaritan*. In that story, a man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among “robbers” (*lēstaēs*, 10:30), who left him for dead. Again, this story is unique to Luke. That word appears in again only in Luke 19:46 where Jesus quotes the prophet that they have made God’s house a den of robbers and in our passage where Jesus says, “Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs?” (22:52). We will see all three of these earlier stories now finding their climax as the Passion of the Christ gets underway.

## The Denial of Peter Predicted (Luke 22:31-34)

Let’s begin in vs. 31. Jesus addresses Peter, but calls him Simon. “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you (plural), that he might sift you (plural) like wheat.” Addressing Simon, Jesus is actually talking about all twelve of them. They are soon all going to have to prove their quality.

But Jesus singles out Simon in the next verse, “But I have prayed for you (singular) that your faith may not fail.

And when you (singular) have turned again, strengthen your brothers” (32). It is a glorious prediction that Peter will not utterly fall. However, the fall of Peter will happen nonetheless. “Peter (The Rock) said to him, “Lord, am ready to go with you both to prison and to death” (33). Peter is utterly confident. Pride cometh before the fall. “Jesus said, ‘I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me’” (34). And with that, we have Jesus very clearly foretelling that Peter will fall. As we have already looked at this, and there is a lot more to do today, let’s continue.

## The Denial of the Disciples Predicted (Luke 22:35-38)

Vv. 35-38 are those unique verses in Luke which are so difficult to interpret. So let’s look at them. “And he said to them...” (35). Jesus’ gaze has moved past Peter. He is turning to all of the disciples now. “When I sent you out with no moneybag or knapsack or sandals, did you lack anything?” This was found in Luke 10:4, “Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road.” This

was when Jesus sent out **the seventy**, that number related directly to the divine council in heaven. They said, “**Nothing.**” Allow me to rephrase what Jesus is asking them. “**Was it enough?**” And their answer. “**It was enough.**”

Jesus then said to them (still the whole group), “**But now let the one who has a moneybag take it, and likewise a knapsack. And let the one who has no sword sell his cloak and buy one**” (36). **What is Jesus doing here?** The verbs here are imperatives. That is, they are verbs of command. “Take it.” “Buy one.” But is Jesus commanding them to do this as some kind of new commandment? Let’s keep reading.

In the very next words, **Jesus continues**, “**For I tell you that this Scripture must be fulfilled in me: ‘And he was numbered with the transgressors.’ For what is written about me has its fulfillment**” (37). The verb here (“has its fulfillment”) is a *present active indicative*. In other words, Jesus is saying that it is being fulfilled right this moment. What is being fulfilled?

Curiously, **Matthew and Mark** both have in mind **a text from Zechariah** as they tell this story. “**Strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered**” (**Matt 26:31; Mark 14:27**). This is their understanding from the OT of why the disciples

will soon all abandon Jesus. Luke doesn't have this at all. But he does have a fulfillment of prophecy *at the very same place*. It's just that it's a different prophecy. So what is it?

It is **Isaiah 53:12**. “He was numbered with the transgressors.” A totally different OT prophecy that Luke is saying fulfills the very same outcome: the disciples will be scattered. In other words, Jesus is predicting here in Luke exactly the same thing he was predicting in Matthew and Mark: that they will all deny him. But how?

Look closely at our text. Immediately after Jesus says this, “They said, ‘Look, Lord, here are two swords’” (**Luke 22:38**). Notice anything? Jesus has just told them to buy **one sword**. Now *they talk* about **two swords**. Then comes Jesus' enigmatic response, “And he said to them, ‘It is enough.’” Luke actually takes this line from later on in the Garden story in Mark, right after Jesus finds Peter sleeping, Jesus says, “It is enough” (**Mark 14:41**). We'll see how that is related to this shortly. But let me remind you of how we could summarize the beginning of this passage. “Did you have enough?” “Yes, we had enough.”

Noticing anything? **Luke 22:35-38** form their own mini-chiasm. And this is very important to see.

- A. I sent you out, **did you lack anything?** (i.e. Did you have enough?) (35)
- B. Now, take the moneybag and knapsack, sell and **buy a sword** (36)
- C. **Scripture must be fulfilled: Isaiah 53:12 (37)**
- B'. Look, here are **two swords** (38a)
- A'. **It is enough** (38:b)

Why is this so significant? Because it shows us that **the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah is taking place as they bring up this idea of picking up swords**. But what could that possibly mean?

Here we have to go back to Isaiah. This is actually the only explicit quotation of Isaiah 53 in the Synoptics in the story of the Passion, though there are many allusions to it.<sup>4</sup> Some of these allusions are clearly going on in Luke's kind of **Christian midrash** [i.e. a kind of running commentary] of this passage in what we are presently looking at, and they show that indeed, he is trying to tell us in picking up swords, Jesus is numbered among the transgressors.

For example, **Jesus has just told Peter** he would **pray for him**, i.e. be his intercessor. Only one line away from being numbered with the transgressors, **Isaiah 53:12** says, “**he**

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<sup>4</sup> John quotes Isaiah 53:1 in the Passion (**John 12:38**). The Synoptics allude to it in the Passion, but do not quote it (**Isa 53:5** with **Matt 26:67**; **Isa 53:6-7** with **Matt 26:63; 27:12, 14**; **Mark 14:60-51; 15:4-5**; **Isa 53:8-9** with **Matt 26:24** and possibly **Isa 53:12** with **Matt 27:38**; **Luke 23:33-34**). On this last one, there is a textual variant in **Mark 15:28** which puts the same quotation as Luke has “**He was numbered with the transgressors**,” when Jesus is beside the criminals on the cross. But none of the earliest manuscripts have this. It may have resulted from misunderstanding what Luke is saying here.

makes intercession for the transgressors.” Or there’s **Isaiah 53:8** where Jesus is “*stricken for the transgression of my people.*” In this verse, it isn’t for the Gentiles or the pagans. It is for *his people*. His people, like Peter, are the ones *now* about to transgress. And as we will see, the very next verse predicts “**he had done no violence**” (9). Keep that one in mind for later. To summarize, what I’m suggesting is that Luke’s unique addition with this quotation of Isaiah squarely in the middle of the two swords verses is predicting that the disciples are about to deny him. How? By **taking up swords against him and becoming transgressors** in a context of Satan, whose race taught men the taking up of swords in the first place. But let’s continue.

## The Second Adam in the Garden (Luke 22:39-46)

It is at this moment that Jesus finally goes out of the upper room in Luke and heads over, “**As was his custom, to the Mount of Olives**” (**Luke 22:39**). We’ve seen the Mount of Olives before, and we will see it again. This is where Jesus gave his great sermon on the destruction of Jerusalem. But now, we are at the **bottom of the mountain**, in what Matthew and Mark call Gethsemane.



Today, this place is home to some of the oldest olive trees in the world, dating to the time of the crusades, nearly 1,000 years ago. It is a lovely little spot in the midst of the hustle and bustle that is modern Jerusalem. Here is how Luke records it. “**And when he came to the place, he said to them, ‘Pray that you may not enter into temptation’**” (**Luke 22:40**). Luke’s difference from Matthew and Mark here are palpable. The fuller treatment is clearly those other Gospels. But Luke’s language is deliberate.



He is harkening back to [the Lord's Prayer](#) and the way he left that prayer at the end. “[Lead us not into temptation](#)” ([Luke 11:4](#)). Now, the other Gospels finish this prayer with, “[But deliver us from the Evil One.](#)” But Luke has this as a way of foreshadowing the need for deliverance from the Evil One. For what we are about to see is Luke's way of telling us [that The Great Temptation is now here](#). Go pray that you may not enter into temptation. Jesus is giving them an out. He has told them what is about to happen. He has said that he has prayed for them. And now he is telling them to go and take it seriously. Something terrible is about to happen.

Luke continues, “[And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed](#)” ([41](#)). Jesus is now [interceding for his people](#), just as Isaiah predicted. But in none of the Gospels is that the main focus. Instead, Jesus intercedes for himself, “[Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me](#)” ([42](#)).

The “[cup](#)” reference is clearly an allusion back to [the Lord's Supper](#) where the cup represents his blood. Earlier, Jesus had said, “[I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is my distress until it is accomplished!](#)” ([Luke](#)

12:50). In Mark, this very same passage is called, “*The cup that I drink ... the baptism with which I am baptized*” (39).

It is impossible for us to fully enter into what Jesus was enduring at this moment, but the text helps us here, for the entire Garden Scene is also chiastic.

- A. His **disciples** also **followed** him (39)
- B. **Pray** that you **enter** not **into temptation** (40)
- C. He withdrew from **them**, **kneeled down**, and **prayed** (41)
- D. “**Saying, Father ...**” (42)
- E. **There appeared an anger from heaven, who strengthened him (43)**
- D’. **He prayed more earnestly**: his sweat was as it were **great drops of blood** falling down to the ground (44).
- C’. He **rose up** from **prayer** and came to his **disciples** (45)
- B’. **Pray**, lest you **enter into temptation** (46)
- A’. **Judas, one of the twelve**, went before him, and **drew near** to Jesus (47)

This means that what takes place on **the mirrored side** helps us understand. In this instance, the mirror of this prayer to the Father is Jesus praying even more earnestly and suddenly, his sweat was as it were **great drops of blood** (44).

Hendriksen points out, “**It is natural that Luke as a physician would inquire into and record this occurrence of hema-**

*tidrosis*.”<sup>5</sup> This is an extremely rare condition where an individual sweats blood. It may occur when the person is suffering from extreme levels of stress. Some point out here that Jesus only sweats “like” blood. Others want to cite this condition. The condition makes the whole thing more palpable, and the importance of this is that **Jesus is a human being** who is undergoing this massive distress.

The **humanity of Christ** comes to the forefront, as nearly all theologians remember that it is not possible for God in his Essence to suffer. That is, **God is impassible**. But the Son of God became *a man*. He is **fully human** in every sense that we are. And he suffers just like us. That isn’t a mirage. It isn’t a fairy tale. There’s an old Gospel song that says, “**Everybody wants to go to heaven, but nobody wants to die.**” After singing about Hezekiah, the new verse says,

*When Jesus walked upon this earth, he knew his father’s plan  
He knew that he must give his life to save the soul of man  
When Judas had betrayed him, Our Father heard his cry  
He was brave enough unto his death but he didn’t want to die.*<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> **William Hendriksen** and Simon J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke*, vol. 11, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953–2001), 983.

<sup>6</sup> Earl Scruggs Revue, sung by **Alison Krauss** and the Cox Family, “Everybody Wants to Go to Heaven,” *Blue Trail of Sorrow: 16 Top Bluegrass Gems*, Rounder Records (2001).

When I first heard this song, my gut reaction was, “**Blasphemy!**” But that was my own Christological heresy coming to the forefront, a practical denial of his humanity. Jesus didn’t want to die any more than any of us. People will say, “**He just didn’t want to be forsaken by his Father,**” or other such things, and certainly those are also true. But friend, Jesus was a human. And he sweated great drops of blood at his passion. Surely, there is more to it than *merely* dying. But to say it was less? This person does not understand that death is a curse and comes as a result of sin. Jesus knew no sin and yet he must still die! That is **true horror**, for he is punished when he did nothing wrong.

But **Jesus’ divinity also shines forth**. “**Nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done**” (**Luke 22:42**). Jesus, the Son of God, is praying to his heavenly Father. His flesh does not want to undergo the ordeal. And so he prays to his Father to help him in this time of his greatest temptation. Jesus is not immune from having to pray, just like us.

But it is precisely at this moment that **the entire world changes**. All of fallen human history is now beginning to be undone. And it is the Gospel. For unlike *all others* who came before and after, Jesus does not give in. **It was in a garden,**

after all, that the First Adam gave into the temptation of the old Serpent. Now, the entire world has come full circle as the Second Adam faces the ultimate test. And he will, because he alone among humans is God.

Are there any more striking, beautiful, hopeful, glorious words than these? “*Nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done?*” In those words, Jesus determined once-for-all to go through with it. His humanity completely surrendered to the heavenly Father. And the divine Son, the one who alone overcame temptation, passed the test. Now that the moment he had dreaded had come, he would do it. He would go through with it. He would do what he was sent to do. For he is not just the Son of Man; Jesus is the Son of God.

This is precisely why Luke saves *that central verse of the Garden temptation* to be the place where he will insert the angels helping our Lord. Now, in the Garden, just like before, was Satan’s opportune time. “*And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him*” (43). Every time I find myself falling into temptation, I think of these words and I’m overcome with grief and joy. Why can’t I be like Jesus? Thank God Jesus was like Jesus! This entire story is about the fall of everyone, *except* Jesus. That’s precisely

why we need this good news, all of us. None are exempt, save Christ alone. For he obeyed when we all fall. But he did it precisely by not exempting himself from the very temptations that we all undergo. Yet, without sin.

As the Garden episode winds down, it returns to Peter. “And when he rose from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow” (45). He told them to pray. They slept instead. He told them they were about to be tempted with the Greatest Temptation. They let grief overcome them and they fell, just like we all do and have. Luke repeats the idea for emphasis. “And he said to them, ‘Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation’” (46). The law always echoes in our ears. They fell short. They disobeyed. And what would happen next is the fulfillment of prophecy.

## The Disciples Deny Christ (Luke 22:47-53)

Vv. 47-53 may not seem like it, but that’s only because we don’t read carefully. “While he was still speaking, there came a crowd, and the man called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them” (47). Judas would have done it at the Supper, but Jesus had hidden the place from his sight so that he

could eat the meal with his friend and bequeath the kingdom to the disciples. But **it took Judas only a few minutes** upon leaving the Passover Meal which symbolized Israel's great deliverance and redemption, to turn on his Lord and his God.

**“He drew near to Jesus to kiss him.”** The other Gospels tell us that the betrayer had given them **a sign**, saying, **“The one I will kiss is the man; seize him”** (**Matt 26:48; Mark 14:44**). Luke's shortening of the story pierces *us*. Jesus simply says to him, **“Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?”** (**48**). Did the rascal feel anything at that moment? Jesus looked him right in the eye. What did he think of that gaze? Isaiah, **“He was despised and rejected by men”** (**Isa 53:3**).

**It wasn't just Judas.** Satan had entered him (whatever that means, we are not certain). But Satan is a major player here, and this must not be forgotten. The other words of the Gospels from this exchange are left off by Luke. He means to show you not the interaction, but the theology. **“And when those who were around him saw what would follow, they said, ‘Lord, shall we strike with the sword?’”** (**49**). Who are these “around him?” It is clearly the other disciples.



Let this sink in. Two swords. “**Strike**.” An entire Roman battalion? What good is that going to do? It was starting to dawn on them that Jesus was in trouble. They would get him out of it. And it is one of the most satanic ideas ever conceived in the hearts of men.

**This was the prophecy!** Remember that Satan is here. Remember what we read about the Watchers at the beginning? They are those who taught us about swords and warfare according to the tradition. Isaiah says the transgressors would be right there with the Suffering Servant. They do not want Jesus to die. Ironically, Satan does, and so this thought in their hearts is contradictory to Satan’s. Yet *both* were evil. Nobody understood this. In taking up the sword, they would attack the very plan of God, in fulfillment of prophecy.

**One of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear (50).** **Strike!** They carried out violence to empty the cup of suffering at the very moment the Son was picking it up on their behalf. The sluggards, slumbering in their spiritual stupor, are unwittingly fulfilling prophecy at this very moment.

**Strike!** It’s the language of Isaiah. “**Stricken for the transgression of my people**” (**Isa 53:8**). Even as Zechariah would

say, “*Strike the shepherd, the sheep are scattered*” (Zech 13:7). And through their own ironic striking, the very thing they thought would save him, that’s exactly what’s about to happen.

“But Jesus said, ‘No more of this!’ And he touched his ear and healed him” (Luke 22:50). Isaiah, “*Although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth*” (Isa 53:9). Then comes the final blow to their ears. “Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders, who had come out against him, ‘Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs?’” (Luke 22:52). Swords belong to those going against a robber. The robber. That’s the Samaritan story. He was beaten and left for dead. None who were supposed to would come to his aid. The disciples picked up the swords thinking they would come to his aid. They were mistaken. It was their downfall. Violence against evil-doers was not the way this plan would unfold. God’s kingdom is upside down, just like their own madness which is literally pictured in all of these mirroring chiasms.

Why did this happen? “When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness” (53). Satan must have

his moment. Through the priests and officers and elders. Through Judas. Through the Disciples. And ... through Peter. It wasn't just Judas, it was all of them.

## Peter's Denial of Jesus (Luke 22:54-62)

Luke deliberately now switches the order of events to that Peter will immediately follow the disciples. “Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house, and Peter was following at a distance” (Luke 22:54). We focus back on the man, right where we started. He's following along ... in the shadows, just the place for the man he is at this moment. False and full of darkness.

We come into Jerusalem, across the Kidron Valley. “And when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat down among them” (54). It's completely public now. They are in the courtyard of the high priest's house. Peter feels safe enough to sit in the middle of the group that has just arrested his Master! What was he thinking?

“Then a servant girl, seeing him as he sat in the light and looking closely at him, said, ‘This man also was with him’”

(55). *The ultimate tattle-tale.* Why do I feel like her eyes have become red and her ears just a little pointy? I loathed those kinds of kids at school, even when they weren't tattling on me! Peter reacted just like we all do when that happens to us. “*But he denied it, saying, ‘Woman, I do not know him’*” (57). *That's once, Peter.*

“*And a little later someone else saw him and said, ‘You also are one of them’*” (58). “*But Peter said, ‘Man, I am not’*” (58). *Twice, Peter.* “*And after an interval of about an hour still another insisted, saying, ‘Certainly this man also was with him, for he too is a Galilean’*” (59). “*But Peter said, ‘Man, I do not know what you are talking about’*” (60).

*Cock-a-doodle-doo.* “*And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed*” (60b). The sun that was rising in the east was now setting on Peter. He had denied Jesus not just once, but three times, the very thing he swore would never happen only hours earlier.

Perhaps *the most cutting of all the words* appear next, and only in Luke, “*And the Lord turned and looked at Peter*” (61). We tend to think that Jesus was somewhere inside, far away, nowhere near these events. Apparently, he saw the

whole thing. The piercing light from Jesus' eyes must have burned his very soul.

“And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how he had said to him, ‘Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times’” (61b). Peter was undone. “And he went out and wept bitterly” (62). And the events haven't even really begun. Jesus' trial is only just beginning.

Our Lord Jesus Christ would indeed go through with it, knowing exactly what was going to happen even from that moment he first called Peter up in Galilee to be his disciple. But our Lord Jesus Christ loved Peter, as he loved all his disciples. And he loves you. And this is the meaning of our passage today.

For you see, though we always want to make these stories about us, that is our great temptation, just like Peter had his, the only place any of us is in these stories is in our failure, our denial, our rebellion, and our sin. And this must be the way you read these stories, if the good news is to have any working on your soul. **You are Peter. Peter is all of us.**

But at the end of the day, this story is actually really about *them*, not us. It is about Jesus prediction of what *they* would do, his giving *them* opportunity one last time to do

the right thing, **the opportunity** he has been giving humanity since Adam was thrown out of his Garden. The opportunity he knew would never be met by anyone other than himself.

For you see, **when he saw Peter sleeping**, this was confirmation that his own resolve to go through with it was Peter's only hope. For the man, like the twelve, and like you and I, only ever do fall short of the law and the Glory of God. But Jesus' resolve through prayer and temptation is **the first of the mighty blows** that Satan would soon enough discover would crush his head. For the prince of Darkness does only what God allows him to do. And in his hatred for humanity, all he had was his same old tricks, tricks he used in days gone by in the Flood to try and wipe out the seed of the woman. The sword. Violence. Revenge. Retaliation.

**God's plan would not be destroyed** by a usurper to the throne of heaven. It would not be destroyed by **the betrayal of Judas** or **the abandonment of his friends** and **denial of Peter**. And it is not destroyed by you either. And that's the point of the Gospel. It gives all glory to Jesus Christ, the one who alone has made it through the Great Temptation unscathed. So that all who turn to him in faith and allegiance

and hope and trust and love, will by God's overflowing mercy and grace, find the once-for-all forgiveness and salvation that they long for in the deepest part of their being.

Amazingly, these eleven men (Judas will hang himself), will all be forgiven and utterly transformed by the Holy Spirit in Luke's second book. That same Holy Spirit is who God gives to all who believe in the Savior Jesus to take away their sin. The Holy Spirit is the opposite of those evil spirits of Enoch, brothers of Satan in the heavenly realms who have done so much harm over the millennia. Praise God in his church for these unspeakable gifts and for his willingness to do all these things for wretches whom he transforms into new creations by faith.

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Luke	Matt	Mark	John
<b>22:31</b> “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat,			<b>John 13:36-38</b>
<b>32</b> but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.”			
<b>33</b> Peter said to him, “Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death.”	<b>33</b> Peter answered him, “Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away.”	<b>29</b> Peter said to him, “Even though they all fall away, I will not.”	
<b>34</b> Jesus said, “I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me.”	<b>34</b> Jesus said to him, “Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.” <b>35</b> Peter said to him, “Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!” And all the disciples said the same.	<b>30</b> And Jesus said to him, “Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.” <b>31</b> But he said emphatically, “If I must die with you, I will not deny you.” And they all said the same.	
<b>35</b> And he said to them, “When I sent you out with no moneybag or knapsack or sandals, did you lack anything?” They said, “Nothing.”			
<b>36</b> He said to them, “But now let the one who has a moneybag take it, and likewise a knapsack. And let the one who has no sword sell his cloak and buy one.			
<b>37</b> For I tell you that this Scripture must be fulfilled in me: ‘And he was numbered with the transgressors.’ For what is written about me has its fulfillment.”			
<b>38</b> And they said, “Look, Lord, here are two swords.” And he said to them, “It is enough.”			
<b>39</b> And he came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him.	<b>36</b> Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane,	<b>32</b> And they went to a place called Gethsemane.	
<b>40</b> And when he came to the place, he said to them, “Pray that you may not enter into temptation.”	and he said to his disciples, “Sit here,	And he said to his disciples, “Sit here	
<b>41</b> And he withdrew from them about a stone’s throw,	while I go over there and pray.” <b>37</b> And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. <b>38</b> Then he said to them, “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me.”	while I pray.” <b>33</b> And he took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly distressed and troubled. <b>34</b> And he said to them, “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch.”	
and knelt down and prayed,	<b>39</b> And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed,	<b>35</b> And going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed	



<p><b>42</b> saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done."</p>	<p>saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will."</p>	<p>that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. <b>36</b> And he said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."</p>	
<p><b>43</b> And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him.</p>			
<p><b>44</b> And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.</p>			
<p><b>45</b> And when he rose from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow,</p>	<p><b>40</b> And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping.</p>	<p><b>37</b> And he came and found them sleeping,</p>	
<p><b>46</b> and he said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation."</p>	<p>And he said to Peter, "So, could you not watch with me one hour? <b>41</b> Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."  <b>42</b> Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done." <b>43</b> And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. <b>44</b> So, leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again.</p>	<p>and he said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not watch one hour? <b>38</b> Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." <b>39</b> And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. <b>40</b> And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy, and they did not know what to answer him. <b>41</b> And he came the third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest?"</p>	
<p><b>47</b> While he was still speaking, there came a crowd, and the man called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He drew near to Jesus to kiss him,</p>	<p><b>45</b> Then he came to the disciples and said to them, "Sleep and take your rest later on. See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. <b>46</b> Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand."</p>	<p><b>It is enough;</b> the hour has come. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.  <b>42</b> Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand."</p>	<p><b>John 18:2-12</b></p>
<p><b>48</b> but Jesus said to him, "Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?"</p>	<p><b>47</b> While he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people.  <b>48</b> Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I will kiss is the man; seize him." <b>49</b> And he came up to Jesus at once and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" And he kissed him. <b>50</b> Jesus said to him, "Friend, do what you came to do." Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus and seized him.</p>	<p><b>43</b> And immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. <b>44</b> Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I will kiss is the man. Seize him and lead him away under guard." <b>45</b> And when he came, he went up to him at once and said, "Rabbi!" And he kissed him. <b>46</b> And they laid hands on him and seized him.</p>	
<p><b>49</b> And when those who were around him saw what would follow, they said, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?"</p>			
	<p><b>51</b> And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his</p>	<p><b>47</b> But one of those who stood by drew his sword and struck the</p>	

<p>50 And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear.</p>	<p>hand and drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear.</p>	<p>servant of the high priest and cut off his ear.</p>	
<p>51 But Jesus said, "No more of this!" And he touched his ear and healed him.</p>	<p>52 Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword.</p>		
	<p>53 Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? 54 But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?"</p>		
<p>52 Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders, who had come out against him, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs?"</p>	<p>55 At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me.</p>	<p>48 And Jesus said to them, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? 49 Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me. But let the Scriptures be fulfilled."</p>	
<p>53 When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness."</p>	<p>56 But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled."  Then all the disciples left him and fled.</p>	<p>50 And they all left him and fled.</p>	
		<p>51 And a young man followed him, with nothing but a linen cloth about his body. And they seized him,</p>	
		<p>52 but he left the linen cloth and ran away naked.</p>	
<p>54 Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house, and Peter was following at a distance.</p>	<p>57 Then those who had seized Jesus led him to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders had gathered.</p>	<p>53 And they led Jesus to the high priest. And all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes came together.</p>	<p><b>John 18:13-24</b></p>
<p>55 And when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat down among them.  66 When day came, the assembly of the elders of the people gathered together, both chief priests and scribes. And they led him away to their council, and they said,  67 "If you are the Christ, tell us."</p>	<p>58 And Peter was following him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest, and going inside he sat with the guards to see the end. 59 Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking false testimony against Jesus that they might put him to death, 60 but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward  61 and said, "This man said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to rebuild it in three days.'"  62 And the high priest stood up and said, "Have you no answer</p>	<p>54 And Peter had followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. And he was sitting with the guards and warming himself at the fire. 55 Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking testimony against Jesus to put him to death,  but they found none. 56 For many bore false witness against him, but their testimony did not agree. 57 And some stood up and bore false witness against him, saying, 58 "We heard him say, 'I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.'" 59 Yet even about this their testimony did not agree. 60 And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, "Have you no answer to make?</p>	

<p>But he said to them, "If I tell you, you will not believe, 68 and if I ask you, you will not answer.</p> <p>69 But from now on the Son of Man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God." 70 So they all said, "Are you the Son of God, then?" And he said to them, "You say that I am." 71 Then they said, "What further testimony do we need? We have heard it ourselves from his own lips."</p>	<p>to make? What is it that these men testify against you?" 63 But Jesus remained silent. And the high priest said to him, "I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." 64 Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven." 65 Then the high priest tore his robes and said, "He has uttered blasphemy. What further witnesses do we need? You have now heard his blasphemy." 66 What is your judgment?" They answered, "He deserves death." 67 Then they spit in his face and struck him. And some slapped him, 68 saying, "Prophecy to us, you Christ! Who is it that struck you?"</p>	<p>What is it that these men testify against you?" 61 But he remained silent and made no answer. Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" 62 And Jesus said, "I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." 63 And the high priest tore his garments and said, "What further witnesses do we need?" 64 You have heard his blasphemy. What is your decision?" And they all condemned him as deserving death. 65 And some began to spit on him and to cover his face and to strike him, saying to him, "Prophecy!" And the guards received him with blows.</p>	
<p>56 Then a servant girl, seeing him as he sat in the light and looking closely at him,  said, "This man also was with him."</p>	<p>69 Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came up to him  and said, "You also were with Jesus the Galilean."</p>	<p>66 And as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came, 67 and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, "You also were with the Nazarene, Jesus."</p>	<b>John 18:25-27</b>
<p>57 But he denied it, saying, "Woman, I do not know him."</p>	<p>70 But he denied it before them all, saying, "I do not know what you mean."</p>	<p>68 But he denied it, saying, "I neither know nor understand what you mean." And he went out into the gateway and the rooster crowed.</p>	
<p>58 And a little later someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them."  But Peter said, "Man, I am not."</p>	<p>71 And when he went out to the entrance, another servant girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth." 72 And again he denied it with an oath: "I do not know the man."</p>	<p>69 And the servant girl saw him and began again to say to the bystanders, "This man is one of them." 70 But again he denied it.</p>	
<p>59 And after an interval of about an hour still another insisted, saying, "Certainly this man also was with him, for he too is a Galilean."</p>	<p>73 After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Certainly you too are one of them, for your accent betrays you."</p>	<p>And after a little while the bystanders again said to Peter, "Certainly you are one of them, for you are a Galilean."</p>	
<p>60 But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about."  And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed.</p>	<p>74 Then he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, "I do not know the man." And immediately the rooster crowed.</p>	<p>71 But he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, "I do not know this man of whom you speak." 72 And immediately the rooster crowed a second time.</p>	
<p>61 And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how he had said to him, "Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times."</p>	<p>75 And Peter remembered the saying of Jesus, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times."</p>	<p>And Peter remembered how Jesus had said to him, "Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times."</p>	
<p>62 And he went out and wept bitterly.</p>	<p>And he went out and wept bitterly.</p>	<p>And he broke down and wept.</p>	

