

CHAPTER 22

Overview of Luke 22

Chapter 22 represents the end of one journey for Jesus and the beginning of another. He has completed His ministry and teaching among the masses, and now will concentrate on His final journey to the cross. We will see that one of Jesus' disciples, Judas Iscariot, prompted by Satan, formulates a plot to betray Jesus to the religious authorities who have decided to do away with Him. We will see Luke's account of the Last Supper where Jesus gives final instructions to His disciples, and institutes what we now call the Lord's Supper (Communion). Jesus will introduce the new covenant during the supper. Because the disciples begin discussing among themselves who will be greatest in the kingdom of heaven, Jesus teaches them an important lesson about having the attitude of a servant. After the supper, Jesus will lead His disciples to the garden of Gethsemane where He will give them an important instruction about prayer. While in the garden, Jesus will be captured by the temple guards and led away to stand trial before the Jewish Council, the Sanhedrin. While Jesus is being abused by the temple guards, Peter will deny Him three times.

1 Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which is called the Passover, was approaching.

2 The chief priests and the scribes were seeking how they might put Him to death; for they were afraid of the people.

What to look for in Luke 22

1. Read Exodus 12 before reading this chapter. It will provide an excellent context for understanding the timing and events that take place in this chapter.
2. Look for the disciple who betrays Jesus, and the entity directing this disciple. Look for the motives behind the betrayal.
3. Look for the key events during what we call the "Lord's Supper" (aka "Communion" or "Mass"). Determine what the "elements" represent, and which one represents the new covenant.
4. Observe the debate among the disciples concerning who will be greatness in the kingdom. See how Jesus settles the debate.
5. After the supper, Jesus will lead the disciples to the garden of Gethsemane. Look for the important instruction He gives them, and why.
6. Look for Peter's denial of Jesus. Consider why Peter denies Him, and look for Peter's rationalization.
7. When Jesus appears before the Council, they will ask only one question. Observe Jesus' answer and consider how important that answer is today.

22:1-2 Luke now turns from Jesus' teaching in the temple to the events surrounding His crucifixion. Luke reminds the reader of the important context of the Passover. The phrase "the Feast of Unleavened Bread" is the only instance this entire phrase is found in the New Testament, as the other gospel writers abbreviate to "Unleavened Bread" or simply "Passover." It is assumed Luke used the entire phrase for the sake of his Gentile readers. These two events, Passover and Unleavened Bread, are distinguished by what they celebrate; however, the terms are often used interchangeably throughout Scripture. As written earlier, Passover always occurred on Nisan 14 and celebrated the night the angel of death "passed over" those homes in Egypt covered by the

blood of an unblemished lamb. Throughout Egypt, those homes not covered by the blood of the lamb lost the firstborn. It is therefore the night that the firstborn son of Pharaoh was taken. The Feast of Unleavened Bread, however, follows immediately on Nisan 15-21, and celebrates the swift flight from Egypt by the Israelites, the Exodus. Escaping from Egypt happened so quickly that the Israelites were instructed not to put yeast in their bread, for there would be no time for the leaven to rise. Luke notes that the Passover was about to take place.

In **verse 2**, note that it is the “chief priests and scribes” that are heading up the plot to kill Jesus. Neither Pharisees nor Sadducees are mentioned here, but surely some were in the mix. In the context of killing Jesus, it is important to note that it was the religious leadership and the heads of the nation that were plotting to do away with Him, not an isolated sect of the Sanhedrin. The significance is that they represent Israel, and as they go, so goes the nation. They are the spiritual and cultural representatives of the whole nation of Israel, and as they are to suffer judgment for their rejection of the Messiah, so will the whole nation. In spite of all the confrontations with the religious leaders, verse 2 is also the first mention by Luke that the Jewish leadership wanted to “put Him to death.” Jesus had predicted His death three times before (9:22; 18:33; 20:15), but only now has the leadership itself come to that conclusion. Why?

The writer suspects that the call for Jesus’ death goes back to chapter 20, verses 1-8. The issue is one of authority. The Jewish leadership was well aware that they were losing their hold on the people. Jesus was not only outsmarting and out maneuvering the Jewish leaders, but word was getting around that He was making them look silly in the eyes of the people. Additionally, He was exposing their hypocrisy, their sins, their greed, their evil methods, their pride, and their predatory ways with the people. He was undermining their authority by exposing their mishandling of the Scriptures, and taking away from them their greatest weapon: the oppressive laws regarding the Sabbath. The people were flocking *to* Jesus and *away from* the religious authorities, so much so that by now the religious leaders fear loss of control of the people.

Concomitantly, the religious leaders feared Jesus Himself. One must not assume that, as in the case of the people, the religious leaders were hoping for the arrival of the Messiah. They had made a life for themselves apart from the need for a Messiah. Therefore, if Jesus *was* the Messiah, He would surely destroy all that they had worked so hard for: first, a relatively peaceful coexistence with the Romans who rewarded them for keeping the peace; second, power

over the people who the leaders could always turn over to the Romans if they caused trouble; and third, their luxurious, comfortable lifestyles, made possible by the temple taxes and kickbacks from the Romans. On the other hand, if Jesus *was not* the Messiah, He would end up causing riots among the people, calling for the overthrow of the Romans, and thus destabilizing the *status quo*. Such attempts had been made before by men named Theudas and Judas of Galilee, as mentioned by Gamaliel in Acts 5:33-39. They had always failed, but they also had always destabilized the religious government by putting everyone in authority at risk.

Thus, it is consistent with the character of Israel's religious leaders that they wanted Jesus out of the way. They saw no other option than to kill Him, as all their other attempts to discredit Him had failed. But when? As to the when, it would perhaps have to be sometime after the Feast of Unleavened Bread when the great crowd of pilgrims had left Jerusalem and, therefore, less chance of a riot. And *how* would they get rid of Him? No doubt, that was the number one item on the agenda at the Council meetings.

Fortunately for them, they had a man on the inside, a traitor by the name Judas Iscariot.

3 And Satan entered into Judas who was called Iscariot, belonging to the number of the twelve.

4 And he went away and discussed with the chief priests and officers how he might betray Him to them.

5 They were glad and agreed to give him money.

6 So he consented, and *began* seeking a good opportunity to betray Him to them apart from the crowd.

22:3-6 Judas Iscariot was not only a disciple of Jesus, he was one of the twelve men specifically chosen by Jesus to be an apostle. "Iscariot" probably is a shortened form of "Ish Kerioth" meaning "a man from Kerioth, a town in southern Judah. (The name Iscariot is attached to Judas here because there was another one of the twelve also named Judas, "Judas the son of James" [Luke 6:6]. Judas' name is also distinguished by the phrase, "Judas, who was betraying Him" [Matt. 26:25].)

Luke makes specific mention that Satan entered into Judas. The dynamics of how Satan entered into Judas are beyond the scope of this commentary, but based on other references in Scripture, Satan enters into people through a weakness of the flesh that violates the commands of God. In the case of David, Satan entered through pride and disobedience (1 Chron. 21:1). In the case of Ananias and Sapphira, Satan entered through greed and lying to God (Acts 5:1-11). What motivated Judas to betray Jesus is never completely spelled out in Scripture, but one theory is that Judas actually believed Jesus was the Messiah and was trying to force His hand. If Jesus were to be seized by the authorities, it might force Him to show Himself as the Messiah and thus overthrow the Romans. Another theory is that Judas simply had a weakness of the flesh called greed: he saw the chance to make some money on the side. Judas did indeed have a weakness for money, as the

apostle John points out that Judas, being the keeper of the money box, “used to pilfer what was put into it” (John 12:6).

Satan’s motive, however, was obvious—undermine Jesus’ mission. Luke mentions Satan by name five times in his gospel, and cites Satan as “the devil” an additional five times. There is no question that the gospel writers and the apostles knew Satan to be a real entity, as he is referred to a number of times in the Old Testament (e.g., Job and Zechariah). Satan, by tempting Jesus in the wilderness, has already failed once to thwart His mission, but he hasn’t yet given up. We know from the Matthew’s gospel that Satan entered Peter in an attempt to prevent Jesus from going to the cross and completing His mission (16:23). On the occasion of entering Judas, however, Satan is behind the plot to force Jesus to scuttle God’s plan and declare Himself as Messiah in order to avoid the horrible death that awaits Him. Satan knows, apparently, that if Jesus’ mission is fulfilled, he will lose his control of the people of the earth and many will be saved from his captivity. He also knows that if Jesus declares Himself as Messiah in order to avoid the suffering of the cross, He will have disobeyed the Father and therefore never fulfill God’s plan to redeem mankind. By declaring Himself as Messiah and setting up His kingdom apart from God’s plan for mankind, Jesus would have gained the earth but lost the world. Therefore, Satan, who all along has been using the religious leaders in an attempt to interrupt Jesus’ mission, has now found a way to force Jesus to make a choice: suffer terribly on the cross, or declare Himself Messiah against the will of God.

Note, too, Luke’s careful phrasing. In **verse 4**, Judas “*went away* and discussed with the chief priests and officers *how* he might betray Him...” This is reminiscent of verse 2 where Luke writes, “The chief priests and the scribes were seeking *how* they might put Him to death...” In other words, the priests and scribes were looking for an opportunity, and Judas, under Satan’s influence, joins in on the plot. In order to do that, Judas “went away” from Jesus. What is most disturbing (and sobering) about this scenario is that both the chief priests and Judas *believed they were doing the right thing!* This scenario raises the issue of self-deception and the price to be paid for *going away* from Jesus: people can believe they are doing the right thing in the name of God, but be completely out of His will. End-times date-setters believe they are doing the right thing in the name of God, but they are completely outside the clear teaching of Scripture. Liberal scholars believe they are discovering new truths about God’s word, but they are completely outside God’s truth. Health, wealth and prosperity preachers believe they are

teaching people how to claim God's promises, yet are teaching heretical doctrines that are not part of God's will, and almost always have to do with money and worldly success. Some pastors may believe they are correctly emphasizing tongues, healings, and other gifts of the Spirit, but are blindly leading believers down a path marked long beforehand by Satan himself to draw them away from experiencing a relationship with God based purely on grace and love. Some evangelical pastors may believe that growing a megachurch is a sign of godly success, that the bigger the church the better the effectiveness of their ministry, and that being the pastor of a megachurch is a sure sign of God's blessings. In reality, the pastor may be on nothing more than an ego trip, suffering from an inferiority complex and/or delusions of grandeur, and who are enabled by groupies who crave the attention of celebrities. Such pastors are completely deceived by their perception of self-importance. The key to avoid being deceived? The true believer or Christian leader steadfastly stays in an intimate, personal relationship with Jesus through prolonged and persevering prayer, personally applies *all* the teachings of Jesus with devout honesty and self-reflection, avoids at all cost the trappings of money or success (whether personally or in the name of church growth or ministry outreach), and who views himself as nothing more than a bond-servant who, at any time, is expendable. True leaders will not be deceived by Satan if they abide by Zechariah 4:6: "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit...."

Note, too, in **verse 5** that Judas brought great relief to the chief priests and officers: "they were glad...." Judas was exactly what the religious leaders were hoping for—an open door to get rid of Jesus. He is an answer to their prayers. Also note that "they were glad and *agreed to give him money.*" This means that Judas bargained with them over money. Once again, the issue of money and possessions raises its ugly head. Perhaps it is why Paul writes to Timothy, "For the love of money is a root for all sorts of evil" (1 Tim. 6:10; note that Paul does *not* write, "money is *the* root of all evil," as is often misquoted). And perhaps it is why Jesus clearly taught His disciples, "You cannot serve God and wealth" (Luke 16:13). The seeking of wealth for personal gain is absolutely contrary to Jesus' instructions to His followers, whether in the name of the church or not.

In **verse 6**, Judas agrees on a price and now enters into the "seeking" mode of the religious leaders in verse 2. The price agreed on according to Matthew 26:15 was thirty pieces of silver, which, ironically, was the asking price for a slave (Exod. 21:32), and had been prophesied by Zechariah (12:12-13). Like the leaders, Judas is seeking a way

7 Then came the *first* day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover *lamb* had to be sacrificed.

8 And Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and prepare the Passover for us, so that we may eat it.”

9 They said to Him, “Where do You want us to prepare it?”

10 And He said to them, “When you have entered the city, a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him into the house that he enters.

11 “And you shall say to the owner of the house, ‘The Teacher says to you, “Where is the guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?”’

12 “And he will show you a large, furnished upper room; prepare it there.”

13 And they left and found *everything* just as He had told them; and they prepared the Passover.

to betray Jesus into the hands of the temple guard without the crowds realizing it.

22:7-13 The day is Thursday. Jesus sends Peter and John to gather all the supplies necessary for the Passover meal. Passover begins at 6 p.m. and will extend through 6 p.m. on Friday. According to the law, the Passover lamb was to be sacrificed “at twilight.” (See Exodus 12:1-13 for the instructions regarding preparation of the meal.) The disciples themselves did not sacrifice the lamb, as the preparation of the lamb was quite specific. Lambs were sacrificed in the late afternoon in the Court of the Priests. All the food necessary for the meal, including the “unleavened bread and bitter herbs” would have been prepared beforehand by others and purchased by the disciples. Therefore, there would have been crowds shopping for the supplies necessary for the meal. It is estimated that during Passover, the population in Jerusalem increased from 60,000 to 250,000. Whereas Judeans celebrated the Passover on Friday, Galileans celebrated the meal on Thursday evening.

Verses 9-13 provide the details of the location where Jesus and His disciples will celebrate the Passover meal. Whether these events were prearranged or providential is not stated and irrelevant to the story, although verse 13 seems to indicate some level of surprise on the part of Peter and John. Some commentators have suggested that normally it was a woman who carried water from the wells, but as others have suggested, it could just as well have been the servant of the owner of the inn.

It should be noted that a debate exists amongst some scholars as to whether or not Jesus actually observed the Passover meal, or another meal prior to the Passover. This would mean that the events in this chapter took place on Wednesday evening, which would be the day of the preparation of the Passover, as recorded in John 19:14. The reasons for each position go far beyond the scope of this commentary. For simplicity, the author assumes the more traditional approach that these events are indeed the Passover meal occurring on a Thursday evening, and that His crucifixion takes place on Friday.

And, as a final note to the above observation, does it really make any difference? Were it an important part of the Last Supper narrative, surely the gospels writers would have been more specific and clarified the issue. What matters most about the Last Supper narrative is not the exact time that it occurred, but what Jesus taught His disciples and the institution of the new covenant. Such debates, while interesting, can often take away from the key lessons the gospel writers are sharing.

14 When the hour had come, He reclined *at the table*, and the apostles with Him.

15 And He said to them, “I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer;

16 for I say to you, I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.”

There is also, of course, a practical lesson here for all Christians. Similar debates have divided Christians throughout church history. Debates such as baptism by immersion or sprinkling, whether salvation comes by predestination or free will, whether there is a pre-tribulation rapture or a mid- or post-tribulation rapture, or even whether there is a rapture at all, do not make for one body unified by love. Let the academic debates abound, for they make for lively discussion. But never, ever, out of love for Christ, let them rule to the point of division and separation. With the exception of heresy, divisions such as these are nothing short of “Satan entered into Judas.”

22:14-23 Luke now moves the narrative forward to the meal itself. Unlike da Vinci’s painting of the Last Supper, the disciples did not sit in chairs at a table Western style, but reclined on pillows at a table much lower to the floor, which was typical of the Middle East during celebratory meals; thus, the meaning of “furnished upper room” in verse 12. Only the twelve are with Jesus.

Obviously, and as John relates in his gospel, Jesus had many, many things to say to the apostles during this last meal with them. Luke presents a synopsis of the most important things which focus on what will eventually be called “Communion”; that is, the passing of the bread and the cup, for “the Lord’s Supper,” as it is also called, will become a regular part of Christian worship in the Gentile world.

The words “I have earnestly desired” indicates that Jesus has been especially looking forward to this event. In one sense, it represents the end of His teaching ministry. The Lord’s Supper represents the transition between the old covenant and the New, the preaching ministry and the cross, the training of disciples and the foundation for the church. It is quite likely that the disciples had no understanding of His words “before I suffer.” Although Jesus has been informing the apostles all along that He will suffer, they have no idea how to put His words into the context of their expectations of a conquering king. That is because they have yet to understand that Jesus Himself will become the Passover lamb; that He Himself will become the sacrificial lamb whose blood protects from the angel of spiritual death by taking away their sin.

It is not unusual for Western evangelicals today to overlook the concept of suffering in their own walk as Christians. The reason is simple: in order to promote church growth and “win souls to Christ” (always a numbers game), the suffering and sacrifice aspects of being a follower of Jesus Christ are rarely if ever taught. It is very easy being a Christian in America. The thought is, “Say this simple prayer,

and not only will your sins be forgiven and therefore guaranteed a trip to heaven, but *your life will get better.*” While it is true one’s life will get “better,” the “better” needs to be defined as being more spiritually better but possibly temporally worse. That is why Paul states in the opening of his letter to the Ephesians, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every *spiritual blessing* in the heavenly places in Christ” (Eph. 1:3; italics mine). Unfortunately, “better” is often assumed to be void of the suffering and sacrifice Christians are called to. So, in this regard, Christians today are no different from the apostles reclining at the table with Jesus, wondering what Jesus means when He says, “before I suffer.” Though Jesus has warned them clearly in the previous chapter (21:12-19), they either do not really believe it or they clearly do not understand it. And it may be true as well that the fact of their future suffering was hidden from them by God Himself (Luke 9:45). The lesson for the reader is this: the gospel should never be sugar coated, and the making of disciples should never minimize or even avoid the subjects of suffering and sacrifice. Discipleship should always include that suffering and sacrifice are to be expected of the disciple of Jesus Christ, that “He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it” (Matt. 10:39).

Jesus’ words “I shall never again eat until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God” is simply a statement of fact that looks ahead to the marriage feast of the Lamb (Rev. 19:9-10). By bringing these two statements together (verses 15 & 16), Luke has pointed the reader to both the immediate mission of Jesus and to His future ministry at the end of the age. “Fulfilled in the kingdom of God” should be interpreted in a much broader sense than simply a future event, however. It refers to the completion of all the work of God through Jesus Christ, which extends throughout the church age and into eternity. The kingdom of God is not just a place, such as heaven, but an entire state of existence that supersedes all temporal reality.

Notice in **verse 17** that Luke states, “And when He had taken a cup and given thanks....” He does not state, “*the* cup.” That is because the *seder*, or Passover meal, called for the passing of *four* cups of wine, diluted with water to one-half, the first of which was the cup of blessing and thanksgiving. After the first cup had been passed around, bitter herbs dipped in vinegar and water (the *charoseth*) was taken by the host, a small portion eaten, and the rest distributed to others at the table. After that, the second cup of wine was taken, followed by the singing of Psalms 113 and 114, the first part of the *Hallel* (aka *Hallelujah*). The main portion of the

17 And when He had taken a cup *and* given thanks, He said, “Take this and share it among yourselves;

18 for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes.”

19 And when He had taken *some bread and* given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.”

20 And in the same way *He took* the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.

meal was then taken, followed by a third and fourth cup, after which the remainder of the *Hallel* was sung (Psalms 115-118).

There is a subtle but important difference in the wording about the kingdom of God in verses 16 and 18. This writer believes that two separate events are described. In verse 16, Jesus is definitely referring to the marriage feast of the Lamb. However, the wording is different in verse 18. Jesus states, “I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on *until the kingdom of God comes.*” There is a partial coming of the kingdom of God at Pentecost, and it is the beginning of the church and the church age. This writer believes that Jesus is referring once again to the first cup, the cup of thanksgiving, and that Jesus, who will be seated at the right hand of God, will begin to see the fruit of His sacrifice on the cross, and will be “drinking” the fruit of the vine. Thus, this statement by Jesus refers, not to the marriage feast of the Lamb, but to Pentecost when the Holy Spirit is poured out “on all mankind.” Therefore, just as there is “one Messiah, two comings,” there is “one kingdom, two comings.”

Verses 19 directs the reader to the breaking of bread, which always occurred after the second cup. The breaking of the unleavened bread is representative of Jesus’ scourging and death (broken body) for the sin of all mankind. (The various interpretations of the elements of the Lord’s Supper will not be discussed here. The writer takes the position, however, that the taking of the elements of bread and wine are symbolic in nature, and serve as a memorial to Christ’s death and resurrection.) Note, too, that Jesus states, “This is My body which is *given* for you....” He does not say, “which is broken for you,” as many people sometimes misquote. The significance of what Jesus says, however, is critical. Just as Jesus’ body “is given for you,” so, too, are the followers of Jesus Christ to give back their bodies for Him. That is why the apostle Paul writes in Romans 12:1, “Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your *bodies* a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.”

Jesus then takes the cup (some say the third, others say the fourth) and passes it around to the rest of the disciples. Whereas the breaking of the unleavened bread represents Jesus’ death for the sins of mankind, the cup represents the resurrection and the new life that His resurrection brings. The cup is symbolic of the new covenant which comes about only because of the shedding of His own blood. With the shedding of Christ’s blood, the old covenant is fulfilled, and therefore is no longer binding on those who are in Christ Jesus. As the writer of Hebrews states, “Without shedding of blood there is no

forgiveness” (Heb. 9:22). It is only through the shedding of Christ’s blood, the blood of the sinless unblemished Lamb, that sins can be forgiven. As Paul writes to the Christians in Colossae, it is “through the blood of His cross” that Jesus reconciled “all things to Himself” (Col. 1:20).

It is tempting at this point of the commentary to (1) elaborate on all the benefits and blessings associated with the establishment of the new covenant which will serve as the core doctrine of the church, (2) to discuss the significance and power of the blood, and (3) to elaborate on the celebration of the Lord’s Supper. But there are many, many more commentators far more qualified than this one to elaborate on such magnificent subjects. However, what is on the heart of this writer is the love of Christ behind it all. The very phrases “which is given for you” and “which is poured out for you” carry the most powerful message of love the world has ever known, or ever will know. Why should He who was blameless and beyond reproach, who healed the sick and cast out demons, who raised the dead, who spoke nothing but perfect truth in simple ways that even the poorest person on earth could understand, who stood up to the rich, the arrogant, the proud, the religious elite and the most powerful military in the world...why should He give Himself and pour Himself out for the sake of those who, when threatened with their lives, reject and forsake Him? Why should the King of Heaven give Himself to those of us who have sinned beyond measure in the most heinous of ways and are worthy only of eternal separation from God? Why should the Son of God, the Logos, the Prince of Peace, pour out Himself for the sake of us who are so desperately lost, and, even after accepting His grace, find ourselves so spiritually lackadaisical? The answer is His love. It was Jesus’ love for the lost—for us—that drove Him to the suffering of the cross. The question to every reader therefore is, “Can we not so love Him in return?” It is a question that every Christian must face in order to become a true disciple of Jesus Christ, and thus discover all the benefits and blessings that come through Him. And, from what we have learned from Luke, returning love to Jesus—by its very nature—demands suffering and sacrifice. If we are to love Jesus in return, then we are to love Him in the same manner He has loved us—sacrificially. And, if we are to love Jesus in return, we are to love *others* in the same manner in which He loves others. There is no compromise or rationale to this principle: love is the foundational calling of the disciple of Jesus Christ.

21 “But behold, the hand of the one betraying Me is with Mine on the table.

And now, the dark part: there is a traitor in their midst (**verses 21-23**). The presence of Judas is a fulfillment of Psalm 41:9 which states, “Even my

22 “For indeed, the Son of Man is going as it has been determined; but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!”

23 And they began to discuss among themselves which one of them it might be who was going to do this thing.

24 And there arose also a dispute among them *as to* which one of them was regarded to be greatest.

25 And He said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who have authority over them are called ‘Benefactors.’

26 “But *it is* not this way with you, but the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like the servant.

27 “For who is greater, the one who reclines *at the table* or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines *at the table*? But I am among you as the one who serves.

close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.” The other gospel writers provide more detail as to the interaction between Jesus and Judas Iscariot, but Luke chooses to put the details aside in favor of making a point for all readers: “Woe to that man by whom He is betrayed.” The writer believes that Luke is warning all who say they are followers of Jesus that there is a terrible consequence for betraying Him. As a companion of Paul, Luke is well aware of those who have turned against Paul, and therefore the gospel, and therefore Christ. (See 2 Tim. 4:10-16 for examples.)

The verb “betraying” is in the present tense indicating that the betrayal is in process. The awkward phrase “the Son of Man is going as it has been determined” could be translated, “the Son of Man is going away” or “going along the course” that has been determined (by God). (The word “going” is *poreuomai* in the Greek, meaning “to behave.”) In other words, Jesus is going along the path that has been determined long beforehand by God the Father, and that path leads to the cross at the hands of a traitor.

Of course, the disciples begin discussing who Jesus is referring to.

22:24-27 The debate among the apostles that follows next is almost beyond belief. The conversation of the apostles quickly turns from who is a traitor in their midst to who is greatest. In any other setting but this, a leader would throw up his hands and sigh, “I can’t believe this!” But not Jesus, so concerned was He for the test that was coming for the disciples when He would be crucified, and for the young church that would emerge after His ascension. In regards to the latter, it is one of the most important teachings Jesus ever gave the apostles.

This is not the first time the apostles have engaged in a discussion about personal status and position in the anticipated new kingdom. Matthew records that the mother of James and John had asked Jesus for preferment for her sons just prior to Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem; that one son would sit on His right hand and the other on His left when He established His kingdom (Matt. 20:20-28). In that instance, Jesus began teaching on the responsibility of good leaders; obviously, the apostles hadn’t gotten the point. The difference in Luke’s record is in the illustration used; that is, the example of the “Benefactor.”

Authority can be used to hold power over others for good or for evil. The “Benefactors” Jesus is referring to are those who used their power and authority over others for evil. The English title “Benefactor” comes directly from the Latin and is

based on the Greek word *euergetes* which means “good works.” It was a practice in those days for kings, rulers and the rich to do “good works” for the people: build amphitheaters, museums, water works, et cetera, for the sake of gaining esteem and favor among the people. Ironically, most of these kings used oppressive taxes to carry out their deeds, and many were ruthless rulers over the people. These so-called “good works” were also used by those wishing to climb the corporate ladder, so to speak; a way of gaining favor with those in authority and power who could elevate their status. Herod the Great, a great builder in his day, is an example of a “Benefactor.” And, by performing these “good works,” they became a source for “lording” them over the people—their good deeds, however, always came with a condition. The “votive gifts” referred to in the previous chapter was a type of “Benefactor,” only in a religious context. Even today, Western philanthropists who give millions to causes and building projects often do so, not out of pure good will for others, but for the fame associated with it and for tax benefits. In Jesus’ day, however, the term “Benefactor” had a connotation of evil, and the selfish, narcissistic, self-aggrandizing, self-deifying use of power and authority that came with it.

It was John Dalberg-Acton who wrote in 1887, “Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” When the Holy Spirit descends upon the apostles at Pentecost, it will be the beginning of the church. The church will grow dramatically in the first century, so much so that a hierarchy of leadership will be required, even the formation of titles and offices (e.g., see 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 2:20; 4:11; 1 Tim. 3:1-13). The apostles will always serve as the primary foundation of the church because they are charged with communicating and preserving the truth about the person and work of Jesus Christ, and the saving grace that comes only by Him and through Him. This is why truth is emphasized so adamantly by the apostles John, Peter and Jude in their latter years. (The word “truth” is used 20 times in John’s epistles alone.) That the apostles will be so esteemed by this sudden influx of new disciples in the church is a temptation beyond measure to exercise power over others. The twelve would be greatly respected, admired and sought after by the growing church, highly esteemed, praised for their miraculous works, seen as the living link with Jesus Himself, celebrities in their own right, and even venerated to the point of worship. Acts 5:15 indicates that the new Christians esteemed Peter so highly that they wanted even his shadow to fall on them. Therefore, the apostles will find themselves in the position of great authority, and with that authority comes potential power over others, and with that power over others comes the

temptation of being great in the eyes of the world. Because they are men of flesh, the esteem they would receive could easily boost their egos, making them think more highly of themselves than they ought to think. But that is not the way of the kingdom of God.

The mention of “Benefactors” would be a background the apostles were familiar with. By using “Benefactors” as an example, Jesus makes one of the most important statements the apostles could ever hear regarding leadership in the church: “*But it is not that way with you....*” (Italics mine.) It is therefore the most important lesson any church leader can learn, a lesson all too often forgotten in evangelical churches and organizations today. The leader is not to attempt to climb the ladder of success for the purpose of gaining more power and authority in the name of church growth, but to descend the stairs of humility to the servants’ quarters in the name of servant leadership. The pastor is not to become the CEO; he is to become the lowly shepherd. Modern-day evangelicalism has been deceived into adopting a philosophy of ministry believing that church growth depends upon the charisma, personality, intelligence, persuasiveness and methodology of the senior pastor. The evangelical community has employed the world’s technique of elevating the senior pastor to celebrity status. The result is that, in general, celebrity pastors have built churches that are a mile wide and an inch deep in terms of making true disciples. The evangelical climate has made celebrities out of pastors who “started out with 15 people in a home Bible study and grew it to a 15,000 member megachurch.” Christians buy millions of books recognized not for what they actually say, but for the fact that the author’s name is at the top in big, bold letters; a celebrity, therefore, to be read, whether or not their character and moral fiber equals his or her fame. After all, who would buy the book if the culture of celebrity did not accompany it? How many books would be sold if the author’s famous name was not at the top? The celebrity pastor movement has spawned a culture of Christian commercialism, not unlike that which Jesus so vehemently objected to in the temple. Instead of making disciples who pray, sacrifice, love one another, are dedicated to Scripture, share their faith, stand bravely for the truth, demonstrate concern for persecuted Christians and the poor, and seek to rectify the ills of a culture hell-bent on self-destruction, the church has perfected the creation of Christian nominalists who isolate themselves from the world, decorate their mantles with Precious Moments, plaster their car bumpers with fish stickers, cover their Bibles with expensive leather cases, ignore the poor, feed their political anger with conservative talk radio and right-leaning cable TV, and, if it is convenient and there

are no kids' soccer game scheduled or an NFL playoff game, gather on Sunday mornings to be entertained by professional musicians, glaring multimedia, a charismatic teacher who has given up the idea that there is any relevance in expositional teaching of God's word, and speak confidently that God's primary concern for His people is that they are happy, prosperous and successful. Such Christians are born-again in name only. While Christians have ranted and raved against the sins of society, many evangelical and charismatic churches and parachurch organizations in America have completely ignored Jesus' instruction, "But it is not that way with you..." Jesus told His disciples emphatically, "The one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like the servant." There is no room in that statement for the celebrity pastor.

This writer suspects that the rationale behind making the pastor or Christian leader a celebrity (author, public speaker, spokesman) is to seek a voice in society that represents the church, and therefore gain greater credibility and favor among the populace. The question is, "How's it working?" The difficulty with the above rationale is that adopting the ways of the world, and seeking acceptance in the eyes of the world, has resulted in making the church just like the world. Especially in America, adopting the methods of the world has backfired completely and, instead of gaining credibility, the church has actually lost credibility by the fact that so many of these so-called Christian celebrities have had moral failures, all of whom have received great press. The problem, however, is not a liberal government, the secular press, or a godless, hedonistic society. The problem is a disobedient, narcissistic, self-serving church that, in seeking to find acceptance in secular society, has compromised itself to the point that the behavior of the average Christian is indistinguishable from the lifestyle of the secularist. The answer? Pastors should shun the celebrity status and seek first the role of a servant. Those who follow celebrity pastors and leaders should confess their sin of idolatry, reject the celebrity pastor, and seek out churches where the word is taught and the pastor is a humble servant who seeks first "the kingdom of God and His righteousness." Ministering as loving servants would go a long way to restoring spiritual health in the church today and fulfilling Jesus' command, "But it is not that way with you..."

Jesus completes His teaching on the subject by asking a rhetorical question: "Who is greater, the one who reclines at the table or the one who serves?" The world's answer is "The one who reclines." Jesus' answer is "the one who serves." Having instructed the disciples on the fact that the true leader in the

28 “You are those who have stood by Me in My trials;

29 and just as My Father has granted Me a kingdom, I grant you

30 that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

kingdom of God is a servant first, Jesus then arises from the table and begins washing the feet of the disciples (John 13:5-11).

22:28-30 Here, Jesus affirms His disciples (eleven, with Judas gone, to be replaced eventually by Matthias [Acts 1:26]). He affirms their perseverance and their faithfulness. In spite of all the hardships, testing and doubts they may have faced throughout three years of ministry with Jesus, they have stayed by His side. For that, they will receive a reward, and that reward will be a heavenly one, even though the disciples are still thinking in terms of an earthly reward. Once again, Jesus speaks in terms the apostles would be familiar with. Just as regional appointees would travel to Rome to have their kingdoms conferred on them by Caesar, so, too, will Jesus go to the Father in heaven to have His kingdom conferred on Him. (The word “granted” is a rarely used Greek term meaning to have property assigned in the form of a covenant.) And just as Jesus is granted a kingdom, He has the authority from the Father to delegate His kingdom to others. Jesus is therefore confirming His role as conquering king; He will be king of His kingdom. The offer to “eat and drink at My table in My kingdom” once again confirms His status as king and the apostles’ status as special guests, for special guests were invited to dine at the king’s table (e.g., 2 Sam. 9:7-13). The disciples will also be given specific authority to rule over parts of Jesus’ kingdom. In this case, the Hebrew nation, which is the twelve tribes of Israel. (The Book of Revelation refers to this in chapters 4 and 20.)

All of what Jesus shares with the disciples here is good news, except for one thing—they believe this is all going to take place in the next few days or even hours when Jesus reveals Himself as the conquering king Messiah. They do not know yet that Jesus is referring to a far future event, an event that will not take place within their lifetime.

There is an important lesson here that keeps surfacing: the promises of God *will* take place, but *when* they take place is rarely ours to know. God promises that prayers offered in faith will be answered one way or another. But exactly *how* our prayers are answered or *when* they are answered is something that is reserved for His knowledge alone. The disciples are going to have to learn this lesson the hard way when Jesus is killed. All their expectations for immediate fulfillment are going to be squashed. It will not be until Jesus contacts them *after* the resurrection that their eyes will be opened to see that God’s plan is much broader than their expectations for immediate fulfillment. Therefore, the onus is upon all followers of Jesus Christ to

31 “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded *permission* to sift you like wheat;

32 but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.”

33 But he said to Him, “Lord, with You I am ready to go both to prison and to death!”

34 And He said, “I say to you, Peter, the rooster will not crow today until you have denied three times that you know Me.”

attempt to see the broader picture when offering prayer requests. It is not God that must fit into our plans, but we who must fit into God’s plan.

22:31-34 Jesus now turns His attention momentarily from the eleven to the one...Simon Peter. That Peter’s Hebrew name is used twice seems to indicate the need to get his attention, almost to the point of warning him of a trial to come. Luke is the only gospel writer to record that “Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat...” The Greek word for “demanded permission” is literally “to beg.” The “you” in verses 31 and the first “you” in verse 32 are both plural. This would indicate that Satan desired to sift *all* the disciples like wheat. The second “you” (“and you”) in verse 32, however, is singular, referring therefore to Peter. Why Jesus focuses on Peter more so than the other disciples is because it was Simon Peter who was first given the revelation that “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God,” a revelation based entirely on Peter’s faith (Matt. 16:16). Providentially, Jesus knows that Peter will deny Him, and that eventually, Peter will become the leader of the church. That makes Peter exceptional, and probably had something to do with Peter’s inherent ability to believe; that is, to demonstrate faith. After all, it was Peter who leaped out of the boat and began walking on water to meet Jesus (Matt. 14:22-33). However, Satan has been watching Peter the entire time and knows his weaknesses as well as his strengths, and it would not be improbable that Satan comprehends Peter’s position as a leader among the disciples. Therefore, if Satan can discourage Peter or destroy his faith in Jesus, it is possible that the rest of the disciples will follow. Therefore, Peter is the key. That is why Jesus instructs Peter, “once you have turned again, strengthen (*the faith of*) your brothers” (italics mine for clarification). Satan wants to destroy the disciples’ faith in Jesus, and Peter is the key to either discouraging or strengthening their faith.

The lesson here is an important one: prayer strengthens the faith of others as well as one’s own. That is why believers should be continually praying for Christians all over the world who are undergoing persecution...that their faith would not fail.

Part of the problem with Peter, however, is that he has a tendency to overestimate his faith and underestimate his flesh. Therefore, Peter makes the bold statement, “Lord, with you I am ready to go both to prison and to death!” And, Peter probably meant it and believed it at that time. What Peter did not understand was that given the right circumstances at the right time, he could rationalize away his excuse not to follow through on the very

thing he believed he could do. Rationalization, as well as fear, is a powerful enemy of faith.

Peter falls into the trap that many Christians do. We overestimate the strength of our faith and underestimate the weaknesses of our flesh. The strength of our faith is rarely tested to any great degree on a day-to-day basis. We coast along on our faith, rarely if ever having to accelerate our faith into high gear. We learn to navigate through life in spite of the weaknesses of our flesh and hope there will never be a bend in the road that will result in a crash test of our faith. When there is no test, no temptation, no persecution, no threat to our livelihood, it is easy to live by faith and tolerate our weaknesses, so long as we maintain the *status quo*. It is when the *status quo* suddenly and unexpectedly turns into *non status quo* that our faith can be shaken and the weaknesses of our flesh exposed and exploited. The faith of Peter assumes he can overcome any threat to his *status quo*. It's the weakness of Peter's flesh, an arrogance and pride he is not aware of, that will cause him to fail the crash test and do the very thing he believes he is incapable of.

Jesus, well aware of the weaknesses of Peter's flesh, informs him of his terrible fall: "The rooster will not crow today until you have denied three times that you know Me."

It is interesting that Peter remains silent. Most likely, he believes that Jesus is wrong. Such is the way of pride. And, it will be days before Peter grasps the impact of Jesus' words in verse 32: "Once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers." The words "turned again" are the same Greek word that means "to repent." In other words, Jesus is telling Peter, "Once you have repented of your denial, strengthen the faith of those who come into the church after Pentecost."

35 And He said to them, "When I sent you out without money belt and bag and sandals, you did not lack anything, did you?" They said, "No, nothing."

36 And He said to them, "But now, whoever has a money belt is to take it along, likewise also a bag, and whoever has no sword is to sell his coat and buy one.

37 "For I tell you that this which is written must be fulfilled in Me, 'AND HE WAS NUMBERED WITH TRANSGRESSORS'; for that which refers to Me has *its* fulfillment."

38 They said, "Lord, look, here are two swords." And He said to them, "It is enough."

22:35-38 The reader should remember that the disciples are expecting Jesus to establish His kingdom within hours. But in these few verses Jesus is clearly identifying what we now call "the church age." Verse 35 reminds the disciples of what their situation was like when Jesus was with them: they lacked nothing. They needed no money, no extra clothing, and no sword to protect themselves. The key words in verse 36, however, are "But now..." In other words, the situation is going to change. When Jesus ascends into heaven, followed by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, a brand new era will begin. There will be a partial fulfillment of the kingdom of God on earth; not the establishing of an earthly kingdom, but the formation of the kingdom of God in the hearts of men and women. Jesus will not be physically present, but His body will be reflected in the members of the church. With Jesus

not physically present to supply all their needs, they will have to plan accordingly. They will need to have money to purchase food just like everyone else. They will require extra clothing just like everyone else. And, they will not be automatically protected like they were when they were sent out on their on-the-job training mission (Luke 9:1-6). They will have to protect themselves by deterring attack from the same common criminals everyone else does. (The Greek word for “sword” here is *machairan*, which refers, not to an offensive long sword, but to a defensive weapon that could also be considered a dagger. And, this “sword” was used for everyday chores as well as a weapon. It is the same word used as a metaphor to describe the word of God in Ephesians 6:17.)

There is an important lesson here for followers of Jesus Christ: living by faith does not mean failing to prepare and plan ahead. The pastor should prepare each sermon as if it were his last. The husband and wife should plan their budget and retirement with the understanding that Jesus probably will not return in their lifetime. The business person should make a business plan that fits the projected financial trends. Why? Jesus answers the question in verse 37: His rejection is about to be fulfilled.

Jesus is quoting from Isaiah 53. Isaiah 53 embodies the prophecy concerning the first coming of the Messiah; that is, the suffering servant. It is the suffering the disciples denied and wanted at all cost to avoid. If the reader has never read Isaiah 53, it is a must read. Written over 700 years before Christ, it vividly and shockingly describes Jesus’ rejection by the people, His scourging by the Romans, and His suffering on the cross. The most significant statement of Isaiah 53 is found in verse 6: “But the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.” What the disciples could not understand until after the resurrection when Jesus explained it to them was that the Messiah had to first die for the sins of all mankind before He could establish His kingdom of glory on earth. Only a perfect, sinless man and infinite divine being could atone for all the sins of all mankind for all eternity. The disciples did not understand that when Jesus returns as the conquering king and establishes His kingdom on the earth, judgment on all unrighteousness begins. The purpose for delaying His second coming is that all peoples on the earth should have the opportunity to repent of their sins and find salvation in Christ, thus sparing an eternity apart from God. And, God the Father is willing to let the church suffer in order for as many people as possible to find eternal salvation. And just as Jesus “was numbered with the transgressors,” so, too, are those Christians who suffer imprisonment in countries hostile to Christianity. Once again, we are reminded that suffering and sacrifice go hand-in-

39 And He came out and proceeded as was His custom to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples also followed Him.

40 When He arrived at 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 He knelt down and *began* to pray,

42 saying, “Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done.”

43 Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him.

44 And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground.

45 When He rose from prayer, He came to the disciples and found them sleeping from sorrow,

46 and said to them, “Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not enter into temptation.”

hand with being called a follower of Jesus Christ and a member of His body.

22:39-46 Having left the upper room, Jesus now leads His disciples to the Mount of Olives where He will be arrested and handed over to the Sanhedrin. Matthew records that Jesus continues to inform *all* the disciples that they will “fall away” from following Him, not just Peter (Matt. 26:30-35). And, as expected, all deny that they will. Once again, Peter asserts his loyalty, and once again, Jesus repeats the inevitable.

Upon arrival at the garden, Jesus gives His disciples one last instruction: “Pray that you may not enter into temptation.” There are two possible interpretations for this instruction, as the Greek grammar does not indicate one way or the other. First, does Jesus’ instruction mean, “Pray, and by praying, you will not enter into temptation” as in “pray *so that* you will not enter into temptation”? Or, is Jesus saying, “Pray this specifically: lead me not into temptation.” The first defines the purpose of prayer, the second, the content of prayer. It may be that both are true, and certainly both are relevant to the situation.

It is very important to note that the temptation Jesus is referring to has to do with the warnings of denial in the upper room. The temptation is to deny Jesus, to deny any relationship with Him, and to act as if they care more about their own well being than Jesus’. The temptation is one that every Christian will face at one time or another: denying by our words, behaviors, actions or relationships that we have a relationship with Him, and that relationship is more important to us than our own well-being. All sins committed under peer pressure fall under this genre of temptation. All sins committed in private fall under this temptation. And all behaviors and relationships that are inconsistent with our relationship with Jesus are a form of denying Him. Today, we Christians are no different, and certainly no better than the disciples who abandoned Jesus in the garden. The only advantage we Christians have today is the benefit of the Scriptures themselves, and the examples of others who have failed. Therefore, this writer is convinced that the primary means of overcoming this temptation is prayer...and not just any prayer. Prayer that is personal, thoughtful, fervent and intimate, for only in that level of prayer can a relationship with Jesus be established that is so grounded in love for Him that never would we ever consider abandoning Him or denying Him, whether it be a matter of everyday sin or the threat of death. Therefore, all Christians are to pray, that we may not

enter into temptation to deny Jesus. It is to be a daily prayer, and a life-long prayer.

According to Matthew, the subject of denying Jesus was repeated and discussed, not only in the upper room, but while journeying to the garden as well. Matthew provides more detail into Jesus' agony in the garden, and the lack of vigilance on the part of the disciples (Matt. 26:36-46). Instead of praying, they will be found sleeping and, as a result of their failure to maintain watchful, vigilant prayer, they will fall to the temptation to abandon Jesus.

When Jesus enters the garden, He instructs His disciples to remain in one location while He separates Himself a few yards away to pray. What Jesus begins to pray should be the goal, if not the hallmark of prayer for all Christians: "Not My will, but Yours be done." Jesus, being fully human, does not want to go through the torture and suffering that awaits Him. He has witnessed Roman scourging and crucifixion, as would have all young men growing up in Judea and Galilee in those days, and He knows full well the terrible suffering that accompanies it. He is well aware that His friends will abandon Him, and the very nation He came to save will shout "Crucify Him!" Therefore, His human nature cries out in agony, "Remove this cup from Me!" It is His divine nature, however, that overrides the human nature and succumbs to the will of the Father, a will that involves intense suffering and death before the incredible realization of resurrection. So, too, are Jesus' words the model prayer for all Christians. More so even that the "Lord's prayer," this prayer should be the hallmark prayer for all true believers everywhere. All those who are indwelt by the Holy Spirit are therefore capable of earnestly saying this prayer regardless of the circumstances, regardless of the suffering, regardless of the threat of death: "Not my will but Yours be done." The history and testimony of martyrs means that as it was possible to live and die by those words then, it is possible to live and die by the same words today. Until the Christian can sincerely utter these words regardless of the circumstances, there remains much growing in Christ. Such a prayer does not come without brokenness, and such a prayer does not come as the result of casual church attendance or token acknowledgement of God's word. This kind of prayer comes only with biblical discipleship by the church and a hunger for God and His word by the disciple. Such prayer does not come without the repentance of sin and an earnest desire to walk in the light. It is the end point that all Christians should attain to so that they will be willing to do whatever God asks of them. Had the disciples been praying this prayer instead of nodding off to sleep (though we mustn't be too hard on the disciples, for we are just

like them), it is possible that their response after Jesus' arrest would have been more favorable.

Luke is the only gospel writer who records that an angel came alongside Jesus to strengthen Him. We know nothing about the identity of this angel nor how the angel strengthened Jesus. In a similar circumstance, Luke records in Acts 27:23-24 that an angel appeared to the apostle Paul on the way to Rome when his ship was about to sink.

Luke, the physician, is also the only gospel writer to state that Jesus experienced a medical condition called *hematidrosis* (aka *hematohidrosis*), a condition brought about by extreme fear, stress or anxiety. Many cases of *hematidrosis* have been documented in modern medical literature, and is believed to be caused by blood from ruptured capillaries mixing with perspiration. A point that should be made here is that Jesus is not sweating blood just from the anxiety of facing physical pain, but from the knowledge that God the Father will impute upon Him all the sins of all mankind for all time. And, in so doing, for a brief moment in time, God the Father will turn His back on Jesus and abandon Him. Not only is the cross the ultimate symbol of rejection by man, but it becomes the ultimate rejection by God Himself, for God will not allow sin in His presence. This rejection by God will result in Jesus crying out in utter anguish, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?"

Once again, the theme of falling into temptation rears up its ugly head. After praying, Jesus finds the disciples sleeping instead of praying. Luke observes that their sleepiness is the result of their "sorrow" (the only gospel write to note this). The Greek word for sorrow is related to sadness and grief. It is a curious expression indeed. Some commentators indicate that the disciples were exhausted, as Matthew states "their eyes were heavy." While this may be true, it would seem that Luke would have chosen another word to describe their fatigue, such as *asthenes*, meaning to be weak. The choice of the Greek word *lupes* is very specific, however, indicating that Luke is emphasizing another point. The writer believes the point Luke is making is that their sleepiness and lack of vigilance is not the result of fatigue or exhaustion, but of something else. It is unlikely that the disciples' sorrow is the result of Jesus' extreme stress resulting in drops of blood, and that they are identifying with Him. It is also unlikely that the disciples' sorrow is because they believe their hopes for a new kingdom are being dashed, for there is no indication that they still do not believe that Jesus will manifest Himself as the conquering king Messiah. (They do not even know that He is about to be arrested, and that His crucifixion is but a few hours away.) The writer believes that the disciples

47 While He was still speaking, behold, a crowd *came*, and the one called Judas, one of the twelve, was preceding them; and he approached Jesus to kiss Him.

48 But Jesus said to him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?"

49 When those who were around Him saw what was going to happen, they said, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?"

50 And one of them struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his right ear.

51 But Jesus answered and said, "Stop! 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 against Him, "Have you come out with swords and clubs as you would against a robber?"

53 "While I was with you daily in the temple, you did not lay hands on Me; but this hour and the power of darkness are yours."

are "sleeping from sorrow" because of the discussions about their denying Him. They are sorrowful that He believes they will deny Him and betray Him. It is an extreme affront to their pride, and they are discouraged and disappointed. In other words, their feelings have been hurt. As a result, they are somewhat less inclined to obey Him completely, and in a sense, withdraw.

This is a problem that many Christians struggle with today. Because Jesus has disappointed them by not answering a specific prayer, or because they believe that Jesus has not "been there for them" when they needed Him, they back off from pursuing Him completely. They are less inclined to obey, less inclined to follow, less inclined to suffer and sacrifice on His behalf. This was probably the case with the disciples. Instead of hearing from Jesus, "Pray, for the kingdom of God is about to be realized," or "Pray, for I am about to establish My kingdom," all they heard from Him was "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." We Christians often fail to abide by the words of Jesus that we neither want nor are expecting to hear.

22:47-53 After prayer comes crisis. Only Jesus will not enter into temptation. Judas's scheme, however, has worked. He has caught Jesus apart from the crowds in a secluded location with no more than eleven disciples by His side. One must remember that there were no street lamps or flashlights in those days, therefore lit torches were the only source of light. Of the crowd accompanying him from the temple, only Judas would be able to identify the right man. As was customary in greeting a friend, Judas kissed Jesus' cheek. But, because Judas's motives were far from benign, Jesus tells it as it is: "Are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" A symbol of love and respect has been turned into an act of rejection, mockery and betrayal.

Jesus' disciples, completely unaware of the big picture, call for a fight. This scene would be humorous if it were not so pathetic. How could these pacifist disciples armed with two daggers possibly overwhelm temple guards and Roman soldiers armed with swords, shields and clubs? Peter (we know from John's gospel) doesn't wait for an answer but lashes out at one of the soldiers named Malchus, cutting off his right ear. Luke, the physician, notes that Jesus immediately heals the soldier; unfortunately, the healing didn't make that much of an impression on the soldier. One would think that he would immediately back off from Jesus and take a good look at himself and his role in Jesus' arrest. And, as noted by other commentators, this is the only incidence in the gospels where Jesus not only immediately heals an open wound, but heals an

54 Having arrested Him, they led Him away and brought Him to the house of the high priest; but Peter was following at a distance.

55 After they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter was sitting among them.

56 And a servant-girl, seeing him as he sat in the firelight and looking intently at him, said, "This man was with Him too."

57 But he denied *it*, saying, "Woman, I do not know Him."

58 A little later, another saw him and said, "You are *one* of them too!" But Peter said, "Man, I am not!"

59 After about an hour had passed, another man *began* to insist, saying, "Certainly this man also was with Him, for he is a Galilean too."

60 But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about." Immediately, while he was still speaking, a rooster crowed.

61 The Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had told him, "Before a rooster crows today, you will deny Me three times."

62 And he went out and wept bitterly.

enemy, someone who obviously did not have faith in Jesus. There are many practical lessons here.

In **verses 52 and 53**, Jesus makes it very clear that all that is taking place in the garden of Gethsemane is by the hand of Satan. God the Father has allowed Satan to have his day (night). Judas, the chief priests, the elders, the temple officials and the soldiers are all acting on behalf of Satan himself. Whereas the leaders of the crowd are ready for resistance and a fight, Jesus willingly allows Himself to be arrested. He is now in the hands of Satan, another cause for Jesus' great agony in the garden.

22:54-62 What follows next in Luke's account is Peter's denial. Note the phrase in verse 54, "but Peter was following at a distance." On the surface, this would seem like an act of bravery on Peter's part. Whereas all the other disciples (except possibly John) have scattered and abandoned Jesus altogether, Peter is bound and determined to stand by his leader. There is one problem, however...he is following Jesus "at a distance." He is apparently close enough to keep track of Jesus, but not so close as to be associated with Him. It is a well calculated position: within sight, but safe. Unfortunately, by not being far enough away to be accused of being a companion of Jesus, and by not being close enough to contribute to Him in any way, he soon finds himself in the vulnerable position of having to declare his relationship with Him. If he were farther away, no one would care. If he were closer, he might experience the same fate as Jesus. In the position that he finds himself, however, he will be challenged on whether he is a true friend of Jesus or not.

The phrase "following at a distance" epitomizes the state of affairs in the church today. Some born-again believers are so far away from Jesus—that is, so much a part of the world—that nobody even sees them as Christians and probably do not even care. However, many Christians today are "following at a distance." They keep their eye on Jesus, but don't get so close as to pay a price. And, by keeping a distance, they can hightail it if they feel threatened by associating with Him. It is a setup for personal spiritual disaster...denial.

The three denials of Peter are recorded here in **verses 56-60**. The details of denials are not nearly as important as Peter's rationale behind them. Like most of us, Peter is naïve. Based on his self-perception and how he anticipated events might play out, he cannot see himself as ever denying Jesus. The word did not even seem a part of his vocabulary, and he thought of himself as the kind of person who could never possibly turn against Jesus. That is probably how most Christians think today. But here's the caveat: given the right circumstances, at

the right time, under the right duress, there is not a Christian alive who is not capable of denying Jesus in one way or another. Peter's denial proves that all of us are capable of denying Jesus. How is that possible? It is because we are all capable of rationalizing our way out of threat or sacrifice. Peter was probably thinking that if he denies that he is a companion of Jesus, he will be free to hang around and help Him. He may be rationalizing that by denying any relationship with Him, he may be able to get closer and find out what's really going on. Most probably, Peter's rationale for denying any association with Jesus is that he will be in a better position to defend Him, protect Him, even follow Him. He may even suspect that at any moment Jesus will reign down on the earth legions of angels to overthrow the government, and if that happens, Peter will be right there, first in line for a seat at Jesus' side. We have no idea what Peter was thinking, but all we have to do is to look within ourselves and determine why we ourselves have denied Jesus in our everyday lives. By failing to stand up for what is godly and right according to Scripture, we are denying Jesus. By giving into peer pressure or not thanking God in heaven for our daily bread in a public place, we are denying Jesus. By cowering under the intimidations of the government, the organizational policies against proselytizing or demonstrating our faith by such simple things as wearing a cross, we are denying Jesus. Any and all excuses can be used to rationalize our way out of associating ourselves fearlessly with Jesus. Simply said, Peter merely serves as a warning to all Christians: in the most innocent ways, in the most rational ways, we are all capable of denying Jesus. Peter is a sobering reminder that there is a price to be paid for "following at a distance," and that price is the potential for denying Jesus.

The terrible record in **verses 61 and 62** tells of the price for denying Jesus: "The Lord turned and looked at Peter," and "he went out and wept bitterly." What a terrible, gut-wrenching, helpless and hopeless feeling that must have been! O, the agony of gazing at the eyes of the Master when you have just denied Him. And Peter did not merely weep...he wept "bitterly." The Greek word is *pikros* meaning "with agony" and with mental suffering. Quite simply, it is emotional torment. Interestingly, this is the same word used to describe "bitter herbs" in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible (Exod. 12:8). There is therefore a symbolic relationship between Peter having partaken of the bitter herbs during the last supper and the bitter weeping he expressed after denying Jesus.

This writer can state from experience that it is one thing to experience remorse for sins having been

63 Now the men who were holding Jesus in custody were mocking Him and beating Him,

64 and they blindfolded Him and were asking Him, saying, “Prophesy, who is the one who hit You?”

65 And they were saying many other things against Him, blaspheming.

66 When it was day, the Council of elders of the people assembled, both chief priests and scribes, and they led Him away to their council *chamber*, saying,

67 “If You are the Christ, tell us.” But He said to them, “If I tell you, you will not believe;

68 and if I ask a question, you will not answer.

69 “But from now on THE SON OF MAN WILL BE SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE power OF GOD.”

70 And they all said, “Are You the Son of God, then?” And He said to them, “Yes, I am.”

71 Then they said, “What further need do we have of testimony? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth.”

committed *before* one was a follower of Jesus Christ. It is quite another to experience the bitter weeping and agony that comes with denying Jesus once one has declared himself a faithful follower. The personal disappointment, disillusionment and self-deprecation that comes with denying Jesus is beyond description. Whereas in the former experience, grace and forgiveness is received with gratitude for sins committed through ignorance, in the latter, grace is begged for with tears and mourning, fearing retribution and judgment. Fortunately, we followers of Jesus are sought after like stray sheep by a loving Father in heaven who knows our weaknesses, and, like Peter, are given second chances.

22:63-65 No one can possibly imagine the emotional and physical pain summarized in verse 63. Jesus is in the hands of the ruthless and at the mercy of the merciless. These are professional soldiers who took pleasure in watching others suffer. These soldiers had no more regard for Jesus than they did for any other common criminal. There is no regret and no remorse in their treatment. Not only are they beating Him, they are insulting Him. Obviously, they have heard that the people believe He is a prophet, so they use that bit of information to mock Him. Verse 65 concludes with the statement that they are “blaspheming” Him. In Jewish culture, only God can be blasphemed. Therefore, Luke is preparing the reader for the next encounter at the Council where Jesus will be asked if He is the Son of God.

22:66-71 The sequence of events after Jesus’ arrest is as follows: He is taken to Annas, high priest emeritus, who sends Him to Caiaphas the high priest, Annas’ son-in-law. There Jesus is interrogated by Caiaphas and others where a temporary decision was made that He should be put to death. (An official decision needed to be made by the entire Sanhedrin during daylight hours.) Jesus is then led into the courtyard just before sunrise where He is beaten and mocked, and it is apparently at that time that Peter denies Jesus the third time. Jesus is then brought before the Council during which **verses 66-71** take place. Jesus will then be sent to Pilate for the purpose of condemning Him to death, as the Jews themselves were prohibited from carrying out capital punishment. Pilate will then send Jesus to Herod Antipas, who in turn sends Him back to Pilate who eventually pronounces judgment and condemns Him to death.

In Luke’s account, the seventy members of the Council have now convened. Among them is a Pharisee named Nicodemus. One would assume this is fairly early in the morning. Most likely, it is Caiaphas the high priest who is orchestrating the

inquiry. One must remember that, according to Matthew, Jesus has already met with Caiaphas where a preliminary decision has already been made. In his account, Luke has condensed the two meetings into one, the official meeting of the Council that condemns Jesus.

There are three titles that are brought up by the Council in order to accuse Jesus of sedition and blasphemy: “Christ” (Messiah, v. 67), “Son of Man” (v. 69), and “Son of God” (v. 70). All three are ascribed to Jesus throughout the gospels. The long-hoped-for Messiah represents Jesus’ fulfillment as King of the Jews; “Son of Man” represents Jesus’ perfect humanity; “Son of God” indicates that Jesus is fully divine and therefore equal to God. That Jesus answers the last question, “Yes, I am” is an unequivocal statement that He is equal to God, and His use of the words “I am” identifies Him with the God of Moses who identified Himself in the burning bush as “I am that I am.” This was all the Council needed to hear: Jesus of Nazareth was declaring Himself to be equal to God and therefore guilty of blasphemy. It is a death sentence for Jesus.

The writer has often heard liberal scholars and skeptics claim that “Jesus never said He was God.” Obviously, they have not read verses 66-71, or if they have, they have explained them away with some sort of liberal rhetoric.

At the end of this chapter, all of Jesus’ disciples have abandoned Him. The religious leaders and spiritual authorities of the Jewish nation have rejected Him. He will be taken and given over to the Gentiles who see no value in His life. Chapter 22 is a fulfillment of John’s statement, “He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him” (John 1:11). These observations, more than anything, acknowledge the great love God has for a lost world, that He would send His only begotten Son into the world, knowing that those whom He loved would reject Him. One cannot leave this chapter without being reminded of the apostle John’s letter: “By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” (1 John 4:10-11).

Questions for Your Personal or Group Reflection

1. This chapter represents the completion of Jesus' teaching and healing ministry to the masses. How does Jesus spend His last night, and with whom does He spend it? Why do you think Jesus wanted to spend His last meal with His disciples? Do you think there was perhaps a "passing of the baton"?
2. How did Satan enter Judas Iscariot? Do you believe that could happen to a Christian today? Do you think Judas knew that Satan had entered him? If Judas was not aware that Satan entered him, then what clouded his vision? What was Judas' weakness? Do you have that same weakness? If so, is it possible that Satan could enter you to do something terrible?
3. Discuss the importance of taking the Lord's Supper. Is the Lord's Supper (or Communion) something sacred and important to you? Do you believe that the bread actually turns into Christ's body and the wine into His blood? If not, then what do the "elements" represent to you? If the elements themselves are not significant, then what is the most important part of taking them?
4. What does Jesus mean by the statement, "This is the new covenant in My blood"? What is the new covenant, and what does that mean to you in terms of your relationship to God the Father? What did Jesus have to do to enable you to become a participant in the new covenant?
5. Follow the theme of Peter's denial. Why do you think Peter was quite confident that he would follow Jesus even to the point of death? And, why do you think Peter ended up denying Jesus? How did Peter feel after he denied Jesus?
6. When Jesus takes His disciples to the garden of Gethsemane, He gives them an important instruction. What is it? What was the reason He gave His disciples for following His instructions? How did the disciples do? Is that a lesson that you can learn from? The bottom-line question is, "How's your prayer life today?"
7. When Jesus is taken before the Council for His trial, they ask Him one important question. How does Jesus answer them? If you were to be brought before a judge or group hostile to Christians and, in fact, guilty of killing Christians, how would you answer the question, "Are you a Christian?"

The Discipler's Commentary
Fill-in Outline for the Disciple
Luke 22

22:1-2 – The desire of the chief priests and the scribes to _____

22:3-6 – The plan to betray Jesus by _____

22:7-13 – Preparations are made for the _____

22:14-23 – The Passover meal we now call _____

22:24-27 – The dispute among the apostles as to who was _____

22:28-30 – The promise to the apostles concerning their heavenly _____

22:31-34 – The prophecy concerning Simon Peter's _____

22:35-38 – The prophecy concerning hardships in _____

22:39-46 – Jesus and the disciples take refuge in the Garden of Gethsemane to _____

22:47-53 – Jesus is arrested by the temple guard and Judas betrays Jesus with _____

22:54-62 – Jesus is taken to the guard house and Peter denies Him _____

22:63-65 – Jesus is scorned, mocked and beaten, and Luke calls the men _____

22:66-71 – Jesus before the Sanhedrin: “Are You the Son of God?” Jesus answers “_____”

The Discipler's Commentary

Answer Outline for the Discipler

Luke 22

- 22:1-2 – The desire of the chief priests and the scribes to put Jesus to death
- *The disciple may need to know about the different feasts, and why the Feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread were so important, especially in regards to Israel's past (i.e., the Exodus).*
 - *Make sure the disciple associates the Feast of Passover with the death of Jesus on the cross, and why He is "the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world."*
- 22:3-6 – The plan to betray Jesus by Judas Iscariot
- *Perhaps one of the most important points here is that Judas had no idea "Satan entered into" him, and that he was being directed by Satan. Ask the disciple how this could happen? What was Judas' weakness of the flesh that allowed Satan to enter him? Ensure that the disciple understands the final result—betrayal.*
 - *What does the disciple think was Judas' motive for betraying Jesus. If Judas was trying to force Jesus' hand in order to establish His kingdom, how can a Christian today end up making that same mistake?*
- 22:7-13 – Preparations are made for the Passover meal (Seder)
- *If the disciple (or the discipler) has never attended a seder, he or she is highly encouraged to do so. There are Jewish Christian organizations available to perform a seder at one's church.*
 - *Ensure that the disciple associates the phrase "the upper room" with this event.*
- 22:14-23 – The Passover meal we now call the Lord's Supper (Communion, Mass)
- *The discipler will want to make sure that the disciple understands that this event described in Scripture is what Christians today call "the Lord's Supper" or "Communion," Catholic "Mass," or liturgical Protestant churches, "Eucharist."*
 - *Let the disciple know that the Lord's Supper is one of two "sacraments" (aka "ordinances") observed by the Protestant Church. The other is baptism. (At least one denomination believes there are three, the third being foot washing.) The Catholic Church teaches there are seven sacraments.*
 - *Make sure the disciple understands that Roman Catholicism teaches that during Mass, the bread and the wine actually turn into the body and blood of Christ. (This is called "Transubstantiation" by the Catholic Church.) Protestants do not believe this.*
 - *Regardless of the theological position, the Lord's Supper is considered a very sacred and important event. In fact, the apostle Paul teaches that taking Communion "in an unworthy manner" has caused some Christians to become sick and eventually die (1 Cor. 11:30. For Paul's entire teaching on the Lord's Supper, include verses 23-32.) For this reason, the Lord's Supper should be taken seriously.*
- 22:24-27 – The dispute among the apostles as to who was the greatest
- *Ask the disciple why he or she thinks this dispute takes place. What were the disciples expectations as to what Jesus was about to do in terms of establishing a kingdom on earth. Remind the disciple of "one Messiah, two comings."*
 - *Have the disciple explain what was Jesus' response to the disciples regarding their debate. The discipler may need to explain the term "Benefactors."*
 - *The discipler must not overlook the phrase "But it is not this way with you..." (v. 26). What does that mean to the disciple? What does that mean regarding the church he or she is attending? What is the very important lesson that is being taught here in terms of leadership, and why?*
- 22:28-30 – The promise to the apostles concerning their heavenly future
- *Ask whether the disciple believes that Jesus is referring to the immediate future, or to a future that happens in heaven after their deaths? (The discipler may want to have the disciple read Revelation 4 & 20.)*
 - *The discipler may want to bring up the subject of "expectations." What does the disciple expect from Jesus, and how does the disciple expect his or her life will change as a result of following Jesus? How can earthly expectations interfere with heavenly realities, and how can that affect a Christian's faith?*

Luke 22

22:31-34 – The prophecy concerning Simon Peter’s denial of Jesus

- *Much discussion and teaching can take place regarding Peter’s denial that he will deny Jesus.*
- *Ask the disciple how he or she might inadvertently deny that they know Jesus.*

22:35-38 – The prophecy concerning hardships in the church age

- *Ask the disciple if he or she is aware of any Christians having hardship as a result of being a follower of Jesus Christ. If necessary, refer the disciple to Christians who today are being persecuted for their faith.*
- *Ask the disciple if he or she can understand what Jesus is referring to here. That is, that the “church age” will be filled with suffering, sacrifice and hardship. Ask the disciple if he or she is experiencing any of that. If the disciple is not experiencing suffering, are they willing to sacrifice in terms of time, money and work toward furthering the kingdom of God through the church.*

22:39-46 – Jesus and the disciples take refuge in the Garden of Gethsemane to pray

- *Ask the disciple if he or she can figure out why Jesus took the disciples with Him to the Mount of Olives. What was their purpose for going there, and what warning did Jesus give the disciples? What was His instruction to them, and how did they do? Can this instruction be directed to Christians today?*
- *What was Jesus’ request from the Father, and how is the Christian to pray that prayer today? What is the powerful truth behind that prayer?*
- *What does prayer have to do with not entering into temptation? Ask the disciple about his or her prayer life. How is it going?*

22:47-53 – Jesus is arrested by the temple guard and Judas betrays Jesus with a kiss

- *What was the irony behind Judas betraying Jesus with a kiss?*
- *The discipler may want to fill in the disciple concerning Peter striking the ear of Malchus.*

22:54-62 – Jesus is taken to the guard house and Peter denies Him three times

- *The discipler may want to go into some detail about Peter’s denial. What does the disciple believe Peter was thinking when he denied Jesus? That is, what was his rationale for denying Him?*
- *Again, the subject of denying Jesus may want to be raised. Most Christians believe that they would never deny Jesus, just as Peter did. But what kinds of circumstances may cause us to deny Him, even though we think we never will?*
- *Ask the disciple if he or she can locate the key phrase that describes why Peter may have denied Jesus. (Hint: he was following at a distance. Have the disciple make application to that regarding Christians today.)*

22:63-65 – Jesus is scorned, mocked and beaten, and Luke calls the men blasphemers

- *Why does Luke record that those who were beating and mocking Jesus were “blaspheming”? What does it mean to blaspheme? Who, in Scripture, is the only One who can be blasphemed, according to Jewish law?*

22:66-71 – Jesus before the Sanhedrin: “Are You the Son of God?” Jesus answers “Yes, I am.”

- *Remind the disciple who the Council was.*
- *Inform the disciple that Luke records only the bare essentials of Jesus’ trial. The entire scenario of going from place to place and person to person may need to be read to the disciple from the commentary.*
- *Ask the disciple if he or she can determine what is the most important question the Council asks Jesus. How does Jesus answer? How would the disciple answer a liberal skeptic who states that Jesus never said He was the Son of God? If Jesus had not answered as He did, then why would the Council say, “What further need do we have of testimony? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth?”*
- *See if the disciple can see the irony of verses 65 and 70-71. The irony is found in the word “blaspheming.” Those beating Jesus were blaspheming, and Jesus is being accused by the Council of blasphemy by stating that He was the Son of God, therefore making Him equal to God. (cf. John 8:56-59)*