

The Sifting of our Faith

Luke 31-62

"In ancient Israel the process of sifting the wheat was the last stage in preparing the harvest. The sifting occurred once the wheat had been gathered in and winnowed (tossed in the air to remove the chaff). The wheat was gathered up off the floor or ground and shaken in a sieve to remove the rocks, dirt and other debris that may have been gathered in with the kernels of wheat.

When the Lord tells his disciples that Satan desires to sift them as wheat, they have already been identified as "wheat." They are not the chaff that has been blown away in the whirlwind, a term used by the Lord to describe the condition of those who are disobedient and do not hearken to the voice of the prophets.

Sifting occurs later. The wheat is shaken and falls to the ground and what is left in the sieve is rubble, dirt and trash. I would assume that the sifting process, according to how we respond to it, can either purify us that we may be gathered into the garner cleansed from the rubble of the natural man, or we lose our faith and the debris of the world is what remains with us. Peter was sifted and came out stronger for it. He triumphed over Satan. We will each be "sifted." We will each decide the end result of that sifting." LHall

- I. The righteous are to live by faith (Hab 2:4; Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11; Heb 10:38), therefore we must guard ourselves against Satan's desire to weaken or destroy our hope and trust in Jesus.

Luke 22:31-38; Isa 53:12

- A. Spiritual forces in dark places are constantly working to get believers to compromise their faith. Their goal is to shake up our faith in ways that get us to keep our eyes off of Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, through sinful compromise, apathy, disillusionment or discouragement.

Luke 22:31-34; 1 Peter 5:8; Eph 6:10-12, Heb 12:2

"Take away faith, therefore, and the devil will destroy us... Take away faith, therefore, and you take away life itself, for the believer is nothing without his faith." Ryken

- B. Jesus allows our faith to be sifted to make it stronger. He prays for us and shields us with his power so that our faith may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed (1 Peter 1:7).

Luke 22:32, 54-62; Rom 8:28,34; 1 Peter 1:5-9

John 12:24 *Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.*

- II. Jesus prepared himself to take on the sins of the world through prayer and total surrender to the will of the Father. He was preparing himself who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5:1).

Luke 22:39-53; Isa 51:17; John 10:17-18

"Jesus became, as it were, an enemy of God, who was judged and forced to drink from the cup of the Father's fury, so that we would not have to drink from that cup. Taking this figurative cup was the source of Jesus' greatest agony on the cross." Guzik