

## Satan Sifting Peter Luke 22:31

At the Last Supper [Matthew 26:20–30; Mark 14:17–26], Jesus warned Simon Peter that a test of faith was coming: “Simon, Simon! Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat” (Luke 22:31, NKJV). The outspoken disciple seemed to be in the same predicament as Job when Satan sought to put him to the test (Job 1—2). Satan wanted to “sift Peter as wheat,” which means that he wanted to shake Peter’s faith so forcefully that he would fall, proving that he could not be trusted to serve God.

1. Read Luke 22:24-34 below and answer these questions.

Luke 22:24-34 [Contemporary English Version]

24The apostles got into an argument about which one of them was the greatest. 25So Jesus told them: Foreign kings order their people around, and powerful rulers call themselves everyone's friends. 26But don't be like them. The most important one of you should be like the least important, and your leader should be like a servant. 27Who do people think is the greatest, a person who is served or one who serves? Isn't it the one who is served? But I have been with you as a servant. 28You have stayed with me in all my troubles. 29So I will give you the right to rule as kings, just as my Father has given me the right to rule as a king. 30You will eat and drink with me in my kingdom, and you will each sit on a throne to judge the twelve tribes of Israel. 31Jesus said, “Simon, listen to me! Satan has demanded the right to test each one of you, as a farmer does when he separates wheat from the husks. 32But Simon, I have prayed that your faith will be strong. And when you have come back to me, help the others. 33Peter said, “Lord, I am ready to go with you to jail and even to die with you.” 34Jesus replied, “Peter, I tell you that before a rooster crows tomorrow morning, you will say three times that you don't know me.”

a)What were the disciples arguing about? Why? *[keep in mind that Peter was a part of this argument]*

b)Who did Jesus say that the disciples should not be like? Why?

c)What quality did Jesus lay down for “greatest”?

d) Who qualifies to serve others?

e) Why do you think the devil wanted to “sift” or “test” Peter?

f) Have you experienced times when he felt the devil was testing or sifting you? Why did he do that? What was the result?

g) What did Jesus tell Peter he was praying? Why?

It was not just Peter who was in danger. The word for “you” in Luke 22:31 is plural. Jesus was speaking to Peter, informing him that Satan had his sights set on all the disciples. Some translations, such as the Berean Study Bible, specify the whole group: “Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift each of you like wheat.”

2. The name Satan means “adversary” or “accuser.” Read Revelation 12:10 below. What does Satan do?

Revelation 12:10 Amplified Bible

Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom (dominion, reign) of our God, and the authority of His Christ have come; for the accuser [Satan, the devil] of our [believing] brothers and sisters has been thrown down [at last], he who accuses them and keeps bringing charges [of sinful behavior] against them before our God day and night.

I am not sure how that works [*how the devil accuses believers before God day and night ... and I will leave that to God*] but that is what the devil does. He brings all your sin before God and tells him you are worthless and deserve to spend eternity in hell.

3. Read 1 Peter 5:8. How would Peter later describe Satan and his plan?

1 Peter 5:8 New Living Translation

Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.

4. Read the following verses and see how the Bible describes the devil and his work.

- a) Hebrews 2:14
- b) John 8:44
- c) 1 John 3:8
- d) 2 Corinthians 11:14

The phrase “sift as wheat” is a metaphor that could also be expressed as “shake someone apart” or “break a person down.”

In biblical times, wheat or other grain was sifted through a sieve or large strainer. As it was shaken violently, the dirt and other impurities that clung to the grain during the threshing process would separate from the good, usable grain.

In sifting Peter and the other disciples as wheat, Satan’s goal was to crush them and wreck their faith. In truth, the adversary wants to destroy the faith of every believer.

5. Read John 10:1-10 and answer the following questions.

- a) What do thieves and robbers do? V1
- b) Whose voice do the sheep listen to? V3
- c) What does the shepherd call the sheep by? V3
- d) What do the sheep do? V3,4
- e) How do the sheep respond to a stranger? V5,8
- f) What does the thief come to do? V10
- g) What does Jesus come to do? V10

Jesus did not leave Peter with the thought of being sifted. He gives Peter this assurance. “I have pleaded in prayer [especially] for you, Peter, that your faith [and confidence in Me] should not fail. So when you have repented and turned to me again, strengthen [and support] your brothers [in the faith]” ([Luke 22:32, NLT](#)). As you read of Peter’s leadership role in the early

church, you see that the Lord's prayer for Peter was answered.

6. Read the following verses. What is Jesus doing for us today?

a) Hebrews 7:25

b) 1 John 2:1 *[An advocate is one who pleads a case for another. Advocates stand in the place of those who cannot speak for themselves. Jesus, as our Advocate, stands in our place before the Father and pleads on our behalf.]*

c) Romans 8:34

Jesus did not promise to remove the test that was coming Peter's way. On the contrary, He predicted that Peter would fail the test by denying Christ three times ([Luke 22:34](#)). Trials are to be expected in the Christian life.

7. Read the following verses. What does the Bible say about having trials in our lives?

a) Acts 14:22

b) James 1:2-4

c) James 1:12

d) 1 Peter 4:12-13

8. Notice how God uses trials and hard times in our lives. [Read the following verses]

a) For our good (Romans 8:28)

b) To refine our character and strengthen our faith (1 Peter 1:6-7; James 1:2-4,12),

c) To make us more like Jesus (Romans 8:29).

Whenever we do experience a test, Jesus is with us to strengthen us (Philippians 4:13) and to pray for us. In challenging times, it's reassuring to remember that Satan's power to sift Peter as wheat was limited by Christ's prayer. When Satan comes after us, we should remember that Jesus Christ always lives to intercede [pray] for us.

Jesus was confident that Simon Peter would get back up again [after he failed by denying him 3 times] and go on to strengthen the other disciples.

Another reason the Lord allows us to suffer through experiences of testing is so we can learn how to comfort and help others grow in faith as they experience testing in their lives.

9. Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-4. What does Paul teach you in these verses?

Before Peter denied Jesus three times, he was overconfident, trusting in his own strength (Luke 22:33). But after being sifted like wheat, Peter learned that failure is possible because the flesh is weak.

10. Read Mark 14:38. What did Jesus say about temptation and our power to resist it?

Now that he understood how easy it is to fall, Peter would have compassion and mercy for others while helping them avoid the same mistake.

Our faith and perseverance are revealed not in a walk of sinless perfection but in repentance and restoration. We get up, get going again and keep going, like Peter, after we fall. When Satan comes to sift us as wheat, we have an advocate, Jesus Christ.

11. Read the following verses. What do they teach us about what Jesus does for us?

a) John 17:9, 11, 15 [*He intercedes for us*]

b) John 10:27–28 [*He protects us so that the devil can never destroy our faith and hope*]

c) Philippians 1:6 [*He began a good work in us, and He is faithful to complete it*]

Again, in challenging times, it's reassuring to remember that Satan's power to sift Peter as wheat was limited by Christ's prayer. When Satan comes after us, we should remember that Jesus Christ always lives to intercede [pray] for us.