

THE TRADITIONS OF GETHSEMANE

John 12:23ff The End of Jesus' Public Ministry Jesus said: "Now the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. In all truth I tell you, unless a wheat-grain *falls to the earth* and dies, it remains only a single grain; but if it dies it yields a rich harvest. Anyone who loves his life loses it: anyone who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and my servant will be with me wherever I am. If anyone serves me, my Father will honour him.

"Now my soul is troubled. What shall I say: "*Father, save me from this hour*"? But it is for this very reason that I have come to this hour. *Father, glorify your name!*"

A voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again."

The crowd standing by, who heard this, said it was a clap of thunder; others said: "It was *an angel speaking to him.*"

John 18:10 At Jesus' Arrest Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the High Priest's servant...Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into its scabbard; *am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?*"

2 Sam 15:13ff The Flight of David from Jerusalem A messenger came and told David, "The men of Israel have shifted their allegiance to Absalom (your son). David said to all his retinue then with him in Jerusalem, "Up! Let us flee, or we shall not escape from Absalom! Leave as quickly as you can, in case he mounts a sudden attack, overcomes us, and puts the city to the sword!"

The entire population was weeping aloud as the King stood *in the bed of the Kidron*, and everyone marched past him, making for the desert. Zadok the priest was there too, and all the Levites with him, carrying the Ark of God. They set the Ark of God down beside Abiathar, until everyone had finished marching out of the city. The King then said to Zadok, "Take the Ark of God back into the city. Should I win God's favour, he will bring me back and allow me to see it and its Tent once more. But should he say, *You displease me*, here I am: *Let him treat me as he sees fit.*"

David then made his way *up the Mount of Olives*, weeping as he went, his head covered and his feet bare, and all the people with him had their heads covered and made their way up, weeping as they went.

(Ahitophel, David's betrayer, finishes his rebellious career by hanging himself. He and Judas Iscariot are the only two people in the Scriptures so to do.)

Mark 13:39 The End of the World Be on your guard, *stay awake*, because you never know when the time will come. It is like a man travelling abroad; he has gone from home, and left his servants in charge, each with his own task; and he has told his doorkeeper to stay awake. So *stay awake*: because you do not know when the master of the house is coming, evening, midnight, cockcrow, dawn: if he comes unexpectedly, he must not *find you asleep*. And what I say to you, I say to all: *Stay awake!*

Luke 22:40 Pray Not To Be Put To The Test The Greek *peirasmos* is the word for testing here. It should be understood as referring to the Hour and to the Cup - the things that threaten Jesus historically at this moment, with real enemies approaching and real suffering on the way - and also the cosmic testing by fire that is the end of the world and the last judgment. Luke frames the prayer of Jesus, before and after, with this command to the disciples. In Mark/Matt it comes after his prayer, when first he finds them asleep. Only in Luke do they ask Jesus to teach them to pray; his response is the Lord's Prayer, which includes "Do not lead us into *peirasmos*". Israel is *tested in the desert*, as also is Jesus at the beginning of the Gospel. So is "the father of all who believe", Abraham; note that there are strong echoes of that Genesis story in Gethsemane:

Gen 22 It happened some time later that God *put Abraham to the test*...God said, "Take your son, your only son, your beloved Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, where you are to offer him as a burnt-offering on one of the mountains which I shall point out to you."
Then on the third day *Abraham...said to his servants: "Stay here with the donkey. The boy and I are going over there: we shall worship and then come back to you."*

The test is the eschatological judgment, the sifting of humanity at the end of the world. This time of trial is particularly clear in Luke. After Jesus' temptation in the desert, Satan is said to withdraw from him, *to return at the appointed hour*. Part of the Gethsemane prayer is for deliverance from the hour: part is for deliverance from the drinking of the cup. This is in the Last Supper account:

Luke 22:28ff You are the men who have stood by me faithfully *in my trials*. Now I confer a kingdom on you, as my Father conferred one on me. You will eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and you will sit on twelve thrones to judge the twelve tribes of Israel. Simon, Simon! Look, *Satan* has got his wish *to sift you all like wheat*. But *I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail*, and when you have recovered, you in your turn must strengthen your brothers.

Matt 6:9ff The Lord's Prayer Our *Father* in heaven, may *your Name* be held holy, your kingdom come, *your will be done* on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive all who are in debt to us, *and do not put us to the test, but save us from the Evil one*.

Luke 22:42 The Strengthening Angel Note that in the accounts of the desert *peirasmos* in Mk (1:13) and Matt (4:11) both report the ministry of the angels. Because Luke has stressed the rôle of Satan in the great Hour of Jesus' testing, he transfers the ministry of the Angel to this place. Mark's Jesus hears only silence in response to his prayer, which he interprets as refusal, for afterwards we see him resolved to face the hour (14:41f). In Matt it is the same, but Jesus will state his assurance that, had he insisted, "the Father...will at once supply me with twelve *legions of angels*". In John he does not for a moment entertain the thought of evading the Hour, but prays: *Father, glorify your name!* (See the Lord's Prayer above). The responding voice is understood by some as coming *from an angel*.

Mark 14:38 Spirit and Flesh Note that this is not a rebuke to the sleeping disciples. Jesus too is spirit and flesh, and he is asking for the support and accompaniment of his disciples

as the flesh, in particular, is being tested to destruction in *peirasmos*.