

On Stumbling

By Jim Elliff

Now as they were eating, He said, "Assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me." Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night . . ."
Mt. 26: 21, 31, 34.

One betraying, one denying, ten stumbling. All twelve disciples fulfilled the prophesy of Jesus. Anyone who says that stumbling is not part of the Christian life does not comprehend the history of our most noted leaders and is laying on others a perfection he is not able to verify through his own testimony or the testimony of any of the saints. It denies the prophesy of Jesus. Even if one temporarily disclaims public identification with Christ, a reprehensible sin, he may still be restored through repentance. But the prophesy concerning the betrayer does not have such a pleasant ending and his future is remorse *ad infinitum*.



What is the difference between a betrayer, a denier, and a stumbler? The sin of Judas was premeditated and the sin of Peter and the other stumblers was that of being overcome in a weakness. Is it

therefore the resolve not to sin that causes us to obey Christ? Peter said, "Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never

be made to stumble" (v. 33). "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" And so said all the disciples" (v. 35). But Peter's elevated resolve did nothing; the leading pronouncement-maker became the stumbler among stumblers! No, the answer is not resolve. Such resolves have an "appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh." Col. 2:23.

What does give us hope? The Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren." Lk. 22:31-32. It is not your resolve that wins the day, though you should have resolve. No. It is the resolve of Christ to intercede for you so that your faith will not fail that causes you to persevere. It is the knowledge of His good will toward us which gives rise to that confidence in Christ that will persist long after the rooster has stopped crowing.



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