

The Gospel of Luke

Peter's Three Denials

Luke 22:55-62

1. **The Reason Peter Followed** (Luke 22:54; Mt. 26:58)

All of the disciples initially fled from the crowd once Jesus was arrested just as He had foretold (Mt. 26:31, 56; Mk. 14:27, 50). Peter followed the throng at a distance and was eventually allowed into the courtyard of the home of the high priest (Jn. 18:15-16). Peter loved and was committed to Jesus (Lk. 22:50; cf. Mt. 16:16; Jn. 6:68-69), and so he followed in order to see what would happen to Him (Mt. 26:58).

2. **The Accusations and Denials**

All four gospels record the fulfillment of Jesus's specific prophecy that Peter would deny even knowing Jesus (Lk. 22:34). The full picture of Peter's denials is revealed when comparing all four gospel accounts. As the accusations about Peter increased in intensity and in clarity, Peter's denials increased in precision and in fervor.

A. **His Gateway Denial** (Mt. 26:69-70; Mk. 14:66-68; Lk. 22:56-57; Jn. 18:17)

When John had vouched for Peter so that he could enter, he was recognized by the door keeper who was a young servant girl of the high priest. Though she seems certain that Peter is a disciple of Jesus, she confronts Peter with a question. Though a question or even an accusation from a servant girl may not be believed easily (cf. Ac. 12:13-15), Peter denies knowing Jesus by evading the question.

B. **His Porch Denial** (Mt. 26:71-72; Mk. 14:69-70a; Lk. 22:58; Jn. 18:25)

Shortly after being rebuffed by Peter, the same servant girl (Mk. 14:69) shared her concern with a few others so that she, along with another young girl (Mt. 26:71) and a man (Lk. 22:58b), began to question him about having been with Jesus in the garden. Peter, no longer able to feign a lack of understanding of what is being stated by multiple people, specifically denies knowing Jesus.

C. **His Final Denial** (Mt. 26:73-74; Mk. 14:70b-71; Lk. 22:59-60; Jn. 18:26-27)

Peter's second denial gained him an hour of freedom from being accosted with accusations (Lk. 22:59). At this time several people began to note that his Galilean accent fit the profile of one of Jesus's disciples, and a relative of the

man who Peter attempted to kill, who was also in the crowd which arrested Jesus, identified Peter as having been with Jesus. Confronted circumstantial evidence as well as testimony from another eye-witness, Peter repeated and accentuated his denial of knowing Jesus with curses and swearing (Mt. 26:74; Mk. 14:71).

D. **The Bitterness of Fulfilled Prophecy** (Lk. 22:62)

Jesus had told Peter that he would deny Him, and now the crowing of the rooster and the gaze of the Lord exposed the hypocrisy of his current denunciations as well as the destitution of the self-assured confidence that he had expressed before (Lk. 22:33-34; Mk. 14:27-31).

E. **Beware the Fear of Man** (Proverbs 29:25-27)

Aaron (Ex. 32:1-6), Saul (1 Sam. 15:24), and Herod (Mk. 6:26) are a few examples of men who determined their actions based upon a desire to please men rather than to be pleasing to the Lord. As Christians we must be vigilant to live in such a way that our actions and decisions are based upon a proper fear of the Lord and not based upon the fear of man.