

Peters Denial 06-09-19 AM

The four accounts of the Gospel of Jesus Christ contain a variety of events in the life of Christ. Often they give us different perspectives or even different parts of the life of Jesus. For example, only Matthew and Luke discuss Jesus' birth. John does not discuss the institution of the Lord's Supper. When an event is contained in all four accounts, we often feel it has a greater significance. Peter's betrayal is one of the few things discussed in all four Gospel accounts.

One of the interesting aspects of Peter's denial was the prediction that was made by Jesus. Jesus explicitly stated that it would be before morning when Peter denied Jesus three times. This was after Peter had stated that even if he had to die, he would not abandon Jesus. We might also consider that Peter's sometimes turbulent behavior led him to rash actions; Matthew 16:21-23 shows us that he had been rebuked before for being minded towards man.

An important lesson for us is to consider the danger of following Jesus at a distance. Why follow at a distance? It is almost certainly because of his fear of the *opinion* of people. Often we are guilty of following Jesus at a distance. This is dangerous; it is easy to think we are invisible to Christ or the world, when we are certainly not. Following Jesus at a distance is a path to denying Him.

Once Peter began down the road of denial, it became harder and harder to back out. Consider Matthew's account of the events; there we find out that Peter escalated his denial at each moment; first a flat denial, then an oath, and finally a curse. This too is a lesson for us about the path of sin. Once in the road of denial we don't want to back out, and the further we travel the harder it is. We are told in Hebrews 6:4-6 that this road ends with a second crucifixion.

Another consideration is that God kept warning Peter. Mark tells us that there were two rooster crows; one was midway through Jesus' denial. In a way, God was warning Peter like an alarm. Jesus had already warned him beforehand; now a second warning came by the first rooster's crow. We too have a twofold warning of our path of denial. First God warns us by the Scriptures (Hebrews 12:25). Second, God warns us by the consequences of sin (James 3:13).

Perhaps the heaviest moment of this denial is the particular note made by Luke. In Luke 22:61 we are told that after Peter's third denial Jesus, who was being tormented in trial, turned and looked at Peter. In that moment Peter's sin became apparent to him, and he wept and fled. Jesus sees it all. There are no "secret sins" (Jeremiah 17:10, Revelation 2:23).

But this story does not have a heartbreaking ending as does the one of Judas. In fact, before it even occurred, while Jesus predicted Peter's denial, Jesus also predicted Peter's restoration (Luke 22:31-32). Peter could and would come back from this. To be clear, it was still a hard event, seen perhaps in John 21:15-19. Returning from this place is terrible; restoration is hard to do (2 Corinthians 2:5-7). But it can be done, and as attested by the life of Peter we can return to our walk with God even after the worst of betrayals.

1 John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

Mt 26:69 Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard, and a servant-girl came to him and said, "You too were with Jesus the Galilean." 70 But he denied it before them all, saying, "I do not know what you are talking about." 71 When he had gone out to the gateway, another servant-girl saw him and *said to those who were there, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth." 72 And again he denied it with an oath, "I do not know the man." 73 A little later the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Surely you too are one of them; for even the way you talk gives you away." 74 Then he began to curse and swear, "I do not know the man!" And immediately a rooster crowed. 75 And Peter remembered the word which Jesus had said, "Before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly.

Mr 14:66 As Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant-girls of the high priest *came, 67 and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him and *said, "You also were with Jesus the Nazarene." 68 But he denied it, saying, "I neither know nor understand what you are talking about." And he went out onto the porch, and a rooster crowed. 69 The servant-girl saw him, and began once more to say to the bystanders, "This is one of them!" 70 But again he denied it. And after a little while the bystanders were again saying to Peter, "Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean too." 71 But he began to curse and swear, "I do not know this man you are talking about!" 72 Immediately a rooster crowed a second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had made the remark to him, "Before a rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times." And he began to weep.

Lu 22:55 After they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter was sitting among them. 56 And a servant-girl, seeing him as he sat in the firelight and looking intently at him, said, "This man was with Him too." 57 But he denied it, saying, "Woman, I do not know Him." 58 A little later, another saw him and said, "You are one of them too!" But Peter said, "Man, I am not!" 59 After about an hour had passed, another man began to insist, saying, "Certainly this man also was with Him, for he is a Galilean too." 60 But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about." Immediately, while he was still speaking, a rooster crowed. 61 The Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had told him, "Before a rooster crows today, you will deny Me three times." 62 And he went out and wept bitterly.

Joh 18:17 Then the slave-girl who kept the door *said to Peter, "You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?" He *said, "I am not." 18 Now the slaves and the officers were standing there, having made a charcoal fire, for it was cold and they were warming themselves; and Peter was also with them, standing and warming himself..... Joh 18:25 Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. So they said to him, "You are not also one of His disciples, are you?" He denied it, and said, "I am not." 26 One of the slaves of the high priest, being a relative of the one whose ear Peter cut off, *said, "Did I not see you in the garden with Him?" 27 Peter then denied it again, and immediately a rooster crowed.