

Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ

Peter's Denial of Jesus

Last time...the trials of Jesus before the High Priests Annas and Caiaphas

“Are you the Christ, the Son of God?”

“I AM.”

This time...Peter denies Jesus

We will again navigate all 4 Gospels, but let's start with context – a look at Peter over the last 3 years and into the future before we consider his present day

He was a fisherman, a business partner of the sons of Zebedee, James and John.

His brother Andrew, a disciple of John the Baptist, took him to meet the Messiah

Jesus told the fishermen He was going to make them fishers of men

Luke 5:1-11

He professed his faith in Jesus in his hometown synagogue

John 6:60-69

He professed his faith in Jesus again Caesarea Philippi

Matt 16:13-23

He witnessed the Transfiguration of our Lord

Matt 17:1-9

He witnessed the many miracles of Jesus Christ during His ministry

He boasted of never being offended by Jesus

Matt 26:31-33

He was desired by Satan and contradicted Jesus' prophesy of his denial

Luke 22:31-34

Prepared to go to war with 500 armed men, he whacked off the ear of Malchus...and then fled

John 18:10 with Matt 26:56b

Then...this bitter event

After which, Jesus restores him

Filled with the Holy Spirit, he delivers the first church sermons/alter calls

Acts 2-5

He is the Apostle to the Jews

Gal 2:8

He was an instrument of the Gospel to Gentiles and witnessed the “Gentile Pentecost”

Acts 10

He recorded God's inspired words in a Gospel (Mark) and 2 Epistles

1 Peter to Jewish believers about suffering because of following Jesus

2 Peter to all believers, warning of the coming persecution by the Roman Empire

Church tradition holds that he was martyred, upside down on a cross because he did not feel worthy to die as the Lord did

John 18

v15-16 Simon Peter followed...another disciple:

Peter, like all the other disciples, fled/scattered when Jesus was arrested...
in fulfillment of the Scriptures (Zech 13:7)

Who knows where Peter was while Jesus was “standing trial” before Annas

But Simon Peter mustered enough courage to follow Jesus being led away to
Caiaphas after the trial at Annas’ house

As did another unnamed disciple – John

Zebedee was a wealthy fisherman who sold salted fish to the high priests

His son John delivered the fish, so those in Caiaphas’ palace were acquainted with
John

Note: perhaps this is why Malchus is mentioned by name in v10...
John knew him

As a known food supplier, John was granted access into Caiaphas’ palace and
he went inside **with Jesus**

Although a business partner of John’s, Peter was unknown so he kept his distance,
standing at the outside gate.

John went back out to get Peter, and, having “credentialed” him to the doorkeeper
(“He’s with me. Let him in.”), and brought Peter inside as well

v17 the damsel...also one...I am not:

The doorkeeper, who knows John, is a servant girl
She looks at Peter and asks, Aren’t you **also** a disciple of this man?
(Is not this man your master?)

ALSO...she knew John and that he was a disciple of Jesus,
John gained entrance for Peter

Her simple yet penetrating question caught Peter off guard...
and Denial #1 came quickly and easily

Denial #1: I am not (one of His disciples; He is not my master)

Resolved to go to Jerusalem and facing all awaited Him there, Jesus’ thoughts
were of

- His Father – His glory
- His disciples – set free
- NOT of Himself

Surprised and caught off guard by a simple question from a servant girl, Peter's thoughts were of

- his own skin
- NOT of Jesus, his loving and faithful Master

Kinda makes you swallow hard and puts a knot in your stomach doesn't it?

v18 servants and officers...fire...cold...Peter stood with:

The servants of the High Priest and the officers of the Temple Police,
coming back from the arrest of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane on this
cold April night/morning,
make a fire to get warm.

Peter is also cold, so he stands **with them** to get warmed by their fire
Peter is with the enemies of Jesus

Q: Where is John?

A: With Jesus

John's account of Peter's denial, a parallel event to Jesus' trial before Caiaphas, resumes in v25

v25 They said...He denied...I am not:

Noticing Peter, the servants and officers and perhaps others standing around the
warm fire (v18) ask him if he **also** is one of Jesus' disciples;
they too know John and know he is a disciple of Jesus

Denial #2: I am not one of Jesus' disciples, I am not with Him.
Such a far cry from his boast earlier in the night about never being
offended by Jesus!

v26-27 One of the servants...kinsman...see you in the garden:

A relative of Malchus, who was also in the Garden of Gethsemane as part of the
band of 500 men, is pretty sure Peter is the disciple of Jesus who cut off
Malchus' ear

Denial #3...and the rooster did his thing

Sifted...lots of chaff but no fruit
Proud Peter is humbled and broken.

Mark 14

v54 Peter followed him afar off:

The “connected” John gains him entrance into Caiaphas’ palace

v66-68 Peter was beneath in the palace...one of the maids...into the porch...cock crew:
Caiaphas’ palace, in the Upper City of Jerusalem (W/SW of Temple Mount)
was a large, multi-level mansion.

The trial before Caiaphas would be in an upper level

Peter is beneath, down on the ground floor in one of the courtyards

One of Caiaphas’ servant girls (the doorkeeper, per John’s account) sees Peter
standing with other servants and officers warming himself by the fire

She gazes intently at Peter and then says, You were also (as was John, the son of
Zebedee) with Jesus of Nazareth.

Denial #1: No longer bombastic or boastful, Peter is timid and fearful

I do not know (Him).

I don’t know what you are talking about.

Suddenly uncomfortable around the comfortable fire, Peter “excuses” himself
(flees, again) from the fire and goes out to the porch...
and the rooster did his thing

v69-70a a maid saw him again...denied:

Out on the porch, another servant girl recognizes Peter as one of Jesus’ disciples
and announces the fact to all those standing by

Denial #2: Peter could not hide, so he denied

v70b-71 they that stood by...surely you are one...Galilaeen...speech:

The sophisticated city folk of Jerusalem thought the people from the Galilee were
country bumpkins.

The Rabbis held Galilaeans in contempt, for being “uneducated”

The bystanders, after hearing Peter talk with his Galilaeen accent,
join the chorus of servant girls identifying Peter as one of the disciples of
Jesus of Nazareth (in Galilee)

To which Peter responded with

- some foul words
- a vow, taking an oath

Denial #3: I do not know Jesus of Nazareth

v72 second time the cock crew...called to mind...wept:
After Peter's 3rd denial, the rooster did his thing again

Then Peter remembered what Jesus has said to him just a few hours ago
Peter was reduced to tears, sobbing bitterly for his shame and failure

Matt 26

v58 sat with the servants, to see the end:
"to see the end"
What does this make Peter?
A spectator...on onlooker, someone just watching

What is John?
A witness...an eyewitness whose presence gives testimony

v69-74 Peter sat without...denial before them all:
3 denials, as recorded like Mark's account

One significant difference – "he denied before them all" (v70)
Peter denied being with Jesus **before all** who were present,
disassociating himself from Jesus

v75 wept bitterly:
Then Peter is reduced to bitter, violent weeping
He is a hypocrite, an actor...not a friend!
He is nothing like he boasted to Jesus!
He is weak and unfaithful
He is a sinful man, not worthy of Jesus

Luke 22

v55 fire in the midst of the hall...Peter sat down among them:
Peter gets cozy with the enemies of Jesus.
He is in the wrong place!

v56-60 certain maid...earnestly looked...denied Him:

A servant girl gazed intently at Peter and announced that he was also
(as was John) with Jesus

Denial #1: I do not know Him

Shortly thereafter, another servant recognizes Peter and also announces him as
one of Jesus' disciples

Denial #2: I am not (a disciple of Jesus, associated with Jesus)

About an hour later, having been thinking about it, another servant was
sure/confident that Peter was with Jesus;
his accent gave him away (who says profiling is new?)

Denial #3: I do not know what you are talking about...
and the rooster did his thing, just as Jesus had said

v61-62 the Lord turned and looked at Peter:

From above the courtyard, while His "trial" is going on before Caiaphas,
Jesus heard the rooster, turned around, and looked down at Peter

How did the Lord look at Peter?

v31-32

What was in Jesus' eyes?

Forgiveness, not "I told you so!"

Peter went out of the courtyard, probably even out of the palace entirely...
definitely out of the line of sight of Jesus...humbled and broken.

So much to learn from this text

We know there were 2 disciples of Jesus involved in this event parallel to the trial of
Jesus before Caiaphas – Peter and John

We can learn...are expected to learn...by looking at both of them

Let's consider several simple, interrelated questions

Application

1. Where

John: frightened, fled but then followed...
and was a faithful witness of being a disciple of Jesus Christ,
standing **with Jesus** (he is in Good company)

Peter: also frightened, fled, and then followed...
but not a faithful witness of being a disciple of Jesus Christ,
standing **with them**, Jesus' enemies (he is in bad company)

Peter was "with the servants, to see the end"...a spectator vs a witness
Peter was not where John was, with Jesus
(spectators do not follow Jesus)
Peter allowed himself to be separated from John and Jesus
He had a God-ordained appointment – to be sifted like wheat by the devil
Peter's boastful profession faith must be tested
Peter must be humbled and broken

Lesson:

In every situation, be where we are supposed to be – with Jesus
Spectators do not follow Jesus, but witnesses do
Do not get cozy with the enemies of Jesus

If we are not where we should be, we will be surprised, caught off guard...
and we will be bitterly ashamed by our response

When we lean on Self, we will be humbled and broken

2. Why

A keyword for us personally in the accounts of Peter's denial is "**also**"

In his heart and in his mind,
By the words he spoke before he was in the wrong place,
By the actions he took before he was in the wrong place,
Peter was

- associated with Jesus Christ
- a disciple/follower of Jesus Christ

But the "heat is on" and the situation has turned very ugly
Jesus repeatedly forewarned him/them
Hearing about something is much different than living it;
Peter was in fact not prepared in heart and mind

So, standing on his own strength and bravado, surrounded by enemies of Jesus Christ, Peter

- disassociated himself from Jesus Christ
- denied that he is a disciple/follower of Jesus Christ
- denied even knowing Jesus Christ

Why did Peter deny Jesus but John did not?

John was moved by...faith

Peter was moved by...fear

John knows the situation is getting very ugly but he stays with Jesus

He knows there is no better place to be than **with Jesus**

He does not know what will become of him, but he knows...by faith...
where he needs to be

He, a young man, may be afraid, but by faith he maintains his association
to Jesus Christ

By faith, John stood on his association with Jesus

By faith, John remained a witness of Jesus Christ

Proud Peter, being sifted like wheat by Satan, whose *m.o.* is hatred and fear,
gives in to the fear

Fear corrupted his faith and he disassociated himself from Jesus

By fear, Peter was not a witness of Jesus Christ, but a denier of Jesus

Peter wept bitterly for his shame and failure

Lesson:

Have we ever disassociated ourselves from Jesus when confronted by an enemy
of Jesus Christ a vocal unbeliever that challenges our association with
Jesus?

Did we let fear corrupt our faith?

Can we relate to Peter's shame and failure?

Fear corrupts faith...Faith is the antidote for fear

John 14:1 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe
also in me.

John 16:33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might
have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of
good cheer; I have overcome the world

1 John 5:4-5 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and
this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even* our faith.
Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth
that Jesus is the Son of God?

Rom 8:31b If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?

Luke 12:32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom

Luke 8:50 Fear not: believe only

2 Tim 1:7 God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind

We stand by faith...and fall by fear

Rom 11:20 thou standest by faith

2 Cor 1:24 Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand

3. Now what

Peter failed and was bitterly ashamed

Is Peter condemned, now a castaway, unfit and unusable by the Lord?

No

The Lord will forgive and restore His friend and use him in mighty ways

We all fail and have been bitterly ashamed

We know what Peter felt...it feels awful

Do you think Satan wants to sift us like wheat...to silence or ruin our testimony/witness and/or shipwreck our faith?

What happens if we stumble due to fear and disassociate ourselves from Jesus?

Will we be condemned and castaway?

No!!!

Can we be forgiven and restored into fruitful living for Jesus Christ?

Yes!!!

Notice: Peter's denial was "before them all" (Matt 26:70)

Peter's profession will also be before all (Acts 2-5)

Lesson:

Our profession needs to be as loud as our denial

Humble ourselves before the mighty hand of God...and be restored

Be prepared in heart and mind, stand by faith to not fall by fear:

If you know Jesus Christ, say so!

Boldly, confidently

(not merely "God")

It is the name and the cross of Jesus that offends/divides

4. How

Be ready for “heat”, not surprised by it

Hostility to Biblical, evangelical Christianity is increasing in the public market
place of ideas and actions

We are behind enemy lines, as was Peter

Our faith will be mocked

Our allegiance to Jesus will be called out

Our silence will be demanded

Fear attacks and corrupts faith

When we give into the fear, shame in a believer’s heart follows closely behind

We will be like Peter if we rely on our flesh, as he did

Note: before born-again (John 20)

before Spirit-filled (Acts 2)

Lesson:

Be baptized of the Holy Spirit, empowered with power from on High to be the
witnesses of Jesus Christ, even when the heat is on

Eph 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good
works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in
them

2 Tim 1:7

Addendum

In John's account, Peter was called out by

1. the doorkeeper, a servant girl
2. others around the fire
3. a servant and a relative of Malchus

In Mark's and Matthew's accounts, Peter was called out by

1. a servant girl
2. another servant girl
3. those around the fire

In Luke's account, Peter was called out by

1. a servant girl
2. another servant, a male
3. another servant, another male

Are these accounts contradictory?

Or are they complimentary?

Jesus foretold Peter that he would deny Him how many times?

3

How many times did Peter deny Jesus in all four Gospel accounts?

3

Did Jesus tell Peter how many different accusers Satan would use in his sifting?

No

There appear to be many more accusers than there are denials

A chart may be helpful

Gospel	Denial #1	Denial #2	Denial #3
Matt	a maid	another maid	bystanders
Mark	a maid	another maid	bystanders
Luke	a maid	another servant	another servant
John	a maid	bystanders	relative of Malchus
Harmony	a maid who talked with another maid	another maid or servant, plus others	bystanders, including a relative of Malchus

We see in the harmony of the Gospels an ever-expanding number of accusers that accompany Peter's 3 denials