

Peter's Denial

Matthew 26; Mark 14; Luke 22; John 13, 18

And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

And Peter went out, and wept bitterly. Luke 22:61–62

During the Last Supper, Jesus told His Apostles that He would not be with them much longer. He said they could not now go where He was going, but they could follow Him later. (See John 13:33, 36.)

Peter asked, "Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake" (John 13:37). But Jesus sadly answered Peter, "Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? . . . I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice" (John 13:38).

Later, on the way to Gethsemane, Jesus told His Apostles that on that very night they would all be afraid to admit being His followers. When Peter declared that even if everyone else deserted Jesus, he would not, Jesus reminded him, "This night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice" (Matthew 26:34; see also Matthew 26:31–33; Mark 14:27–30; Luke 22:34). But Peter insisted that he would never deny Jesus, that he would die with Him if necessary (see Matthew 26:35; Mark 14:31).

After Jesus prayed and suffered in Gethsemane, He was arrested and taken away. Peter followed far behind and went with the crowd into the high priest's palace. While he sat with the servants and warmed himself by a fire, one of the high priest's

maids saw him and said, "Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth" (Mark 14:67). But Peter denied this, saying, "I know not . . . what thou sayest" (Mark 14:68; see also Matthew 26:58, 69–70; Luke 22:54–57).

Then Peter left the group and went to a porch of the palace. While he was there, another maid saw him and told the people standing nearby, "This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth" (Matthew 26:71). Again, Peter denied this, replying, "I do not know the man" (Matthew 26:72; see also Mark 14:69–70; Luke 22:58).

After a while one of the high priest's servants came to Peter, feeling certain that Peter was a follower of Jesus because he spoke like a Galilean. "Did I not see thee in the garden with him?" he asked (John 18:26). For the third time Peter denied knowing Jesus, saying, "I know not the man" (Matthew 26:74). Just then the cock crowed (see Matthew 26:73; Mark 14:70–72; Luke 22:59–60; John 18:27).

Jesus, who was being ridiculed and hurt nearby, turned and looked at Peter. "And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, . . . Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly" (Matthew 26:75; see also Mark 14:72; Luke 22:61–62).

Summary

At the Last Supper, Peter said he was willing to give his life for the Lord. However, Jesus told Peter that before the rooster crowed the next morning, Peter would deny Him three times. When Jesus was taken away to be tried and beaten, Peter followed. As he waited to see what would happen, Peter was

approached three different times about being one of Jesus's followers, and each time he said he did not know Jesus. When Peter denied knowing Jesus for the third time, he heard the rooster crow and remembered what Jesus had said would happen. Realizing what he had done, Peter wept.

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

Artist, Carl Heinrich Bloch

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