**John 18:25-27**

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/john/john-18/john-1825-27/>

Peter Denies Knowing Jesus Two More Times

Peter’s second and third denials of Jesus occur during the Lord’s religious trial held at Caiaphas’s house. One of the men to whom Peter denies being with Jesus is a relative of Malchus, the servant whose ear Peter cut off when defending Jesus at His arrest. After this third denial, a rooster crows, thus fulfilling Jesus’s prediction that Peter would deny Him three times before the rooster crows.

 The parallel gospel accounts of this event are found in Matthew 26:72-75; Mark 14:68b-72; and Luke 22:58-62.

The main event in this passage is Peter’s final two denials of Jesus.

Peter’s first denial of his Lord occurred in the courtyard of the former high priest, Annas, during Jesus’s preliminary trial (John 18:15-18). It happened a “little” before these other two denials (Luke 22:58).

Peter’s second and third denials most likely took place on the night of Nisan 15 (the dark and dim hours of Friday morning by Roman reckoning) in the courtyard of Caiaphas, the high priest, as Jesus’s second night-time trial was underway inside Caiaphas’s home.

See “[The Bible Says Timeline of Jesus’s Final 24 Hours](https://thebiblesays.com/tough-topics/a-timeline-of-jesuss-final-24-hours/)” to learn more about the timing and sequencing of this event.

As was observed in TheBibleSays commentary for John 18:15-18 discussing Simon Peter’s first denial of Jesus, there were three significant moments as part of the back-story leading up to Peter’s denials. We will only restate them in summary here. If the reader desires to see a fuller explanation of these three significant moments, they can be found here.

The first moment was Jesus’s warnings to Peter that he would deny Him three times before the rooster crowed that night. Jesus appears to have warned Peter of this twice: once in the upper room following Jesus and the disciples’ celebration of the Passover (Luke 22:31-34; John 13:38); and again as they walked to the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:34; Mark 14:30). As Jesus gave Peter this warning, Peter strongly disagreed with his Rabbi and swore he would never deny Him and that he would die for Him (Matthew 26:33, 35; Mark 14:29, 31; Luke 22:33; John 13:37).

The second moment was in the Garden of Gethsemane, when Jesus asked Peter and the other disciples to “pray that you may not enter into temptation” (Luke 22:40). Jesus was trying to prepare them for the most difficult trial they had yet faced—the trial of seeing their Lord arrested, crucified, and buried for three days. But instead of praying, as Jesus told them to do, Peter and the other disciples fell asleep (Mark 14:37). Therefore, when the trial came, none of the disciples were prepared to overcome it by faith and in God’s strength. All of them were spiritually weak.

The third moment came when Jesus submitted to arrest and rebuked Peter for trying to attack His captors (Matthew 26:52-54; Luke 22:49-53; John 18:7-11). By defending Jesus, Peter showed that he was ready to die for Jesus as he claimed, but when Jesus submitted to arrest, Peter and the rest of His disciples fled in fear and confusion (Matthew 26:56; Mark 14:50). Peter and the rest of the disciples were prepared to die and follow Jesus on their own terms, but they were not prepared to do so on His terms. In this moment, they did not have the faith to follow Jesus when circumstances diverged from their expectations.

After Jesus was taken away, Peter followed the armed captors at a distance all the way to Annas’s house (Matthew 26:58; John 18:12-13, 15). Once there, another disciple (probably John) who also followed Jesus and knew the door keeper at the high priest’s house asked his friend if he would let Peter inside, which he did (John 18:15-16). As Peter was inside warming himself by the fire, a slave-girl asked him if he was one of Jesus’s disciples. And Peter said: “I am not” (John 18:17; see also Matthew 26:69-70; Mark 14:66-68a; Luke 22:54b-57).

This was Peter’s first denial of Jesus.

From there Peter followed the proceedings from Jesus’s preliminary trial in the home of Annas, the former high priest, to Jesus’s night-time religious trial in the home of Caiaphas, the sitting high priest (Matthew 26:57-58; John 18:24).

In the courtyard of Caiaphas was where Peter’s second and third denials took place. Luke writes that Peter asserted his second denial of Jesus, “a little later” from the first denial, which suggests that he did this around the time Jesus’s second trial was getting started (Luke 22:58).

John describes the scene:

Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself (v 25a).

But it seems that as Peter was leaving Jesus’s preliminary trial at Annas’s house and stepped “out onto the porch” (Mark 14:68) and 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’” (Matthew 26:71).

These men took note of Peter and when they saw him standing and warming himself by the fire in Caiaphas’ courtyard a little later, they said to him, “You are not also one of His disciples, are you?” (v 25b).

Again, He denied it, and said, “I am not” (v 25b).

This was the second time Peter denied knowing Jesus. And it was the second time he failed to keep his promise that he would never deny Him (Matthew 26:35).

Matthew records that this time, Peter denied knowing Jesus with “an oath” (Matthew 26:72). By denying Jesus with an oath, it gave greater strength and force to the denial than Peter’s first denial of his Lord.

Once again, the Greek word Matthew uses for “know” in Peter’s expression “I do not know” is a form of οἶδα (G1492 – pronounced: “Oi'-dah). This word describes theoretical knowledge. It is different from the other common Greek word for “I know” which is γινώσκω (G1097 – pronounced “Ghin-ōs-kō”). “Ghinōskō” describes relational or experiential knowledge or familiarity. By denying that he “oidah” Jesus, Peter is implying that he knows little to nothing about Him.

To say he did not “ginōskō” Jesus would mean that Peter may have talked with Him once or twice, but that he was not a real follower of Jesus. But to say that he did not “oidah” Jesus implied that Peter knew nothing of Jesus at all and/or had never interacted with Him. Therefore Peter’s “oidah” denial was a much stronger and more absolute denial than if he had merely said he did not “ghinōskō” Jesus.

“After about an hour had passed” (Luke 22:59) Peter denied Jesus again (v 27). He seems to have done this after Jesus’s second trial was over, which would suggest that this trial lasted “about an hour.”

This time: One of the slaves of the high priest, being a relative of Malchus (John 18:10) the one whose ear Peter cut off, said, “Did I not see you in the garden with Him?” (v 26).

John again phrases this servant’s accusation as a question—Did I not see you in the garden with Him? Apparently, this slave went with Judas, the Jewish leaders, and the Roman into the garden of Gethsemane to arrest Jesus. This man personally recognized the disciple who cut off the ear of his relative.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke all mention how this servant commented about how Peter’s Galilean accent or manners also gave Peter away (Matthew 26:73; Mark 14:70; Luke 22:59).

John observes that Peter then denied it again (v 27a).

Matthew writes that Peter “began to curse and swear, ‘I do not know (“oidah”) the man!’” (Matthew 26:74a). In Matthew’s progression, first he simply denied knowing Jesus (Matthew 26:70), then gave an oath that he did not know Him (Matthew 26:72); finally, he cursed and swore that he did not know the man (Matthew 26:74; Mark 14:71).

All four Gospels record the moment Peter denied Jesus the third time: and immediately a rooster crowed (v 27) (See also Matthew 26:74; Mark 14:72). Luke goes so far as to say that the rooster crowed “while he was still speaking” (Luke 22:60).

Luke also includes this bitter detail, that as the rooster crowed during Peter’s third denial:

“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.’”
(Luke 22:61)

Jesus and Peter made eye contact as the Lord’s accusers were taking Him from Caiaphas’s house to Jesus’s “official” religious trial before the Sanhedrin, which was scheduled for sunrise. When Peter saw Jesus, his Lord, whom he had denied, he recalled what Jesus had told him he would do and what Peter swore he would never do, and yet had now done—“you will deny Me three times” (Luke 22:61).

Luke then comments how Peter: “went out and wept bitterly” (Luke 22:62 – see also Matthew 26:75b; Mark 14:72).

This was Peter’s lowest moment. He had failed himself. But what was likely the most crushing of all was that he had failed Jesus. It is unlikely that Peter also recalled in this bitter moment what Jesus had also assured him when He told His disciples that they would all fall away (Matthew 26:31), “But after I have been raised, I will go ahead of you to Galilee” (Matthew 26:32). Though Peter had fallen and denied his Lord, there was still hope, even if Peter did not recall it as he wept bitterly.

Peter might have had this experience in mind years later when he penned his first epistle, in which he wrote:

**“**In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”
(1 Peter 1:6-7)

The same is true for all who believe in Jesus. If we belong to Him there is no condemnation (Romans 8:1), no sin (Romans 5:20), no danger, no disgrace, no death that will be able to separate us from His love (Romans 8:37-38). Even in the trials where we stumble and fall, God will redeem and use them to conform us to His image (Romans 8:29). But those trials we endure will prove our faith, and gain us great reward. Instead of a stinging rebuke, as Peter experienced, we can receive “praise and honor” from Jesus for our faithfulness.

[To see all three of Peter’s denials from the perspective of Matthew, go to The Bible Says commentary page for Matthew 26:69-75.](https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/matt/matt-26/matthew-2669-75/)

**Biblical Text**

**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.**