

Matthew

Bible Study

Peter's Denial

Matthew 26:31—35, 57—58, 69—75

(Mark 14:27—31, 53—54, 66—72; Luke 22:31—34, 54—62; John 13:37—38, 18:15—18, 25—27)

Matthew 26:31—35 (Spoken outside upper room)	Mark 14:27—31 (Spoken outside upper room)	Luke 22:31—33 (Spoken inside upper room)	John 13:37—38 (Spoken inside upper room)
<p>31 Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.</p> <p>32 But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.</p> <p>33 Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.</p> <p>34 Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, <u>before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.</u></p>	<p>27 And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.</p> <p>28 But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee.</p> <p>29 But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet will not I.</p> <p>30 And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this day, even in this night, <u>before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.</u></p>	<p>31 And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:</p> <p>32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.</p> <p>33 And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.</p> <p>34 And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, <u>before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.</u></p>	<p>37 Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake.</p> <p>38 Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, <u>till thou hast denied me thrice.</u></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Matthew 26:57—58</p> <p>57 And they that had laid hold on Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.</p> <p>58 But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Mark 14:53—54</p> <p>53 And they led Jesus away to the high priest: and with him were assembled all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes.</p> <p>54 And Peter followed him afar off, even into the palace of the high priest: and he sat with the servants, and warmed himself at the fire.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Luke 22:54—62</p> <p>54 Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed afar off.</p> <p>55 And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them.</p> <p>56 But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him.</p> <p>57 And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>58 And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>59 And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilaean.</p> <p>60 And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew.</p> <p>61 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.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">John 18:15—18</p> <p>15 And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest.</p> <p>16 But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter.</p> <p>17 Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>18 And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Matthew 26:69—75</p> <p>69 Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.</p> <p>70 But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>71 And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth.</p> <p>72 And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>73 And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee.</p> <p>74 Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew.</p> <p>75 And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Mark 14:66—72</p> <p>66 And as Peter was beneath in the palace, there cometh one of the maids of the high priest:</p> <p>67 And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked upon him, and said, And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth.</p> <p>68 But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest. And he went out into the porch; and the cock crew.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>69 And a maid saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by, This is one of them.</p> <p>70 And he denied it again.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>And a little after, they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou art one of them: for thou art a Galilaean, and thy speech agreeth thereto.</p> <p>71 But he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom ye speak.</p> <p>72 And the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">John 18:25—27</p> <p>25 And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples? He denied it, and said, I am not.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>26 One of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him?</p> <p>27 Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew.</p>	

A Contradiction?

A quick reading of the accounts telling of Peter's denial will lead to the conclusion that the book of Mark disagrees with the details found in Matthew, Luke and John. This so-called contradiction is found on many atheist web sites and is probably one of the most cited Bible contradictions. Matthew, Luke and John all clearly state that Peter will deny Jesus three times before the cock crows while Mark states the cock will crow two times after Peter denies Jesus twice. Mark then tells specific details about the denials. After the first denial the cock crew (crow one) then did so again after the third denial.

There are a number of ways this seeming contradiction is explained. One common solution is to have Peter deny Jesus six times. Some say he denied Jesus three times, heard a rooster crow, left the Praetorium for a while then returned only to deny Him three more times followed by another crow of the rooster. Others say there were actually three rooster crows. The various explanations combine and sort the denials in a number of different ways to arrive at a logical answer that satisfies the details recorded in Scripture.

Others explain the apparent discrepancy by interpreting the cock crowing to be a reference to a time of day. They would then understand Jesus was telling Peter that he would deny Him three times before daybreak, or the time of the rooster crowing. This explanation really does not seem to have solid biblical nor historical support.

Three denials, two crowings

Usually the simplest answer is the correct answer so lets try to find out what the most straightforward solution could be. First, the translators normally speak of THE cock that was crowing which would lead one to think that there was only one bird crowing. The Greek text does not contain the definite article “the” so Scripture is only saying a bird crowed. When Jesus told Peter that he would deny Him three times He said that a cock would not crow until Peter denied Jesus three times. This was indeed fulfilled for a rooster did not crow until after Peter denied Jesus three times.

But what about Mark’s account of a rooster crowing after the first denial then third denial? All Mark was doing was giving additional information. Matthew, Luke and John only told us of the crowing after the third denial but Mark mentions a crowing after the first. There is no contradiction only differing viewpoints from four different authors. This can be observed by comparing who questioned Peter for each denial.

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Denial 1	Maid/servant	Maid/servant	Maid	Woman doorkeeper
Denial 2	Another maid	Maid	Another	They/group
Denial 3	They that stood by	They that stood by	Another	Servant of High Priest

Although there are different details they do not contradict themselves. The first denial is obviously a female servant who was keeping the door. The second denial was a different female servant who happened to be part of a group. She probably began questioning Peter and the whole group chimed in with their questions about Peter’s relationship to Jesus. The third denial has the same idea as the second with the servant of the High Priest beginning the questioning followed by individuals in that group they were a part of.

This is an example of how believers need to approach Scripture. We can be confident that it does not contain contradictions. When we come to Scripture we understand that there are logical explanations to what skeptics call errors or discrepancies. Their desire is to destroy Scripture while our desire is to know what God is saying to us. The Bible has stood the test of time. A lack of understanding on our part does not disprove the cohesiveness of God’s Word.

For previous notes and additional mid-Acts materials please visit www.MidActsTruths.com