

**Peter’s Denials of Jesus: Problems between the Accounts**

**Matthew 26:33–35, Matthew 26:57–75**

**Mark 14:29–31, Mark 14:53–72**

**Luke 22:31–34, Luke 22:54–75**

**John 13:36–38, John 18:12–27**

<b>Matt 26:33–35</b>	<b>Mark 14:29–31</b>	<b>Luke 22:31–34</b>	<b>John 13:36–38</b>
This very night, before a rooster crows, you will deny me 3 times	This very night, before a rooster crows TWICE, you will deny me 3 times	The rooster will not crow today until you have denied me 3 times	A rooster will not crow until you deny me 3 times
<b>Matt 26:69–70</b>	<b>Mark 14:66–68a</b>	<b>Luke 22:56–57</b>	<b>John 18:17–18</b>
Servant-girl: “You too were with Jesus the Galilean.”  Peter: “I do not know what you are talking about.”	Servant-girl: “You also were with Jesus the Nazarene.”  Peter: “I neither know nor understand what you are talking about.”	Servant-girl: “This man was with him too.”  Peter: “Woman, I do not know Him.”	Slave-girl (doorkeeper): “You are not also one of this man’s disciples, are you?”  Peter: “I am not.”
<b>Matt 26:71–72</b>	<b>Mark 14:68b–70a</b>	<b>Luke 22:58</b>	<b>John 18:25–27</b>
Another servant-girl:  “This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.”	Rooster crows. The servant-girl began again:  “This is one of them.”	Another ( <i>heteros</i> ):  “You are one of them too!”	They:  “You are not also one of His disciples, are you?”

Peter (w/oath): “I do not know the man.”	Peter denied it.	Peter: “Man, I am not!”	Peter: “I am not.”
<b>Matt 26:73-75</b>	<b>Mark 14:70b-72</b>	<b>Luke 22:59-62</b>	<b>John 18:25-27</b>
Bystanders: “Surely you too are one of them; for even the way you talk gives you away.”  Peter (cursing and swearing): I do not know the man!”  Rooster crows.	Bystanders: “Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean too.”  Peter (cursing and swearing): I do not know this man you are talking about!”  Rooster crows second time.	Another man ( <i>allos tis</i> ): “Certainly this man also was with Him, for he is a Galilean too.” Peter: “Man, I do not know what you are talking about.”  Rooster crows.	Slave (relative): “Did I not see you in the garden with Him?”  Peter denied it.  Rooster crows.

Adjusted to reflect John’s inclusion of only two occurrences of denial:

<b>Matt 26:71-72</b>	<b>Mark 14:68b-70a</b>	<b>Luke 22:58</b>	<b>John 18:25-27</b>
Another servant-girl:  “This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.” Peter (w/oath): “I do not know the man.”	Rooster crows. The servant-girl began again:  “This is one of them.”  Peter denied it.	Another ( <i>heteros</i> ):  “You are one of them too!”  Peter: “Man, I am not!”	Second occasion of denial not reported.

<b>Matt 26:73-75</b>	<b>Mark 14:70b-72</b>	<b>Luke 22:59-62</b>	<b>John 18:25-27</b>
<p>Bystanders:                      “Surely you too are one of them; for even the way you talk gives you away.”</p> <p>Peter (cursing and swearing): I do not know the man!”</p> <p>Rooster crows.</p>	<p>Bystanders:                      “Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean too.”</p> <p>Peter (cursing and swearing): I do not know this man you are talking about!”</p> <p>Rooster crows second time.</p>	<p>Another man (<i>allos tis</i>):                      “Certainly this man also was with Him, for he is a Galilean too.”</p> <p>Peter: “Man, I do not know what you are talking about.”</p> <p>Rooster crows.</p>	<p>They: “You are not also one of His disciples, are you?”</p> <p>Peter:                      “I am not.”</p> <p><i>Slave (relative):</i>                      “Did I not see you in the garden with Him?”</p> <p><i>Peter denied it.</i></p> <p>Rooster crows.</p>

## Gospel Accounts of Peter's Denials

(English texts below are adapted from the NASV, 1995)

### Jesus' Prediction of Peter's Denials

***Narrative element #A: In response to a confident boast of courage and loyalty by Peter, Jesus prophesies to him that on the very night coming up, before the rooster's crowing has finished announcing the dawn—more specifically, before the rooster has sounded a second time—Peter will have denied Jesus on three separate occasions. Peter denies that Jesus' prediction is true and, joined by the other disciples, vows once again his courage and loyalty, even to the point of death.***

Matt 26:33-35	Mark 14:29-31	Luke 22:31-34	John 13:36-38
<p>But Peter said to Him, "Even though all may fall away because of You, I will never fall away." Jesus said to him, "Truly I say to you that this very night, before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." Peter said to Him, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You." All the disciples said the same thing too.</p>	<p>But Peter said to Him, "Even though all may fall away, yet I will not." And Jesus said to him, "Truly I say to you, that this very night, before a rooster crows twice, you yourself will deny Me three times." But Peter kept saying insistently, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" And they all were saying the same thing also.</p>	<p>"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers." But he said to Him, "Lord, with You I am ready to go both to prison and to death!" And He said, "I say to you, Peter, the rooster will not crow today until you have denied three times that you know Me."</p>	<p>Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, where are You going?" Jesus answered, "Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you will follow later." Peter said to Him, "Lord, why can I not follow You right now? I will lay down my life for You." Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for Me? Truly, truly, I say to you, a rooster will not crow until you deny Me three times."</p>

### Account of Peter's Denials

***Narrative element #1: The soldiers, having taken Jesus into custody, led him to the residence of Caiaphas, the high priest. Some (all?) of the members of the Sanhedrin had been called to meet there. They delivered Jesus first to Annas (father-in-law of Caiaphas) to be interrogated by him in private before Jesus was to be taken to be questioned before the Sanhedrin. John and Peter had followed Jesus and the soldiers from a distance until they arrived at the gate to Caiaphas' residence. John, who was known personally to the household of the high priest, was admitted***

***entrance into the courtyard. Peter, who was not known to the servant girl who was manning the door, was not granted entrance and remained outside the gate. John, noticing that Peter had not followed him in, returned to the gate and spoke with the doorkeeper to gain admittance for Peter. John and Peter then gathered with a crowd of onlookers (including officers of the temple guard and various servants in the high priest's household) who were sitting and warming themselves around a fire that had been built in the middle of the courtyard.***

<b>Matt 26:57-58</b>	<b>Mark 14:53-54</b>	<b>Luke 22:54-55</b>	<b>John 18:12-16</b>
<p>Those who had seized Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas, the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were gathered together. But Peter was following Him at a distance as far as the courtyard of the high priest, and entered in, and sat down with the officers to see the outcome.</p>	<p>They led Jesus away to the high priest; and all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes gathered together. Peter had followed Him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest; and he was sitting with the officers and warming himself at the fire.</p>	<p>Having arrested Him, they led Him <i>away</i> and brought Him to the house of the high priest; but Peter was following at a distance. After they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter was sitting among them.</p>	<p>So the <i>Roman</i> cohort and the commander and the officers of the Jews, arrested Jesus and bound Him, and led Him to Annas first; for he was father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. Now Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was expedient for one man to die on behalf of the people. Simon Peter was following Jesus, and <i>so was</i> another disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and entered with Jesus into the court of the high priest, but Peter was standing at the door outside. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the doorkeeper, and brought Peter in.</p>

***Narrative of Jesus' interrogation and trial in the high priest's residence:***

<b>Matt 26:59-68</b>	<b>Mark 14:55-65</b>	<i>Luke</i>	<i>John</i>
<i>At this point in his account, Matthew describes some of the events related to Jesus' being interrogated by the chief priests and other members of the Sanhedrin inside the high priest's residence. These are events that are occurring concurrently to the drama that is unfolding around the fire in the courtyard outside.</i>	<i>At this point in his account, Mark describes some of the events related to Jesus' being interrogated by the chief priests and other members of the Sanhedrin inside the high priest's residence. These are events that are occurring concurrently to the drama that is unfolding around the fire in the courtyard outside.</i>	<i>No corresponding account is situated here in Luke's account. Luke includes a comparable account later.</i>	<i>No corresponding account is situated here in John's account. John includes a comparable account later.</i>
Text not included. This account is outside the scope of our interest in the integrity of the accounts of Peter's denials.	Text not included. This account is outside the scope of our interest in the integrity of the accounts of Peter's denials.		

***Narrative element #2: As the various onlookers were sitting and warming themselves around the fire in the courtyard, the servant girl who served as the doorkeeper comes into the courtyard and joins them all around the fire. Noticing Peter by the light of the fire, she looks intently at Peter and finally asks him, "You aren't one of this man's disciples, are you?" Peter (presumably) answers, "No." But convinced that she recognizes him, she insists, "You were with Jesus of Galilee, the Nazarene, too. Peter denied it emphatically. But she persisted, announcing to the other onlookers that Peter was one of Jesus' disciples. The more she persisted, the more emphatically Peter denied it.***

<b>Matt 26:69-70</b>	<b>Mark 14:66-68a</b>	<b>Luke 22:56-57</b>	<b>John 18:17-18</b>
<i>FIRST occasion of Peter's denials</i>	<i>FIRST occasion of Peter's denials</i>	<i>FIRST occasion of Peter's denials</i>	<i>FIRST occasion of Peter's denials</i>
Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard, and a servant-girl came to him and said, "You too were with Jesus the Galilean." But he denied <i>it</i> before them all, saying, "I do not know what you are talking about."	As Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant-girls of the high priest came, and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, "You also were with Jesus the Nazarene." But he denied <i>it</i> , saying, "I neither know nor understand what you are talking about."	And a servant-girl, seeing him as he sat in the firelight and looking intently at him, said, "This man was with Him too." But he denied <i>it</i> , saying, "Woman, I do not know Him."	Then the slave-girl who kept the door said to Peter, "You are not also <i>one</i> of this man's disciples, are you?" He said, "I am not." Now the slaves and the officers were standing <i>there</i> , having made a charcoal fire, for it was cold and they were warming themselves; and Peter was also with them, standing and warming himself.

***Narrative of Jesus' interrogation and trial in the high priest's residence:***

<i>Matthew</i>	<i>Mark</i>	<i>Luke</i>	<b>John 18:19-24</b>
<i>No corresponding account is situated here in Matthew's account. Matthew includes a comparable account earlier in his text.</i>	<i>No corresponding account is situated here in Mark's account. Mark includes a comparable account earlier in his text.</i>	<i>No corresponding account is situated here in Luke's account. Luke includes a comparable account later in his text.</i>	<i>At this point in his account, John describes some of the events related to Jesus' being interrogated by the chief priests and other members of the Sanhedrin inside the high priest's residence. These are events that are occurring concurrently to the drama that is unfolding around the fire in the courtyard outside.</i>
			Text not included. It

			is not relevant to the integrity of the parallel accounts of Peter's denials.
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***Narrative element #3: Peter's experience around the fire had proved quite uncomfortable for him. To escape further scrutiny and inquiry, he eventually left the warmth of the fire and went out to take refuge under the outer porches surrounding the courtyard. As he did so, he heard a rooster sound. Eventually, as he stood near the gateway, another servant girl saw him and announced to others who were standing nearby, "This man is one of his disciples. He was with Jesus of Nazareth." And to Peter she asserted, "You are one of his disciples." Peter denied it, swearing with an oath that he did not know Jesus.***

<b>Matt 26:71-72</b>	<b>Mark 14:68b-70a</b>	<b>Luke 22:58</b>	<b>John</b>
<i>SECOND occasion of Peter's denials</i>	<i>SECOND occasion of Peter's denials</i>	<i>SECOND occasion of Peter's denials</i>	<i>SECOND occasion of Peter's denials</i>
When he had gone out to the gateway, another <i>servant-girl</i> saw him and said to those who were there, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth." And again he denied <i>it</i> with an oath, "I do not know the man."	And he went out onto the porch, and a rooster crowed. The servant-girl saw him, and began once more to say to the bystanders, "This is <i>one</i> of them!" But again he denied it.	A little later, another saw him and said, "You are <i>one</i> of them too!" But Peter said, "Man, I am not!"	<i>This occasion of denial is not included in John's account—presumably because John is giving an account of only those events of which he was an eyewitness.</i>

***Narrative element #4: Peter had not succeeded at finding safety under the porches, so he returned to rejoin John at the fire in the courtyard once again. After about an hour had passed, one of the men (slave girls?) around the fire asked him once again, "You aren't one of this man's disciples, are you?" Peter emphatically denied it. But the person refused Peter's denial, "You must be. I can tell by your accent that you are a Galilean. You are one of his disciples!" The person went on to insist to the bystanders, "He is a Galilean. Most certainly he is one of his followers." The other bystanders joined in, accusing him of being a disciple of Jesus. But Peter persisted in denying their allegation. Then one of the slaves of the high priest whose relative had had his ear cut off by Peter hours before in the garden of Gethsemane said, "Didn't I see you with him in the garden?" Peter again denied that he was with Jesus. Then, just as Peter was insisting that he did not know Jesus, Jesus was led out of the room where the Sanhedrin had been questioning him and through the courtyard where Peter was standing. At that moment a rooster sounded for the second time and Jesus turned and looked at Peter. When Peter saw Jesus looking at***



***him, Peter remembered Jesus predicting that he would deny him three times before the rooster crowed, and he ran out and wept bitterly.***

<b>Matt 26:73-75</b>	<b>Mark 14:70b-72</b>	<b>Luke 22:59-62</b>	<b>John 18:25-27</b>
<i>THIRD occasion of Peter's denials</i>	<i>THIRD occasion of Peter's denials</i>	<i>THIRD occasion of Peter's denials</i>	<i>THIRD occasion of Peter's denials</i>
A little later the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Surely you too are <i>one</i> of them; for even the way you talk gives you away." Then he began to curse and swear, "I do not know the man!" And immediately a rooster crowed. 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.	And after a little while the bystanders were again saying to Peter, "Surely you are <i>one</i> of them, for you are a Galilean too." But he began to curse and swear, "I do not know this man you are talking about!" 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.	After about an hour had passed, another man <i>began</i> to insist, saying, "Certainly this man also was with Him, for he is a Galilean too." But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about." Immediately, while he was still speaking, a rooster crowed. 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." And he went out and wept bitterly.	Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. So they said to him, "You are not also <i>one</i> of His disciples, are you?" He denied <i>it</i> , and said, "I am not." 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?" Peter then denied <i>it</i> again, and immediately a rooster crowed.

***Narrative of Jesus' interrogation and trial in the high priest's residence:***

<i>Matthew</i>	<i>Mark</i>	<b>Luke 22:63-65</b>	<i>John</i>
<i>No corresponding account is situated here in Matthew's account. Matthew includes a comparable account earlier in his text.</i>	<i>No corresponding account is situated here in Mark's account. Mark includes a comparable account earlier in his text.</i>	<i>At this point in his account, Luke describes some of the events related to Jesus' being interrogated by the chief priests and other members of the Sanhedrin inside the high priest's residence. These are</i>	<i>No corresponding account is situated here in John's account. John includes a comparable account earlier in his text.</i>

		<i>events that have occurred concurrently to the drama that was unfolding around the fire in the courtyard outside.</i>	
		Text not included. It is not relevant to the integrity of the parallel accounts of Peter's denials.	