

The Passover meal was followed by Jesus' last instructions to the disciples. Then, as the disciples slept, Jesus poured out His heart to the Father in the Garden of Gethsemane. Gethsemane means olive press. There Jesus was put under the pressure of accepting a mission that only He could accomplish. It was there that He yielded His will to the Father. He settled in His heart to drink the cup of wrath that our sins deserved, a horror of which we cannot comprehend. The pressure of accepting the onslaught of hell caused His capillaries to burst, sweating blood from His pores.

Though he encouraged the Peter, James, and John to stay awake and pray, they all slept. He went back to them several times to waken them and asking them to pray to avoid temptation. Finally, He roused them one last time as Judas, the soldiers, and the chief priests approached. The trusted treasurer whose feet Jesus had washed gave the kiss of betrayal to the incarnate Word who called him friend. Jesus' declaration of "I Am" knocked the arresting crowd to the ground. Seeing this, Peter, who shortly before was jolted awake, pulled his sword, and whacked off the ear of the high priest's servant. Jesus told Peter to put his sword away. There would be no resistance.

*<sup>54</sup> Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house, and Peter was following at a distance.* Luke 22:54 "The hands of men" was the thing that King David had feared the most. Millennia before, Jesus ancestor, David, had sinned by looking to the size of his army instead of to God. Through the prophet Gad, God offered three options for his punishment: flee from enemies for three months, a plague for three days, or three years of famine. He chose the plague rather than facing the merciless hands of men (2 Samuel 24:13,14<sup>i</sup>), for he knew God was more merciful than man (Psalm 27:12<sup>ii</sup>). But now the Son of David was delivered into the merciless hands of men, not for His own sins, but for yours and mine. He had warned His disciples that this arrest would happen (Luke 9:44<sup>iii</sup>).

Some of us have walked that route of Gethsemane through the Kidron Valley (picture) and up the actual steps Jesus would have walked to the house of Annas and Caiaphas (picture). What was going through Jesus' mind surrounded by soldiers as the blood of the Passover lambs flowed down that valley? He had set His heart to do the Father's will. He knew the physical abuse and spiritual assault that was coming. The air around Jesus was filled with the royal scent of the myrrh with which Mary had anointed Him (John 12:3<sup>iv</sup>). Peter and John came trailing far behind, following the light of the torches ahead of them (John 18:15<sup>v</sup>). Peter remembered his vow, and he was determined that what Jesus said would never happen. He would go with Jesus to prison and death. He didn't yet know he needed the power of the Holy Spirit to face that.

*<sup>55</sup> And when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat down among them. <sup>56</sup> Then a servant girl, seeing him as he sat in the light and looking closely at him, said, "This man also was with him." <sup>57</sup> But he denied it, saying, "Woman, I do not know him." <sup>58</sup> And a little later someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them." But Peter said, "Man, I am not."* Luke 22:55-58 Two thousand years later a life-size bronze of the scene was place in that very courtyard (picture). Annas and Caiaphas were the main figures in their day, but they are not remembered in bronze. To us today, they were minor figures who appear only as the villains for a couple of scenes. They were not nearly as important as they thought they

were. The only figure we know the name of in this bronze is Peter, and it is not a flattering reminder. Christianity is so different in that it immortalizes the failures of its heroes. Think about that! And the reason we do that is that we can relate to their failures while longing to relate to their repentance and victories as well. It reminds us that Jesus is gracious, patient, and persistent. He gives no person preferential treatment (Deuteronomy 10:17<sup>vi</sup>), so we can be sure He will be the same with us.

Another gospel tells us that John was known by the High Priest's home, which enabled him to get Peter past the gate (John 18:16<sup>vii</sup>). We do not know where John was at that moment. He was probably closer to Jesus. Peter had sat near the charcoal fire to get a bit of the warmth. A servant girl recognized him by the light of the fire and informed everyone that he was one of Jesus' followers. Immediately Peter responded, "*Woman, I don't know Him!*" And then another person came by the fire and recognized Peter. "*You also are one of them.*" Again, Peter denied being a disciple of Jesus.

Did Peter realize it was strike two and that he was fulfilling Jesus' prediction? Did he determine not to do it again? That is what we probably would have done. But is there a difference between once, twice, or three times? He denied knowing his Master.

*<sup>59</sup> And after an interval of about an hour still another insisted, saying, "Certainly this man also was with him, for he too is a Galilean." <sup>60</sup> But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about." And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. <sup>61</sup> And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how he had said to him, "Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times." <sup>62</sup> And he went out and wept bitterly.* Luke 22:59-62 An hour of interrogating Jesus had passed. There is a rock hewn chamber beside that courtyard where people were tied with arms up and spread. I would guess that they did not secure Jesus in that manner, but because He showed no resistance merely left his hands tied. Then again, they may have tied Him up just to humiliate Him.

Peter had time to think about the two denials. One more and he would fulfill the prophecy. But he was more focused on the little he could hear from the interrogation chamber. It sounded like they were trying to convict Jesus of blasphemy. That would mean execution. Is that what Jesus meant when He said He would be mocked, flogged, and crucified (Matthew 20:18,19<sup>viii</sup>)? And if they asked Peter if he believed Jesus was the Messiah and he answered in the affirmative, wouldn't he be executed with Jesus? Peter had surely seen people die the slow, torturous death of crucifixion. The scenes of agony may have flooded into Peter's mind while he tried to maintain his composure.

It was then that another man identified Peter by his Galilean accent. Luke is kind in how he records Peter's response. Mark, who was an associate of Peter, tells us Peter denied it invoking a curse on himself (Mark 14:71<sup>ix</sup>). And the rooster crowed even as Peter was speaking. At that very moment, Peter saw Jesus' head turn to look at him. The Greek word for that look was the same word used for the look Jesus gave Peter when He first called Him to follow Him (John 1:42<sup>x</sup>). It was a look of loving concern. Take that scene in for a moment. There is sorrow in Jesus' eyes. It is a sorrow not just for the denial, but for the agony and self-condemnation Jesus knew Peter would endure. He had done it, the very thing he swore he would never do. Peter rose and left the courtyard and found a place where he could pour out his remorse in heaving sobs and tears of remorse.

Peter is a model for us of genuine repentance. His sin was one you may be familiar with. He denied being associated with Jesus. We rarely are confronted so directly, but

indirectly we can do the same. We laugh at a lewd inappropriate joke or even tell one. We respond to rudeness with rudeness. Any way in which we fail to respond like our Savior is a form of publicly denying we are His disciples. But Peter gives us such hope in the grace and mercy of God. Even under assault, Jesus gave Peter that gracious look. It is a look that calls us to come back into His love. And Peter responded as we should, with remorseful brokenness. John's Gospel tells us of his gracious restoration (John 21:18,19<sup>xi</sup>).

*The sense of sin depends on our view of sanctity. As we grow better, we see sin clearer. As we have more of God, we realize evil more vividly. The greatest saints are therefore the deepest penitents. As we perceive love and largeness of heart, so we despise our selfishness. The more God shines into us, the more we loathe our own vileness. We judge by the contrast.*<sup>xii</sup>

*<sup>63</sup> Now the men who were holding Jesus in custody were mocking him as they beat him. <sup>64</sup> They also blindfolded him and kept asking him, "Prophecy! Who is it that struck you?" <sup>65</sup> And they said many other things against him, blaspheming him.* Luke 22:63-65 Jesus was accused of blasphemy by the ones who are blaspheming. The temple guards blaspheme as they abuse Jesus' body. They are making fun of Him being the Messiah, for the Messiah is prophesied to not judge by hearing of the ear or sight of the eyes (Isaiah 11:3<sup>xiii</sup>). This mockery is saying, "If you are the Messiah tell us who hit you, for the Messiah knows without seeing." They missed the point of the prophecy and certainly the spirit of it. The prophecy goes on to say, <sup>4a</sup> *but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;* Isaiah 11:4a It wasn't about magically knowing someone's name, but about being impartial in judgment. It continues with a warning. <sup>4b</sup> *and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.* They did not realize that unless they repent, they were sealing their own fate by battering the One who will one day judge them.

That is not the only abuse they heaped on him. These temple guards had probably heard the animosity their leaders had toward Jesus. Abusing Jesus was venting the leaders' anger towards Jesus' indictments against them (Luke 20:46,47<sup>xiv</sup>). In doing this they were proving Jesus' words regarding the religious leaders' hypocrisy were one-hundred-percent accurate.

*<sup>66</sup> When day came, the assembly of the elders of the people gathered together, both chief priests and scribes. And they led him away to their council,* Luke 22:66 The decision was made in the night after Annas and Caiaphas interrogation, but the official declaration could only be made in daylight (Matthew 27:1<sup>xv</sup>; John 18:28<sup>xvi</sup>). After the guards had their fun with Jesus, He was probably held in a dry cistern which is just below the interrogation room (Psalm 88:8<sup>xvii</sup>, 18<sup>xviii</sup>). Early in the morning He was hauled up, His face bruised and bloodied from the soldiers' abuse. The Sanhedrin was called at the crack of dawn to Caiaphas home for the conclusion of the mock trial.

*and they said, <sup>67</sup> "If you are the Christ, tell us." But he said to them, "If I tell you, you will not believe, <sup>68</sup> and if I ask you, you will not answer.* Luke 22:67,68 "Tell us if you are the Messiah?" Jesus answered with a truth they cannot deny, but one that would only affect those with a conscience. "If I tell you, you will not believe, and if I ask you, you will not answer." He knew their minds were made up. He could ask them about the prophecies and point out how He fulfilled them. They already knew many of them and yet chose to have Jesus killed to maintain their authority. They clung to their power and

positions of authority. To answer Jesus would be to expose the trial as a sham. They had made up their minds before the arrest.

Jesus had determined to do the Father's will. He could have run them in circles, but at this point He knew His hour had come and told them what they needed to condemn Him. The strange thing is that though He was on trial, His words condemned them. If they said He was not the Messiah, it would show their bias in forming a conclusion without considering any evidence. Trials with foregone conclusions are simply for show.

*<sup>69</sup> But from now on the Son of Man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God. ” <sup>70</sup> So they all said, “Are you the Son of God, then?” And he said to them, “You say that I am.”* Luke 22:69, 70 Jesus identified Himself with the Messiah to Whom the world will submit (Daniel 7:13,14<sup>xix</sup>). The quotation is from Psalm 110:1. <sup>1</sup> *The LORD says to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.”* Jesus was declaring that by posturing themselves as enemies of Jesus, Almighty God would make them Jesus’ footstool. That was sure to tick them off! The right hand of God is the place of power and authority. It is the same psalm that says that the Messiah is a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek (Psalm 110:4<sup>xx</sup>).

With that quote Jesus was saying He is the Messiah, and He will vanquish His enemies, reign forever, and be priest forever for all mankind. Mark’s Gospel tells us that at these words the High Priest tore his robe in furious anger (Mark 14:63<sup>xxi</sup>). Just to make it clear to all, he asked Jesus to clarify, "So you are the Son of God then?" He wanted a clear expression of what he thought was blasphemy to convince the entire council. Of course, if Jesus was indeed the Messiah it would not be blasphemy. Son of God was an accepted title for the coming Messiah. "You say that I am." In today’s language it would be like saying, "It is just as you have said."

"You" is plural in this case, so was Jesus also saying the whole council said He is? When would they have said that? John 3:3 records that Nicodemus came to Jesus at night and told Jesus, "We know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one could do the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with Him." "We" probably refers to the Sanhedrin. If this is the case, they understood they were killing their Messiah to stay in power. Incredible! On the other hand, Jesus had just said that if He argued that He is the Messiah, they would not believe Him. Had they been convinced He was and then talked themselves out of it to cling to their prestigious positions?

*<sup>71</sup> Then they said, “What further testimony do we need? We have heard it ourselves from his own lips.”* Luke 22:71 Caiaphas told the council they did not need any corroborating witnesses as Jesus had condemned Himself with His own words. The problem is that was not how the Jewish legal system worked. They had to have two witnesses whose stories matched. They could not come up with them even when they paid men to testify (Mark 14:56<sup>xxii</sup>; Deuteronomy 17:6<sup>xxiii</sup>). They repeatedly ignored their law, the Scriptures, to do what they wanted, which was to get rid of this threat to their power and income.

It seems incredulous that anyone would think they could fight their Creator and win. Yet, every day all over the world people resist the Holy Spirit and go their own way rather than receiving Jesus' gracious offer of salvation. They choose the pleasures of sin for a season and risk eternal damnation (Hebrews 11:24,25<sup>xxiv</sup>). I often hear people claim that they will receive Him after they have enjoyed life. Sins fleeting pleasures always

come at a cost that is much higher than we imagine. The more a heart is hardened, the less likely it will ever turn (Ephesians 4:19<sup>xxv</sup>).

The enemy of our souls plays a very clever trick. He tempts us to sin and when we do consequences come into our lives. The enemy then tells us that those consequences are God whacking us for enjoying life, as if God delighted in being a cosmic killjoy. We bring it on ourselves, but we begin to blame God, which hardens our hearts toward His goodness. If the anarchists have their way, they end up in a world of chaos and uncertainty. The abundance disappears and all that is left is to fight for the leftovers. But they will blame the system they destroyed for the results they created and end up even more hardened toward godly principles. That is the destructive nature of sin in the human heart, blaming God for the results of our actions.

The suffering of Christ had begun, the arrest, Peter's denial, abuse by the temple guards, and the mock trial. Next Jesus will endure the interrogation by the secular powers and abuse of Roman soldiers. Delivered into the hands of men will have its ugly conclusion on a Roman cross. Why? To satisfy the justice of God on our behalf making a way for us to be His forever. It was to take our sins and give us His righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21<sup>xxvi</sup>).

We would like to think that if we had been there, we would have stood up for Jesus and never shrunk back from denying Him like Peter did. That can only happen if the Holy Spirit empowers us to put Jesus above our own self-interest. We will know how dependent we are on Him when we face an opportunity to take a stand.

Most Christians in the world face threats daily. We, American Christians, face little if any persecution that is so familiar to the rest of the world. Egyptian Christians wonder if their daughters will be kidnapped on the way to school. Northern Nigerian Christians do not know when their village will be raided, and their homes burned. Christians in China know they could end up in re-education labor camps for years. In Iran Christian couples must decide what they will do when the secret police break down their door. It is a reality they must consider every day.

Of course, it is only by the power of the Holy Spirit that we can deny ourselves and take up our cross (Matthew 16:24<sup>xxvii</sup>). We find it is a deeper realization of the love of Christ for us that makes our hearts want to surrender to His will regardless of the consequences. It is that love that turns us from the garbage of worldly desires. Without it we would be like a dog going back to lap up our vomit (Proverbs 26:11<sup>xxviii</sup>). The love of Christ constrains us (2 Corinthians 5:14<sup>xxix</sup>). His Word opens our spiritual eyes to the way things truly are and exposes the lies of this world and our flesh (Romans 12:2<sup>xxx</sup>).

Questions:

- 1 What implications come with the phrase “hands of men”?
- 2 How did Peter get into the high priest’s courtyard?
- 3 How might Peter have justified his first denials?
- 4 What was it that broke Peter?
- 5 Why did they blindfold and strike Jesus?
- 6 Who is blaspheming?
- 7 How did Jesus wisely answer Caiaphas demand?
- 8 What Scripture did Jesus refer to?
- 9 Why did that cause Caiaphas to go berserk?
- 10 How can we avoid being as evil as those rulers?

---

**<sup>i</sup> 2 Samuel 24:13 (ESV)**

<sup>13</sup> So Gad came to David and told him, and said to him, “Shall three years of famine come to you in your land? Or will you flee three months before your foes while they pursue you? Or shall there be three days’ pestilence in your land? Now consider, and decide what answer I shall return to him who sent me.”

**<sup>ii</sup> Psalm 27:12 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup> Give me not up to the will of my adversaries; for false witnesses have risen against me, and they breathe out violence.

**<sup>iii</sup> Luke 9:44 (ESV)**

<sup>44</sup> “Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men.”

**<sup>iv</sup> John 12:3 (ESV)**

<sup>3</sup> Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

**<sup>v</sup> John 18:15 (ESV)**

<sup>15</sup> Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he entered with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest,

**<sup>vi</sup> Deuteronomy 10:17 (ESV)**

<sup>17</sup> For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe.

**<sup>vii</sup> John 18:16 (ESV)**

<sup>16</sup> but Peter stood outside at the door. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the servant girl who kept watch at the door, and brought Peter in.

**<sup>viii</sup> Matthew 20:18-19 (ESV)**

<sup>18</sup> “See, we are going up to Jerusalem. And the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death <sup>19</sup> and deliver him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified, and he will be raised on the third day.”

**<sup>ix</sup> Mark 14:71 (ESV)**

<sup>71</sup> But he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, “I do not know this man of whom you speak.”

**<sup>x</sup> John 1:42 (ESV)**

<sup>42</sup> He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon the son of John. You shall be called Cephas” (which means Peter).

**<sup>xi</sup> John 21:18-19 (ESV)**

<sup>18</sup> Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go.” <sup>19</sup> (This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, “Follow me.”

<sup>xii</sup> Cannon T.T. Carter as quoted in Biblical Illustrator - Luke

**<sup>xiii</sup> Isaiah 11:3 (ESV)**

<sup>3</sup> And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear,

**<sup>xiv</sup> Luke 20:46-47 (ESV)**

<sup>46</sup> “Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love greetings in the marketplaces and the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts, <sup>47</sup> who devour widows’ houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.”

**<sup>xv</sup> Matthew 27:1 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death.

**<sup>xvi</sup> John 18:28 (ESV)**

<sup>28</sup> Then they led Jesus from the house of Caiaphas to the governor’s headquarters. It was early morning. They themselves did not enter the governor’s headquarters, so that they would not be defiled, but could eat the Passover.

**<sup>xvii</sup> Psalm 88:8 (ESV)**

<sup>8</sup> You have caused my companions to shun me; you have made me a horror to them. I am shut in so that I cannot escape;



---

xviii **Psalm 88:18 (ESV)**

18 You have caused my beloved and my friend to shun me; my companions have become darkness.

xix **Daniel 7:13-14 (ESV)**

13 "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. <sup>14</sup> And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

xx **Psalm 110:4 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup> The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."

xxi **Mark 14:63 (ESV)**

<sup>63</sup> And the high priest tore his garments and said, "What further witnesses do we need?"

xxii **Mark 14:56 (ESV)**

<sup>56</sup> For many bore false witness against him, but their testimony did not agree.

xxiii **Deuteronomy 17:6 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> On the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses the one who is to die shall be put to death; a person shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness.

xxiv **Hebrews 11:24-25 (ESV)**

<sup>24</sup> By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,

<sup>25</sup> choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.

xxv **Ephesians 4:19 (ESV)**

<sup>19</sup> They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.

xxvi **2 Corinthians 5:21 (ESV)**

<sup>21</sup> For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

xxvii **Matthew 16:24 (ESV)**

<sup>24</sup> Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

xxviii **Proverbs 26:11 (ESV)**

<sup>11</sup> Like a dog that returns to his vomit is a fool who repeats his folly.

xxix **2 Corinthians 5:14 (ESV)**

<sup>14</sup> For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died;

xxx **Romans 12:2 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup> Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.