

Episode #937 Matthew 26 Part 10-Peter's Denials

I. The purpose of the gospel of Matthew is to present Jesus as the Christ, the King of Israel. It is another grand treatise like John to prove to Israel Who Jesus really is. It is the book of being “in Israel,” in contrast to believers today who are “in Christ.”

II. The Lord was led to trial before Caiaphas and all the Sanhedrin. They condemned Him to death for rightfully admitting to being the Son of God. Now, we consider the denials of Peter outside the high priest's house where the Sanhedrin was meeting.

III. Peter's Three Denials (Matthew's Version). Matthew 26:69-75.

- A. Verse 69. This portion shows “intelligent design in the gospels,” as my late friend Hal Booher put it. Different portions of the Lord's trials are in each gospel. The same thing is true of Peter's denials, where different details are in each gospel. The word for a young serving girl; probably younger than 20. The Greek reads “one girl,” because a different girl is going to be mentioned in verse 71. “Came to him” is *proserchomai*, again approached. Probably in this case because she was a servant girl; not, of course, because Peter was a king, for he was not. This “also” makes sense when we realize that Peter came in with John, John 18:15-16, who apparently was openly known and admitted to being the Lord's disciple. Galilee was not a compliment to a resident of Judea.
- B. Verse 70. John may have been of the rich class, and so Peter felt, as a commoner, that he was in more danger. He may have thought they remembered the cutting off the ear incident. Whatever the reason, he was not as brave as John, and saw fit to deny. To realize the seriousness of this, consider what the Lord said in Matthew 10:33 about the one who denies Him before men. Peter was forgiven of this, however. “Before all” means his denial was public. This word was also used in Matthew 10:33.
- C. Verse 71. He probably went out to avoid the maid! The “gateway” means the portico, just inside the gate. He retreated as far as he could and still be in the area. There is no word for “girl,” but “another” is feminine, so this was a different young servant girl. Notice the “also” again, indicating at least one other disciple was there. The first girl called Him “of Galilee,” this one “of Nazareth.” Neither was a respectful term, see John 1:45-46. These girls probably were on the side of their masters (as most servants are) and judged Jesus by the high priest's standards.
- D. Verse 72. Peter adds an oath to his denial this time, swearing that he does not know the Lord. Peter could have used to take the Lord's teaching in Matthew 5:33-37 to heart. His oath in this case did, indeed, come of evil.
- E. Verse 73. Yet again an “also,” showing another disciple was there (John). “Speech” means his dialect, giving him away as a Galilean. “Betray” seems more an attempt to explain the King James word than to translate. Old English “bewrayeth” means reveals, makes known or evident, as this word.
- F. Verse 74. Peter was trying to be near the Lord to see what would happen to him. Denying him was done out of fear, and probably just wishing they would leave him alone to see the outcome of the Lord's trial. Having started on this policy, he continues it, and it only grows worse. He was pronouncing curses on himself, *katanathematizo*, from *anathema*. He was cutting himself off from life or from God if he was not telling the truth. Again the Lord told them not to swear at all in Matthew

- 5:33-37. The words had just left his lips when the rooster crowed, bringing the Lord's prediction to full completion. "Crowed" means sounded, made a noise, gave voice.
- G. Verse 75. The sound of the rooster, so familiar to Peter, suddenly registered in his mind, and reminded him of what the Lord had told him earlier that night. Faced with his failure, Peter could no longer remain following the Lord, even from afar. It took the Lord's restoration after His resurrection, as we read in John 21, to make things right with Peter again. Some have made out that he went out of the city, but we do not know this. We only know he left the house of the high priest. Where he went, we cannot say. Peter learned a hard lesson about relying on his own faithfulness and strength. It was only when Peter had the power of the Holy Spirit that he was ready to face death with all boldness.

IV. Conclusion: Peter denied the Lord three times when challenged. He thought he was strong enough even to die for the Lord, but when the time came, he wasn't even as brave as John. Peter relied on his own strength, and he failed. Later, he would learn to rely on the Holy Spirit, and then he had the strength even to die for the Lord. Praise God that He gives second chances!