

## WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY: "Peter's Denials" Luke 22

Scripture of Lesson: Luke's Gospel 22: 54-62

### 1. *Peter denies his Lord three times*

- a. Peter was supposed to flee and scatter as other disciples did. Quoting prophet Zechariah's prophecy about Himself [Zechariah 13:7], Lord Jesus had foretold the disciples that they would be offended and scatter:

*Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: 'I will strike the Shepherd, And the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'" [Matt 26:31]*

Young apostle John was somehow acquainted with the high priest family and was allowed inside the house of Caiaphas [John 18: 15-16]. Thus, John could observe the trial proceedings and relate them later to the gospel writers to be recorded.

- b. But, why did Peter follow 'at a distance' [22:54], joined the crowd of the high priest's servants and ended up denying his Lord three times as had been foretold by Lord Jesus during the Passover dinner [22: 31-34]. Lord Jesus knew exactly how Peter would fail. He also knew exactly when 'the rooster' would crow. This shows the Lord's omniscience and that He had the power over all living things, though He subjected Himself to the judgment of the Jewish and the Roman powers for the time being so as to fulfill the prophecies about Him.

- c. What were the causes of Peter's failure?

- 1) He had failed to 'watch and pray' in the garden of Gethsemane as instructed by Lord Jesus and failed to take part in the Lord's prayers. This attitude of not complying with the Lord's instruction, which was a plea to the three special disciples, carried Peter into the place of denial.
- 2) Though it seemed like an act of desertion, Peter should have joined the other disciples and fled from the scene of their Lord's arrest. They, like sheep, were to scatter and to meet their Lord later in Galilee as instructed [Matt 26: 32]. Peter, in this night, was not paying attention to his Lord's instructions and warning of his impending failure.
- 3) When Lord Jesus was undergoing the Jewish civil trials, Peter "sat down" with the crowd warming by the fire because it was a cold night. Who were the crowd in the courtyard of the house of Caiaphas? They were all either the arresting party or the servants of Caiaphas. They were against Lord Jesus. They had the strong spirit of indictment and accusation toward Lord Jesus and His believers. This was not a right place for Peter to be warming his body together with the antagonistic band.
- 4) Peter did not stop after his first denial nor after the second denial. He went on to the third denial, which was pronounced vehemently with a swear. We need to learn to stop our failure after the first or the second time. But the Lord prepared 'the rooster' that crew immediately after Peter's third denial.

### 2. *Provisions for Peter's restoration*

- a. Lord Jesus admonished Peter about his coming failure but told him to strengthen the brethren after repentance:

*But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren. [Luke 22: 32]*

Lord had prayed for Peter to come to a place of repentance, to come back to his Lord's forgiveness and compassion, and to sense of his personal mission from the Lord. The Lord had prepared a mission for Peter even though He knew Peter would deny Him three times.

- b. Lord Jesus prepared a rooster, a very specific rooster, to crow exactly at the right moment, immediately after Peter's third denial.

*Then He said, "I tell you, Peter, **the rooster** shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me."* [Luke 22: 34]

This rooster's crowing brought to Peter in an instant the Lord's warning about his denials. Peter went outside, where he belonged, and wept bitterly [22: 62], because he realized how he denied his Lord the Savior with his own lips and how he had failed to heed the Lord's instructions and warning during the previous night.

- c. But the rooster's crowing signified a new day, a new beginning for Peter. He did not heed the voice of Satan to desert his Lord and Savior, but to come back so that he could strengthen his brethren as instructed.

### **3. Application to Us**

- a. Let us have the mind of sharing in the Lord's suffering through 'watch and pray' daily so that we do not fall into Satan's trap that leads us to a place of denial.
- b. When we fail for the first time or the second time, let us remember how the Lord prays for us. Satan wants us to stay as failed and not return to our Lord. But, let us remember our Lord is compassionate and understanding. He wants to continue to work with us, to teach us to be better Christians, and to bless us more than ever before 'after' we come back to Him. From the story of the Prodigal Son, remember how the repenting son was richly blessed and honored by the Father.

*Discussion topics:*

1. *Have you failed miserably and yet come back to Jesus after repentance?*
2. *Have you had a 'rooster crowing' that awakened you out of an obsession or sin?*