

## *Peter's Seven Denials* (from Chapter 3)

During the days of segregation in the South, a lady boarded a bus in Birmingham, Alabama. It was not unlike other days for the Blacks in the South, until the lady sat in the section of the bus reserved for white people. There was nothing “wrong” with that (according to the prejudiced social “rules” of the time), actually; as long as the white people had a front seat, the black people were allowed to use the middle section of the bus. When, however, more white people boarded at another bus stop, the Blacks were “required” to give up their seats and move to the back.



But the lady, Rosa Parks, would not move. The bus driver shouted his commands at her, but she calmly replied, “I shall not be moved.” That courageous demonstration began the Civil Rights Movement.

We are in a great movement today; it is called Christianity. It is a far greater movement than that from which Rosa Parks could not be moved. How is it with you? Can anything move you from your platform of belief and trust in your Saviour? If you answer, “Nothing!” then you need to hear the story of Peter, recorded in Matthew Chapter 26, beginning at verse 30.

The disciples had just finished their last meal with the Master. They were now walking together up the Mount of Olives listening to Yahshua explain the events soon to transpire.

“All of you will be offended because of Me, this night,” he began (verse 31). “Offended” in this passage means to “be deceitfully led into ruin.” The Master was not saying that He would deceitfully lead them into a trap of ruin. No! He was warning them that they would be self-deceived in their own zeal.

Peter argued against such a prophecy. Wouldn't you, who love the Saviour with all your heart, mind, and soul, question the idea that you would betray Him in any way? “Though others are offended because of You,” Peter responded, “I will never be offended because of You!”

Peter didn't know it, at the time, but he was already preparing to make his first denial of Yahshua. This was to be the first of SEVEN denials of the Saviour.

### **DENIAL #1: Denying the Word of God**

“You will deny Me, Peter. In fact, you will deny Me three times before the rooster crows tomorrow morning,” Yahshua sadly informed him.

“No, my Lord, You are mistaken! I would die rather than deny You! You don't know me very well, if you think I could ever deny You,” was the essence of Peter's reply.

But, Peter had just denied the Saviour for the first time, by denying His WORD. To deny the “Thus saith the Lord,” is to set oneself up for blind, but complete denial of the Saviour. That pathway to total denial, often disguised by zeal and strong belief, is entered by the demon-inspired question, “Hath God said?” The same question that had sent Adam and Even spiraling into the “Fall” had entered Peter's heart. And His response was to deny the Word of God, as did they.

Peter knew Who the Word had come from, foretelling his denial. He himself had admitted that Yahshua was, “the Christ, the Son of the Living God,” (John 6:69). Thus, the denial of Yahshua's Word was a sign that Peter had taken the first step of Laodiceanism. He believed

he was “rich and increased with goods and in need of nothing,” no matter what the Master had to say about his true condition.

### **DENIAL #2: Indifference to the Warning: Watch and Pray**

When the Master reached the Garden with His disciples, He asked them to watch and pray so that they would not fall prey to temptation (verses 38-41). This is the same instruction He gives to each of us today (Luke 21:36).

Peter was pridefully indifferent to his need. So he slept. First he had argued with the Word of God, pridefully overstating his security. Next, he had acted out his indifference toward the Word of appeal: Watch and pray, lest ye fall to temptation. This was his second denial.

### **DENIAL #3: Following our Natural Inclination**

The Master had gone apart to pray leaving instructions for Peter to do likewise. Peter had been warned that if he did not obey, he would be placing himself within the Tempter’s grasp. But, Peter was sleepy. Rather than resisting his natural inclination in Yahweh’s strength, Peter followed it into denial number three.

“The darkness of the evil one encloses those who neglect to pray,” (*Steps to Christ*, page 94).

### **DENIAL #4: Looking awake but Spiritually Being Asleep**

When Yahshua returned to His sleeping disciples, He woke them and bid them arise to go. It was now too late to watch and pray. This time they obeyed. But, suddenly awakened from sleep, they arose in a still-sleepy stupor to face the hour of trial. Being spiritually asleep and without the alertness needed to face the trial is the Laodicean condition. John 18:10 records that Peter drew his sword to prevent the mob from taking his Lord. He reacted to the crisis with his carnal nature, because he had slept in obedience to his natural inclination during the preparation time.

### **DENIAL #5: Swearing not to Know Him for Self-Preservation**

Peter’s sinful nature was very much alive and well as he followed, ill-prepared into the outer court of the Saviour’s trial. Because his selfish “old man” was in the “driver’s seat,” he craved approval and self-preservation.

While the Saviour had gained popularity with the common people, Peter had been proud to be a part of Christ's company. But, the One he had followed seemed now to be a "Loser." Worse still, knowing Him might bring Peter into danger.

"Weren't you one of His followers?" asked the damsel by the fire.

"I don't know what you're talking about," Peter denied, his natural heart recoiling at the mere suggestion.

"Yes you do know Him! I've even seen you with this Man from Nazareth," the young woman challenged.

### **DENIAL #6: "Stooping" to Lie**

Peter's level of denial rose to a fevered pitch as his relationship with the Messiah staggered toward complete ruin. He lifted his voice to swear that he did not know The Man. Thus, in his sixth denial of the Saviour, he stooped to a lie. Thus, the crowning lie, the complete denial prophesied was not set.

### **DENIAL #7: Cursing God to His Face**

When again challenged that he had been with the Saviour's company, Peter began to curse and swear like a sailor. With profanity he acclaimed, "I don't know THAT MAN!"

Yet, in the lie was a disturbing truth: He really didn't know the One he had called Lord, Messiah, Son of God. He had walked with Him for many days, but still did not truly know the Saviour.

With this final and ultimate denial, Yahshua turned His face toward Peter. Their eyes met. The cock crowed. Peter had just cursed the Son of God to His face, and he, realizing it, rushed from the Judgment Hall in bitter convulsive sobs.

Before we can be certain that we will not deny the Saviour as Peter did, we must not base our assurance on prideful blindness, ignorant of our own human failings. Peter's denial started the night before, when He denied the Word of God. Watch the steps, lest you fall likewise.