

Peter's Three Denials of Christ

	MATTHEW 26:34, 69-75	MARK 14:30, 66-72	LUKE 22:34, 54-62	JOHN 13:38; 18:15-18, 25-27
J e s u s ' P r o p h e c y				
What did Christ prophesy?	this night, before the cock crows, deny me thrice	this night, before the cock crows twice, deny me thrice	before cock crows thrice you will deny you know me	before cock crows, deny me thrice
F i r s t D e n i a l				
Who addressed Peter?	maid	maid of High Priest	maid	maid at the door
What was said?	you were also with Jesus of Galilee	you were also with Jesus of Nazareth	you were also with Jesus	are not you one of the disciples?
Peter's answer	I do not understand	I do not understand	I do not know him	I am not a disciple
S e c o n d D e n i a l				
Who addressed Peter?	another maid	maid of High Priest/ another man	another man	a group
What was said?	you were also with Jesus of Nazareth	you are one of the disciples	you are also one of the disciples	are not you one of the disciples?
Peter's answer	I do not know him, with an oath/curse	plain denial, he denied it	I am not a disciple	I am not a disciple
T h i r d D e n i a l				
Who addressed Peter?	group	group	another man	kinsman of the man whose ear Peter cut off
What was said?	are not you one of the disciples? your accent betrays you	are you not one of the disciples? you are a Galilean; your accent betrays you	you were also with Jesus; you are a Galilean	did I not see you in the garden with him?
Peter's answer	I do not know him, with an oath/curse	I do not know him, with an oath/curse	I do not understand	plain denial
R e s u l t s				
Cock crowed	1 time	2 times	1 time	1 time
Peter's reaction	remembered the word of Jesus; went out; wept bitterly	remembered the word of Jesus; wept	Lord turned and looked at Peter; he remembered the word of Jesus; went out; wept bitterly	no information

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Explanation

An important detail in the trial of Jesus is the so-called denial of Peter. All four Gospels report this event, but they do so in different ways. To begin with, the exact words of Jesus' prophecy differ. Would the cock crow once or twice? Would Peter deny that he knows Jesus or that he was a disciple of Jesus? Did Peter actually deny in response to all three of the different questioners, or did he simply profess that he did not understand the question? In any event, it is clear that, unlike John who followed Jesus into the council room, Peter did not step forward and defend Jesus (perhaps for very good reason, under the circumstances). Nevertheless, a close reading of these accounts shows that he did not deny that Jesus was the Christ, only that he had not been in the garden, or a disciple, or one who knew Jesus.

Reference

Richard Lloyd Anderson, "Simon Peter," *Ensign*, February 1975, 40–41.