

# Peter's Denials

📖 Matthew 26:69-75

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Last time we studied Matthew 26:59-68, the first two trials of Jesus. There are six trials in all; three religious, during the night, and three civil, during the day. The first religious trial is not recorded by Matthew, Mark or Luke, but only by John. It says that when they arrested Him and bound Him in the Garden of Gethsemane they took Him to Annas first, because he was the father-in law of the high priest, who was named Caiaphas. In other words, Annas had the real power. He had served as high priest from AD6-15 and had retained tremendous influence among both the Jews and the Romans. He was the one who owned the Temple business that Jesus called a band of thieves. Jesus had cleaned up that business on two occasions, one early in His ministry and one just a few days before. Annas had ample motivation to get rid of Jesus. He questioned Him with respect to two issues; First, His disciples. He wanted to discover how many followers Jesus had. That way if there was a riot he would be prepared to crush it. Jesus gave no answer to this question. Second, His doctrine. He wanted to know what He taught. Jesus answered that He had taught publicly and His doctrine was well-known. All one had to do was ask those who heard Him. One of the officers felt this answer was disrespectful of the high priest and slapped Him with the back of his hand. Jesus challenged the slap and Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas. This meant, in effect, that Caiaphas was to proceed with a trial. But it had already been decided. Jesus was guilty in their eyes before He even went to trial in the first place. They had planned to put Him to death. The only reason they went through the trials was to find some charges that would hold up before Pilate in the morning. In Matt 26:59 a quorum of 3 members of the Sanhedrin had gathered. They had to keep calling witness after witness to get a testimony against Him that would hold up, something that was a capital offense. In 26:60 we see that they did not find any, even though many came forward. This shows the King's innocence and the Sanhedrin's guilt. They should have let Him go. That was the Law. But they kept trying. The verse says "Finally, two came forward. In 26:61 we see their charge, "This man stated, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to rebuild it in three days.'" But that is not really what He said, and certainly not what He meant. The parallel in Luke says that even these two men's testimony did not agree. That meant it was illegitimate. If they took that before Pilate in the morning it would not hold up. That is why in 26:62 the high priest stood up and said to Him, "Do You not answer? What is it that these men are testifying against You?" He was trying to get Jesus to incriminate Himself. That too was against the Law. But verse 63 says Jesus kept silent. He was fulfilling the great prophecy of Isa 53:7, "Like a lamb led to slaughter, He did not open His mouth." He could have said something. He could have opened His mouth. He could have answered the charge. But if He had He would not have fulfilled prophecy. He would

not have been the Messiah. And so the high priest said to Him, "I force you under oath by the living God, tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God." Under Law Jesus had to answer. And Jesus kept the Law 100%. Caiaphas asked the question because He knew Jesus claimed to be God's Son. He had revealed that in Caiaphas' presence in the parable of the landowner. Now he puts it straight to Him. And in 26:64, Jesus said to him, "You have said it yourself" You said who I am. That is who I am. And you are about to kill Me and fulfill the parable of the landowner. Nevertheless, that is not all He said, He won't just be killed. "hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven." To be sitting at the right hand of Power Jesus would have to be resurrected, then ascended and seated in exaltation next to God the Father in heaven. From there He would come on the clouds of heaven to establish the kingdom on earth. They may think that they have Jesus under their power but in the future they would be under His power. This was both a warning and a threat. At this, in 26:65 the high priest tore his robes. This was against the Law. It had become tradition but the tradition was contrary to the Law. He then leveled the charge, "He has blasphemed! What further need do we have of witnesses?" You see, they had no witnesses at all. They went on for hours and could not get two witnesses to agree on anything substantial. Jesus was completely innocent. The only charge they could get on Jesus was His own words, which they rejected. So the high priest asks the Sanhedrin in 26:66, "what do you think?" They answered, "He deserves death!" We already knew this would be the conclusion. This is what they set out to find some basis for to begin with. They hated Him. The natural man is at enmity with God and Jesus is God. Never has anyone been hated as much as Jesus. But if you are connected with Him by faith, you will be hated because you are connected with Him. Then in 26:67 they spit on Him as if He were dirt and beat Him with their fists and others slapped Him. The parallels say they blindfolded Him. They loved doing this, even though it was against the Law. In 26:68 they turned their hatred into a game saying, "Prophecy to us, You Messiah; who is the one who hit You?" It was nothing more than fun and games now. They had gotten their way. They would send Him before the whole Sanhedrin later. That would bring the religious trials to an end. Then they would send Him to Pilate in the morning and if all went well, they would get their way with Pilate and be through with this Jesus once and for all, or so they thought.

We come now to Peter's denials in Matt 26:69. In 26:69 **Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard.**

Remember, this was **the courtyard** of Caiaphas. Caiaphas was the high priest at the time. His father-in-law Annas had already sent Jesus to him and so the officers and servants of Caiaphas were all **in the courtyard**. If you go to Israel today you will likely visit Gallicantu, the traditional location of Peter's denials. The word Gallicantu is Latin for "rooster's crow." This is a picture of the Roman Catholic Church built over the site. On top you can see a weathervane with a rooster atop it. Inside you can see that the Church was built into the rock to protect underground caves that were rediscovered at this location in 1889, and constituted an underground dungeon. It is thought that it was this very prison that held Jesus the night of the trials. This picture describes the dungeons as follows.....Here is a diagram of the underground dungeon. From here you can see that the prisoner would

be let down into the dungeon. Here is the whole through which a prisoner, like Jesus, would have been let down into the dungeon below. In the courtyard outside there is this statue commemorating Peter's denials.

Notice that **Peter was sitting** because later he is standing. There's a progression to Peter's stance. The parallel in Jn 18:18 says "it was cold" and in Lk 22:55 that "they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard" and in Mk 14:54 that "he was sitting with the officers and warming himself at the fire." So it was a cold night and everyone was huddling in close to the fire for warmth in the courtyard of Caiaphas. While there Matthew tells us a **servant-girl came to him and said, "You too were with Jesus the Galilean."** The words **You too** indicate that there was someone else she had noticed that was **with Jesus the Galilean**. All the other gospels agree that she had identified not one, but two of Jesus' disciples there in the court of Caiaphas. Most think this other disciple is John but Wiersbe questioned it saying, "We do not know who the other disciple was who went with Peter into the courtyard of the home of the high priest. It was probably John, though it is difficult to understand how a fisherman could be acquainted with the high priest and his household. Was this "other disciple" possibly Nicodemus or Joseph of Arimathea? They would certainly have access to this home."<sup>1</sup> If it was someone like Nicodemus or Joseph of Arimathea then the doctrine of Jesus had crept into the Sanhedrin, for both of these men were members. But if so they would be unlikely to have voted to put Jesus to death. On that score it seems more likely to have been John. But how he knew the high priest is not known, especially when he had been so close to Jesus. It could, of course, have been an unnamed disciple (Jn 18:15). This seems most likely to me. In any event, this **servant-girl** recognized not one, but two of Jesus' disciples present in the courtyard. By referring to Jesus as **the Galilean** she was being derogatory. Like modern urbanites often consider rural people to be inferior, so "Residents of Judea, and especially Jerusalem, regarded Galileans as inferior to themselves because the area was mainly rural."<sup>2</sup> She had recognized his voice as that of a Galilean Jew which differed from that of Judean Jews.

In verse 70, when she accused Peter of being with this **Galilean he denied it before them all, saying, "I do not know what you are talking about."** This is the first denial. Earlier in 26:34, as they walked from the Upper Room to the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus had predicted Peter's denials saying, "Truly I say to you that this very night, before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." But Peter said to Him, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You." Yet He did deny Him. The word of God is true and the word of man is but a flower, fading under the sovereign word of God. This is a lesson Peter would learn.

At this point, 26:71 says Peter left the warmth of the fire and sought refuge **out the gateway**. The parallel in Lk 14:54 says "he went out onto the porch." He hoped to escape the large company around the fire. Here **another servant-girl saw him**. If you notice the words *servant-girl* are in italics and so are not in the original Greek. However, the Greek word used for **another** is *ἄλλος* and refers to "another of the same kind." Therefore, this is another *servant-girl*. There must have been a small group of others on the porch because it says when **she saw him** she **said to those who were there, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth."** The reference to Jesus as

being **of Nazareth** is another derogatory reference in view of the fact that Nazareth had a bad reputation. We all remember the epithet uttered by Nathaniel, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth." And Philip said, "Come and see." Some thought something good had come out of Nazareth, but this servant-girl was not among them.

In 26:72 we read, **And again he denied it with an oath, "I do not know the man."** This time Peter made **an oath** to support his denial. Walvoord said, "This time, Peter denied more emphatically and even denied with an oath that he did not know Jesus."<sup>3</sup> To deny with an oath was to call down a curse on oneself if not telling the truth. Peter was willing to go so far as to call down curses on himself. What Peter meant by saying **I do not know the man** is that he was no companion of Jesus, which was the charge of both servant-girls. This was the second denial. You begin to see that it was dangerous to associate with Jesus, that people were looking for them. What lay ahead for Jesus' disciples was going to be a hard road. Their lives would be in constant danger. They were a threat because Jesus was a threat.

In 26:73 **A little later the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Surely you too are one of them; for even the way you talk gives you away."** The parallel in Luke 22:59 says "After about an hour..." and that may be what is meant by the phrase **a little later**. In any case, here we see **the bystanders**. The parallel in John 18:18 says "the slaves and the officers" and they may have been **the bystanders**. Both times the slave-girls accused him of being with Jesus was in a group. These **bystanders** may have been in the group and overheard. After Peter had been accused two times he got nervous and began to talk a lot, a common response to calm the nerves. With all that talk they easily recognized he was not from around those parts. They noticed he had a Galilean accent. The Galileans were a rural people and had a rural accent, just like we have a rural accent. The urban Judeans detected him easily. Constable noted, "This shows how thoroughly residents of Jerusalem connected Jesus' ministry with Galilee since it was the site of most of His activity. Most if not all of His disciples were Galileans."<sup>4</sup> The one who may not have been was Judas Iscariot, if Iscariot is derived from Kerioth, a town in Judea. McGee pointed out that Peter was nervous and just had to talk and it was his big mouth that got him in trouble. "Peter has a big mouth, and he just has to talk. Remember the other Gospels tell us that the girls spot him as a Galilean because his speech betrays him. He talks too much. He's nervous in there."<sup>5</sup> I think he is right. For what other reason would Peter be talking so much. Surely he knew his accent would give him away.

In 26:74 **Then he began to curse and swear, "I do not know the man!" And immediately a rooster crowed.** Now when it says **he began to curse and swear** it does not mean that Peter went into a bout of cussing. Constable said, "Matthew did not mean that Peter used profanity, but he invoked a curse on himself if he was lying. He appealed to something sacred to confirm his truthfulness (cf. 5:33–34; 23:16–22)."<sup>6</sup> We don't know what he swore on, but he was so insistent that he swore on heaven or the temple or something common that the Jews swore on. This was contrary to Christ's teaching, "Let your yes be yes and your no, no." Peter was completely out of it. His strong reaction is almost proof positive that he did know him. When he issued this third denial it says **immediately a rooster crowed**. All four gospels use the adverb **immediately** to convey the close

connection between the third denial and the rooster crow. The parallel in Luke 22:60 goes so far as to say "while he was still speaking, a rooster crowed." There was no delay.

The connection was so close that 26:75 says, **Peter remembered the word which Jesus had said, "Before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times."** When that rooster crowed it was like a bell going off in Peter's head. He probably did not think much of Jesus' words about the rooster crowing. He was so sure of himself that he did not believe them. He repeatedly said he would not deny Him. Yet here he had done exactly what Jesus predicted he would do. Peter learned a great lesson here about the word of God. The parallel in Luke 22:61 says, "The Lord turned and looked at Peter." Jesus was not far away. It was that look from Jesus at Peter that broke Peter's heart. Satan had sifted Peter like wheat. Peter **went out and wept bitterly**. He had denied Him three times. He had told Jesus he would never deny Him and that he was even willing to die with Him. But Peter was nothing more than a coward at this time. Fortunately, Jesus had prayed for him that his faith would be restored. That prayer would go on to be answered in a marvelous way. Peter would not only be restored. He would go on to preach what is arguably the greatest sermon of all time in Acts 2, a sermon that brought three-thousand souls to salvation!

Why did Matthew record Peter's denials? Constable said, "Matthew probably recorded this incident because it illustrates Jesus' ability to foretell the future, a messianic characteristic. It also reveals the weakness of the disciples whom Jesus had taken such pains to prepare for His passion but without success."<sup>7</sup> To illustrate Jesus' ability to foretell the future and to reveal the weakness of the disciples are two good reasons but there are more than that. The record of Peter's denials is interesting for many other reasons. First, Peter's denials are the only ones given a detailed report, even though Jesus said in 26:31 that all the others would deny Him. Why was Peter singled out to have his denials recorded in the pages of Scripture? Why not the others? Because Peter was to be the first among equals and this would generate humility in Peter. The concept of first among equals was a concept used by the Greeks to describe one member in a group who was formally equal to the others but accorded special honor. The Gospel of Matthew increasingly reveals that Peter would have this status as first among equals among the apostles. At the first Peter was the only one who came out to Jesus on the water (14:28ff). Then Peter was the one who asked for explanation of the parable of what enters a man (14:15ff). It wasn't long before Peter was the spokesman for the group when Jesus asked, "But who do you say that I am?" and Peter gave his famous answer (Matt 16:15ff). Peter was then singled out as the one who would be given keys in the kingdom (Matt 16:19). Peter was also part of the intimate small group that saw the transfiguration, a preview of the Second Coming (Matt 17:1ff). Peter was even viewed by outsiders as the lead spokesman of the group, since they addressed him when they wanted to know about the Master (17:24). Peter was also the one who spoke for the group and said, "We have left everything and followed you, what will there be for us?" (19:27). Peter singled himself out as Jesus' most loyal follower when he said, "Even though everybody else may deny you, I will never deny you" (26:33). And further, Peter was one of the inner circle whom Jesus took with Him further into the Garden of Gethsemane (26:37). Even Satan recognized Peter's pre-eminence when he requested

to sift Peter like wheat (Lk 22:31). But Peter is the one that Jesus prayed for, that his faith would not fail, and afterward he would turn again and strengthen the brothers (Lk 22:32). To all this is now added that Peter is the only one who received a detailed report of his denials in Scripture. Surely we are to learn by this that Peter was to be a first among equals, a doctrine which protects against the extreme of the Roman Catholic Church, which founds the Church on Peter rather than Christ and the other extreme of the Protestants, which accounts to him no more status than any of the others. The Scriptural record is contrary to both of these extremes and shows a healthy balance of our view of Peter. After Peter fell he was restored after His denials and went on to lead the way with the first sermon of the Church, in Acts 2, when the Spirit baptized Jews, and again in Acts 8 Peter was required in Samaria for the Spirit to baptize them, and then again in Acts 10 Peter was the one who went to the Gentiles at Caesarea to testify of the Spirit baptizing them. He went on to have a fruitful ministry, strengthening many brothers. He continues to strengthen us today as we realize that we fall on our faces all the time, we have denied Him too, or at the very least, not spoken up, and yet we can be restored to go on and have fruitful ministries as well. Peter teaches us that we are not perfect, but when we fall we can be restored and we should persevere until the end.

	<b>Matthew 26:58, 69-75</b>	<b>Mark 14:54, 66-72</b>	<b>Luke 22:54-62</b>	<b>John 18:15-18, 25-27</b>
1	Slave-girl	Servant-girl	Servant-girl	Slave-girl
2	Another slave-girl (αλλος – another of same kind)	Servant-girl (same as before)	A man	Slaves and officers (probably bystanders)
3	Bystanders	Bystanders	A man ((αλλος – another of same kind)	Slave of high priest (kin of Malchus – could be one of the two men or simply another)

A second interesting observation is that Peter's denials are recorded in all four gospels. This is rare, seeing that three of the Gospels are synoptics, a word that means seen through the same eye. Often we find parallels in the three synoptics. But to have an event in all four gospels is rare. Because Peter's denials are also recorded in all four gospels means it is an important event. It also means there is a lot of data to put together. The four accounts have led to confusion about how many times Peter really denied Him. Laney in his book *Answers to Tough Questions* said, "Each of the Gospels records just three denials of Christ by Peter, but because of the differing details it has been argued that Peter received two different warnings about denying Christ and in each warning was told that he would deny Christ three times."<sup>8</sup> Laney concluded that because each of the Gospels records just three denials then there must have been only three denials. But Laney is right in pointing out that in the details there seem to be different warnings to Peter about denying Christ. This constitutes the first line of evidence for

more than three denials. There seems to be two different predictions of three denials. Turn to the first one in John 13:37. Here Jesus had just revealed that He was leaving and they could not follow Him now, but they would follow Him later. "Peter said to Him, "Lord, why can I not follow You right now? I will lay down my life for You."<sup>38</sup> Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for Me? Truly, truly, I say to you, a rooster will not crow until you deny Me three times." Where did this prediction take place? According to the end of John 14:31 they were still in the Upper Room. In that verse Jesus said, "Get up, let us go from here." They were in the Upper Room so He was saying let us go from the Upper Room. That means that there was a prediction of three denials in the Upper Room. But now turn back to Matthew 26:30 to see another prediction of three denials that was not in the Upper Room. In 26:30, we see the last element of Passover, "After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives." So they went out of the Upper Room in verse 30. In verse 31ff they were walking through the city and across the Kidron Valley to the Mount of Olives. As they walked along the way, verse 34 says, "Jesus said to him, "Truly I say to you that this very night, before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." There is no doubt this is a separate prediction of three denials because they happened in separate places. One might be tempted to say that He merely repeated the prediction here so that He did not predict three plus three denials, or twice thrice, but only three in all, however, there are other evidences that point to two predictions that are to be added up to twice thrice, or six denials. Second, the four accounts seem to clearly evidence more than three denials. The chart I have given you shows in Matthew his first denial was to a "slave-girl." His second denial was to "another" slave girl. The Greek word for "another" is *αλλος* and signifies another of the same kind, but distinct, so she was another slave-girl. His third denial was to the "bystanders." In Mark His first denial was also to a "servant-girl." So we may reckon that one to be the same as the first in Matthew. His second denial was to the same "servant-girl," so that he denied Him twice to her, which already amounts to four denials. His third denial was also to the "bystanders" as in Matthew. In Luke it gets even more obvious that there were more than three denials. His first denial is to a "servant-girl," same as Matthew and Mark. His second denial was to "a man." This is unique, that would amount to five denials. His third denial was to "another man." The Greek says to "one other someone." It's masculine and so it must be some other man. That would amount to six denials. In John his first denial is to a "slave-girl," the same as the other three gospels. His second denial is to "slaves and officers" which may reasonably be the "bystanders" from Matthew and Mark. His third denial is a "slave of the high priest," one who was related to Malchus, who had his ear cut off by Peter. The word slave here is in the masculine, and a different word from the word used of the slave-girls. Therefore, this could be one of the two men already mentioned by Luke or simply another. In any case, there are at least six denials. The third evidence for six denials is that all four gospels record that when Peter denied the last time "immediately the rooster crowed." However, the account in Mark 14:72 says something strange, "Immediately a rooster crowed a second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had made the remark to him, "Before a rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times." What is this about a rooster crowing twice? We have no record of this prediction other than Peter's remembrance of it stated here. What it may imply is that Jesus predicted that Peter would deny Him three times before a rooster crowed during the night and another prediction that Peter would deny Him three more times

before a rooster crowed a second time in the morning. It is all very difficult and I am not suggesting that I have it all resolved, but I am suggesting that there seems to be evidence in the details of two predictions of three denials each, and therefore that Peter denied Him at least six times, or twice thrice.

But what is the significance of this? This is the third interesting thing to observe. The word of Christ is absolutely certain but the flesh and word of man are weak. Wiersbe said, "Peter learned some important lessons during that difficult experience. He learned to pay attention to the Word, to watch and pray, and to put no confidence in his own strength."<sup>9</sup> These are all things he failed to do that night. He had even denied Christ's words that he would deny Him, saying no way! But Peter learned that the word of God is always true. Both of his epistles reflect this high view of Scripture. In his second epistle he says that the word of God is more certain than his experience at the transfiguration. You may have great experiences, but they are not on the level of Scripture. Scripture trumps all experiences, and is more certain than them all. The event of hearing Christ predict his denials before the rooster crowed seems to have effected Peter dramatically. In His first epistle Peter teaches that the word of God is the instrument we use to overcome persecution and suffering and in his second epistle he teaches that the word of God is the instrument we use to overcome false teachers. There is nothing that trumps the word of God. Peter is also the one who wrote the tremendous statement about the inspiration of Scripture where it says that the prophets of old were carried along by the Spirit of God as a ship is carried by the wind and that no Scripture is open to private interpretation. And lastly, he is the one who wrote that Paul wrote many things hard to understand, and thereby authenticated Paul's writings as Scripture. The point is that Peter learned an important lesson here; the word of Christ is the word of God and it is more certain and powerful than anything.

At the same time, we learn that Peter's word and Peter's flesh were weak. Peter had said, "...even if all fall away, I will never deny you" and "even if I have to die with you, I will not deny You." We may say we won't deny him, but when the rubber meets the road, our flesh is weak. Peter sounds like Paul in Romans 7 who said, "The good I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want" (7:19). We may desire to confess Him when the time comes, but if we depend upon our flesh we will deny Him. And realize that this was not much pressure, it was the pressure in many cases of just a little slave-girl, and as J. Vernon McGee said, at the wisp of a little girl, Peter collapsed. The flesh is weak. Don't ever forget it. You can't live the Christian life. You weren't called to. You were called to have Christ live in you. That is a very big difference.

Fourth, Peter fell before the cross, but Peter was restored after the resurrection. On the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 he delivered the first sermon ever preached to the Church, and 3,000 souls were saved. In Acts 4 He stood before the Sanhedrin and confessed the name of Jesus boldly. So we all fall when we depend upon our flesh, but there is restoration and spiritual advance. Let this be an encouragement to you that if you have fallen and denied Him, that is not the end, there is restoration, and future opportunities to confess Him.

The fifth and final interesting thing to note is the sovereignty of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ controlled not only the crowing of the rooster but the exact moment of the crowing of the rooster to correspond with Peter's last denial.



In the parallel in Luke 22:60-61 it says that while Peter was still denying Him, "a rooster crowed." And "the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had told him, "Before a rooster crows today, you will deny Me three times." Peter got the clear revelation that Jesus was Lord of the rooster and caused that rooster to crow at that exact moment. This was the final confirmation to Peter that the word of Christ was sovereign over all creation. Taken as a truth we conclude once more by asking, "Who then was in control of the trial that night?" Jesus was in full control. Even during His trial with Caiaphas he was controlling a rooster in the courtyard. Never was a single thing out of place during the arrest, the betrayals, the trials, or the crucifixion itself. This means that He went to the cross, not because of the Romans or the Jews forced Him, but because He permitted it. Jesus had said it Himself, "No one can take My life from Me, but I lay it down of My own initiative." He laid down His life for your sin and my sin and the whole world's sin. That is why He alone is our great God and Savior.

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<sup>1</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 375.

<sup>2</sup> Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), Mt 26:69.

<sup>3</sup> John F. Walvoord, *Thy Kingdom Come*, 224.

<sup>4</sup> Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), Mt 26:73.

<sup>5</sup> J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible Commentary: The Gospels (John 11-21)*, electronic ed., vol. 39 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1991), 141.

<sup>6</sup> Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), Mt 26:71.

<sup>7</sup> Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), Mt 26:73.

<sup>8</sup> J. Carl Laney, *Answers to Tough Questions*, 207.

<sup>9</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 99–100.