

The Gospel According To Mark

Part Eighteen

Mark 13:1-2 [New King James] *“Then as He went out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, ‘Teacher, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here!’ And Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone shall be left upon another, that shall not be thrown down.’”*

About 15 years before Jesus Christ was born as a human being, Herod The Great began to remodel and rebuild the temple, which had stood for nearly 500 years since the days of Ezra, [**Ezra 6:14-15**].

Herod made the temple one of the most beautiful buildings in Jerusalem, **not** to honour God, but to appease the Jews whom he ruled.

Jesus Christ’s prophecy was fulfilled in AD70 when the Romans completely destroyed the temple and the entire city of Jerusalem.

Mark 12:3-4 [New King James] *“Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Him privately, ‘Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?’”*

The disciples wanted to know when the temple would be destroyed.

As they sat on the Mount of Olives they could look down on the city of Jerusalem and see the temple.

The very fact they were on the Mount of Olives may have prompted the discussion to extend beyond the destruction of the temple, to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Zechariah 14:1-4 [New King James] *“Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, and your spoil will be divided in your midst. For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; the city shall be taken, the houses rifled, and the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle. And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south.”*

The Mount of Olives is the spot on earth where the returning Jesus Christ will land, this time as a conquering King of kings.

Mark 13:5-8 [New King James] *“And Jesus, answering them, began to say: ‘Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am He,’ and will deceive many. But when you hear of wars and rumours of wars, do not be troubled; for such things must happen, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be earthquakes in various places, and there will be famines and troubles. These are the beginnings of sorrows.’”*

In every generation there has been people who claim to know when Jesus Christ will return, deceiving many, for Jesus Christ will return on God the Father’s timetable, not ours.

Matthew 24:36-39 [New King James] *“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in*

marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.”

Only God the Father will decide this in His own time, knowing when will be most effective, [**Luke 12:40; Matthew 25:13**].

Mark 13:9-13 [New King James] *“But watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. You will be brought before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them. And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations. But when they arrest you and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. Now brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.”*

It will be a time of great tribulation within the Church as well as the rest of the world.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 [New King James] *“But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.”*

The fact that Jesus Christ will return is and will always be a great comfort to true Christians.

Mark 13:14 [New King James] *“So when you see the “abomination of desolation,” spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not’ (let the reader understand), ‘then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.’”*

No certain conclusions have been reached regarding the meaning of this term in this context, except it is an act of profanity.

It has been identified with antichrist, [**2 Thessalonians 2:1-4**].

It is part of Daniel’s prophecy in **Daniel 11:31** and **Daniel 12:11-13**, both are referring to the “end of days,” that is, the end of human rule on this earth.

Nowadays people are apt to completely disregard the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, not even thinking about it, or have a completely unbalanced view of it being the only doctrine of their Christian faith.

Mark 13:15-18 [New King James] *“Let him who is on the housetop not go down into the house, nor enter to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter.”*

These only apply to people who are living near to Jerusalem.

Mark 13:19-20 [New King James] *“For in those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be. And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake, whom He chose, He shortened the days.”*

The “*elect*” are those people who have been called at this time [John 6:44] and saved by accepting Jesus Christ as their Saviour, [Romans 8:29-30; Ephesians 1:4-5].

Mark 13:21-23 [New King James] *“Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or, ‘Look, He is there!’ do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will rise and show signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. But take heed; see, I have told you all things beforehand.”*

Is it possible for Christians to be deceived?

The answer is yes!

So convincing are the arguments and “*proofs*” from deceivers in the end times that it will be difficult **not** to fall away from Christ.

The ability of certain religious leaders influenced and empowered by Satan to perform signs and miracles will also be a powerful challenge to any Christians who are not completely surrendered to the will of Jesus Christ, [Romans 12:1].

Mark 13:24-27 [New King James] *“But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars of heaven will fall, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then He will send His angels, and gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven.”*

The actual return of Jesus Christ will be unmistakable and will be seen by all human beings whatever their religion or beliefs, if any.

Mark 13:28-30 [New King James] *“Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. So you also, when you see these things happening, know that it is near, at the doors! Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.”*

The generation [30-40 years] who see all the signs given in **verses 5-22** happening will know that Jesus Christ’s return is very close.

Mark 13:31 [New King James] *“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.”*

Jesus Christ confirms that all His Words, including what He has said about His Second Coming, can be totally relied on.

Mark 13:32 [New King James] *“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”*

When Jesus Christ said that even He did not know the time of the end of human rule and His Second Coming, He was confirming His humanity. Jesus Christ and the Father are one, [John 10:30; Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3; John 14:7-11].

Mark 13:33-37 [New King James] *“Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is. It is like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning, lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!”*

The command to be on our guard and to watch is not just world events, but the life we are living, is it becoming more like a reflection of Jesus Christ’s life as a human being?

The whole idea behind this part of Mark's account of Jesus Christ's words is **not** to promote discussion on prophetic timetables of Jesus Christ's Second Coming but to stimulate right living for the Creator God in a world where He is largely ignored.

Mark 14:1-2 [New King James] *“After two days it was the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take Him by trickery and put Him to death. But they said, ‘Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar of the people.’”*

The Passover commemorated the day the Israelites were freed from slavery in Egypt, [Exodus 12] when the death angel sent by God “passed over” all the houses where the blood of a lamb was marked on the door posts and lintel, not killing the firstborn within that house.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread followed the Passover and lasted seven days.

Eventually the whole of this period of time from the selection of the lamb to be sacrificed to the end of the seven days of unleavened bread was called the Passover. This term was used in all of the gospel accounts.

The Passover was one of the feasts that Jews from throughout the Roman world sought to at least once attend in Jerusalem in their lifetime, so many people were crowded in Jerusalem at that time.

Mark 14:3-9 [New King James] *“And being in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, as He sat at the table, a woman came having an alabaster flask of very costly oil of spikenard. Then she broke the flask and poured it on His head. But there were some who were indignant among themselves, and said, ‘Why was this fragrant oil wasted? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor.’ And they criticized her sharply. But Jesus said, ‘Let her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good work for Me. For you have the poor with you always, and whenever you wish you may do them good; but Me you do not have always. She has done what she could. She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial. Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.’”*

Bethany is located on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, Jerusalem is on the western side.

This anointing was the second of two that took place within the six days that led up to the killing of the Passover Lamb, Jesus Christ.

It took place two days before the Passover at the house of Simon the [healed!] leper, the anointing was on the head of Jesus Christ and was done by an unnamed woman, those who protested to what the woman had done were not named.

The account of the first anointing is found recorded by John.

John 12:1-8 [New King James] *“Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead. There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him. Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil. But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said, ‘Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?’ This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it. But Jesus said, ‘Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial. For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always.’”*

This anointing was also in Bethany, but six days before the Passover lambs were sacrificed. It took place in the home of Mary and Martha and the resurrected Lazarus was present at the meal.

It was Mary who anointed the feet of Jesus Christ, and it was Judas who was specifically named as the one who protested.

Mark 14:10-11 [New King James] *“Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Him to them. And when they heard it, they were glad, and promised to give him money. So he sought how he might conveniently betray Him.”*

Why did Judas want to betray Jesus Christ?

Like all the other disciples, Judas expected Jesus Christ to start a rebellion to overcome Rome.

As treasurer of the group, Judas expected to have a high position in that new Kingdom that Jesus was constantly speaking about.

When Jesus praised the woman for pouring out the perfume, thought to be worth a year’s salary, Judas began to realise that Jesus Christ’s Kingdom was **not** a physical kingdom or a political one, but a spiritual kingdom, in which his greedy desire for money and status could **not** be fulfilled if he continued to follow Jesus Christ.

It was the greed and pride within Judas that allowed Satan to enter into him [Luke 22:3] and take over his mind and body.

Satan had this misconceived idea that if he could kill Jesus Christ then the Kingdom of God would never come into being.

Satan had tried to physically kill Jesus Christ as a baby, through Herod’s pride and evil desire to destroy a rival to his rulership of Judah, [Matthew 12:1-16].

Satan now was using Judas to have Jesus Christ murdered so that his mission would die like similar groups had when their leader died or was killed.

What was really happening was the God the Father, being in total command of everything that was happening, was using Satan to bring about the salvation of all the human beings whom Satan wanted to destroy.

This was going to be done through a resurrection, first of His Son, Jesus Christ, then all who died having faith in Him and trusting Him, [1 Corinthians 15:20-23; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17].

Mark 14:12-24 [New King James] *“Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they killed the Passover lamb, His disciples said to Him, ‘Where do You want us to go and prepare, that You may eat the Passover?’ And He sent out two of His disciples and said to them, ‘Go into the city, and a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him. Wherever he goes in, say to the master of the house, “The Teacher says, ‘Where is the guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?’” Then he will show you a large upper room, furnished and prepared; there make ready for us.’ So His disciples went out, and came into the city, and found it just as He had said to them; and they prepared the Passover. In the evening He came with the twelve. Now as they sat and ate, Jesus said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, one of you who eats with Me will betray Me.’ And they began to be sorrowful, and to say to Him one by one, ‘Is it I?’ And another said, ‘Is it I?’ He answered and said to them, ‘It is one of the twelve, who dips with Me in the dish. The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had never been born.’ And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them and said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body.’ Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, and they all drank from it. And He said to them, ‘This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many.’”*

This was the “preparation day” and the day of the crucifixion.

Remember that the Jewish day begins at sunset and ends at sunset, this was the very beginning of the 14th of Nisan when they were having an evening meal.

While they were eating, Jesus Christ took the unleavened bread and broke it offering a piece to each of His disciples, depicting His physical body that would soon be so broken through scourging that it nearly lost its human form, [**Psalms 22:14-17**].

Jesus Christ then offered them a cup of wine for each of them to drink from, saying it was a New Covenant that He was making with them ratified by His own blood, [**John 19:34-37**].

Jesus Christ had taken two traditional parts a meal, the passing of bread and the drinking of wine, and given them new meaning.

Mark 14:25-31 [New King James] *“Assuredly, I say to you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.” And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. 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 will be scattered.” But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee.’ Peter said to Him, ‘Even if all are made to stumble, yet I will not be.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Assuredly, I say to you that today, even this night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times.’ But he spoke more vehemently, ‘If I have to die with You, I will not deny You!’ And they all said likewise.”*

This was the second time in the same evening that Jesus Christ predicted the disciples’ denial and desertion, which explains their strong reaction, [**Luke 22:31-34; John 13:36-38**].

Mark 14:32-42 [New King James] *“Then they came to a place which was named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, ‘Sit here while I pray.’ And He took Peter, James, and John with Him, and He began to be troubled and deeply distressed. Then He said to them, ‘My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch.’ He went a little farther, and fell on the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. And He said, ‘Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will.’ Then He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, ‘Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not watch one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.’ Again He went away and prayed, and spoke the same words. And when He returned, He found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy; and they did not know what to answer Him. Then He came the third time and said to them, ‘Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough! The hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand.’”*

Jesus Christ was **not** trying to get out of the very task He had come to earth to fulfil.

Jesus Christ was expressing His true feeling as a physical human being, He did not deny or rebel against God the Father’s will.

Jesus Christ’s prayer highlights the terrible suffering He was about to endure.

An agony so much more magnified because He was taking on the sins of all humanity, [**Hebrews 5:7-9**].

The sinless Son of God was separated for a while from God the Father as He took on our sins, [Mark 15:34; Matthew 27:46] so He experienced exactly how we are when our un-repentant and unforgiven sins cut us off from our Creator God, [Isaiah 59:2].

In times of great stress we all are vulnerable to temptation, even if we have a willing spirit to obey.

Jesus Christ, by personal example, gave us guidelines of what we should do to resist the temptation to give up.

Pray to God the Father – **Mark 14:35**.

Seek support of friends and loved ones – **Mark 14:33, 37, 40-41**.

Focus on the work that God has given us to do – **Mark 14:36**.

Mark 14:43-46 [New King James] *“And immediately, while He was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. Now His betrayer had given them a signal, saying, ‘Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him and lead Him away safely.’ As soon as he had come, immediately he went up to Him and said to Him, ‘Rabbi, Rabbi!’ and kissed Him. Then they laid their hands on Him and took Him.”*

Judas had been given a contingent of police and soldiers, [**John 18:3**] in order to seize Jesus Christ and bring Him before the religious court for trial. Judas was acting as the religious leaders’ official accuser.

Mark 14:47 [New King James] *“And one of those who stood by drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.”*

According to **John 18:10** the person who pulled out the sword was Peter. **Luke 22:51** records that Jesus Christ immediately healed the man’s ear and prevented any more bloodshed.

Why were the disciples armoured with swords?

Matthew 26:47-56 [New King James] *“And while He was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and elders of the people. Now His betrayer had given them a sign, saying, ‘Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him.’ Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, ‘Greetings, Rabbi!’ and kissed Him. But Jesus said to him, ‘Friend, why have you come?’ Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him. And suddenly, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. But Jesus said to him, ‘Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?’ In that hour Jesus said to the multitudes, ‘Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and you did not seize Me. But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.’ Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled.”*

This was so that prophecy would be fulfilled about the arrest and death of Jesus Christ, [Isaiah 53:12; Mark 15:27-28].

The religious leaders did look on Jesus Christ as a man was leading a rebellion and this prompted Pilate to sign His death warrant, [**Mark 15:15**].

Mark 14:48-52 [New King James] *“Then Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize Me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled.’ Then they all forsook Him and fled. Now a certain young man followed Him, having a linen cloth thrown around his naked body. And the young men laid hold of him, and he left the linen cloth and fled from them naked.”*

Just hours before the disciples had vowed never to leave Jesus Christ, [**Mark 14:31**].

Tradition says that this young man was John Mark, the writer of this gospel. The incident is **not** mentioned in the other accounts.

Was Mark saying that he was there without mentioning his name?

We read in Acts that the meeting place of the Jerusalem Church was apparently in the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, [Acts 12:12].

If that was so, it is at least probable that the upper room for the Last Supper was eaten in the same room.

Was Mark actually present at the Last Supper, as a young boy no-one really noticed him as he followed the disciples when they, with Jesus, went out into the night, listening and watching?

This would explain one thing, if all the disciples were asleep how did anyone know the struggle Jesus Christ went through in prayer?

Was Mark watching silently in the shadows with reverence the greatest hero he had ever known, the one witness to these final moments of Jesus Christ's life?

Mark 14:53-57 [New King James] *“And they led Jesus away to the high priest; and with him were assembled all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes. But Peter followed Him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. And he sat with the servants and warmed himself at the fire. Now the chief priests and all the council sought testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. For many bore false witness against Him, but their testimonies did not agree. Then some rose up and bore false witness against Him, saying,”*

This trial by the Sanhedrin had two phases.

A small group met at night, [**John 18:12-24**] and then the full Sanhedrin met at daybreak, [**Luke 22:66-71**].

They tried Jesus Christ for religious offences such as calling Himself the Son of God, which according to the law was blasphemy.

This whole trial was “fixed” for these religious leaders had already decided to kill Jesus Christ, [Luke 22:2].

Mark 14:58 [New King James] *“ We heard Him say, ‘I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.’ ”*

This false witness twisted the words of Jesus Christ to make out He was referring to the physical temple building and not His own body, [**John 2:18-22**].

Mark 14:59-65 [New King James] *“But not even then did their testimony agree. And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, saying, ‘Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?’ But He kept silent and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked Him, saying to Him, ‘Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?’ Jesus said, ‘I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.’ Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, ‘What further need do we have of witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy! What do you think?’ And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death. Then some began to spit on Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him, and to say to Him, ‘Prophecy!’ And the officers struck Him with the palms of their hands.”*

The first question Jesus Christ refused to answer because it was based on confusing and erroneous evidence, silence was a wise decision.

If Jesus Christ had refused to answer the second question, it could have been taken as a denial of His whole mission.

Instead, Jesus Christ's reply predicted a powerful role reversal.

Sitting at the right hand of power He would come to judge those who were at that moment judging Him.

They would have to answer His questions, [Psalms 110:1; 2 Corinthians 5:10-12].

Of all people, the high priest and members of the Sanhedrin should have recognised Jesus Christ as the Messiah, because they knew the scriptures that pointed to the Messiah in the Old Testament.

Their job was to point people to the One True Creator God, but they were more concerned about preserving their reputations and holding on to their authority over the people.

Mark 14:66-72 [New King James] *“Now as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came. And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, ‘You also were with Jesus of Nazareth.’ But he denied it, saying, ‘I neither know nor understand what you are saying.’ And he went out on the porch, and a rooster crowed. And the servant girl saw him again, and began to say to those who stood by, ‘This is one of them.’ But he denied it again. And a little later those who stood by said to Peter again, ‘Surely you are one of them; for you are a Galilean, and your speech shows it.’ Then he began to curse and swear, ‘I do not know this Man of whom you speak!’ A second time the rooster crowed. Then Peter called to mind the word that Jesus had said to him, ‘Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times.’ And when he thought about it, he wept.”*

Caiaphas’ house, where Jesus Christ was tried, [Mark 14:53] was part of a huge palace with several courtyards.

Peter and John were apparently acquainted with the servants of the high priest, most likely as fishermen they had supplied fish for the household, part of the stable diet at that time, [John 18:15-16].

Peter’s curse was more than just a common swear word. He was making the strongest denial he could think of by denying with an oath that he knew Jesus Christ. He was literally saying, *“God strike me dead if I am telling a lie.”*

Sometimes we read this account of Peter’s denial in a way that is far less than just towards Peter.

Peter had shown reckless courage that night, he had drawn a sword and in the face of great odds had defended his friend Jesus Christ.

Now the last place anyone would have dreamed that Peter would go to would be among the servants of the high priest who would have known about his attack on one of their group.

Yet this is where Peter did go, the other disciples had fled but Peter was keeping his word.

After being recognised Peter denied all connections with Jesus Christ but still remained where any prudent man would have left as fast as he could, but not Peter.

This happened a second time, yet it seems that Peter did not mean to move.

Then something happened.

The Roman night was divided into four watches from 6pm to 6am.

At the end of the third watch, at three o’clock in the morning, the guard was changed.

When this happened there was a bugle call which was called the “galliginium,” which is the Latin for the cockcrow.

Most likely this happened at the same time Peter spoke his third denial.

Peter remembered Jesus Christ's words and was heartbroken.

Peter fell into a temptation that could only come to a man of fantastic courage.

Remember we saw in the introduction that Mark's gospel was the preaching material of Peter?

So Peter must have told the story of his own denial!

Then Peter would tell people of the great mercy and forgiveness of Jesus Christ that allowed him to put the past behind him, and through the influence of Jesus Christ in his life he became a new person whom Jesus Christ wanted to use.

John 21:3-19 [New King James] *“Simon Peter said to them, ‘I am going fishing.’ They said to him, ‘We are going with you also.’ They went out and immediately got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing. But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Then Jesus said to them, ‘Children, have you any food?’ They answered Him, ‘No.’ And He said to them, ‘Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.’ So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, ‘It is the Lord!’ Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea. But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from land, but about two hundred cubits), dragging the net with fish. Then, as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, ‘Bring some of the fish which you have just caught.’ Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not broken. Jesus said to them, ‘Come and eat breakfast.’ Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, ‘Who are You?’, knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish. This is now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead. So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?’ He said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.’ He said to him, ‘Feed My lambs.’ He said to him again a second time, ‘Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?’ He said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.’ He said to him, ‘Tend My sheep.’ He said to him the third time, ‘Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?’ Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, ‘Do you love Me?’ And he said to Him, ‘Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Feed My sheep. Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish.’ This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, ‘Follow Me.’”*

Three denials forgiven by three commissions which Peter fulfilled the rest of his life with the same courage.

When we read this episode of Peter's life, from denial to total dedication to Jesus Christ, the story of shame becomes a story of a man greatly used by our Creator God.

Such a dramatic change could happen to any of us.