
The Accounts of Peter's Denial

Understanding the Texts and Motifs

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"And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly." (Matthew 26:75)

Peter in the Passion Narratives

- Jesus' suffering and prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, his arrest, subsequent abuse and false judgment, crucifixion, and death
 - *Followed by his resurrection*
- Peter's overconfident declaration that he would never deny his Lord, his inability to stay awake during his watch with the Savior in the garden, his impulsive attempt to defend Jesus by the sword, his eventual flight, his repeated denial that he either knew Jesus or that he was one of his followers
 - *Followed by his rehabilitation in the post resurrection narrative of John 21*

LDS Interest in the Denial Episode

- Peter had been impulsive before and would be again even on a few occasions after, but abandoning and, even worse, denying association with his Lord **seems clearly out of character with the disciple otherwise known as “the rock.”**
- There has been a long tradition of using Peter’s failing that night **first as a criticism of the apostle himself** and then **as a model of how believers should not act.**
- This prevailing tendency has encountered occasional resistance, however, by some within **the Latter-day Saint community, which has a long tradition of respecting leaders and avoiding unnecessary criticism.**

President Kimball’s “Peter My Brother” talk

July 13, 1971, BYU Devotional

- “Some time ago a newspaper in a distant town carried an Easter Sunday religious editorial by a minister who stated that the presiding authority of the early-day church fell because of self-confidence, indecision, evil companions, failure to pray, lack of humility, and fear of man. . . .”
- “Then I opened my New Testament. I could find no such character as this modern minister described. Instead, I found a man who had grown perfect through his experiences and sufferings—a man with vision, a man of revelations, a man fully trusted by his Lord Jesus Christ.”
- “I remember his sad, triple denial of his acquaintance with the Lord in those terrifying, frustrating moments. . . . **I do not pretend to know what Peter’s mental reactions were nor what compelled him to say what he did that terrible night.** But in light of his proven bravery, courage, great devotion, and limitless love for the Master, *could we not give him the benefit of the doubt and at least forgive him as his Savior seems to have done so fully.*”

Historical Figure vs. Literary Character

- Nevertheless, while we cannot—and should not—try to judge the motivations of *the historical figure* of Peter, the actions *the literary character* certainly fit **into the clear pattern of betrayal, abandonment, confusion, and fear that permeates the narratives describing Jesus' arrest and condemnation.** While this pattern highlights the Savior's suffering and his utter aloneness during his atoning journey that night and the next morning, it also teaches us lessons about ourselves as disciples. Not just Peter but all the disciples present failed Jesus that night, as do we each day as we fail to fully live up to our covenants. *In this way the character of Peter helps us see our own weakness and need for Christ's grace.*

Back to Peter's Denial in the Gospel Texts

- All four of the canonical gospels contain versions of the same basic story, presumably drawn from some sort of primitive Passion narrative, probably oral but perhaps even written, that was familiar to all of the Evangelists
 - All four contain **accounts of a prediction**, in which Jesus announces that before the rooster crows that next morning Peter would deny Jesus three times
 - Nevertheless they **differ in the circumstances surrounding Jesus' pronouncement and use two different grammatical constructions** in quoting it
 - All four Gospels then have **accounts of the fulfillment of Jesus' words** to Peter
 - these differ even more significantly than do the accounts of the prediction, seeming to disagree in **the timing of Peter's disavowals, the people to whom he made the denials,** and even in the details of **where these statements occurred**
- *These apparent inconsistencies in the accounts caution against definitive interpretations of exactly what happened that night, let alone why Peter acted as he did.*

The Prediction

Table 1: The Prediction

Mark 14

KJV ²⁶ And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

²⁷ And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.*

²⁸ But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee.

²⁹ But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet will not I.

³⁰ And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, **That this day, even in this night, before the cock crow [prin phōnēsai] twice, thou shalt deny [aparnēsē] me thrice.**

³¹ But he spake the more vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise. Likewise also said they all.

Matthew 26

KJV ³⁰ And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

³¹ Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.*

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³³ Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.

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³⁵ Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.

Luke 22

KJV ³¹ And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:

³² But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

³³ And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.

[³⁴ And he said, **I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow [ou mé phōnēsai] this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny [prin aparnēsē] that thou knowest me.**]

NRSV ³⁴ Jesus said, "I tell you, Peter, **the cock will not crow [ou phōnēsai] this day, until you have denied [heōs aparnēsē] three times that you know me.**"

KJV ³⁹ And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him.

John 13

KJV ³⁶ Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards.

³⁷ Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake.

³⁸ Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, **The cock shall not crow [ou mé phōnēsē], till thou hast denied [heōs hou arnēsē] me thrice.**

John 18

KJV ¹ When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples.

* Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones. (KJV, Zechariah 13:7)

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³¹ But he spake the more vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise. Likewise also said they all.

The Marcan Prediction

- After the Last Supper on the Mount of Olives
- Jesus declares that all of his disciples would stumble or be caused to fall away [*skandalisthēsesthei*, KJV, “be offended”] that night
- He illustrates their expected behavior with a passage from Zechariah 13:7
- Peter confidently declares, “Although all shall be offended, yet will not I”
- Emphasizes that the denials would occur “this day, even in this night”
- Mark’s rooster would crow twice, while the other three Gospels mention the cock crowing once

Matthew 26

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³⁵ Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.

The Matthean Prediction

- Follows the Marcan account of the prediction very closely
- On the Mount of Olives after the Last Supper
- Uses the same Zechariah quotation
- Matthew improves on Mark’s grammar and style, resulting in smoother Greek (and English for that matter) which also emphasizes Peter’s confidence
- Otherwise differs from Mark only in omitting the explanatory reference to that night being part of that “day” and Mark’s double crowing by the rooster

Luke 22

KJV ³¹ And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:

³² But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

³³ And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.

[³⁴ And he said, **I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow** [*ou mē phōnēsēi*] **this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny** [*prin aparnēsēi*] **that thou knowest me.**]

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KJV ³⁹ And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him.

The Lucan Prediction

- Differs significantly from the earlier Marcan and Matthean versions
- Begins earlier at the site of the Last Supper rather than on the Mount of Olives
- Omits the prophecy of the disciples' being offended and scattered
- Begins with Jesus praying for Peter, who is referred to by his original name, "Simon"
- Peter has the chance to express his willingness to follow Jesus
- Changes to "Peter" and words the prediction quite differently—was Luke following a different source?

John 13

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³⁷ Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake.

³⁸ Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, **The cock shall not crow** [*ou mē phōnēsēi*], **till thou hast denied** [*heōs hou arnēsēi*] **me thrice.**

John 18

KJV ¹ When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples.

The Johannine Prediction

- Like Luke, set at the place of the Last Supper
- When Peter asks Jesus to clarify where he is about to go, the Lord tells Peter that he cannot follow now but will later
- Peter's response in this Gospel is not at first a self-confident declaration but a seemingly genuine question
- As in Luke, Peter proclaims, "I will lay down my life for thy sake" (echoing the words of Jesus in the Discourse on the Good Shepherd [see John 10:11]?)
- Proceeds with a prediction that in Greek is much closer to the Lucan version than that of Mark or Matthew: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice"

The Grammar of the Denial

Use of *amēn*

- In every version except for that of Luke, Jesus begins by saying “Verily [*amēn*] I say unto thee” (Mark 14:30; Matthew 26:30; John 13:38, where it is doubled)
- The Greek transliteration of the Hebrew asseverative particle ‘*āmēn*, meaning “truly”
 - *Usually used at the end of Jewish and Christian prayers, meaning “so let it be”*
- Jesus’ use of it seems to have been idiosyncratic, because only he appears to have used it at the *beginning* of statements
 - *this use of ‘āmēn emphasizes the truthfulness and validity of what he is about to say*
- **Thus Jesus’ statement to Peter was not simply a saying but was a solemn, weighty pronouncement**

Forms of the Verb *arneomai* for “Deny”

- John in its simple form and the synoptics in a compound form with the preposition *apo*
- Meanings of *arneomai* or *aparneomai* range from “refuse or disdain” to “deny something or say that it is not true” and “**repudiate, disown, or disclaim association with someone or something**”
- Lucan account has Jesus say that Peter will “thrice deny that thou knowest me” (Luke 22:34), the other three accounts have Jesus simply say that Peter will “deny me [*me aparnēsē* or *arnēsē*]” (Mark 14:30; Matthew 26:34; John 13:38)
- Otherwise Peter never denies anything in particular about Jesus—and, as President Kimball was anxious to emphasize, **never denied that he was “the Christ”**
- The meaning of *arneomai* that consistently fits both the accounts of Jesus’ prediction and the fulfillment is the idea that ***Peter would repudiate or otherwise disown Jesus***

“Thou Shalt Deny . . .”

- A **prediction** . . . or perhaps **a command or directive**?
- The possibility that Jesus might have been commanding or directing Peter to deny knowing him is an attractive idea to those desiring to somehow excuse or better understand why Peter acted as he did that night
- Such commentators have suggested that Jesus had given such direction to Peter so that the apostle, otherwise an ardent supporter and defender of his lord, could elude arrest and trial that terrible night, thereby surviving to lead the church
- Such attempts are usually rooted in **possible meanings of the expression “thou shalt deny” in English**, but ***such efforts require further examination of the Greek texts behind the phrase.***

Mark 14:30

- Assuming Marcan priority, the reading “before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice [*tris me aparnēsē*]” is the earliest version
- the verb *aparnēsē* appears as a second person singular future deponent indicative form
 - The natural sense of the future here is **a predicative future**, meaning that Jesus was foreseeing or prophesying what Peter would do
 - Some seeking to excuse Peter, however, have wondered whether this future might, as can happen in English, have had in addition the **sense of a command**

A Future Imperative?

- This sense is, in fact, **possible in some periods of Greek**
- Such an imperatival use of the future, though **rare**, is found **in Classical Greek**, where it is known as ***the jussive future***
 - Generally it **has a familiar tone**—as when we say to our children “you *will* go to bed!”—making it a somewhat weak form of the imperative
- This imperatival use was adopted and used **fairly commonly in the Greek of the Septuagint** to render ***formal injunctions and prohibitions***, particularly in the case of divine commandments
 - ***most commonly it is used in negative prohibitions***
 - in the Ten Commandments **positive injunctions**, such as “remember the Sabbath day” appear **in the standard imperative mood**
- Such usage is **rarer in the New Testament**; when it appears it is usually quoting the LXX or otherwise ***imitating the legal language of the Old Testament***
 - As a result, the future imperative **appears mostly in Matthew**, being uncommon in other New Testament authors

Future or Subjunctive?

Most problematic for the future-command argument, however, is the fact that it is only a possibility in two of the four prediction accounts—and in only one of three if, in fact, Matthew is following Mark

- The forms *aparnēsē* and *arnēsē* are grammatically ambiguous
 - **Future deponent indicative** and **aorist deponent subjunctive** look exactly alike!
 - Grammatical constructions determine which is which
- Only the construction of Mark 14:30, and Matthew 26:34 which follows it, allows *aparnēsē* to be the future form
- Neither the Lucan nor the Johannine accounts allow the verb to be a future
 - The NRSV rendition of Luke 22:34 reveals that earlier Greek manuscripts of this account use a very different construction from that in the KJV
 - begins with a main clause in the future that is followed by a subordinate temporal clause that requires *aparnēsē* to be an aorist subjunctive

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²⁸ But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee.
²⁹ But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet will not I.
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³³ And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.
³⁴ And he said, **I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow [ou mē phōnēsai] this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny [prin aparnēsē] that thou knowest me.**
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³⁷ Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake.
³⁸ Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, **The cock shall not crow [ou mē phōnēsē], till thou hast denied [heōs hou arnēsē] me thrice.**

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KJV ¹ When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples.

* Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones. (KJV, Zechariah 13:7)

Context?

- “Thou shalt deny me” is preceded by Jesus’ statement that “All ye shall be offended because of me this night” (Mark 14:27; parallel Matthew 26:31)
 - almost certainly a prediction because of its tie to the prophecy from Zechariah 13:7 that the sheep will be scattered when the shepherd is struck
 - If Jesus’ saying about the disciples being offended is a predicative future, it follows that the saying about Peter’s denial would likewise be predicative.
- ***Thus the immediate context of Jesus’ pronouncement in even these accounts also favors a prediction over a command.***

It may all be moot anyway!

- This grammatical possibility in two of our four texts is not conclusive, because ***Jesus would presumably have been speaking to Peter in Aramaic, not Greek***
 - In other words, arguments based upon the Greek grammar in all probability only represent the understanding of what the Evangelists (or their sources) thought Jesus meant or intended when he originally spoke in Aramaic.
- While arguments based upon grammar remain inconclusive, ***they incline against the possibility that Jesus had issued a command to Peter***
- Elder Jeffrey R. Holland has observed, “We don’t know all that was going on here, nor do we know of protective counsel which the Savior may have given to His Apostles privately.”
 - ***Nevertheless, the context and a straightforward reading of the texts support the traditional interpretation that Jesus was predicting what Peter would do***

The Fulfillment

Table 2: The Fulfillment

Mark 14

⁶⁶ KJV ⁶⁶ And as Peter was beneath in the palace, there cometh one of the maids of the high priest:

⁶⁷ And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked upon him, and said, And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth.

⁶⁸ But he denied [*ernésato*], saying, I know not, **neither understand I what thou sayest**. And he went out into the porch; and the cock crew.

⁶⁹ And [the] maid^{*} saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by, This is one of them.

⁷⁰ And he denied [*ernéito*] it again. And a little after, they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou art one of them: for thou art a Galilaean, and thy speech agreeth thereto.

⁷¹ But he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom ye speak.

⁷² And the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, **Before the cock crow [*prin phónésai*] twice, thou shalt deny [*aparnésé*] me thrice**. And when he thought thereon, he wept.

* While the KJV text reads "a maid," the use of the definite article in *he paidouke* makes it clear that this second figure is, in Mark, the same as the first.

Matthew 26

⁶⁸ KJV ⁶⁸ Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.

⁶⁹ But he denied [*ernésato*] before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.

⁷⁰ And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth.

⁷¹ And again he denied [*ernésato*] with an oath, I do not know the man.

⁷² And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee.

⁷³ Then **began he to curse and to swear**, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew.

⁷⁴ And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, **Before the cock crow [*prin phónésai*], thou shalt deny [*aparnésé*] me thrice**. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

Luke 22

⁵⁸ KJV ⁵⁸ But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him.

⁵⁹ And he denied [*ernésato*] him, saying, Woman, I know him not.

⁶⁰ And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, **I am not**.

⁶¹ And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilaean.

⁶² And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew.

⁶³ And **the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter**. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, **Before the cock crow [*prin phónésai*], thou shalt deny [*aparnésé*] me thrice**.

⁶⁴ And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

John 18

¹⁵ KJV ¹⁵ And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest.

¹⁶ But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter.

¹⁷ Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, **I am not**.

¹⁸ And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself.

¹⁹ KJV ¹⁹ And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples? **He denied [*ernésato*] it**, and said, I am not.

²⁰ One of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him?

²¹ **Peter then denied [*ernésato*] again:** and immediately the cock crew.

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The Marcan Fulfillment

- Housemaid says she saw Peter with Jesus
- Peter denies that this is true and adds he can't understand her
- Retreats to the porch and the rooster crows the first time
- The maid sees him again and says Peter was one of Jesus' followers
- Peter *kept* denying (imperfect) her claim
- When bystanders say he sounds like a Galilean, Peter begins to curse and swear
- Rooster crows a second time

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The Matthean Fulfillment

- some seeming differences, such as the KJV's "damsel" in Matthew instead of "maid" as in Mark, are more apparent than real because both use the same word, *paidiskē*, in Greek
- Addition of "another maid" in Matthew 26:71, adding another person to the list of people to whom Peter denies Jesus
- adding of "with an oath [*meta horkou*]" to Peter's second denial
- When the bystanders question him, Peter's renunciation leads to cursing and swearing (*katathematizein kai omnyein*)
- The effect in Matthew is to highlight that Peter's denials progressively become both more public and more serious

Luke 22

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⁵⁹ And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilaean.

⁶⁰ And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew.

⁶¹ And **the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter.** And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, **Before the cock crow** [*prin phōnēsai*], **thou shalt deny** [*aparnēsē*] **me thrice.**

⁶² And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

The Lucan Fulfillment

- Differs significantly from that of Mark and Matthew's
- All three Lucan denials take place beside the fire without Peter withdrawing to the porch
- Luke differs in the order of the denials and in two cases even to whom they are made
 - Denies knowing Jesus to the maid
 - Denies being one of Jesus followers to another (man)
 - Claims to not know what a second man is even saying
- No cursing or swearing
- The Lord turns and looks at him . . .

John 18

¹⁵ KJV And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest.

¹⁶ But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter.

¹⁷ Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, **I am not.**

¹⁸ And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself.

²⁵ KJV And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples? **He denied** [*ērñēsato*] it, and said, I am not.

²⁶ One of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him?

²⁷ **Peter then denied** [*ērñēsato*] **again:** and immediately the cock crew.

The Johannine Fulfillment

- Differs considerably from the other three accounts
- Accompanied by an unnamed, other disciple who is known to the high priest
- The maid is specifically identified as the doorkeeper (*thyroros*)
- First denial at Annas', second and third at Caiaphas', separating the denials in time and space
- Peter denies using "I am not," the opposite of Jesus' familiar phrase *egō eimi* ("I am")
- Second denial is to servants and officers, third to Malchus' brother

The Motif of the Denial

A Series of Failures

- The actions of Peter are part of **the larger succession of events where Jesus is first let down by his friends**
 - including, and especially, Peter, James, and John—who are not able to keep watch with him in Gethsemane
 - betrayed by Judas
 - abandoned by his other disciples, their flight constituting what can be seen as a form of passive betrayal following Judas' more active treachery.
- *Peter's denial, then, simply appears as the next in a series of events where Jesus is abandoned by all who know him and handed over from one party to another*

A Tragic Character

- Peter is the perfect tragic character, good but not too good so *that the audience, in this case the reader, can identify with him*
- His efforts to defend Jesus and then to follow him even after a temporary moment of terror and flight, ***represent well the inadequate efforts of all of us to love and serve Jesus***

“Theology of the Cross”

- Peter and the other disciples are **not capable of being truly successful until after Jesus has actually died on the cross**—in other words, until Jesus had completed the Atonement for them
- Throughout the ministry they consistently failed to understand or act faithfully, and such failings accelerated in the final hours of Jesus’ mission
- ***Only when Jesus’ atoning sacrifice had been completed did grace sufficient begin to flow, enabling Peter, and us, to be successful and valiant as disciples***

Peter, Our Weakness, and Christ's Grace

Avoiding a Distorted Portrait

- Focusing on Peter's weakness that night can produce a distorted portrait of the chief Apostle, detracting from his full redemption and acceptance by Jesus and his subsequent ardent, devoted service to Christ and his kingdom. *What should perhaps be the greatest lesson drawn from the denial stories is that Peter, like all of us, could make mistakes, but through Jesus Christ he could be fully redeemed, rehabilitated, and go on to serve faithfully.*

Our Need for Grace

- By showing his own weakness, Peter provided a model to other believers on how they could overcome their own weaknesses. Indeed, regardless of whatever our individual mistakes and failings might be, ***we all share in the same fundamental weakness, that as fallen men and women we lack both the ability to fully overcome our shortcomings and the strength to do any further good on our own.***
 - As Jacob taught in the Book of Mormon, “the Lord God showeth us our weakness that we may know that it is by his grace, and his great condescensions unto the children of men, that we have power to do these things” (Jacob 4:7; see Ether 12:27).
- Just as the full power of Jesus’ grace was manifested in Peter’s momentary failure and his later complete redemption, so can it be with us: ***as we slip and fall, we too can repent and return to the Lord, who will accept our love and then empower us to overcome our weaknesses and press forward in Christ to do greater things in his strength***