



# CAPITOL COMMISSION

## The Repentance of a Leader in Sin

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**Matthew 26:69-75** *“Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard, and a certain servant-girl came to him and said, ‘You too were with Jesus the Galilean.’ 70) But he denied it before them all, saying, ‘I do not know what you are talking about.’ 71) And when he had gone out to the gateway, another servant-girl saw him and said to those who were there, ‘This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.’ 72) and again he denied it with an oath, ‘I do not know the man.’ 73) And a little later the bystanders came up and said to Peter, ‘Surely you too are one of them; for the way you talk gives you away.’ 74) Then he began to curse and swear, ‘I do not know the man!’ And immediately a cock crowed. 75) And Peter remembered the word which Jesus had said, ‘Before a cock crows, you will deny me three times.’ And he went out and wept bitterly.” (NASB)*

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“THE SINGLE GREATEST GIFT GOD COULD CONCEIVABLY GIVE TO MANKIND IS FORGIVENESS OF SINS. WITHOUT FORGIVENESS, THERE COULD BE NO SALVATION FROM SIN, NO RECONCILIATION WITH GOD, NO SPIRITUAL LIFE, NO VICTORY OVER DEATH, NO PROSPECT OF HEAVEN.” JOHN MACARTHUR

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How had Peter become the leader among the disciples? What was the pattern of Peter's life that solidified his leadership? Were there clear steps that caused Peter's fall? Had Jesus warned Peter of his future fall? Who is the first person Jesus specifically looked at the last morning of His life on earth? Had Satan asked for permission to tempt Peter? How had Jesus prayed for Peter? What is the mark of true repentance? Once Peter repented, how was his failure used to bring about greater good for God's kingdom?

### FOCUS ON FUTURE EVENTS:

- SEPTEMBER 15: DELTAVILLE LEGISLATIVE INVITATIONAL FISHING TOURNAMENT (LIFT)
- NOVEMBER 7: CAPITOL OF VIRGINIA CAPITOL COOKOUT AND PRAYER WALK

When Jesus prepared to feed the 5000, he taught the disciples to expect the impossible from Him in the

exercise of their faith when He said, *“You give them something to eat”* (Mt. 14:16). Later that night as Jesus walked on the stormy sea, Peter was the first of the disciples to exercise his faith and believe Jesus could do the impossible when he said, *“Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water”* (Mt. 14:28). Then Peter exercised leadership a second time when he declared the rock-solid confession of the entire future Church, *“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”* Jesus solidified that foundational confession when He said, *“you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church,”* promising to give him *“the keys to the kingdom of heaven,”* including authority in the church (Mt. 16:16-19). Peter witnessed the raising of Jairus' daughter (Lk. 8:41-56), the transfiguration (Mt. 17:1-13), and Jesus' fervent prayers in Gethsemane (Mt. 26:36-46). From the first time he heard of it, Peter refused to accept the fact of Jesus' crucifixion and he is the only disciple to be called *“Satan”* because of it (Mt. 16:23). Satan again is the motivator for Peter's denial of Jesus as He follows the path to His cross.

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“AND THE LORD SAID, ‘SIMON, SIMON! INDEED, SATAN HAS ASKED FOR YOU THAT HE MAY SIFT YOU AS WHEAT. BUT I HAVE PRAYED FOR YOU, THAT YOUR FAITH SHOULD NOT FAIL; AND WHEN YOU HAVE RETURNED TO ME, STRENGTHEN YOUR BRETHREN.’”

LUKE 22:31-32

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### I. REASONS FOR THE DENIAL

Peter's denial was not just an isolated response to an unexpected trap; he had unknowingly but continuously paved the path toward his own defection. The pride of his leadership clearly marked the steps to his downfall.

**1) Proudful Boasting:** Jesus had just prophesied that all the disciples would defect and disown Him and had quoted Scripture as proof, Peter crowed, *“Even though all may fall away because of You, I will never fall away”* (Mt. 26:33). Peter arrogantly thought he was better than

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### BIBLE STUDY LOCATION INFORMATION

WEDNESDAY @ 7:00AM – BIBLE STUDY – FREDERICKSBURG – (CALL 804-683-2285 FOR SPECIFICS)

THURSDAY @ 7:00AM – BIBLE STUDY – RT. 10, IRONBRIDGE SPORTS PK, NOON – WYTESTONE PLAZA – 8<sup>TH</sup> & MAIN – 2<sup>ND</sup> FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM

FRIDAY @ 7:00 AM – BIBLE STUDY – IN THE TIDEWATER AREA (CALL 804-683-2285 FOR SPECIFICS)

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everyone else. **2) Persistent Defiance:** Jesus personally warns Peter relating repeated denials (26:34). But Peter will not accept Jesus' assessment of him and intensifies his assertion, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You" (26:35). This he "kept saying insistently" until all the other disciples joined him in saying the same thing (Mk. 14:31). **3) Prayerless self-confidence:** Finding Peter asleep when he should have been praying, Jesus said, "So, you men could not keep watch with Me for one hour? Keep watching and praying, that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak" (26:40-41). Peter thought he was strong so he saw no need to be watchful in prayer. **4) Passionate Impulsiveness:** Without seeking anyone's advice or permission, Peter "reached and drew out his sword and struck the slave of the high priest, and cut off his ear" (26:51). Ignoring God's clear plan of Jesus' crucifixion, Peter arrogantly took matters into his own hands and almost committed murder. Had Jesus not healed the severed ear, Peter may have been arrested before Christ! **5) Presumptuous Positioning:** He compromised in allowing himself to assume the greatest spiritual danger among the enemies of Christ (26:58). His self-sufficiency resisted the blessedness of Psalm 1:1.

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"IT SHOWS US THE NECESSITY OF HUMILITY: SO LONG AS WE ARE IN THE BODY, WE ARE IN DANGER. THE FLESH IS WEAK, AND THE DEVIL IS ACTIVE: WE MUST NEVER THINK, 'I CANNOT FALL.'" J.C. RYLE

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### II. RAPID PACE OF DENIAL MT. 26:69-74

Peter had followed Jesus "at a distance" (26:58) and had initially not been given permission to enter, but John had "spoke to the doorkeeper, and brought in Peter" (Jn. 18:16). While Peter was sitting with the officers around the fire in the middle of the courtyard, the servant-girl who kept the door, "seeing him as he sat in the firelight and looking intently at him, said, 'This man was with Him too'" (Lk. 22:56). And then she probably accused, "You too

were with Jesus the Galilean" (26:69). But as covertly as possible he denied it before all of them by saying, "I do not know what you are talking about" (26:70). But in order to escape more attention (and possibly the house) "He went out into the porch and a rooster crowed" (Mk. 14:68). If he was trying to escape, he was probably denied the door by a second servant-girl keeping the door, who accosted him by saying "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth!" This time "he denied it with an oath, 'I do not know the man'" (26:71-2). An oath included swearing by God's name that one was telling the truth. Probably Peter then sought to escape back unnoticed into the courtyard where Jesus' trial was going on above him. About an hour after his previous denial, the rumors had circulated and "one of the slaves of the high priest, being a relative of the one whose ear Peter cut off, said, 'Did I not see you in the garden with him?'" (Jn. 18:26) Another said, "Surely you too are one of them; for the way you talk gives you away. Then he began to curse and swear, 'I do not know the man!' And immediately a cock crowed" (26:73-4). "And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had told him, 'Before the cock crows today, you will deny Me three times'" (Lk. 22:61).

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"HE FELL WITH SUCH SLIGHT PROVOCATION! HE COLLAPSED BEFORE THE QUESTION OF A MERE SERVANT GIRL. IF PETER COULD DO THAT, IF HE COULD DENY JESUS, SO CAN WE. WHAT HAPPENED TO PETER CAN HAPPEN TO THE STRONGEST OF US, AND IT MAY EVEN BE THE STRONGEST WHO ARE IN THE GREATEST DANGER." JAMES MONTGOMERY BOICE

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### III. REPENTANT TEARS OVER DENIAL MT. 26:75

When reminded by the rooster and the loving, battered, spittle filled face of Christ as He turned and looked at Peter, "He went out and wept bitterly." Peter had true repentance because he never denied the Lord again and Jesus restored him three times publicly to match his three denials, with "Feed My sheep" (Jn. 21:1-17).

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#### Questions to Ponder:

- 1) Is your leadership increasing your pride?
- 2) Are you allowing compromises in your life set you up for greater sin?
- 3) Do you completely repent of your sin so that Christ's forgiveness equips you for greater service?