

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).

The Passion narratives that chronicle Jesus' suffering and prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, his arrest, and the subsequent abuse and false judgment that followed also include accounts of Peter's actions that night. These include his 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, and his eventual flight. But nothing stands out so poignantly as his repeated denial that he either knew Jesus or that he was one of his followers. In many ways Peter's denials stand in glaring contrast with the portrait of Peter painted elsewhere by the Gospels. 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.”

Nevertheless, a memory of Peter's denial was a clear part of the Christian communal memory of what occurred that terrible night. 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.¹ They each contain accounts of a prediction, in which Jesus announces that before the rooster crows that next morning Peter would deny Jesus three times. Beyond this, however, the Gospels present differences in the circumstances surrounding Jesus' pronouncement and use two different grammatical constructions in quoting it (see Table 1: The Prediction, p. 144). All four Gospels then have accounts of the fulfillment of Jesus' words to Peter, though 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 (see Table 2: The Fulfillment, see p. 145). Despite these differences, the attestation of the denials in all four Gospels and the unlikelihood that early Christians would create a story like this about one of their leading figures establishes the historicity of the basic story in the minds of even skeptical biblical scholars.²

Despite this, the apparent inconsistencies in the accounts caution against definitive interpretations of exactly what happened that night, let alone *why* Peter acted as he did. As a result, in Peter's case, as in the case of so many others in the scriptural record, we ought to be particularly careful about how we judge the actions and especially the motivations of historical figures about whose circumstances we know so little. Nevertheless, there is 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.³ 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. For instance, in a well-known speech to Brigham Young University faculty and students in 1971, then-acting President of the Twelve, Spencer W. Kimball, responded to criticisms of Peter. After reviewing several possible motivations for Peter's actions,⁴ he concluded, "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."⁵

Nevertheless, while we cannot—and should not—try to judge the motivations of *the historical figure* of Peter, the actions of *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,⁶ 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.⁷

The Prediction

While Jesus and his disciples presumably spoke Aramaic, all four of the canonical Gospels were written in Greek anywhere from thirty to sixty years after the events that they describe. While two of the Evangelists have traditionally been identified as Apostles who would have been witnesses of many of the events that these Gospels preserve, all four exercise frequent literary license in how they craft their narratives, relating events and teachings truthfully enough but feeling free to sometimes order them differently, present different details, and emphasize particular ideas and themes. This pattern is particularly clear in the Gospels' different accounts of the prediction of Peter's denial. All four preserve the same basic points regarding what Jesus and Peter said to each other, which, presumably, the Evangelists drew from possibly different versions of the earliest primitive Passion narrative that had been circulating since the events of Jesus' death and Resurrection. Either before or just after the Last Supper, Peter expressed a great willingness to be faithful to Jesus. In spite of Peter's confidence, Jesus declared that before morning, signaled by the crowing of a rooster, Peter would, in fact, deny Jesus three times. Beyond this, however, the Gospels differ, though Matthew largely seems to follow Mark (see again Table 1: The Prediction). Despite these differences, however, Raymond Brown notes that "perhaps nowhere else in the [Passion narrative] do the Gospels agree so much in the overall flow of the story as in the denials of Jesus by Peter."⁸

The prevailing consensus of biblical scholarship holds that the Gospel according to Mark was the earliest of the four Gospels to actually be written. If this assumption is correct, then the Marcan version represents the earliest surviving written account of Jesus' prediction of Peter's denial (Mark 14:26–31). This version places Jesus's prediction after the Last Supper, thus framing the institution of the sacrament, by which believers remember and commit themselves to Jesus, with two predictions of betrayal, Judas' at the beginning (Mark 14:18–21) and Peter's after it is over.⁹ In the Marcan account, the prediction of Peter's denial occurs on the Mount of Olives, where Jesus declares that all of his disciples would stumble or be caused to fall away [*skandalisthēsesthei*, KJV, "be offended"] that

night.¹⁰ He illustrates their expected behavior with a passage from Zechariah 13:7, using this prophecy about the sheep scattering after the shepherd had been struck to anticipate how the disciples would flee when Jesus was arrested in Gethsemane. Jesus softens how they would fail to stand with him, however, by promising that he would go before them into Galilee, which is later realized when he appears to them there after his Resurrection. Nevertheless, the prophecy of the disciples' flight causes Peter to confidently declare, "Although all shall be offended, yet will not I" (Mark 14:29).

It is this confident assertion that leads Jesus to reply in the Marcan version by saying, "Verily I say unto thee, That this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, *thou shalt deny me thrice*" (Mark 14:30; emphasis added). Jesus' prediction does little to daunt Peter's resolve: he emphatically declares that even if it meant that he would need to die, he would never deny Jesus, a sentiment that the other disciples all take up as well. This Marcan account thus establishes all of the basic elements of the prediction: a confident assertion by Peter that is met with a declaration by Jesus that Peter would in fact deny Jesus three times before morning. Mark's account emphasizes that the denials would occur "this day, even in this night," perhaps because Mark's presumed Gentile audience might not be familiar with Jewish methods of reckoning days beginning with sunset on the previous day. Otherwise the only other unique aspect of the Marcan account is the detail that the rooster would crow twice, while the other three Gospels mention the cock crowing once.¹¹ The reason for this difference remains obscure, though it might have been intended to make Jesus' statement seem proverbial, borrowing the counting figure of "for three . . . and for four" seen in Proverbs 30 and applying it to a rooster crowing twice and Peter denying thrice.¹² For those who give credence to the early Christian tradition that Peter in some way lay behind Mark's Gospel, the fact that the Marcan prediction is, in fact, the most detailed could reflect the possibility that the double cockcrow might preserve a vivid, personal memory of the Apostle himself.¹³

Generally assumed to have been the second Gospel to have been written, Matthew follows the Marcan account of the prediction very closely. The Matthean version (Matthew 26:30–35) similarly places the prediction on the Mount of Olives after the Last Supper and uses the Zechariah quotation in connection with Jesus' prediction that the disciples would all stumble (*skandalisthēsesthe*) in their faith in and devotion to Jesus that night. As is often the case, Matthew improves Mark's Greek grammar and style, which in this passage not only results in smoother Greek (and English for that matter) but also emphasizes Peter's confidence.¹⁴ In the Matthean version, for instance, Mark's "Although all shall be offended, yet not I"

is rendered "Though all men shall be offended *because of thee, yet will I never be offended*" (Matthew 26:33; emphasis added). Otherwise the prediction in Matthew 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's Gospel, while generally following the basic outline of Mark, also shares much material, usually discourse passages, with Matthew. Luke frequently reworks this common material, however, and in addition, this Gospel contains important unique material, suggesting that it drew upon another independent source or sources. Accordingly, the Lucan version of Jesus' prediction of Peter's denial (Luke 22:31-34) differs significantly from the earlier Marcan and Matthean versions. First, it begins earlier at the site of the Last Supper rather than on the Mount of Olives. Also notable among these differences is Luke's omission of the prophecy of the disciples' being offended and scattered. This omission is in line with the Evangelists' consistently gentler treatment of the disciples, which includes omitting or at least downplaying examples of their failure and mistakes and portraying them in the Passion narrative as those who remain faithful to Jesus and do not flee or fall away.¹⁵

Instead the prediction episode begins in the Lucan account with Jesus praying for Peter, who is referred to, as is common in Luke, by his original name, "Simon." Jesus' prayer that Peter's faith not fail is followed by the injunction, "and when thou art converted [*epistrepsas*], strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:32). This direction may well have had particular meaning in this context, because the Greek *epistrepsas* literally means "to turn back again" and is rendered by the New Jerusalem Bible as "once you have recovered." This may have held out particular hope for Peter when his faith did fail, as was the case with the denials: he could turn back again and, after his recovery, be a greater strength to his brothers.¹⁶ Likewise, Luke softens Peter's response. Rather than the brash, self-referential "I [will] never be offended," the Lucan account has Peter express willingness to follow Jesus: "Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death," acts of faith that Peter would in fact accomplish later in his own mission.

Despite this generally positive focus on Peter in Luke, Jesus proceeds with his declaration that Peter will yet disown Jesus: "I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me" (Luke 22:34). Given the general Lucan use of the name "Simon" instead of "Peter," the return to the name more commonly used by the other Gospels (John commonly uses the combined name "Simon Peter") may be significant,¹⁷ suggesting perhaps that this was actually how Jesus addressed Peter in that moment. Since Mark and Matthew do not record Jesus as addressing Peter directly by name in

their accounts of the prediction, Luke may have been following another source here, perhaps accounting for the considerably different wording “the cock *shall not crow* this day, *before that* thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me” (Luke 22:34; emphasis added). The difference, which is even more apparent in Greek than in the English of the King James Version, is more apparent still in the rendering of the New Revised Standard Version: “the cock will not crow this day, until you have denied three times that you know me” (more on the differences of this verse is discussed in the section “The Grammar of the Denial” below). Only after Jesus’ prediction do he and his disciples proceed to the Mount of Olives.

The Johannine account of the prediction (John 13:36–38) is also still set at the place of the Last Supper, and it grows directly out of Jesus’ earlier announcement after the meal that he would only be with his friends a little while longer and where he was going they could not come (John 13:33). 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 that he will never be offended but a seemingly genuine question: “Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now?” (John 13:37a). Peter begins his rejoinder with a proclamation that he is ready to go with Jesus in the Lucan account as well (Luke 22:33), and the fact that they had not yet gone to the Mount of Olives in both of these Gospels creates an interesting parallel of David’s sad departure from Jerusalem at the time of Absalom’s rebellion (see 2 Samuel 15:13–37). As David was going across the Kidron towards the Mount of Olives, Ittai asked him where he was going and whether he could come with him, much as Peter asked Jesus where he was going and whether he could go with him. But the parallel is even stronger with the example of Hushai, whom David sent back to Jerusalem until he could return. Similarly, Peter could not follow Jesus at that time but was of more use to his Lord there.¹⁸

But in John’s account Peter does not stop with a question about following Jesus. Rather, as in Luke, he proclaims, “I will lay down my life for thy sake” (John 13:37b). Here Peter seems to be purposefully echoing the words of Jesus in the Discourse on the Good Shepherd (see John 10:11) as he affirms his willingness to die for Jesus. But as Morris notes, “The exact opposite is true in two ways. In the first place Peter was not really ready, as the sequel would show. And in the second Jesus was about to lay down *his* life for Peter.”¹⁹ Perhaps because of Peter’s lack of readiness at that point, in the Johannine account Jesus prefaces his prediction by saying, “Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake?” and then 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” (John 13:38).

The Grammar of the Denial

Certain aspects of the Greek used to report Jesus' words to Peter could have bearing on how to understand what Jesus was saying to Peter in his prediction. These include the use of *amēn* to begin the pronouncement in three of the four versions and the possible meanings of the word translated as "deny" in each account. While the discussion of these words and their grammatical forms can be somewhat technical, it is important for assessing claims made regarding what Jesus may or may not have intended when he told Peter that he would deny the Savior that night.

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), with John characteristically doubling it to "Verily, verily" as he often does in his Gospel. The Greek transliteration of the Hebrew asseverative particle *āmēn*, meaning "truly," was commonly used as a word of assent at the end of both Jewish and Christian prayers, becoming a liturgical formula meaning "so let it be."²⁰ Jesus' use of it, however, seems to have been idiosyncratic, because only he appears to have used it at the *beginning* of statements.²¹ As such, this use of *āmēn* emphasizes the truthfulness and validity of what he is about to say, and the effect of its use at the beginning of all the predictions (except for the one in Luke) emphasizes the solemnity on what Jesus is about to declare.²² Thus Jesus' statement to Peter was not simply a saying but was a solemn, weighty pronouncement.

All four accounts use 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."²³ Although generally compound forms are stronger than simple ones, we should probably not see too much significance in the difference between the synoptic *aparnēsē* and the Johannine *arnēsē*, and the shorter, simpler form is used in the fulfillment section of all four texts each time that Peter actually does the denying.²⁴ Rather, what is more significant is what it meant to "deny" Jesus. Although the 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). Then again, only once in the four accounts of these three denials does Peter actually "deny him [*ērēsato auton*]" (Luke 22:57) directly (see the section "The Fulfillment" below). Otherwise Peter never denies anything in particular about Jesus—and, as President Kimball was anxious to emphasize, never denied that he was "the Christ."²⁵ Nor does he "disdain" Jesus directly. While we shall

see that he does, in fact, deny that something is true, such as the charge that he was one of Jesus' disciples, this can only be seen as "denying Jesus" in the sense that Peter was repudiating Jesus by denying that he was his disciple or one of his followers. Consequently, 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.

While it has not been an important or regular feature of analysis outside of Latter-day Saint discussions, the actual grammar of Jesus' prediction has been the focus of some efforts among Latter-day Saints, at least since President Kimball's 1971 talk, which encouraged a few commentators to find another motive that would be less critical of Peter. 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.²⁶ 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.²⁷ 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.

Assuming Marcan priority, the reading "before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice [*tris me aparnēsē*]" in Mark 14:30 is the earliest version of Jesus' statement. In this instance, 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. This sense is, in fact, possible in some periods of Greek.²⁸ For instance, 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.²⁹ 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, the most notable example of which is the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:3–17; Deuteronomy 5:6–21, Septuagint, or LXX).³⁰ Significantly, while there are cases of positive commands in the jussive future in the LXX (e.g., Leviticus 19:18–19, 22), most commonly it is used in negative prohibitions, and in the Ten Commandments themselves positive injunctions, such as "remember the Sabbath day" and

“honor thy father and thy mother,” appear in the standard imperative mood. Furthermore, the future imperative often follows a preceding imperative verb (for example, as in Genesis 40:14) rather than occurring in isolation.

Such a usage is rarer in the New Testament itself, but when it appears it is usually quoting the LXX or otherwise imitating the legal language of the Old Testament.³¹ As a result, the future imperative appears mostly in Matthew, being uncommon in other New Testament authors.³² However, because Matthew seems to be following the Marcan account in the prediction of the denial, it is unlikely that “thou shalt deny” in Matthew 26:34 reflects a Matthean jussive future. Moreover, in the Sermon on the Mount the independent injunctions of Jesus (i.e., when he is not quoting the Old Testament) usually appear in the imperative mood rather than in an imperatival future.³³

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. That is because the forms *aparnēsē* and *arnēsē* are grammatically ambiguous: while they can be the form of future indicative of this verb, they also look exactly like another form, the aorist subjunctive, that is required for certain sentence constructions. However, only the construction of Mark 14:30 and Matthew 26:34, which follows it, allows *aparnēsē* to be the future form.³⁴ These Gospels both begin Jesus' pronouncement with the introductory temporal phrase “before the cock crow [*prin phōnēsai*]” that is followed by the main clause “thou shalt deny me thrice [*tris me aparnēsē*],” clearly making *aparnēsē* a future form.

On the other hand, 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,³⁵ beginning with a main clause in the future that is followed by a subordinate temporal clause that requires *aparnēsē* to be an aorist subjunctive:³⁶ “I tell you, Peter, the cock will not crow [*ou phōnēsei*] this day, until you have denied three times [*heōs tris me aparnēsē*] that you know me.”³⁷ This better Lucan reading is close to the Johannine version of Jesus' prediction, “The cock shall not crow [*ou mē phōnēsē*], till thou hast denied [*heōs hou arnēsē*] me thrice” (John 13:38), which differs only in making “shall not crow” more emphatic with a double negative in Greek, adding a relative pronoun after the subordinating conjunction, and using the shorter form *arnēsē*. As a result, the future form, which can be either predicative or imperatival, appears in only two of our four Greek sources (and Matthew may only be following the earlier Marcan version, leaving the future in only one of *three* sources).

While the future form in Mark (and by extension in Matthew) could be an imperatival future, the immediate context of Jesus' pronouncement in even these accounts also favors a prediction over a command. This is because in those two Gospels it is preceded by Jesus' statement that "All ye shall be offended because of me this night" (Mark 14:27; parallel Matthew 26:31), which is 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.

But in the end, 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. Attempts to get close to what his original saying might have been are not only difficult,³⁸ their results sometimes end up being as ambiguous as the Greek they are trying to clarify. For instance, the reconstructed Salkinson-Ginsburg Hebrew New Testament uses *tkhš* (שׁכח), a form which is imperfect for *aparnēšē*.³⁹ Perhaps even closer to what Jesus actually said, however, is the translation into Old Syriac, which, though a later dialect, is closest linguistically to Jesus' Palestinian Aramaic. Like modern attempts to translate the Greek back into Hebrew, the Syriac also uses the imperfect, in this case of the root *kpr* (ܩܦܪܐ). The imperfect in these Semitic languages can serve as both a future *and* an imperative, much as the Greek future can represent either futurity or in some instances a command.⁴⁰ Thus these attempts leave the uncertainty exactly where it was when only looking at the two Greek versions that use the future: Jesus may possibly have intended his pronouncement as a command, but it is just as likely, or more likely, that it was a prediction.

Accordingly, while arguments based upon grammar remain inconclusive, they incline against the possibility that Jesus had issued a command to Peter. As 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."⁴¹ Nevertheless, the context and a straightforward reading of the texts support the traditional interpretation that Jesus was predicting what Peter would do.

The Fulfillment

Considerable differences in the four Gospel accounts of the fulfillment of Jesus' words to Peter reveal either less certainty about what exactly happened or

considerably more liberty on the part of the Evangelists in shaping the material they had to work with. As noted, the accounts diverge on the timing, audience, and even place of Peter's denials (see Table 2: The Fulfillment). The texts resist simple harmonization, and the fact that Matthew and Luke presumably were familiar with Mark's text makes the differences in their accounts even more unexpected.⁴² Indeed, they agree only in the broad story that three times Peter was asked whether he was one of Jesus' followers or had at least been with him, and three times Peter denied either associating with or even knowing Jesus.

Once again, Mark's account, apparently the earliest and perhaps based upon Peter's own recollections or upon a tradition attributed to him, provides the basic story. Having followed Jesus and his captors at a distance, Peter joined with a group of the high priest's servants at his palace who were warming themselves by a fire (see Mark 14:54). Following a scene that Mark relates about the inquisition and maltreatment of Jesus at the hands of the Jewish authorities, the fulfillment episode begins when one of the high priest's housemaids (*mia tōn paidiskōn*) sees Peter by a fire in the courtyard and states that he had been with Jesus of Nazareth (Mark 14:66–67). Peter not only denies (*ērēsato*, an aorist or "past" tense of *arneomai*) that this is true, he claims that he neither knows nor understands what she is talking about. He then retreats from the court into the porch, presumably to get away from his accuser. At this point a rooster crows once, something that only happens in the Marcan account at this point. Because this denial is preceded directly by the chief priest's interrogation of Jesus, the maid is portrayed as interrogating Peter at the same time but with very different results.⁴³

While the King James Version reads that "a" maid sees him a bit later, the Greek text of Mark and most modern translations make it clear that this is the maid (*hē paidiskē*) who had seen him earlier (Mark 14:69). She remarks to those who are standing by that Peter was one of those with Jesus, which causes Peter to deny (*ērneito*) again, this time using the imperfect tense that may mean that he kept denying Jesus or that he *tried*, unsuccessfully, to disassociate himself from him.⁴⁴ The bystanders insist that Peter must be one of Jesus' following because he sounds like a Galilean. At this point "he began to curse and to swear, saying, *I know not this man* of whom ye speak" (Mark 14:71; emphasis added), and at this third denial the cock crows again, causing Peter to weep.

Matthew's account follows the basic line of Mark's, but in addition to generally improving Mark's Greek grammar and style, it also makes a few changes and additions (although 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).⁴⁵ One of the changes is the introduction

of “another maid” in Matthew 26:71 because this adds another person to the list of people to whom Peter denies Jesus. This difference, however, may well be explained by an editorial pattern or literary technique often found in Matthew, whereby he doubles the number of people that he found in his original source material,⁴⁶ perhaps because of his desire to establish “two witnesses” to fulfill the Old Testament requirement for two or more witnesses (see Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15).

A more significant Matthean addition, however, is the adding of “with an oath [*meta horkou*]” to Peter’s second denial (Matthew 26:72). This second denial is that Peter does not “know the man,” something that Mark reserved for the third denial. This renunciation leads into the cursing and swearing (*katathematizein kai omnyein*) that Matthew, like Mark, has accompanying the third denial, when Peter once again denies knowing Jesus. The effect in Matthew is to highlight that Peter’s denials progressively become both more public and more serious. Whereas the first denial had been made to the first maid in private and was a general denial, Peter’s denial to the second maid is made in front of bystanders and with an oath meant to confirm that he did not know Jesus. The final denial, in which Peter again says that he does not know Jesus, is then in public, made with cursing and swearing that might imply a formal renunciation of his association with Jesus and even possibly numbering himself among those who curse him.⁴⁷ This supports the idea that *arnēsē* in this context meant “you will renounce or disown me.”

Luke’s account differs significantly from that of Mark and Matthew’s. While it likewise takes place in the courtyard of the high priest, all three Lucan denials take place beside the fire without Peter withdrawing to the porch. Because Luke does not have a nighttime hearing before the Sanhedrin, Peter’s ordeal takes place while Jesus is in the custody of the high priest’s men but before the Lord’s abuse and own questioning begin, which occurs in Luke only the next morning *after* the cock crows (see Luke 22:63–71). More significantly, however, Luke differs in the order of the denials and in two cases even to whom they are made. While the first denial is made to a maid as in Mark and Matthew, Peter’s denial at that time is that he does not know Jesus, which is the last denial in the other two versions (see Luke 22:57).

The second Lucan denial, that Peter is not one of Jesus’ followers, is made to “another [*heteros*],” who the Greek makes clear is a man and not another maid as in Matthew (Luke 22:58). The third denial, made to a second man (*allos*, which is also masculine),⁴⁸ is, in fact, the softest: it is simply that he does not know what the man is talking about (Luke 22:59–60), which is the first denial in Mark and Matthew, and in Luke this denial does not include any cursing or swearing. The overall effect seems to be a result of Luke’s usual efforts to present the disciples in a

better light and minimize their failings.⁴⁹ That said, the Lucan account nonetheless adds perhaps the most poignant detail to the scene: of the four accounts, only Luke's recounts that after the third denial, and before the rooster crowed, "the Lord turned [*straphēis*], and looked upon Peter" (Luke 22:61). But even in this, Luke may be offering a note of hope, for his portrayal of Jesus turning and looking may recall Jesus' prophecy to Peter that when he "had turned back" (*epistrepsas*; KJV, "art converted") he was to strengthen his brethren (Luke 22:32).⁵⁰

As expected, the Johannine fulfillment account differs considerably from the synoptic accounts. First, rather than following from a distance on his own, Peter is actually accompanied by another, unnamed disciple who is known to the high priest and manages to get admission for both of them to his palace (John 18:15–16). This other disciple is frequently identified with the main source and possible author of the Gospel, the figure of the Beloved Disciple, who has been traditionally identified with John himself.⁵¹ The existence of another informant beside Peter himself may account in part for some of the differences in the Johannine version. One of these differences is that the high priest in this instance is not the current high priest, Caiaphas, but rather his father-in-law, Annas (John 18:13), who had previously held the position but had since been deposed. Another difference is that the maid (*paidiskē*; KJV, "damsel") is specifically identified as a *thyrōros* or doorkeeper, meaning that she was the one through whom the other disciple had gained their admission. When she asks whether Peter was one of Jesus' disciples, his first denial in the Johannine account consists of the single statement, "I am not [*ouk eimi*]" (John 18:17). He then joins a group of men warming themselves by a fire.

Whereas Mark and Matthew placed Jesus' questioning by the Jewish authorities under the direction of Caiaphas *before* Peter's first denial, John places the questioning done by Annas and his associates after the denial (see John 18:19–23). This separates the first denial from the second and third, which only take place after Jesus is sent to Caiaphas, the current high priest, for more questioning. Peter, meanwhile, continues to warm himself by the fire, where those present repeat the doorkeeper's question about his being one of Jesus' disciples, and "he denied it [*ērñēsato*], and said, I am not [*ouk eimi*]" (John 18:25). Peter's third and final denial in John occurs when one of the high priest's servants, the brother of Malchus, whose ear Peter had cut off in Gethsemane, asks whether he had seen Peter in the garden. Peter denied again, and immediately the cock crowed (see John 18:27). As with the Lucan version, John's account of Peter's denials is actually softer, without the progressively more severe denials found in Mark and Matthew, and likewise lacking the accompanying cursing and swearing.⁵²

While the words of Peter's third denial are not preserved by John, his response "I am not" in the first and second denials contrast markedly with Jesus' response to the high priest as preserved in Mark: to Caiaphas' question "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" Jesus responded simply, "I am [*egō eimi*]" (Mark 14:61–62; parallel Matthew 26:63–64).⁵³ While this particular interchange is not included by John, the *egō eimi* formula is a common expression on the lips of Jesus in that Gospel, highlighting the extent of Peter's disassociation from the Lord. John's account leaves the condemnatory crowd as the last word, omitting any references to Peter's crying as is found in all three of the synoptic accounts.

Despite the considerable variety in the Gospel accounts, the basic elements of the fulfillment of Jesus' words to Peter are found in all four versions, namely that before the cock crowed near or at dawn the next morning, Peter would in some way deny Jesus three times. Also, while the timing, placement, and even audience of the denials are not always consistent, the usual substance of the denial seems to have been that Peter either denied knowing Jesus or having been one of his disciples, with his claim he simply did not understand the questioner being a less frequent variation. While President Kimball is correct that Peter never denied the revelation he had received at Caesarea Philippi regarding Jesus' divine identity and mission,⁵⁴ his denial of Jesus and his association is consonant with the still serious meaning of *arneomai*, which is to repudiate or disown.

The Motif of the Denial

Both the criteria of multiple attestation and embarrassment support the basic historicity of Peter's denial of Jesus, but the wide variation in the accounts suggests that the story was used somewhat freely as a motif by the Evangelists as part of what they were trying to accomplish in their depiction of the larger Passion narrative. Thus, while we ought to reserve judgment on the motivations of the historical Peter, it is worthwhile to see what the Gospel authors may have been trying to illustrate in their depiction of his actions as a literary character.

Indeed, to a certain extent asking why Peter did what he did is the wrong question to ask in the broader context of a Passion narrative, because these narratives focus mainly upon Jesus and what happened to him in the hours leading up to Calvary. In this regard the actions of Peter are part of the larger succession of events where Jesus is first let down by his friends—especially Peter, James, and John—who are not able to keep watch with him in Gethsemane. He is then betrayed by Judas and abandoned by his other disciples, their flight constituting what can be seen as a form of passive betrayal following Judas's more active treachery. In Mark and Matthew, Jesus' betrayal consists in particular

in being “given over [*paradidotai*]”: first Judas hands Jesus over to the chief priests, who give him over to Pilate, who then delivers him to the soldiers who will crucify him.⁵⁵ 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. With Peter’s threefold renunciation, Jesus’ prophecy of his denial is fulfilled at the very moment when he is being accused of being a false prophet by the Sanhedrin in Mark and Matthew and by those who are mocking him in Luke.⁵⁶

The net effect of all this is that from Gethsemane to Calvary Jesus walked what Elder Holland has called “the loneliest journey ever made, . . . the Savior’s solitary task of shouldering alone the burden of our salvation.”⁵⁷ Yet it was Peter who impulsively tried to defend Jesus in the garden until directed by Jesus himself to “put up his sword.” And it was only Peter—except in John where he is accompanied by the other disciple—who, after his initial flight, tried to follow the Savior. In that sense, from a literary perspective, these efforts at supporting Jesus needed to be counterbalanced by the denial to ensure that, in the end, Jesus was alone throughout the experience. The importance of this lonely atoning journey to us can be seen in the fact that so many people experience, to some degree, aspects of some of the things that Jesus underwent that night as he not only suffered our sins, pains, and sorrows but also experienced the terrible realities of betrayal, false judgment, arrest, and rejection. No wife betrayed by a husband, no child abused by a parent, no friend rejected by another person will fail to resonate with Jesus’ being betrayed by the kiss of a friend, abandoned by his disciples, denied by Peter, and falsely accused and condemned.⁵⁸

Yet while the Passion narratives are primarily about Jesus, they also feature other characters, Peter foremost among them. In this regard, 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. This lesson may have had particular meaning for early Christians, particularly for the Marcan Christians who are presumed to have suffered persecution in Rome, when many of them may have failed in their discipleship and even renounced their Christianity.⁵⁹ The seriousness of such denial would have been apparent to them in the words of Jesus that “whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 10:33; parallel Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26, 12:9),⁶⁰ yet there remained hope, for he had also said, “whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him” (KJV, Matthew 12:32; parallel Luke 12:10).⁶¹

The figures of Jesus and Peter are brought together in what has been called the “theology of the cross,” most clearly seen in Mark. According to this proposal, 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.⁶² After the Resurrection that followed, Peter’s rehabilitation is immediately implied in the angel’s direction to go tell his disciples *and Peter* (see Mark 16:7; emphasis added), with Peter being singled out. Only then could Peter realize Jesus’ other prophecy that night, that when converted, he would strengthen his brethren (Luke 22:32).⁶³ While the four accounts differ in detail and emphases, they teach the same basic points about Peter and his experience. As the foremost of the disciples, Peter serves as an “everyman” figure, both for the original disciples, the first generation of Christians, and all subsequent believers.

The use of Peter’s denial in the Passion narratives of the four Gospels is not the only way the motif of his denial was or can be used. As Jared Ludlow’s paper in this volume on the characterization of Peter in the Gospels demonstrates, the denial story was also the part of the portrait that the larger Gospel narratives paint of Peter. Regardless of how historically accurate this “many-sided picture of Peter” was, it certainly presents Peter as a relatable character, both to early Christians and to later believers. Thus the Evangelists emphasize different details about the basic story in order to apply them to teach universally applicable points.

Peter, Our Weakness, and Christ’s Grace

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 able to serve faithfully. As President Kimball observed, “If we admit that he was cowardly and denied the Lord through timidity, we can still find a great lesson. Has anyone more completely overcome mortal selfishness and weakness? Has anyone repented more sincerely? Peter has been accused of being harsh, indiscreet, impetuous, and fearful. If all these

were true, then we will ask, Has any man ever more completely triumphed over his weaknesses?"⁶⁴ As has been often noted, Jesus' triple questioning of Peter, asking whether Peter loved him, at the end of John's Gospel provided an opportunity for Peter to proclaim his love three times, compensating for his earlier threefold denial (John 21:15–19). His subsequent faithfulness in feeding Christ's sheep through the course of his faithful ministry thus illustrated his complete rehabilitation.⁶⁵

Ruth Fox, a sister of the Order of St. Benedict, has written: "It is commonly supposed that Peter himself must have painfully revealed his denial to the other disciples, perhaps for their strengthening. No one else [except perhaps the other disciple in John] was there to witness the event, and it is quite unlikely that such a disparaging story of the community's leader would have circulated if it were not true. It is indeed a beautiful and endearing quality for leaders to be able to confess their own weaknesses to those who look to them for guidance and compassion."⁶⁶ By showing his own weakness, Peter provided a model to other believers of 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).

The strong affiliation that many early Christians felt with Peter's experience can be seen by the role of the rooster in Petrine iconography, particularly on graves.⁶⁷ Perhaps at the time of death and burial, the model of Peter's failure being overwhelmed by Christ's grace was a comforting one as they pondered the state of their loved ones' souls. His experience can also be encouraging for us. As Sister Fox went on to note, "Opportunities for conversion experiences like Peter's, with all the accompanying pain, often become the best means for one to enter into one's own total dependence upon God."⁶⁸ Then, 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.⁶⁹

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 [aparnēsē] 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.

* 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)

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.*
³² But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.
³³ Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.
³⁴ Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, **That this night, before the cock crow [aparnēsē], thou shalt deny [aparnēsē] me thrice.**
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 mē phōnēsē] 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 phōnēsē] this day, until you have denied [beōs 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 mē phōnēsē], till thou hast denied [beōs hou armēsē] 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.

Table 2: The Fulfillment

Mark 14

KJV⁶⁶ 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** [*ērñēsato*], saying, I know not, **neither understand I what thou sayest**. And he went out into the porch; and the cock crew.

⁶⁹ And [the] maid⁷⁰ saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by. This is one of them.

⁷⁰ And **he denied** [*ērñēto*] 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 crew** [*prin phōnēsai*] **twice, thou shalt deny** [*aparnēsē*] **me thrice**. And when he thought thereon, he wept.

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

Matthew 26

KJV⁶⁹ Now Peter sat without in the palace; and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.

⁷⁰ But **he denied** [*ērñēsato*] before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.

⁷¹ 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.

⁷² And again **he denied** [*ērñēsato*] with an oath, I do not know the man.

⁷³ 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.

⁷⁴ Then **hegan he to curse and to swear**, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew.

⁷⁵ And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, **Before the cock crew** [*prin phōnēsai*], **thou shalt deny** [*aparnēsē*] **me thrice**. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

Luke 22

KJV⁶⁶ 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.

⁶⁷ And **he denied** [*ērñēsato*] him, saying, Woman, I know him not.

⁶⁸ And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them.

And Peter said, Man, **I am not**.

⁶⁹ 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.

⁷⁰ And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew.

⁷¹ 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 crew** [*prin phōnēsai*], **thou shalt deny** [*aparnēsē*] **me thrice**.

⁷² And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

John 18

KJV¹⁵ 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.

KJV²⁵ 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.

Notes

1. Raymond E. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 51, 53–56, 92–93, 610–11; Eric D. Huntsman, *God So Loved the World: The Final Days of the Savior's Life* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2011), 127.

2. The story of Peter's denials is thus substantiated by two important criteria used in historical Jesus studies, namely multiple attestations and the so-called "criterion of embarrassment." See Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 615–17, 620–21.

3. See, for instance, Robert W. Herron, *Mark's Account of Peter's Denial of Jesus: A History of Its Interpretation* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1992).

4. Spencer W. Kimball, "Peter, My Brother," *Speeches of the Year* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1971), 1–8, reprinted pp. 375–86 in this volume. The possible reasons that Kimball reviews include possible cowardice (p. 2), confusion (p. 3), circumstances justifying the denial as an expedient act (p. 3), frustration from being prohibited from trying to stop the arrest and subsequent Crucifixion (p. 4), or reasons that we simply cannot know (p. 5).

5. Kimball, "Peter, My Brother," 5.

6. Jeffrey R. Holland, "None Were with Him," *Ensign*, May 2009, 86, 88; Huntsman, *God So Loved the World* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2011), 66, 78, 137 n. 2.

7. Huntsman, *God So Loved the World*, 68–69.

8. Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 610.

9. R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 573–74.

10. Walter Bauer, "skandalizō," *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, rev. and ed. Frederick William Danker, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 926. While the late Byzantine texts (such as A, K, and W) followed by the KJV include "because of me this night" (*en moi en tē nykti*), earlier better manuscripts (including 8, B, C*, D, and L) followed by most modern translations simply read, "You will stumble or fall away."

11. The difference in including "twice" (*dis*) is so great that some Greek manuscripts move it within the verse or even omit it altogether in attempt to harmonize Mark with the other Gospels. Nonetheless, the manuscript evidence is strong enough that textual critics are generally confident that this is the original reading. See Metzger, *Textual Commentary of the Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1998), 96.

12. Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 137. Other reasons summarized by Brown include the assonance of twice/thrice found in the Greek (*dis/tris*) or the fact that in Greek and Roman writing dawn was associated with the second cock crow.

13. France, *Gospel of Mark*, 579. For the issue of Petrine authority and the Gospel according to Mark, see Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 155–82, as well as my "The Petrine *Kerygma* and the Gospel of Mark" in this volume. Regardless of whether the Marcan account preserves a direct memory from Peter, Thomas E. Boomershine, "Peter's Denial as Polemic or Confession," *Semeia* 39 (1987): 60, makes the case that the denial story could not have become a cornerstone of the early Christian tradition of the Passion unless Peter had originally told it and permitted it to be told about him.

14. John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 1090–91.
15. I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1978), 820; Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 126, 135.
16. Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, 821.
17. Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, 818.
18. Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 135.
19. Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 563–64.
20. Bauer, “amēn,” in *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 53–54.
21. Schlier, “amēn,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), 1:335, 337–38.
22. Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 134, 137.
23. Bauer, “arneomai,” in *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 132–33.
24. Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 137.
25. Kimball, “Peter, My Brother,” 3.
26. Although anecdotal evidence exists that President Kimball actually made this suggestion in his 1971 talk, there is nothing in the printed version or in the audio recording of the address corroborating this idea. This perception may arise from the fact that immediately after Kimball discussed expediency as a possible reason for Peter's denial (Kimball, “Peter, My Brother,” 3), he noted in his discussion of frustration as a possible motivation that Peter had been “prohibited from resisting the coming crucifixion by the Redeemer himself” (p. 4).
27. For perhaps the best articulation of this possibility, see John F. Hall, *New Testament Witnesses for Christ: Peter, John, James, and Paul* (American Fork, UT: Covenant Communications, 2002), 65–66, and especially Andrew C. Skinner, “Peter—the Chief Apostle,” in *Go Ye into All the World: Messages of the New Testament Apostles*, ed. Ray L. Huntington, Thomas A. Wayment, and Jerome M. Perkins (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2002), 208–13, *n.b.* 212; Andrew C. Skinner, *Golgotha* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003), 54–59.
28. Hall, *New Testament Witnesses*, 65–66, for instance, notes, “In Greek, a future tense verb in the second person can also be construed to express a command, just as if it were an imperative form of the verb. This usage is given the grammatical term of the ‘jussive future.’ It occurs not infrequently in both Classical and koine Greek.”
29. Herbert W. Smyth, *Greek Grammar* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 428–29 (§1917).
30. F. C. Conybeare and St. George Stock, *Grammar of Septuagint Greek* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1995), 74 (§72).
31. F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. Robert W. Funk, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 183 (§362).
32. Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 452–53, 569.
33. Blass and Debrunner, *Greek Grammar of the New Testament* 183 (§362).
34. Huntsman, *God So Loved the World*, 68.

35. These include important manuscripts of the Alexandrian text family such as codex Sinaiticus (w) and codex Vaticanus (B).

36. Blass and Debrunner, *Greek Grammar of the New Testament*, 195–96 (§383.2); Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 479–80. While some may argue that in Classical Greek the subjunctive usually appears with the particle *an*, when *heōs* means “until” and is followed by the indicative, the verb is usually in the imperfect and “the future is very rare.” Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, 548 (§2425). In New Testament Greek, on the other hand, the *an* can be omitted after *heōs*, as here in Luke, and is almost always missing after *heōs hou*, as in John 13:38. Blass and Debrunner, *Greek Grammar of the New Testament*, 195 (§383.1); Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 479 (John 13:38 n. 2).

37. The somewhat awkward “before that thou shalt thrice deny” of the KJV followed the later Byzantine text known as the Textus Receptus, which reads *prin ē tris aparnēsē*, a construction that would require *aparnēsē* to be a future indicative. Nevertheless, the future here is being required for the subordinate temporal clause and could not be an imperatival future.

38. For the methods that can be used, together with some of the challenges associated with this process, see Maurice Casey, *Aramaic Sources of Mark’s Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), especially 73–110.

39. *The New Testament*, Salkinson-Ginsburg Hebrew text, ed. Eric S. Gabe, 3rd ed. (Hitchin, Hertfordshire, England: Society for the Distribution of the Hebrew Scriptures, 2000), 59, 100, 167, 210.

40. J. Weingreen, *A Practical Grammar for Classical Hebrew*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), 75–77 (§39–41) and 88 (§48c); Theodore Nöldeke, *Compendious Syriac Grammar* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1904), 208 (§266).

41. Holland, “None Were with Him,” 87.

42. Neil J. McEleney, “Peter’s Denials—How Many? To Whom?” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 52 (1990): 468.

43. Ruth Fox, “Peter’s Denial in Mark’s Gospel,” *Bible Today* 25 (1987): 298–99.

44. These are the so-called iterative and conative renderings of the Greek imperfect. See France, *Gospel of Mark*, 621.

45. Nolland, *Gospel of Matthew*, 1138, posits that Matthew might, in fact, have had a second source in addition to Mark but otherwise, 1140–43, notes Matthew’s deviations from Mark as being stylistic.

46. McEleney, “Peter’s Denials,” 468, 471; Nolland, *Gospel of Matthew*, 375.

47. Birger Gerhardsson, “Confession and Denial before Men: Observations on Matt. 26:57–27:2,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 13 (1981): 52–55. Nolland, *Gospel of Matthew*, 1142, agrees but also notes that Peter could be cursing himself here, and either way he is condemning himself by his act.

48. The separation of the bystanders into the two separate men in Luke is an editorial technique that McEleney, “Peter’s Denials,” 469, 471, calls “clearing the stage.”

49. Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, 839.

50. Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 608.

51. Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 596–97.

52. Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 623–24, who also notes that Peter here is mostly a foil for the more consistently faithful other disciple.

53. Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 599, 622.
54. Kimball, "Peter, My Brother," 3.
55. Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 211–13.
56. Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 622–23.
57. Holland, "None Were with Him," 86.
58. Huntsman, *God So Loved the World*, 66.
59. Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 141, 625.
60. Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 608; Gerhardsson, "Confession and Denial before Men," 48–49.
61. Gerhardsson, "Confession and Denial before Men," 62–63.
62. Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 624–25. See also Martin Hengel, *Saint Peter: The Underestimated Apostle*, trans. Thomas H. Trapp (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 43.
63. Gerhardsson, "Confession and Denial before Men," 62.
64. Kimball, "Peter My Brother," 2.
65. James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1916, repr. 1982), 693; Gerhardsson, "Confession and Denial before Men," 62; F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983), 404–5; Huntsman, *God So Loved the World*, 69.
66. Fox, "Peter's Denial in Mark's Gospel," 301.
67. D. Gewalt, "Die Verleugnung des Petrus," *Linguistica Biblica* 43 (1978): 114–16; Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 621 n. 63.
68. Fox, "Peter's Denial in Mark's Gospel," 303.
69. Huntsman, *God So Loved the World*, 69.

