

# **Dr. Mark Jennings, Mark, Lecture 22, Mark 14:26-72, The Last Supper, Arrest, Trial, And Peter's Denial**

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This is Dr. Mark Jennings in his teaching on the Gospel of Mark. This is session 22, Mark 14:26-72, The Last Supper, Arrest, Trial, and Peter's Denial.

Welcome back as we continue to work through Mark chapter 14.

When we were in our previous discussion of Mark 14, we had set the stage, and we were discussing the Last Supper and its relationship to the Passover meal and the great act that was about to occur with Jesus' death and setting it within the context of God as the one who saves his people from captivity, the Exodus narrative pointing to what Jesus is doing. In that, we also discussed the declaration of a betrayer and how Jesus had revealed that one of them would betray. And that is interesting because as they were discussing with Jesus, being sorrowful that Jesus had said one of them would betray, they all were saying, it's not me, is it? It's not me, it's not me, and you wonder too if there wasn't a bit of hope.

Well, maybe it's only one of us, right? You know, it's not me and so must be some other one. And then that sets the stage for what we're now going to look at. And even though only one of them is the betrayer, all of them abandoned Jesus.

And so, let's pick it up then with verse 26 in Mark chapter 14. And when they had sung a hymn, which had been appropriate to do at the end of a Passover, they went out to the Mount of Olives. And Jesus said to them, you all fall away.

For it is written, I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered. But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee. But Peter said to him, even though they all fall away, I will not.

Jesus said to him, truly I tell you, this very night before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times. But he said emphatically, if I must die with you, I will not deny you. And they all said the same.

Jesus' prediction that they will all fall away is closely related to Zechariah 13.7. Notice that in Zechariah, there's an apocalyptic reality to that, a divine cause for suffering. And, of course, the death of the shepherd is not the end of the story, which would have been, of course, such a comfort to Peter, but there is vindication and restoration in view. The statement though here, there's hope even if they don't hear it.

And there's a resurrection appearance even if it didn't seem so evident. After declaring that they would all fall away, Jesus says, after I'm raised up, I will go before you to Galilee. And then that hint, there's this hint of hope for Peter in this moment.

Jesus said he would go before Galilee. You know when we're looking at the differences between Judas and Peter, one of the things that the Gospels make quite clear is there isn't as much difference as we would sometimes suppose, but there are a few important ones. Of course, Matthew will talk about how he prays for Peter.

We don't get such a prayer for Judas. And here Jesus says to Peter that he will see them again in Galilee. Of course, Peter's protest and Jesus' rebuke here recall what happened in Mark 8, verses 31 through 32, where Peter denies what Jesus has been saying about his coming downward trend into rejection after Peter declares Jesus is the Messiah.

I mean, the irony, of course, is we're talking about the one figure who was commended in the Gospel of Mark for affirming and declaring that Jesus is the Messiah will be the one who denies. But this exchange, this protest where Peter once again has trouble with what Jesus has to say when Jesus says they will all fall away and Peter says even if they all will fall away, I will not, and even goes on to emphatically declare that he will not deny you. Of course, he will be emphatic in a statement on the other side in just a few short verses.

Of course, it is not only Peter who says this; they all say the same. The strong disciples who would never deny Jesus now have a chance to demonstrate their faithfulness to Jesus at the Garden of Gethsemane. And of course, their failure will be quick and immediate.

Let's look at how the Garden in verses 32 through 42 of Mark chapter 14. And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me, yet not what I will, but what you will.

And he came and found them sleeping and he said to Peter, Simon are you asleep? Could you not watch one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The Spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. And again, he went away and prayed, saying the same words.

And again, he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy, and they did not know what to answer him. And he came the third time and said to him, are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough. The hour has come.

The Son of Man has been betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.

The structure of this passage, I think, stresses the loneliness or isolation of Jesus as well as the failure of the disciples. Look how this moves. He arrives with all the disciples except Judas, even though Judas' departure here isn't made clear.

Mark does not clearly know when Judas actually left. The broader gospel narrative explains that. But Judas clearly left at this point because he arrived with the guard who would rest.

So, Jesus arrives with the disciples, already missing one. And then he withdraws again with the three, the three that we've now become accustomed, the three that Jesus often took with him. And then he goes even further by himself.

So you see this progression of separation even in the garden. We see here, you know, Mark, his fondness for threes, you know, being stressed. Three times, Jesus returns to find the disciples sleeping.

Three times he rebukes them. This repetition, this use of the same language over and over brings to the forefront what is happening. Gethsemane, in case you're interested, is a Hebrew or Aramaic word, perhaps for olive press, which would make sense given that we're on the Mount of Olives.

We're probably talking about a place that's more like an olive grove, maybe even with a mill for pressing olives, as we would have it here. Luke tells us that this is a place that Jesus went to regularly. And it's clearly a place also that Judas knew to find Jesus.

This is now his retreat to Gethsemane if this was part of the pattern that Jesus would usually do, and to go and to rest, of course, gives Judas the very opportunity he's looking for, which is Jesus secluded away from the crowds and able to be arrested. You know, it's interesting when we think about the relationship between this passage and some of the other elements of the Gospel. You know, in Mark 10:38 through 39, James and John say that they can drink the cup that Jesus must drink.

In Mark 14:31, Peter, of course, says he will not fail them. But here you have, you know, this move, this repeated refrain of Jesus sort of suffering through this, of Jesus doing this alone, his grieving. You have this righteous sufferer picture, this my soul, you know, which is a Semitic or poetic way of referring to oneself, you know, is near death, that he's in such sorrow that it feels as if he's dying.

I think this is a poetic statement. I don't think it has to be that he's so sorrowful that he actually is about to literally die, but it's this poetical sense, almost like the Psalms. And Jesus prays here, right, that if it's possible, the hour would pass from him.

And the term hour, you know, isn't a literal term, but it is a way of telling you the time or the period of it, or even maybe an eschatological sense. And notice we get direct discourse. It's Abba, Father.

This is one of the rare times that Jesus prays, where we get the prayer in Mark. This is not a reference to praying but the prayer in Mark. We'll get another one in the cry from the cross.

Jesus, of course, is mentioned throughout the Gospel of praying and of teaching on prayer, but this is actually the first actual prayer that we have in Mark. His choice here to wait till then, I think, is fascinating. The use of Abba here is unique to Jesus, meaning that it's something that Jesus sort of introduces uniquely.

It's an unprecedented level of intimacy. We know in the Old Testament, of course, that God is occasionally dressed as Father or Our Father, especially for the people of Israel. We see this even in the Dead and in the Hellenistic writings.

But this Abba here, in terms of this personal declaration and corporate, is extremely intimate. We need to be careful and not merely assume Abba somehow means Daddy, as sometimes is given in context, because there's often the word used by adult children towards their Father, as we usually associate Daddy with something younger children say. Abba would have been something adult children say.

But we truly don't have elsewhere in pre-Christian, pre-first century Palestinian Judaism such a personal address by God by an individual. We have a cup. I think the cup here is important for understanding why Jesus is almost to death.

The cup is a common image in the Old Testament for suffering. The cup is a common imagery in the Old Testament for divine judgment. If we look through the Old Testament, we see suffering and divine judgment associated with the cup in Psalm 11, Psalm 60, Psalm 75, the suffering idea, Isaiah 51, Jeremiah 25, Jeremiah 49, Jeremiah 51, Lamentations 4, Ezekiel 23, Habakkuk 2, Zechariah 12.

And I think that the key here is that what Jesus is praying that this cup might pass from me is this image of what is about to occur, which is the pouring out of God's judgment, God's wrath. That isn't just a poetical statement, but that Jesus is praying not simply that this physical suffering, which will be immense, will be spared him, but the pouring out of the divine judgment will be spared from him. That what we will have happening on the cross is a glimpse, a unique dispensation, if you will, of the day of the Lord.

The day of the Lord, which is this day of judgment, this day of wrath that will accompany the end of all things when the very fabric of creation will start to be shaken. That is what occurs uniquely on the cross but upon Jesus. And so this is

where, you know, when the depiction of the cross and the cry of Jesus, many will want to say, and I understand this, will want to say that it was in that moment that, you know, God the Father turned his back on Jesus, or that somehow God the Father and God the Son were somehow separate in that moment because of the sin that was on Jesus.

And I think what is occurring there is actually missing. I think God the Father is fully present at the cross, but he's fully present in his wrath. What is happening is that God the Father is pouring out his cup of judgment upon God the Son.

That it is his wrath, and thus Jesus prays that if there's any way that he doesn't have to receive the wrath of God, he would like that to pass from him. And so, I think this sort of, you know, speaks to the stress and the sorrow that he's about to face. And yet, of course, knowing full well what is about to be poured upon him, that the day of the in-breaking of the day of judgment will be uniquely upon him.

This is where, you know, theologically, the idea would be all who believe in Christ experience the day of the Lord but experience it vicariously through Jesus and aren't suffering from it. In the middle of full realization of what is about to occur, Jesus says, yet not what I will, but what you will. And the beautiful display of the relationship between God the Son and God the Father, and how God the Son submits and obeys to the will of God the Father.

He is the perfect suffering servant motif coming in. And he comes, of course, he finds him sleeping. He said to Peter, Simon, are you asleep? Could you not watch for one hour? Here was Simon and the other disciples who had been so confident that they would be able to be steadfast with Jesus, and now they couldn't even stay awake.

And the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. My understanding of that statement is he's acknowledging that they indeed were sincere when they would say they would stay with him, but they were just physically unable to do so. And again, he goes away and prays saying the same words, and again he comes and finds them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy.

And, of course, the repetition sets up, right, that Jesus again scolds them for not being able to stay awake, and to which, of course, the disciples have no response. You know, this being unable to respond is indicative in verse 40 that they know they are wrong. They have failed Jesus. And then a third time, he says to them, are you still sleeping and taking your rest? And finally, he means it is enough, which I think is enough, which is his way of saying that, metaphorically speaking, it is done.

It is, we are now, we have now reached the moment, the time is enough, the prayer of petition is finished, and it is enough, the answer is substantial, for the hour has come. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. And of course, as

readers of Mark, we've been working towards this moment ever since chapter 8, ever since Jesus has been saying it's necessary for the Son of Man to be handed over; we now know that this moment has come.

And I find it fascinating too that he uses in the hands of sinners, and I find that reference to sinners interesting here, could be a reference to his judgment upon them, right, that this is who they are. There's some irony there, of course, because he's the one who's so often being accused of being with sinners in Mark, and of course, it's hard not to miss atonement that he is truly about to be one who stands where only sinners belong. And perhaps the use of sinners' language there captures all of this.

So here is the moment where Jesus is delivered into human hands, and we pick this up with verse 43. And immediately while he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him was a crowd with swords and clubs from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. Now, the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, The one I will kiss is the man.

Seize him and leave him away under guard. And when he came, he went up to him at once and said Rabbi, and he kissed him. They laid hands on him and seized him, but one of those who stood by drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear.

Jesus said to them, Have you come out against a robber with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day, I was with you in the temple preaching, and you did not seize me, but let the Scriptures be fulfilled. And they all left him and fled. A young man followed him with nothing but a linen cloth about his body, and they seized him, but he left the linen cloth and ran away naked.

When we look at this section, of course, and then with 53, where they lead Jesus to the high priest and the trial set up, we find here this moment when Jesus is delivered into human hands, but we also see how much his authority is still present. Jesus, of course, is being said here as the paradigm of obedience. We've been speaking of this throughout our study of Mark, where the disciples' lack of faith becomes the foil of which the contrast is made with Jesus' own faith.

And here the lack of faith becomes fully in view. And of course, the signal of a kiss, right, Judas has pre-arranged how this would take place, how we identify who Jesus is. One, maybe it's a way to help identify in the dark who the figure is, in case this group that's coming with him does not know exactly what Jesus looks like.

But even more in the ancient Near East, the kiss was a sign of affection, of hospitality. The church is to greet one another with a kiss, which makes this moment

so much more sorrowful. Mark Strauss points out, I think quite effectively here, how Proverbs 27:6 and the truth of Proverbs 27:6 here is found.

Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses. We have a reference to a certain figure standing here who has a sword and strikes a servant's ear. It's interesting because Mark is very cryptic about this moment.

We don't know who it is in Mark who actually pulls out the sword, it's just a certain man. We don't even know the name of the servant who has his ear cut. John tells us it's Peter who has the sword.

The servant is Malchus. Matthew and Luke give a much fuller description of this event. There's dialogue, there's conversation.

Of course, Jesus had in Luke, Jesus instructs him to actually bring swords with them. But then we also have in Matthew and Luke where Jesus rebukes the act and heals the wound, but we don't get any of this in Mark. In fact, this event, which is just mentioned, is left almost immediately for Jesus' words.

And I think the sense of the immediacy is that Jesus has no intention of responding in this way, in this military defensiveness way. In fact, his focus is turned very much, in the Gospel of Mark, towards this group. And so, Mark moves very quickly away from this attempt to thwart the attack, if you will, the arrest and rebukes those who are coming.

He rebukes them. His rebuke is twofold. First, he rebukes them for coming with weapons as if they are robbers or insurrectionists, a threat to the people and to stability.

Yet they do it in secret. They had many opportunity when he's teaching in the temple, but they never seized them. So, the irony is you come as if I'm a threat, but you were too afraid to do it in public because you felt threatened about this action.

So, he's drawing at even the tension between the hypocrisy and the whole action of those who are arresting. But his authority becomes present. Even though there are those who are next to him who might pull the sword, even though the arresting party itself is inconsistent with its reasoning, Jesus does not stand upon any of those in terms of resistance but says that he knows what the scriptures say must occur.

So, his authority is made view. And indeed, Zechariah 13:7 says, strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered. So, this the scriptures predicting not only that the Son of Man would be handed over and arrested, but also that the shepherd when he is taken, the sheep are scattered, immediately comes through in verse 50 where they all left him.

With the exception of Peter's episode, the disciples' departure is the last we will hear of them until the ending of all these events. And Mark, they are truly gone. They have truly left.

We do have this very strange incident, and I have no other ways to describe it except verses 51-52 are strange. A young man followed him with nothing but a linen cloth about his body. They seized him, but he left the linen cloth and ran away naked.

There have been many suggestions of what might be happening here, who this might be. I think one of the two best possibilities is why this young man only has a linen cloth about his body; I mean, so, somehow he is rushed out in a hurry to follow to Gethsemane, and this was all that he had on, but we don't know. He somehow stays just a little bit longer.

He follows where all the disciples fled. He follows just a little bit, but not too long. In fact, runs away naked, which would be something very shameful to do.

The two suggestions are basically this and perhaps are not mutually exclusive. One is that this is a figure that the community of which Mark is writing to knew about, that they know about this person, and there's a reference to someone they know. The other, it's been taken that maybe this is John Mark, the author of Mark's own sort of autobiographical insertion indicating that he was that person there, and again, those two aren't mutually exclusive.

I think the autobiographical statement makes some sense because this incident doesn't get picked up anywhere else, and so I think the sense that John Mark is referencing himself in a way that is humble. I mean, he declares that he ran away naked when pressed for it, so it wouldn't be a moment of inserting himself in a high honoring way, but in a shameful way. With verse 53, though, we begin the trial sequence.

There will be two trial scenes in Mark, a Jewish one before the Sanhedrin and then a Roman one before Pilate. The purpose of the Jewish hearing is apparently to marshal evidence to be used against Jesus, one that might gain a capital sentence from the Roman governor; Matthew follows Mark, while Luke and John have additional phases in the trials. When we look here, we see that Mark divides basically five scenes, maybe even a bit of a smirking sandwich, where you have the account of the arrest and the trial is interrupted twice, first by a statement about Peter following at a distance, then by Peter's denial.

Though, I wonder if we need to be careful before we press a sandwich idea too much here, and it may be just a rotation of scenes, or letting us know what's happening



concurrently. Of course, throughout this we have a very stark contrast. Jesus faithfully testifies that he is the Messiah.

Peter denies that he even knows Jesus. Jesus testifies that he is the Messiah, which means suffering. Peter denies that he knows Jesus and that he must escape it.

Peter is risking losing his life to protect, losing his soul to protect his life. Now, the historicity of this count of the trials has been challenged often on the basis that it violates what's found in the Mishnah. According to the Mishnah regarding Sanhedrin and capital cases, one, they could not be tried at night, and a conviction must wait until the next day, no trials could be held on the eve of the Sabbath, which would have been on the eve of the Sabbath, no trial was to be held during festivals, a second hearing was always required for a death sentence, the Mishnah says that evidence that is contradictory is to be discounted, witnesses are forbidden from testifying falsely, a charge of blasphemy could only be made if the defendant had pronounced the divine name, trials could only be held in one of three courts in Jerusalem and the residence of the high priest was not one of them.

And so, it's put out that the trial of Jesus violates all of these. Now, there are different responses to that. One response is, well, they were trying to do a lot of this very hurry and in secret and following regulation was not something that was a high priority to them.

Keep in mind also, though, that the Mishnah is codifying these trials towards the end of the second century, so we can't always be certain that those practices that were demanded or expected at the end of the second century are at play in this moment, that those regulations that come about in the Mishnah likely came about because of abuses that might have been occurred. Furthermore, it's not so much a formal trial here as getting a case against Jesus to present to Pilate. The Mishnah represents more than the Pharisaic practices as well.

In Mark, the Sanhedrin is mostly Sadducees that are there. That Jesus was crucified on the orders of Pontius Pilate is not in doubt, but that doesn't mean that we need to question the historicity of the Jewish trials of Jesus simply because it would have been the Romans only who could have crucified or it seems to be out of order. And so the question does tend to center around what role the Jewish rulers had? What was their part to play in all of this? And I think as we think through this, we have clear statements of the rejection of the Jewish leaders, the religious leaders of Jesus, that they now have that moment that they've been looking for to find fault with Jesus, to do it in secret.

The chief priests who feared the crowds are now able to take control of Jesus, to arrest Jesus, and begin to control the moments. There is a need to coalesce around their opposition against Jesus, to charge him with blasphemy as well as to find

charges that would put him against Rome. There is a need to begin to, from a theological leadership perspective, if you will, stand up for the cause of the death of Jesus, even if they don't have the power to commit it.

You know, the fact that we see here these men bent on killing Jesus, we shouldn't expect necessarily they would follow protocols in order to make this happen. Now, Mark doesn't name who the high priest is here that they go to. Others say it's Caiaphas.

Caiaphas, we know, held the office, indeed, from 18 to 36 AD. He was a son-in-law of Annas, who was deposed by the Romans in 15 AD. Josephus tells us that five of Annas' sons and his son-in-law served as high priest.

This fits then historically with what we see elsewhere. We know that there were three groups that were taken to make up the Sanhedrin, so all of the Sanhedrin, that this reference here is probably a way of saying a quorum. So, when we look through this, this evidence of what's happening in this Jewish plot, if you will, that even though it is Pilate who ultimately declares death upon Jesus, I think Mark is clear to indicate that it is not only the Romans who sought this out.

And so let's look through sort of what we see here as we move through. They led Jesus to the high priest, and all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes came together. Again, I think this means the quorum, the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes of these groups.

Peter followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. Peter actually has a hint of courage there. And he was sitting with the guards, warning himself at the fire.

Now, the chief priests and the whole council were seeking testimony against Jesus to put him to death, but they found none. Why? For many for false witness against him, but their testimony did not agree. And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you? Verse 60.

But he remained silent and made no answer. Again, the high priest asked him, are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? So, it's at this moment, it seems as if, you know, it seems as if the trial is now going Jesus' way, that there is those who are bearing false witness against him. In verse 58, for example, they're trying to get him on the charge of destroying, that he would destroy the temple that is made with hands and three days build another, but they, you know, they don't agree.

They don't agree in their testimony. Interestingly enough, of course, this actual statement isn't what we hear from Jesus being in the temple most recently, that he

will destroy it; his temple was made with human hands, and in three days, they'll build another, not made with hands. We actually have that statement from the Gospel of John, where there is the Jesus in the temple doing similar activities, though there's a little bit of a change as well from what we have on the Passion Week, and of course for John this happens very early in the Gospel, where Jesus does make this statement.

And I think, you know, this debate which we've talked about, this idea of, is this, did Jesus enter a temple twice or did he enter it once and it's been separated into two parts of the story, I think the fact that the witnesses don't actually agree on the statements that Jesus made as it related to destruction of the temple supports that there being two separate activities, that there being a passage of time that had occurred rather than just statements he made a few days ago in the presence of these very religious leaders that were in view. So, I think it might be that, in fact, you know, Jesus, of course, we know from the Gospel of John, entered Jerusalem on more than one occasion, and it is in that first occasion that he also showed disgust for what was happening in the temple that he made these statements. But the trial is not going well, and Jesus is not answering, and he doesn't need to answer, and then we have the high priest ask him specifically, are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed? And the Son of the Blessed, of course, is a term that we haven't picked up a whole lot, and so it speaks to the historicity of the term. The Son of the Blessed is another way of saying the Messiah, you know, the identification of the Messiah as God's Son, you know, would have been, you know, part through this.

So, this is not a question of whether Jesus is divine and whether he's the Son of the Blessed. It's a question of whether Jesus thinks he is the Messiah. In the setting, the high priest stood up in the midst, of course, I think, recalling the man in the withered hand being asked to stand up in the midst of everyone.

The silence of Jesus is similar to Isaiah 53:7, the sheep before the shearers is silent. And the question, of course, is very striking. We think about what's been happening in Mark.

Jesus has been actively dampening this identification. Now there have been, in Mark, certain Messianic implications which Jesus has embraced. There's a writing in the donkey in Jerusalem, for example.

But here we have a specific question, and the question, of course, for Jesus has been coming throughout his entire gospel. In the first eight chapters, the questions were always: who is this one who can do such things? Who can speak with such authority? Who can heal? Who is this one who can calm the storms? And so, you had all these questions being asked about who Jesus is. Mark's been letting us know all these questions.

Then, of course, in Mark 8, we have Jesus himself asking the question to Peter, who do the people say? And the disciples, who do the people say that I am? Who do you say that I am? But now Jesus is asked this question specifically: are you the Messiah? And Jesus answers in Mark 6:2, I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of power and coming with the clouds of heaven. I almost wonder in this sense, if the entire trial here wasn't hanging by a thread, and if Jesus had just remained silent, perhaps the trial would have gone his way, supposedly. And so, his decision to not remain silent gives the religious leaders in the Sanhedrin what they've been wanting, which is an opportunity to accuse him.

And he gives them an opportunity to accuse them politically and theologically. For his answer, one is he declares very straightforward, yes, the messianic secret, if you will, is over. He declares he is indeed the Messiah.

This gives them the political ammo they need. This allows them to then go to Pilate and say he is trying to be a political ruler, trying to unite people against Rome and cause distrust. But then by also saying that they will see the Son of Man, indeed it is the second answer that even becomes even more defiant.

It is the second aspect where they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds of heaven. This comes from Daniel 7:13 through 14, where one, like the Son of Man, comes on the clouds of heaven before the Ancient of Days and is given glory and dominion and an everlasting kingdom. That what Jesus, I believe, does here is he says, not only am I the Messiah, but I am the Son of Man.

And the Son of Man figure that comes, you know, and is given dominion, that there's a reference that there will be a trial to come, that you are standing in judgment of me, but there'll come a time when I, as the Son of Man, will be standing in judgment of you. And, of course, there is no other response for the high priests at this point. They can either, you know, affirm what Jesus has said is true, or they must declare him to now have committed blasphemy, which is what they do in the tearing of the garments and the declaration of what further witnesses do we need.

You have heard his blasphemy, verse 64, you have heard his blasphemy. What is your decision? And they all condemned him as deserving death. And some began to spit on him and to cover his face and to strike him, saying to him, prophesy. And the guards received him with blows.

And so, in verse, you know, through 65 here, we have that the Jewish trial comes to an end, and it comes to an end with the declaration that Jesus affirming he is the Messiah, affirming he's the Son of Man, and their rejection of him, and that he must be sentenced to die. The irony is that it is his very death that brings about the validity of his messianic claim and that he is the Son of Man. We see then in 66 through 72,

and we'll get into more of this a little bit later, but maybe to finish out here on Mark 14, we now jump back to Peter.

So, all of this is going on. Jesus' strong stance in front of all of these religious leaders that claim that he is the Messiah, the Son of God. In 66 through 72, we have Peter below in the courtyard, and one of the servant girls of the high priest comes.

I think the idea is that she's probably working with the servant girls. It could have been a younger woman; the language sort of allows it not to have to be a little girl. And seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, "You were with the Nazarene Jesus."

He denied it, saying, I neither know nor understand what you mean. This is sort of another way of saying, I don't know what you're talking about. And he went out into the gateway, which I think he goes out in the gateway mostly because he's trying to separate from this slave girl who's identified it, but also this allows him for a quicker exit, should he need it.

And the rooster crowed. And the servant girl saw him and began to say, the bystander, this man is one of them. So now notice she's not accusing Peter directly.

She's now bringing other people into it. Perhaps these are other servants, or maybe they're also people there to keep the peace, or guards, and so forth. But again, he denied it.

After a little while, the bystander said to Peter; certainly you are one of them, for you are a Galilean. And Mark doesn't tell us why they know he's a Galilean. Of course, the other gospel sort of explains his speech and, most likely, his accent.

But the sense here is this group has come to a conclusion. Yes, he must be. He must be one of them because he's a Galilean.

We know Jesus is from Galilee. And then Peter's response, I think, just shows you the substance of his denial. He began to evoke a curse on himself and to swear, I do not know this man of whom you speak.

That's what ESV translates. It's interesting because in the Greek, it just says he began to swear with an oath and invoke a curse. It's not clear actually who the target of the curse is.

In fact, the language that is used could imply is that typical reflexive language. Usually, when you invoke a curse, you're invoking a curse upon someone or something. So, there's been several options.

One is that Peter invoked a curse on himself, and Mark is presenting in a way that's sort of atypical of that. The second would be that he's invoking a curse actually upon Jesus, declaring Jesus to be cursed. And the third is he is invoking a curse on the people who are accusing him.

The idea of being that God will do something against you for your calling me a liar kind of idea. Regardless of the three, and I think the least likely of the three, it might be what the ESV has chosen here, which is invoking a curse on himself. Regardless of the three, I think we realize that the oath and curse language are two ways of invoking God as part of affirming the truth of what Peter is saying.

That Peter is swearing an oath to God would be the idea, and is also declaring God will curse someone, you know, because of this accusation. So, think of what is happening here. Here is while Jesus is standing in front of the religious leaders and declaring that he is the Messiah and that he is the Son of Man, and they are yelling blasphemy at Jesus. At that same time, Peter, out of fear of what his servant girl and those around him are saying, declares that he has nothing to do with Jesus and that God can validate the authenticity of what he is saying.

I mean, the contrast between the two of Peter's denials is not simply that I don't know what you're talking about, but that he has brought God into the strength of his denial. This puts Peter much closer to the religious leaders, declaring Jesus as blasphemy, declaring Jesus as being cursed. You know, to declare blasphemy would be to declare that Jesus is outside the people of God, has been now, has violated God's law.

Peter is much closer to that statement in his lie. He's much closer to doing the same thing than he is to standing with Jesus, which, of course, he had so boldly said he would do. Peter remembered, and then immediately the rooster crowed a second time, and Peter remembered how Jesus had said to him, before the rooster crows thrice, you will deny me three times.

He broke down and wept. So here is Jesus had predicted this and the exact prediction had come true, which Peter probably doesn't realize in the moment, but there's hope in that moment that what Jesus said about the rooster and his denial came true. There's hope because Jesus had also said, I will see you again in Galilee.

And so, if Jesus is right here, there's hope that he will be right there. And Peter broke down and wept. And I think as we look at the differences between Peter and Judas, there are several throughout the Gospels.

Peter's never said to have Satan inspire him. Woes are never given to Peter. Peter, Jesus says he has prayed for him.

I prayed for you, Peter. We don't get any account of Jesus saying about Judas that I prayed for you, Judas. And here Peter does weep and immediately recognizes what he has done, perhaps even a hint of his sorrow.

That brings us to the end of Mark chapter 14. We will continue next time with Mark 15 and the trial and the crucifixion of Jesus.

This is Dr. Mark Jennings in his teaching on the Gospel of Mark. This is session 22, Mark 14:26-72, The Last Supper, Arrest, Trial, and Peter's Denial.