

## Good Lessons from a Bad Episode

John 18.12-27

After Jesus was arrested in Gethsemane, He was interrogated twice – by Annas, then Caiaphas. John deliberately interrupts these trials, weaving in the three denials of Jesus by Peter. As we examine this tragic episode, we discover hidden truths for our Christian lives.

Jesus is Arrested and Interrogated (12-14, 19-24)

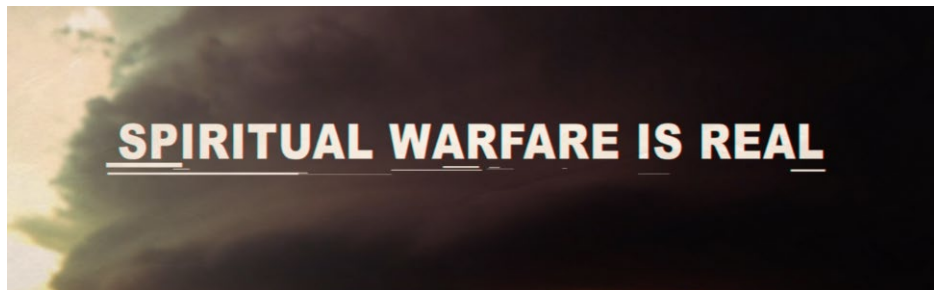
- A double-whammy: Two ‘high priests’!
- Jesus’ teachings were all in public, not secret
- He is struck by an officer of the high priest

Peter Denies Knowing Jesus Three Times (15-18, 25-27)

- “I am not (one of Jesus’ disciples).” (17, 25)
- “I do not know this man you are talking about!” (Mark 14.71)
- The rooster crowed (27; predicted by Jesus in Jn. 13.38)

Lessons from Jesus’ Defense vs. Peter’s Denials

- John’s intentional narrative: Jesus’ Defense vs. Peter’s Denials
- Lesson 1: Don’t go into battle in your own strength!
- Lesson 2: Pray for those who Satan is ‘sifting like wheat’!



1. As John has done throughout his Gospel, he tells the story of Jesus *intentionally* – that is, he deliberately presents events in such a way that exalts the deity of Christ, and exhibits for us truths for living the Christian life. Compare John’s account of events following Jesus’ arrest (18.12-27) with the other three Gospels (see Matt. 26.55-75; Mark 14.50-72; Luke 22.54-71). What events do the other writers include which John omits? What details does John give which no other writers include? Notice how, unlike the other Gospel accounts, John ‘weaves’ together the interrogation of Jesus with the denials of Peter. Why do you think John presented it this way?
2. Going into spiritual battle in our own strength is dangerous. Peter’s denials of Jesus are an example. No one doubts his love for Jesus; following Jesus after His arrest shows this (he didn’t run and hide!). What led to him denying Jesus? Have you ever concealed your faith in Christ for fear of repercussions? This is a warning for us: We can be engaged in service for the Lord, yet go into ‘spiritual battle’ in our own strength and suffer defeat. Peter exhibited this on a few occasions (see Matt. 14.28-31; 16.21-23; Jn. 13.6-9; 18.10-11; Gal. 2.11-14). How can we prepare ourselves so that we will not fall prey to ‘the schemes of the devil’ (see Eph. 6.10-18)?
3. Someone has observed that ‘Christians shoot their wounded’! That is, we tend to trample the reputation of those who falter in their Christian lives. How should we react? Peter denied Jesus, but a few hours earlier Jesus said something intriguing to him in the Upper Room (Lk. 22.31-32). He said Satan wanted to “sift the disciples (“you” in v31 is *plural*) like wheat” (to crush and scatter them), but that He prayed for *Peter* (“you” in v32 is *singular*), *that his faith might not fail*. Jesus was *not* praying that Peter wouldn’t deny Him (He says in v34 that he will!). When was Peter’s faith most tested (see Lk. 22.62)? When is our walk with the Lord most likely to fail? Do you see Jesus’ heart in praying for Peter, knowing that Peter would deny Him (cf. 2 Tim. 2.13!)? How can we reflect Jesus’ heart in our response to Christians who stumble spiritually? Read Gal. 6.1; 2 Cor. 2.6-8; Gal. 6.1; Eph. 4.1-2; 2 Thess. 3.14-15; Heb. 12.12-13; and James 5.19-20.