

## THE PROPHECY OF FAILURE (Mk. 14:27-31)

Jesus and His disciples have left the upper room. Their Passover feast which began at sunset on the Thursday evening and lasted until after midnight had finished, <sup>26</sup> And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives. ... In the early hours of Friday morning, they departed the city, went down and across the brook Kidron, and in among the olive trees of the Garden of Gethsemane on the lower slope of the Mount of Olives. The disciples were full of contemplation concerning all Jesus had been telling them in the upper room ... and Jesus was also engrossed in what lay ahead for Him in those next few hours. ... **Mk. 14:27** 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. <sup>28</sup> But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee. <sup>29</sup> But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet will not I. <sup>30</sup> And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. <sup>31</sup> But he spake the more vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise. Likewise also said they all.

The emphasis of these verses is upon the weakness of the disciples. At such a time as this, they should have been strong and determined, and sure ... but they weren't! It must have been a real disappointment for the Saviour, and yet He chose them, knowing each of them so well. ... Months earlier, before they had begun their journey southwards, while in Caesarea Philippi, Peter brought encouragement when he confirmed before the other disciples concerning Jesus, **Mk. 8:29** Thou art the Christ. Shortly afterwards, Jesus told them, **Mk. 8:38** Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. ... Having been warned about the consequences of being ashamed of Jesus, they ought to have been particularly watchful.

First of all, the nature of Judas' shame against the Saviour would be irretrievable. But, what about the other eleven? ... They would also be ashamed to be identified with Jesus. They did not betray Him as Judas did, and they would not sell Him like Judas, but their weakness brought shame. ... This, however, is a different category to Judas because Judas had left, gone, *finished*, - his ministry for the Lord was over ... but these eleven disciples would be restored after the resurrection ... and following the Day of Pentecost, they would valiantly suffer shame, and even death, for Jesus.

I need not ask the question, have you ever, - not meaning to, - brought shame to the Saviour ... have you ever let Him down and disappointed Him? I think

it would be very difficult for any of us to deny we have not disappointed Him at some time or another ... Compare that to Jesus ... He would never be ashamed of us ... Look at Him on the cross, as He took carried our shame ... It was so repulsive to His Father that His Father turned away ... and *still* Jesus ... “Bearing shame and scoffing rude, in my place condemned He stood”. ... Where were the disciples? ... They weren’t there. With the exception of John, at the cross, they were *ashamed of Jesus*.

The Gospel is offensive because it goes against the grain of the human nature ... and belonging to that Gospel and being a Christian is offensive. People don’t like hearing that we are born in sin, and that sin has a terrifying hold over us, and if that hold is not broken by trusting in Jesus Christ, we shall never break free and we will enter a lost eternity in Hell when we die. Nobody wants to hear that! ... But when you are *saved*, - when Jesus Christ has taken away your sin and promises you eternal life with Him, - it is a *wonderful* Gospel, ... the Good News the Lord Jesus, our Saviour, God’s Son died for us on the cross of Calvary ... And it means when we *do* fall victim to our weaknesses, we have the promise, **1 Jn. 1:7** [the blood of Jesus Christ \[God’s\] Son cleanseth us from all sin.](#)

Here are some interesting statistics ... There are 89 chapters in the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John (28+16+24+21). Out of those 89 chapters, four present His birth and early life, including the ‘silent years’. Twenty-nine of the eighty-nine chapters relate to the final week, and thirteen chapters specifically to the Friday, the day when Jesus was finally crucified ... the day we have now entered, in Mk. 14. ... I mention this to demonstrate the emphasis of the Gospels concerning why Jesus came into this world, - He **1 Tim. 1:15** [... came into the world to save sinners...](#) There was no other reason!

At the foot of the Mount of Olives, - at this particular part, - there was an olive grove, with an olive press nearby ... and that is the area to where Jesus and His disciples made their way. ... In the distance the candles were burning brightly in the homes of the city. There was all the excitement of the enthusiastic and expectant pilgrims, anticipating the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread ... However, it was very quiet in the Garden of Gethsemane, very simple, and very alone. ... There wasn’t a rustle among the olive trees, not a sound. It was away from the noise of the busy ancient city, and yet there was so much going on in the minds of Jesus and His disciples.

This was the Mount of Olives to which Zechariah, - away back between the years 520-518 BC, - prophesied the Messiah will return ... But, all the thoughts of the Saviour at that time in Gethsemane were on Calvary, the distressing events which would lead up to it, and the harrowing sacrifice He would make on a cross to atone for the sins of His people. ... All that and more is contained within those words, <sup>26</sup> ... they went out into the mount of Olives. ... He knew what would happen there, because He planned it, and He was setting everything in place whereby His plan would be fulfilled.

On arriving there, <sup>27</sup> Jesus saith unto them ... In the darkness and in the tension which enveloped them since He had spoken to them so tenderly in the upper room, they knew something was 'going on'. What it was they just could not determine, but in the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus spoke to them devastating words, <sup>27</sup> 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. ... At a time like this, His words went into them like a dagger. They did not know how to take it! They did not know the future. They did not know what was going to happen in those early hours of that morning. He had told them previously, **Mk. 10:33** Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles: <sup>34</sup> And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him: and the third day he shall rise again. ... But how could they believe such a thing?!

One of the most important necessities for a believer is to trust the Word of God, - even those parts we don't yet understand. It is God's Word, which means it contains nothing false, deceitful, or inaccurate. ... Since it is His Word, everything He says in it is to be relied upon. It also follows, - since there are parts of it with which we may have difficulty understanding ... that is the time when we simply trust it is His Word, His truth, and He will reveal it to us, as and when necessary. ... *He* is God, *we* are not ... *He* knows all things, *we* don't ... and we never stop learning from and trusting in the perfectness of His precious Word.

However, as we shall see, this was something the disciples grappled with.

In contrast to their lack of knowledge is the knowledge of the Lord Jesus, - it is without limit. There is nothing He does not know, **1 Jn. 3:20** God ... knoweth all things. ... And Jesus said to His disciples, **Mk. 14:27** All ye shall be *offended*

because of me this night ... σκανδαλίζω ... All I have told you, you are going to run away from. I will be a ‘scandal’ to you for you will be *ashamed* of Me. I will embarrass you. ... You are going to tell Me you would never allow that to happen, but you will ... All ye shall be offended because of me this night.

He knew exactly what was shortly to happen. There was nothing He did not know. He already knew the Jewish leaders were preparing to come and arrest Him. He already knew the great number of Roman soldiers that would accompany them. ... There was nothing would catch Him unawares, for He knew every detail of what was about to take place for His knowledge is unlimited, and He quoted this passage to His disciples from the Old Testament, **Zech. 13:7** 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. ... There, in that passage, Zechariah the prophet of God had been referring to the false prophets, - in his day, - polluting the Jewish religion ... and now, - coming down out of the old city of Jerusalem, - were another set of false prophets and priests ... the set Zechariah had prophesied would confront and condemn the Messiah. ...

Behind it all though, was God’s plan of redemption for His people, **Mk. 14:27** And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd ... His Father would *smite* the Son, - *the Shepherd*, **Jn. 10:11** I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. ... And the consequence of the mighty wrath of the Father smiting the Shepherd, - the Father punishing His Son for our sins, - would ultimately be, *the sheep shall be scattered*. ... The ‘sheep’, - that is initially His disciples, - for they would be scattered, and then their disciples after them, into other countries and continents.

There is another very tender note in Zech. 13:7 where the Lord says, <sup>7</sup> *smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered [the disciples]: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.* ... *That* is indicating how He would allow His own to be persecuted ... and it did come. Christian persecution came to the apostles first, and then throughout the Church during those early centuries. ... And yes, Israel was scattered too for in Zech. 13:8 we are told, <sup>8</sup> *And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein.* <sup>9</sup> *And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD*

is my God. ... That is God's plan of salvation for *all* His people, - Jew and Gentile, - ... and it *has* and *is* and *will* come to pass entirely and completely.

He is telling us here He knew all that was going on, - nothing could be hidden from Him ... neither the betrayal by Judas, or the abandonment by His disciples. ... Indeed, Jesus knew how dark it really was ... and John picks up on it in Jn. 13:30, He ... went immediately out: and *it was night*.

It was dark ... but no matter how dark it was, - spiritually, or because of the night time, - nothing was hid from the Saviour's knowledge, **Jn. 1:5** *the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not*. ... Everything is under God's control? He does not allow anything He has not already sanctioned. Yes, as long as we are in this world, we have to contend with its difficulties and tears ... but we are also in the Saviour's care, and He is holding on to us *so* tight nothing can take us away from Him, **Jn. 10:28** *I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand*.

As well as seeing the immeasurable knowledge of the Lord here, we also see His limitless courage. On one hand, His disciples were trembling and afraid ... They would fall foul of fear, disloyalty, desertion ... but Jesus would remain committed and faithful to His Father's calling ... They would abandon Him in the Garden of Gethsemane ... Some of the disciples, - like Thomas, - would run away off somewhere because 'the going got too tough' ... Some, - like the two on the road to Emmaus, - would head back to where they came from. ... And some would head away up north to Galilee, to their boats and to their fishing. ... What had Jesus *already* planned, though? ... After His resurrection, He had already planned to go and find them again, and bring them all back together. And for forty days, He gave them the most intensive training for their future ministry, at the end of which His work on earth for now was completed, and He ascended into Glory from the Mount of Olives (Acts 1) ... to which He is coming back one day.

It does set you apart, being a Christian. You have a different lifestyle and different principles and a different set of priorities because you have a different Master. You have a different purpose in life, and that is because you belong to Jesus ... The problem with the disciples was they tried to face the difficulties without considering Jesus ... and they failed, so they ran off and left Him. ... However, in contrast to their cowardice was the Saviour's courage. Ultimately that courage would take Him to the cross to die for our

sins. Ultimately that courage would give Him the strength to keep His Father's will, for His glory and for our salvation.

Jesus knew all this, so what must it have been like for Him as He left the upper room and walked down into the Garden of Gethsemane with men who He knew would desert Him? ... Consider the turmoil in *His* heart and mind! ... And it must have been made worse when Peter spoke up and *contradicted* his Master, <sup>29</sup> *But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet will not I ...* <sup>31</sup> ... *Likewise also said they all.* ... No, they wouldn't ... Jesus knew them better than they knew themselves ...

But despite their failures, Jesus told them He was going to rise again, <sup>28</sup> *after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee.* ... He was looking beyond the cross. For His Father's sake, the cross was in front of Him ... but also in the eternal plan, He would be raised from the dead. He knew He would die, and He knew His disciples would abandon Him, but He also knew "death could not hold its prey"!

The disciples *feared* death, - that is why they ran! ... And yet, our Lord *faced* death and the whole horrors implicated in suffering the wrath of God ... but He did it, for our salvation. He 'put His hand to the plough', and He did not turn back!

The Christian faith is set apart from all others because we trust and believe in a living God, a living and risen Saviour. ... We believe in a living Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the same yesterday, today and forever, and He is alive forever more (Rev. 1:18). ... There is none His equal! ... And there is no other Gospel with such a great hope. Because we have a living Saviour we have a living Gospel ... a Gospel which is alive ... the only Gospel which brings life to spiritually dead souls. ... And Jesus told His disciples, "I'll see you again ... and before you get up into Galilee, I'll be there before you, **Mk. 14:28** *But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee.* ... And that is what happened. ... He was on the shore of the Sea of Galilee waiting for them. ... When the Lord makes a promise, He keeps it ... and nothing can stop His promises coming true!

He brought them all together for those forty days in between the resurrection and the ascension. They were all gathered in the upper room in that week before Pentecost ... He recovered and restored them all, in answer to the

prayer He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, **Jn. 17:11** Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. **12** While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. ... He kept them, as was written in His Father's plan.

Peter and the others though, were adamant they would not desert Jesus, - they doubted the word of the Lord! ... In fact, Peter was even dismissive of his brethren, for he reckoned himself *better* than them, **29** But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet will not I. ... Not me, Lord! You have got it all wrong ... Maybe, the rest, but not me! ... It is a dangerous thing to doubt the Word of God! ... **30** And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.

... And that is what happened ... Turn over to Lk. 22 where a short time later Jesus has been arrested and was being interrogated inside the house of the high priest. Outside in the garden, Peter was with a group of people, ... **Lk. 22:56** *a certain maid* beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him. **57** And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not. **58** And after a little while *another saw him*, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not. **59** And *about the space of one hour* after *another confidently affirmed*, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilaean. **60** And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. **61** And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. **62** And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

Peter, God's Word never gets it wrong! *We do, often ... and often we* make decisions we shouldn't ... but God is never wrong. He never allows anything to interrupt His will. ... Peter argued with the Lord, - an extremely unwise course of action to pursue, **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.

In our own strength, we are weak and unsteady in the Christian faith, - *we* could never keep our salvation. There are times, if Jesus did not carry us, we would fall and never get up. If He did not keep us, we would be away off somewhere, ... *lost*. ... Satan is in the business of attempting to destroy Christians. He will try every 'which-way' he knows how ... and he knows many! ... But before He starts to work on you, he has to ask permission from the Lord (cf. Job). ... That is how under God's control he is! ... He does not

have ‘free reign’ ... The Lord is in charge ... and you are not on your own because you have the Saviour with you, and the Holy Spirit living inside you ... and you can stand up against the devil in the Lord’s strength ... A word of warning, though ... You try and stand up against the devil in your own strength, and you will *fail*, but do it in the Lord’s strength and you will *prevail*. ... We are no match for the devil, but the Lord *is* ... so stay close to the Lord!

... Jesus told the arrogant, self-inflated Peter, <sup>30</sup> *Verily I say unto thee, That this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice* ... The Jews divided night time into four quarters consisting of three hours each, - from six to nine, from nine to twelve, from twelve to three, and from three to six ... and before the third quarter, - *before the cock crow twice*, - Peter would deny three times he knew the Saviour. ... After the first time, why didn’t he get up from the fire and get himself out of the high priest’s garden?! Why didn’t he get away and leave those Christ-haters? What was he doing with them sitting and denying the Saviour *for a second time*?! ... And then, he stayed with them for another hour ... He should have been out of there and *not* have given them the third opportunity to ‘catch him out’! He was not right being there ... for the Lord Jesus had already warned him.

Sin makes us stubborn, and takes us places, - even as Christians, - we ought not to be, and no good can come out of it! ... And yet, the Lord was praying for Simon Peter, and that is what kept him! As Paul wrote in his letter to the Romans, **Rom. 8:33** *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.* <sup>34</sup> *Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.* Those who are His by grace, He always preserves and protects, so that when your faith is truly and confidently in Him ... you will keep on obediently trusting and your faith will not fail. Amen.