

Matthew 26:72

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man.

Analysis

And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man (καὶ πάλιν ἤρινήσατο μετὰ ὅρκου ὅτι Οὐκ οἶδα τὸν ἄνθρωπον)—Peter's second denial escalated: πάλιν ('again') he denied (ἀρνέομαι), but now μετὰ ὅρκου ('with an oath'). An ὅρκος (oath) invoked God as witness to truth—ironically, Peter swore by God while denying God's Son. The phrase Οὐκ οἶδα τὸν ἄνθρωπον ('I do not know the man') depersonalizes Jesus—not 'I don't know Jesus' but 'I don't know the man,' treating Christ as a stranger. This fulfilled Jesus's prediction: 'you will deny Me three times' (26:34).

The oath's addition shows sin's progressive nature—first denial was evasive ('I don't know what you mean'), second was explicit with oath ('I don't know the man'). Each sin unprevented makes the next easier and worse. Peter's oath violated Jesus's teaching against swearing (5:33-37), compounding his sin. Yet even this wasn't final—Luke 22:32 records Jesus's prayer: 'I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail.' Peter's faith wavered but didn't fail utterly, demonstrating preservation of saints through Christ's intercession.

Historical Context

Oaths were common in Jewish culture for affirming truth (Genesis 21:23-24; 1 Samuel 20:3). Mishnaic law developed elaborate oath distinctions. Peter's oath-reinforced denial shows desperation—as pressure increased, denials intensified. The phrase 'the man' (ὁ ἄνθρωπος) rather than 'Jesus' attempted to distance Peter from Christ by using generic language. This psychological distancing technique

(depersonalization) reveals the self-deceptive nature of sin—we minimize wrongdoing through euphemism and abstraction.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does sin's progressive nature (Peter's escalating denials) warn you to repent at first compromise rather than continuing?
2. When have you depersonalized Jesus ('the man,' 'the historical figure') to avoid personal commitment to Him as Lord?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	πάλιν	ἡρνήσατο	μεθ'	ὅρκου	ὅτι	Οὐκ	οἶδα	τὸν
And	again	he denied	with	an oath	G3754	not	I do	G3588
G2532	G3825	G720	G3326	G3727		G3756	G1492	

ἄνθρωπον

the man

G444

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