

## **WHEN DID Y'SHUA CONSIDER A DAY TO BEGIN?**

*by Bill and Karen Bishop*

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All four gospels record various versions of the Passover meal and the narrative about Peter's denial. The dinner had been concluded that fateful night when Y'shua informs Peter that he will deny Y'shua three times. He further correlates these denials with the "crowing of the cock". We find this narrative in all 4 of the gospels, where it is clear that Peter does deny Y'shua 3 times, though we find slight variations as to how many times the cock is said to crow. In Matthew and Luke, the cock crows only once.

Matthew 26:74

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

Luke 22:60

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

John simply indicates that the denials will occur before the cock shall crow:

John 13:38

(38) Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.

In Mark, the cock crows twice.

Mark 14:68 & 72

(68) But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest. And he went out into the porch; **and the cock crew.**

(72) And **the second time the cock crew.** And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept.

Another interesting factor that differs between the 3 synoptic gospel versions is the timing this crowing is said to take place. In Matthew, it is to be "this night".

Matthew 26:34

(34) Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That **this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.**

In Mark, it is to be "this day, even in this night".

Mark 14:30

(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.

In Luke, it is to be "this day".

Luke 22:34

(34) And he said, I tell thee, Peter, **the cock shall not crow this day**, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.

So how do we sort this out?

Before we can answer that, we need to confront some words of the the earliest compilation of rabbinic oral law, the Mishneh. Because this "law" was being observed in the land during Y'shua's day, it does have bearing here. The Mishnah states that **chickens (which would include roosters) are not to be raised in Jerusalem** due to purity concerns (*m. Baba Kama 7.7*):

[https://www.sefaria.org/Mishnah\\_Bava\\_Kamma.7.7?lang=bi&with=all&lang2=en](https://www.sefaria.org/Mishnah_Bava_Kamma.7.7?lang=bi&with=all&lang2=en)  
Baba Kama 7.7

**... One may not raise chickens in Jerusalem, due to the sacrificial meat** that is common there. There is a concern that chickens will pick up garbage that imparts ritual impurity and bring it into contact with sacrificial meat, thereby rendering it ritually impure. **And priests may not raise chickens anywhere in Eretz Yisrael**, because of the many foods in a priest's possession that must be kept ritually pure, e.g., *teruma*. ...

Similar wording may be found again in Baba Kama 82b where chickens are forbidden in Jerusalem – again citing concerns of purity.

The question of the day then becomes, how could a cock would crow in Jerusalem if such a creature could not be found in Jerusalem in the first place? This would be entirely possible though if the "cock crowing" was not a rooster at all.

To see how this might be so, we need to examine other potentials. We will quote from a very insightful article by AG (Assemblies of God) News titled Sometimes a Rooster is Not a Rooster (emphasis ours):

<https://news.ag.org/en/article-repository/news/2016/05/sometimes-a-rooster-is-not-a-rooster>

*In describing the activities that went on in the Jerusalem Temple, the Mishnah references a specific time in the early morning: "He that was minded to clean the*

*altar of ashes rose up early and immersed himself before the officer came. At what time did he come? Not always at the same time. Sometimes he came at **cockcrow** and sometimes a little sooner or later” (emphasis added; m. Tamid 1.2; see also m. Yoma 1.8; m. Sukkah 5.4). **“Cockcrow” refers to a time early in the morning when the priests began to prepare the Temple for the daily visitors:** “Every day they used to remove the ashes from off the altar at cockcrow, or near to it, either before it or after it” (m. Yoma 1.8). **And it does not mean a rooster crow, but rather the blast from a trumpet at the Temple that announced the time:** “At cockcrow they blew a sustained, a quavering, and another sustained blast” (m. Sukkah 5.4). In other words, **cockcrow refers to a time early in the morning when a trumpet signaled the beginning of the day for work in the Temple.** ... Jesus did not refer to a random rooster, but rather a specific time in the morning, which Peter would have understood. ... Priests would blow the trumpets announcing the **different times of the day and week** (see Josephus, War 4.582). ...*

*The Evangelists assumed that their readers understood the cultural and spiritual world of ancient Judaism; therefore, they did not explain much of the language and details. The task of the modern reader of the Gospels is to read the Gospels within the language, culture, and spiritual world of ancient Judaism because sometimes a rooster is not a rooster.*

Therefore, all of the gospels may be congruent after all. They may merely have been recorded with differing perspectives. Note the wording above that **the cockcrow** in the morning was: a **sustained blast** followed by a **quavering** and then another **sustained blast**. The first sustained blast would probably be to get the attention of those serving at the Temple. Then the quavering implies a tenuous weak sound, which may have continued for some time to allow people to position themselves for the work. Then the second sustained blast would likely occur to signal that work should begin. These two sustained blasts may have been considered as a single “cockcrow event” by some. On the other hand, the two sustained blasts separated somewhat may have been considered as two crows by others. Thus Mark mentions two crows and the other three gospels mention only one.

Likewise the timing for the blowing is negotiable, as the cockcrow trumpet would likely have been in the early morning about dawn, thus described differently by each of the gospel writers. Mark may have said it best when he states, “this day, even in this night”.

However, what is clear is that Y'shua was speaking to Peter during the dark of night about something that would happen during the night and into the morning hours. The denials would take place as the night proceeded, and the cock to announce that the morning had arrived would bring to Peter's memory the words

of Y'shua. Luke records Y'shua's words that night as being: "**this** day" when He was referring to the trumpet that would sound in the morning. He didn't say "tomorrow" or "the next day". Actually, in all instances, it can easily be understood by the words Y'shua spoke that **night**, that He viewed the **morning** hours that would follow to be the same day.

When we look at this objectively, it is clear that the "day" Y'shua is referring to had already begun that evening before He spoke to Peter during that night – SO – it seems that Y'shua Himself was referring to an "evening to evening" time frame for a day.