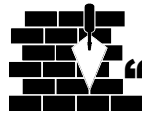


## Jesus - "Facing Rejection"

**"Building Blocks"**

1. **(Scripture)** In the Matthew 26 reading, Peter's initial bravado should not be quickly dismissed. Peter blurted out, "Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away" Because he really meant it. He *wanted* to be that one out of the Twelve that remained faithful. OFten, others' failure to be there when we most need them is more a reflection of the crushing nature of the pressure than their lack of resolve.
2. **(Scripture)** We have the hint of coming rejection by His Father in the accounts of Matthew and Mark. They record Jesus' triple assault on God to "change His mind," and to no avail. Yahweh's silence did *not* mean He hadn't answered Jesus' prayer. It simply meant His answer was "no." This happened *prior* to the arrival of Judas. (NOTE: Luke mentions only one appeal and John doesn't mention any.) But, in Jesus' statement, which was *after* his agony in the garden, John alone tells us that Jesus *had* accepted the Father's answer of "no" (Jn 18:11).
3. **(Background)** The "Pharisees" were a highly respected religious "middle class." They lived all throughout Palestine in Jesus' day. The "chief priest and elders" as well as the Sadducees were concentrated in or very near Jerusalem. So, when reading the Gospels, the presence of Pharisees in the narrative does *not* tell you where Jesus is, and you shouldn't assume he's in Jerusalem. The actual physical location has to be ferreted out from the larger context of the narrative itself.
4. **(Q1-Mk3)** Mark's statement in verse 20 is important to make sense out of Mary's conclusion her son was temporarily "out of his mind." It is likely she is worried about him due to his relentless schedule and poor nutrition (cf. verse 31).
5. **(Q1-Jn 6)** The Greek word translated "hard" (ESV), "difficult" (NAS) for Jesus' teaching [Gk, *sklēros*] means "hard, stiff, harsh." It is at the root of our medical term for the "hardening" of various organs like arteries (arteriosclerosis) or the skin (scleroderma).
6. **(Q1-Lk 13) John 1:9-11 is an excellent expansion on this point.**  

*"The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him."* John 1:9-11
7. **(Q1-Mt 26:36)** Psalm 69:20 adds tremendous insight to this passage in Matthew, *and* increases our appreciation for Jesus' sorrow when he found them sleeping multiple times:  

*"Reproaches have broken my heart, so that I am in despair. I looked for pity, but there was none, and for comforters, but I found none."* Psalm 69:20
8. **(Q1-Mt 26:56)** The Greek word here is used for "divorce" by Paul in 1 Cor. 7:11; Its broader meaning has to do with a departure with no plan of return.
9. **(Q1-Mt. 26:69)** Peter's denial was facilitated by *where* he was. He fled from Jesus in the garden (as predicted), but then finds himself standing, sitting, and warming himself by the fire alongside Jesus' enemies!
10. **(Q1-Mt 27:22)** What had happened in seclusion at night the night before is eclipsed by what happened in daylight the next morning. Imagine yourself to be Jesus, listening to a *crowd* calling for your death! And, this crowd is calling for something no Jew would *ever* have called for in regard to

another Jew—crucifixion! This is not merely a denial of his claim to Messiah, it is a rejection of him as one of their own people! He is being disowned as a Jew, not just denied as a savior.

11. **(Q1-Mt 27:27)** The word translated “cohort” (NAS), “battalion” (ESV) is the Greek word, *speira*. It was a Roman military term for one tenth of a legion, or 600 soldiers. It is possible that it was a “cohort” of auxiliaries (hired mercenaries; non-Romans), but that would still be close to 500. Regardless of the exact number, we need to be thinking of God incarnate being stripped naked twice, spit upon and mocked *in front of a very large crowd*.

John also tells us they “struck him with their hands” (Jn 19:3). The Greek word he uses here, *rhapisma*, is very significant. It means “to strike with the palm,” in other words, to slap. In contrast to this, we are told the Jewish soldiers present during his interrogation by the Sanhedrin [Gk, *kala-phizō*] “beat him with their fists” (Mk 14:65).

12. **(Q1-Mt 27:44)** Matthew is very careful to inform us that the two (condemned) thieves behaved “like” the elders, scribes and chief priests! They seem to have taken their clues from the hostile crowd led by the religious leaders. What a sad and damning testimony. We really need to galvanize an image in our minds of a mob made up of every strata of Jewish society, *ALL* mocking and jeering at a naked man nailed to a cross outside the city.
13. **(Q4-Heb)** The verb translated here, “looking to” (ESV), “fixing our eyes upon” (NAS), *aphoraō*, means to turn one’s gaze away from one thing in order to look at another. In this case it must be referring to our *mind’s gaze*, for Jesus was no longer on earth. Hebrews was written at least 30 years after his ascension. The verb is also stressing the ongoing, continuous action of “gazing” (i.e. present tense). This is to be a lifestyle activity, not an occasional thing.

The word, “consider” in verse 3 is used only here in the New Testament. It came from an old word meaning to count over and over. We might even say, “do the math.” The key to enduring in the face of hostility and feeling isolated, is to meditate on the life of Jesus, especially the *outcome* (i.e. “*seated at the right hand of God*”).

14. **(Q4-Ps 73)** This is an amazing promise of God’s unfailing faithfulness and steadfast love in the face of my own disregard and despair. *He* is the strength my heart needs and the hope for my future.
15. **(Q4-Ps 38)** The word translated “sighing” (NAS, ESV) here can also be translated “groanings.” It is a word for deep, emotional pain. It was a word used to describe Job’s anguish (Job 3:24; 23:2). It is one of the things *missing* in Isaiah’s description of Yahweh’s future kingdom (Is 35:10).



## “Stumbling Stones”

1. **(Q1-Mt 26:14-16)** Because we know this story so well, and we also know *Jesus* knew and predicted this event, it is easy to lose sight of the fact that this was a genuine betrayal by one of those in Jesus’ inner circle. God’s foreknowledge does *not* eliminate His displeasure *or* His sorrow. Jesus *wept* over the city he knew would reject him (Lk 19:41). In fact, it was his knowledge of the coming rejection that produced the sorrow and tears.

It is also an enormous detail that Judas “sold him out” for money! He chose money over Jesus’ life and ministry. We must also be careful not to miss the impact Judas’ choice was going to have on the blind, the poor, the lame, the lepers, and all those to whom Jesus had ministered. Judas was cutting off their healing and hope by his choice. It was not simply Jesus and his disciples who were going to suffer by his death. Jesus’ ministry of teaching and touching would cease. This was the source of the despair of his followers *after* his death (e.g. “*But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel...*” Lk 24:21).

3. **(Q1-Mt 26:59)** Don't miss the larger fact that this short verse tells us that the vast majority of Jesus' entire political and spiritual *government* was opposed to him and wanted him dead.
4. **(Q4-Heb)** The point here is *not* escape or deliverance, though from time to time God may do that. The main point is *endurance* in the midst of difficulty. The key to endurance is to ponder Jesus, *both* the fact that he endured greater pain, *and* the outcome or fruit of it.



## “Going Deeper”

1. **(Q1-Mt 26:14-16)** “What had Judas valued more than Jesus' life *and* Jesus' ministry to the sick and marginalized? What would this type of value choice look like in your own life?”
2. **(Q1-Mt 26:36)** Have someone read Matthew 26:36-43. Then read Psalm 69:20. Then ask, “How does this psalm push you deeper into what was happening in Jesus' heart that night?”