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## What is the 'cock's crow'?

Another question of semantics - was the cock's crow which Jesus prophesied Peter would hear before he betrayed Him thrice, the crow of a rooster or a trumpet blast which happened every 3 hours, or so.

peter

edited Jan 5 '12 at 7:44



Lance Roberts

9386 1 6 19

asked Oct 11 '11 at 21:18



Gryphoenix

214 1 6

Not sure why I received a down-vote. I have heard scholars state that loose fowl would not be permitted in the temple complex (because of the risk of becoming unclean due to their waste). — Gryphoenix Oct 11 '11 at 21:26

- 5 this could be a good question, but it's a fairly low quality post as it stands. Typically on SE on general, I expect to see some work put into grappling with the question. There should probably be some elaboration, some reasoning why you'd think that it's not meant literally, and a Bible quote. — Ray ♦ Oct 11 '11 at 21:53

### 3 Answers

A cock's crow [can be heard from a long distance](#), depending on various factors, so there is no reason to assume the bird was within the temple. Given that it is perfectly likely that it was simply a literal cock's crow, the seems to be no logic searching for another more complicated explanation, which would need to be backed up by strong historical evidence to have any credibility in my view

answered Oct 12 '11 at 8:57



Jack Douglas ♦

3,179 2 10 34

- 1 As well, based on [Matthew 26](#), Peter was in the courtyard of the High Priest. However, this might not have been within the temple complex. (It was somewhere that a servant girl was permitted, at least.) And in any case, the Old City of Jerusalem really wasn't very big. — GalacticCowboy Oct 15 '11 at 13:22

"residence was connected to the temple complex by an overhead causeway" suggests it was not - though I've no idea how reliable this source is — Jack Douglas ♦ Oct 15 '11 at 13:36

- 2 As one who has chickens, I suggest that the miracle was that a rooster could be silent long enough for Peter to say three sentences! Those things are loud and unlike what you see in cartoons, they crow all night long. — Affable Geek Apr 7 '12 at 22:41

This is a good question because the [Mishnah \(m.Bava Kamma 7:7\)](#) states that:

אין מגדלין תרנגולים בירושלים.

We may not raise chickens in Jerusalem.

The reason for this is not the dung directly (dung is not actually ritually unclean). But there is a concern that the chickens may contaminate the sacrifices with the unclean creatures they might drag out of the dungheaps. (Remember, some sacrifices were eaten anywhere in Jerusalem, not just the Temple courts.)

"Cock's crow" is a technical term in Jewish law: *kri'at hagever* (קריאת הגבר). It is a time of day prior to dawn that marks the end of night.

The [Mishnah \(m.Yoma 1:8\)](#) describes how the removal of the ashes from the altar in the Temple was performed:

בכל יום תורמין את המזבח בקריאת הגבר או סמוך לו, בין לפניו בין לאחריו.

Every day they would remove the ashes at *kri'at hagever* or around that time, before or after.

In the [Gemara \(b.Yoma 20b\)](#) there is a disagreement as to whether the term *kri'at hagever* literally

The Right Answer is here

means "call of the man" or "call of the rooster":

מאי קריאת הגבר? רב אמר קרא גברא, רבי שילא אמר: קרא תרנגולא

What is *kri'at hagever*? Rav said, "Call of the man." Rabbi Shila said, "Call of the rooster."

The Gemara continues by explaining that they are both right. In the Temple precinct, there was a Temple crier who called out to begin the service. Everywhere else, the time would be determined by an actual rooster crowing.

גביני כרוז מהו אומר - עמדו כהנים לעבודתכם וליום לדוכנכם וישראל למעמדכם, והיה קולו נשמע בשלש פרסאות. מעשה באגריפס המלך שהיה בא בדרך ושמע קולו בשלש פרסאות, וכשבא לביתו שיגר לו מתנות

Gabbini the Temple crier--what did he say? "Rise up, O priests, to your service, and Levites, to your platform, and Israelites to your posts!" His voice was audible for three parasangs. Once it happened that King Agrippa was going along and heard his voice from three parasangs, and when he got home he sent him gifts.

edited May 13 at 1:54

answered May 9 at 19:56



Aaron

151 1 3

1 +1 very interesting answer. I've never heard that this idiom might actually refer to something other than a rooster. – Matthew Miller May 9 at 21:31

So, Aaron, how do you understand the cock's crow occurring three times? Does that mean three dawns? – Ray ♦ May 9 at 22:22

No, the Temple crier would call out the proper times for various events throughout the morning. – Aaron May 9 at 22:30

1 @Ray, I thought it was three denials but one cock's crow? – Gone Quiet May 9 at 22:31

@MonicaCellio d'oh. You're right. – Ray ♦ May 9 at 22:32

The "cock crow" was the changing of the roman guard every three hours. Interesting the Catholic Church built a Bronze Rooster statue at Ananias house - if they have this wrong - what else have they theologially blundered?????

answered 5 hours ago



Mike

1