After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.  

Then Jesus said to them, "You will all fall away because of Me this night, for it is written, `I WILL STRIKE DOWN THE SHEPHERD, AND THE SHEEP OF THE FLOCK SHALL BE SCATTERED.'  

"But after I have been raised, I will go ahead of you to Galilee."  

But Peter said to Him, "Even though all may fall away because of You, I will never fall away."  

Jesus said to him, "Truly I say to you that this very night, before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times."  

Peter said to Him, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You." All the disciples said the same thing too...  

Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard (after Jesus’ arrest), and a servant-girl came to him and said, "You too were with Jesus the Galilean."  

But he denied it before them all, saying, "I do not know what you are talking about."  

When he had gone out to the gateway, another servant-girl saw him and said to those who were there, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth."  

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

A little later the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Surely you too are one of them; for even the way you talk gives you away."  

Then he began to curse and swear, "I do not know the man!" And immediately a rooster crowed.  

And Peter remembered the word which Jesus had said, "Before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly.

People have a very stubborn insistence on believing what they WANT to believe.
God’s Reality Check

No matter how many times Jesus taught them they are to be meek & lowly, those who followed Christ WANTED to believe their faith made **them better** than those around them.  
Mark 9: 33 They came to Capernaum; and when He was in the house, He began to question them, "What were you discussing on the way?"  34 **But they kept silent**, for on the way they had discussed with one another which of them was the greatest.  35 Sitting down, He called the twelve and said to them, "If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all."

Matthew 18:1 **At that time the disciples came to Jesus and said, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"**  2 And He called a child to Himself and set him before them,  3 and said, "Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.  4 "Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

Luke says the first time Jesus spoke of the disciples falling away & Peter denying Him was at the Passover/Last Supper.  
Luke 22: 21 "But behold, the hand of the one betraying Me is with Mine on the table.  22 "For indeed, the Son of Man is going as it has been determined; but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!"  23 And they began to discuss among themselves which one of them it might be who was going to do this thing.  24 **And there arose also a dispute among them as to which one of them was regarded to be greatest.**

After three and a half years of Jesus telling them to be humble, what do they all WANTED to believe about themselves?  Jesus chose them because of the greatness of their faith & character.

Even in the garden, Peter declared once again that Jesus was mistaken; that he would NEVER deny Jesus! “All the others might, but not me!”  WHY NOT?

- The greatness of Peter’s character & faith!
- And ALL the disciples said the same thing!  (WHY?)
- The greatness of their character & faith!

THEN came the moment of GOD’S REALITY CHECK.
- In the garden: soldiers - swords - shouting - Jesus’ arrest - what happened?
- WHAT happened to what the disciples WANTED to believe about themselves?
- In the courtyard: questions - accusations - threatening crowd  what happened?
- WHAT happened to what Peter WANTED to believe about himself?
- What did Adam & Eve WANT to believe about themselves?  God must be mistaken!
- What did Peter WANT to believe about Jesus’ & His kingdom?  He must be mistaken!
- What did Jewish leaders WANT to believe about the Messiah?  Jesus must be a liar!
- What did David WANT to believe about his taking of Bathsheba?  I’m above Scripture!
- How BAD is it when people choose to believe what they WANT to believe?  intolerant?
- What happens to the authority of the parents when kids believe what they want to believe?
- WHAT must parents do to show that they love that child?  REALITY CHECK! such as?  
  - pleading?  asking nicely?  bribing?  threats?  emotional outburst?  Do those kinds of parents ever regain their authority?  Can a parent without authority train up a child in the way they should go?  Is our Father in heaven any different?

When children dismiss the authority of their parents and believe what they wish to believe in choosing their actions - EVERY parent knows it’s time for a reality check!  such as?
God’s Reality Check

What was God’s Reality Check on:  Adam & Eve?  Peter?  Jewish Leaders?  King David?  The Israelites?  Paul?  Jerusalem? (70AD)

In light of all this, what is the answer to the age-old question:

**WHY do bad things happen in a world said to be created by a God of Love?**

If the world is full of people who continually choose to believe what they want to believe against God’s authority, then ALL BAD THINGS are **proof** that God is a God of Love!

- What is a terminal illness?
- What is a jail sentence?
- What is a car crash?
- What is an unexpected death?  A funeral of someone much too young?
- What is a bridge collapse?
- What is a drought or heat wave?
- What is the twin towers crashing to the ground?

**WHY DO BAD THINGS KEEP HAPPENING?**  When does it stop?

Hebrews 12:5 and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM; 6 FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES."

Parents, when is the active disciplining of your kids not needed?

*When they humbly respect your authority over them in their speech & behavior!*

Christians, when is the active disciplining of your Father in heaven not needed?

*When you humbly respect His authority over you in your speech & behavior!*

When you see a church that is **puffed up** by their numbers, money, & ministries:

you are guaranteed to see God give them a reality check. Pray for them.

When you see a Believer wanting their efforts of service to be noticed & admired:

you are guaranteed to see God give them a reality check. Forgive them.

When you see a Christian put their time & money first on their desire above God’s:

you are guaranteed to see God give them a reality check. Encourage them!

When you see a sinner humble themselves before God’s Word asking for understanding;

When you see a person humble themselves before others asking for forgiveness;

When you finally see yourself as you really are and ask God to show you mercy;

you are guaranteed to see God pour out His blessings above & beyond what we could ask for.  Remember to respectfully say “Thank you.”

Have you humbled yourself to others, choosing an attitude of kindness & patience, bringing Peace with your words & generosity with good humor in your behavior?

Or do you **CHOOSE TO** see yourself as righteous even as you offend others with an attitude of “I’m right-you’re wrong” & disturbing the peace with your words of accusation & actions of anger?  God’s next “reality check” might be more than you want to pay!