

Luke 22:56

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him.

Analysis

But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him. Peter's first challenge comes from an unexpected source—not a powerful priest or soldier but a servant girl. The verb atenisasa autō (ἀτενίσασα αὐτῷ, 'having looked intently at him') indicates sustained, penetrating gaze. She studies his face in the firelight, and the Greek kai houtos syn autō ēn (καὶ οὗτος σὺν αὐτῷ ἦν, 'this one also was with him') uses syn (σύν, 'with'), the preposition of close association. She doesn't accuse Peter of being Jesus' disciple but simply observes he was 'with him'—guilty by association.

The irony is profound: Peter feared the powerful but falls to the powerless. A paidiskē (παιδίσκη, 'servant girl') has no authority to arrest or harm him, yet Peter's courage evaporates. This reveals that his bravado (v. 33, 'I am ready to go with thee') was self-confidence, not Spirit-confidence. When the Spirit departs, even a servant's observation terrifies. The maid's recognition suggests Peter's Galilean features or mannerisms betrayed him despite sitting silently.

Historical Context

The servant girl was likely the doorkeeper mentioned in John 18:16-17. In ancient society, servants held low status, making Peter's fear more shameful—he fears the judgment of the powerless. Her identification was probably based on Peter having entered with John, whom she knew. Galileans were distinct from Judeans in

speech, dress, and appearance. Peter's fisherman features and northern accent would mark him. That she speaks publicly about him increases Peter's panic—others will now scrutinize him.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. Why does Peter collapse before a powerless servant girl after boldly attacking armed soldiers?
2. What does this reveal about the nature of courage—is it circumstantial or Spirit-empowered?
3. When have you denied Christ before 'powerless' observers rather than face social awkwardness?

Interlinear Text

ἰδοῦσα δὲ αὐτῷ παιδίσκη τις καθήμενον πρὸς τὸ
beheld **But** **him** **maid** **a certain** **as he sat** **by** **G3588**
G1492 G1161 G846 G3814 G5100 G2521 G4314

φῶς Καὶ ἀτενίσασα αὐτῷ εἶπεν Καὶ οὗτος σὺν
the fire **also** **earnestly looked** **him** **and said** **also** **This man** **with**
G5457 G2532 G816 G846 G2036 G2532 G3778 G4862

αὐτῷ ἦν.
him **was**
G846 G2258