

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	παιδίσκῃ	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						