

Luke 22:57

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not.

Analysis

And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not. Peter's first denial is direct and emphatic. The Greek ἔρνησατο λέγον (ἔρνήσατο λέγων, 'he denied saying') uses arneomai (ἀρνέομαι), meaning to disown, repudiate, refuse association with. Jesus used this same verb in Luke 9:23: 'let him deny himself and take up his cross'—Peter denies Christ instead of self. The statement οὐκ οἶδα αὐτόν, γύναι (οὐκ οἶδα αὐτόν, γύναι, 'I do not know him, woman') uses oida (οἶδα), meaning intimate knowledge, not mere acquaintance. Peter claims complete ignorance of the man he confessed as 'the Christ of God' (Luke 9:20).

This lie contradicts three years of discipleship, countless miracles witnessed, intimate conversations, and Peter's recent confession. Yet fear erases memory. The address γύναι (γύναι, 'woman') is respectful but distancing—Peter doesn't engage her claim, simply denies it. Hours earlier he declared, 'Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death' (v. 33). Jesus responded, 'before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice' (v. 34). Peter's self-confidence has become self-destruction.

Historical Context

Peter's denial fulfills Jesus' specific prediction (v. 34). The threefold denial corresponds to the threefold restoration in John 21:15-17. Peter's collapse demonstrates that even apostles are capable of catastrophic failure without God's sustaining grace. Church tradition holds that Peter wept whenever hearing a rooster for the rest of his life. His later boldness (Acts 2-4) came from the Holy

Spirit's empowerment (Acts 2:4), not natural courage. His failure became testimony: the same man who denied Christ before a servant girl later boldly proclaimed Him before the Sanhedrin (Acts 4:8-12).

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How can someone who witnessed Christ's glory deny Him so quickly under pressure?
2. What does Peter's use of 'I do not know him' reveal about how sin distorts truth?
3. How does Jesus' prediction of Peter's denial demonstrate both foreknowledge and patience?

Interlinear Text

ο	δὲ	ἡρνήσατο	αὐτὸν	λέγων,	Γύναι,	οὐκ	οἶδα	αὐτὸν
G3588	And	he denied	him	saying	Woman	not	I know	him

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