

Mark 14:54

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Peter followed him afar off, even into the palace of the high priest: and he sat with the servants, and warmed himself at the fire.

Analysis

Peter followed him afar off (ἀπὸ μακρόθεν, apo makrothen)—The phrase reveals Peter's conflicted state: courageous enough to follow, fearful enough to keep distance. Contrast this with his earlier boast: 'Although all shall be offended, yet will not I' (14:29). **Even into the palace** (ἔως ἔσω εἰς τὴν αὐλήν, heōs esō eis tēn aulēn)—Peter penetrated the high priest's courtyard, likely through John's connections (John 18:15-16).

He sat with the servants, and warmed himself at the fire (συγκαθήμενος μετὰ τῶν ὑπηρετῶν καὶ θερμανόμενος πρὸς τὸ φῶς, synkathēmenos meta tōn hypēretōn kai thermainomenos pros to phōs)—The present participles suggest ongoing action: Peter kept warming himself, seeking physical comfort while his Lord faced interrogation. The fire (φῶς, phōs, literally 'light') becomes ironic—Peter warms himself at the enemies' fire while the Light of the World stands trial inside.

Historical Context

Palestinian nights in early spring (Passover season, March-April) were cold, especially in Jerusalem's elevation (2,500 feet). Courtyards of wealthy homes featured central braziers where servants gathered. These open courtyards allowed Peter to observe the trial proceedings while remaining technically outside. Roman and Jewish elites often had such architectural layouts for servant areas.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What spiritual danger lies in 'following afar off' rather than complete commitment or complete withdrawal?
2. How does Peter's physical comfort-seeking (warming at the fire) parallel spiritual compromise?
3. Why does Mark include the detail of Peter sitting 'with the servants' rather than identifying as a disciple?

Interlinear Text

καὶ ὁ Πέτρος ἀπὸ μακρόθεν ἡκολούθησεν αὐτῷ ἔως
And G3588 Peter off afar followed him even
G2532 G4074 G575 G3113 G190 G846 G2193

ἔσω εἰς τὴν αὐλὴν τοῦ ἀρχιερέως καὶ ἦν
into G1519 G3588 the palace G3588 of the high priest And he sat
G2080 G833 G749 G2532 G2258

συγκαθήμενος μετὰ τῶν ὑπηρετῶν καὶ θερμαινόμενος
G4775 with G3588 the servants And warmed himself
G3326 G5257 G2532 G2328

πρὸς τὸ φῶς
at G3588 the fire
G4314 G5457

Additional Cross-References

John 18:18 (References Peter): And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself.

Matthew 26:3 (Parallel theme): Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas,

John 18:25 (References Peter): And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples? He denied it, and said, I am not.

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