

Mark 14:66

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And as Peter was beneath in the palace, there cometh one of the maids of the high priest:

Analysis

And as Peter was beneath in the palace (Καὶ ὅντος τοῦ Πέτρου κάτω ἐν τῇ αὐλῇ, Kai ontos tou Petrou katō en tē aulē)—The word κάτω (katō, 'below') creates physical and spiritual geography. While Jesus stands trial 'above,' Peter remains 'beneath' in the courtyard, symbolizing his moral descent from the Upper Room's bold declarations. **There cometh one of the maids of the high priest** (ἔρχεται μία τῶν παιδισκῶν τοῦ ἀρχιερέως, erchetai mia tōn paidiskōn tou archiereōs)—A παιδίσκη (paidiskē) was a young female servant, possibly the doorkeeper John mentioned (John 18:17).

Mark's narrative technique interweaves Jesus's faithful confession (vv. 60-64) with Peter's impending denial, creating dramatic irony. While the Master faces the full Sanhedrin's hostility with truth, the servant crumbles before a servant girl's question. The 'maid' (παιδίσκη) contrasts with Peter's earlier self-image as mighty defender (14:29, 47)—undone not by soldiers but by a young woman's recognition.

Historical Context

Large aristocratic homes in Jerusalem featured multi-level architecture with courtyards accessible from the street. The 'upper' area contained formal reception rooms where the Sanhedrin met; the 'lower' courtyard served as servant quarters. Archaeological excavations in Jerusalem's Upper City (where Caiaphas likely lived) confirm such layouts. The charcoal fire around which servants gathered was both for warmth and light, making Peter's face visible.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What is the spiritual significance of Peter being 'beneath' while Jesus is 'above' facing trial?
2. Why does Mark emphasize that Peter's challenger was merely a servant girl, not a threatening authority?
3. How does Peter's physical warmth-seeking at the fire contrast with the spiritual heat Jesus endures?

Interlinear Text

Kαὶ ὅντος τοῦ Πέτρου ἐν τῇ αὐλῇ κάτω ἔρχεται
And was G3588 as Peter in G3588 the palace beneath there cometh
G2532 G5607 G4074 G1722 G833 G2736 G2064

μία τῶν παιδισκῶν τοῦ ἀρχιερέως
G1520 G3588 of the maids G3588 of the high priest
G3814 G749

Additional Cross-References

Mark 14:54 (References Peter): 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.

Matthew 26:58 (References Peter): But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end.