

Questions and Answers

“Jesus answered him, ‘I have spoken openly to the world. I have always taught in the synagogues and in the temple, where all Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. Why do you ask Me? Ask those who have heard Me what I said to them; they know what I said.’” John 18:20-21.

Jesus said these words in response to the high priest's questions about Jesus and His disciples. The high priest, instead of going to Jesus and hearing Him, arrested Him in secret and at night. And they didn't question Jesus in order to understand Jesus. They used His answers to put Him to death. But the thing is that, as Israel's leaders, they should be asking these questions. They were responsible for testing prophets and claims of Messiah. As guardians over God's people, they were responsible for the people who might be led astray by false prophets and false Messiahs. It's not the questions themselves that bothered Jesus, it's *how* they asked the questions and *why* they asked them in the first place.

The *how* had to do with the fact that they arrested Jesus and questioned Him at night when no one was watching. They stopped publicly questioning Jesus because Jesus frequently publicly humiliated them with His answers. Before they arrested Him, they came to Jesus, believing they had unanswerable questions – questions which Jesus easily answered.

The *why* had to do with the fact that they questioned Jesus in order to use His answers as reasons to put Him to death. They weren't interested in a fair trial. They were interested in execution. As political leaders, their means of murder reflected their specialty and occupation. If they were, say, a pack of butchers and meat packers, their means of murder would have looked much different, but they would still have put Jesus to death.

Jesus could have said this today. It's common to encounter someone in person or various media who questions Jesus – His historicity, the validity of New Testament manuscripts, His teachings compared to popular ideologies, etc. Yet it is rare to encounter someone who asks these questions in sincerity. Rarely are the *hows* and *whys* of the questions sincere, though there are those who are sincere. Our scenario is nearly identical to that of the one which played out the night of the death of Jesus. Those who question Jesus are often those who haven't heard His teachings or sought His historicity or followed up the questions of New Testament validity with real research. Though these questions may be asked in movies or television, they're still asked in secret because they're asked at a safe distance from the Christians who have real answers. And the response of Jesus today is the same as the night He died: *I have spoken openly to the world ... I have said nothing in secret.* [DJR]