John 18:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

> Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said.

Analysis

Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me—Jesus invokes proper judicial procedure: testimony must come from witnesses, not the accused. The Greek ἐπερώτας (eperōtas, 'keep asking') suggests repeated, badgering questions. His response, **behold, they know what I said** (ἴδε οὗτοι οἴδασιν, ide houtoi oidasin), appeals to thousands who heard Him teach publicly.

This isn't evasion but legal precision. The Mishnah (later codification of oral law) forbade using an accused's testimony against himself. Jesus demanded legitimate witnesses—exposing that His accusers couldn't produce credible evidence because His teaching contained nothing seditious or heretical when examined honestly.

Historical Context

The Sanhedrin's desperation for false witnesses (Matthew 26:59-60) confirms they lacked legitimate testimony. Jesus's public ministry meant hundreds could verify His words—yet no consistent accusation emerged. This forced them to rely on distorted half-truths and manufactured charges.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus's insistence on proper legal procedure demonstrate that righteousness includes justice, not just mercy?
2. What does the absence of credible accusers reveal about the purity of Jesus's three-year ministry?
3. When facing false accusations, how can you balance Jesus's bold defense of truth with His silence before unjust power?

Interlinear Text

τί	με	ἐπερώτησον	ἐπερώτησον	τοὺς	ἀκηκοότας	τί
Why	**me**	**ask**	**ask**	G3588	**them which heard me**	**Why**
G5101	G3165	G1905	G1905		G191	G5101

ἐλάλησα	αὐτοῖς·	οἴδασιν	οὗτοι	οἴδασιν	ἃ	εἶπον	ἐγώ
I have said	**unto them**	**know**	**they**	**know**	G3739	**said**	**what I**
G2980	G846	G1492	G3778	G1492		G2036	G1473