

John 18:34

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?

Analysis

Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?—Jesus's response is not evasion but diagnostic inquiry. The Greek construction (ἀπὸ σεαυτοῦ σὺ τοῦτο λέγεις, *apo seautou sy touto legeis*) emphasizes "from yourself"—is Pilate asking from genuine political concern, or merely parroting the Jewish accusation?

This question probes whether Pilate seeks truth or performs theater. If Pilate asks personally, "king" means political revolutionary; if echoing Jewish charges, it means Messianic claim. Jesus, even in chains, remains the sovereign interrogator, exposing hearts. Throughout John's Gospel, Jesus never defends himself—he reveals others. This mirrors his later declaration: "For this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth" (v. 37).

Historical Context

Roman governors routinely faced accusations from provincial subjects. Pilate had to discern genuine threats from religious squabbles. His question about kingship was standard protocol for sedition cases, but Jesus's counter-question shifted the trial from legal proceeding to spiritual examination.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. When you question Jesus, are you seeking truth or defending predetermined conclusions?
2. How does Jesus's sovereignty remain intact even when he appears powerless?
3. What does this exchange teach about the difference between political expediency and moral clarity?

Interlinear Text

ἀπεκρίθη	αὐτῷ	ὁ	Ἰησοῦς	ἀφ'	ἐαυτοῦ	σὺ	τοῦτο
answered	him	^{G3588}	Jesus	of	thymself	thou	this thing
G611	G846		G2424	G575	G1438	G4771	G5124

λέγεις	ἢ	ἄλλοι	σοι	εἶπόν	περὶ	ἐμοῦ
Sayest	or	did others	thee	tell it	of	me
G3004	G2228	G243	G4671	G2036	G4012	G1700
