

Luke 23:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing.

Analysis

He questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing— Jesus's absolute silence before Herod fulfills Isaiah 53:7: 'He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth.' The Greek construction (ἐπηρώτα...ἐν λόγοις ικανοῖς, αὐτὸς δὲ οὐδὲν ἀπεκρίνατο αὐτῷ, επέρωτα...en logois hikanois, autos de ouden apekrinato autō) emphasizes the contrast: Herod's 'many words' met with Christ's complete silence—ouden, 'nothing whatsoever.'

This silence is not passive but powerful. To Pilate, Jesus offered measured responses (John 18:34-37); to Herod, nothing. Why? Herod had rejected John the Baptist's testimony, murdered the prophet, and now sought entertainment, not truth. Jesus casts no pearls before swine (Matthew 7:6). The Word made flesh (John 1:14) offers no word to those who have persistently rejected his messengers. This sobering silence warns of judgment to come—there comes a point when God's patience ends and his voice falls silent to the hardened heart (Romans 1:24, 26, 28).

Historical Context

Herod's 'many words' likely included questions about Jesus's miraculous powers, his identity, and perhaps his relationship to John the Baptist. As tetrarch of Galilee, Herod would have received reports of Jesus's ministry throughout his territory for over two years. His questioning may have mixed genuine curiosity with mockery,

seeking to satisfy his long-standing desire to witness Jesus's supernatural abilities firsthand.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What distinguishes those to whom Jesus speaks from those to whom he remains silent, and where do you find yourself?
2. How should Christ's silence before Herod shape our understanding of persistent rejection of God's Word and messengers?

Interlinear Text

ἐπηρώτα	δὲ	αὐτῷ	ἐν	λόγοις	ικανοῖς	αὐτῷ	δὲ
he questioned	Then	him	in	words	many	him	Then
G1905	G1161	G846	G1722	G3056	G2425	G846	G1161
οὐδὲν ἀπεκρίνατο αὐτῷ							
nothing	he answered	him					
G3762	G611	G846					

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 27:14 (Word): And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly.