

Questions related to John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, and Politics

1. The Bible indicates that John the Baptist and Jesus were cousins, with John being six months older than Jesus. How did Jesus show his approval of John's ministry?
2. Tax collectors were Jews who worked for the Romans by gathering taxes from their fellow Jews, who despised them. Tax collectors could pocket the surplus amounts they collected, which made them rich. Roman soldiers were present in Palestine to enforce the Roman occupation and could be enlisted by the tax collectors to coerce people to pay up. Is John's advice to the tax collectors and soldiers critical of Roman authority?
3. Identify one way in which what John and Jesus were doing was similar, and another way in which what they were doing was different.
4. Had John been arrested for challenging Herod's legitimacy as a ruler or for challenging Herod's personal conduct? Explain.
5. How did Jesus react to the news of John's execution? Did his mission change after that?
6. Jesus had religious enemies who tried to get him in trouble with the Roman authorities. One attempt involved trying to trap him into saying something damning in regard to the poll-tax. The poll-tax was an annual fixed sum—one denarius—assessed by Rome on subjects (non-citizens) in the provinces. A denarius was a Roman coin equivalent to a day's wage. The Jewish inhabitants of Palestine were very unhappy about this tax; it was a considerable sum for most people, who were poor, and the money was then used to pay for the Roman occupation of their land. Does Jesus challenge Roman authority when answering whether the tax should be paid? Explain.

7. In Luke 13, Jesus is told about an atrocity committed by Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea. Is Jesus critical of Pilate in his reaction to the report? Explain.

8. As regards religion, what did the Jewish leaders have against Jesus?

9. What two lies were told by the Jewish leaders when they brought Jesus before Pilate?

10. Since Jesus was from Galilee, which was governed by Herod rather than Pilate, Pilate attempted to shift Jesus's case to Herod, who happened to be in Jerusalem at the time for Passover. Did Jesus challenge Herod when he appeared before him?

11. Since neither Herod nor Pilate agreed with the charge of rebellion, a crime punishable by death, why did Pilate go ahead and have Jesus crucified?

12. During his trial Jesus acknowledged to Pilate that he was in fact "a king." What does Jesus say about his kingdom in John 18?

13. According to Matthew 25, when will Jesus's kingdom come to fruition in a political sense? On what basis will every individual who has ever lived be judged?