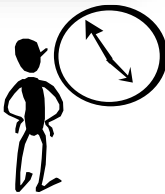


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### Time of Assembly



#### **Sunday:**

Bible Study	9:00 a.m.
Worship	10:00 a.m.
Worship	5:00 p.m.
(every other week)	

#### **Wednesday:**

Bible Study	6:30 p. m.
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## What Shall We Do with Jesus?

By Doy Moyer

Jesus does not allow us to be neutral about Him. We are not left with the option of just calling Jesus a good man while denying His claims. If He was not who He claimed to be, He was delusional at best and a lying manipulator at worst. Or if, as some argue, it's all legend, then He is the product of liars who had no reason to pass such a false story around in the face of their own peril. Again, there is no neutrality here. We are either for Jesus or against Him (Matthew 12:30).

Pilate asked the people this question when they chose to release Barabbas over Jesus. *"Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" They all said, "Crucify Him!" And he said, "Why, what evil has He done?" But they kept shouting all the more, saying, "Crucify Him!"* (Matthew 27:22-23, NASB95). Is that our answer, too? When we choose sin over Jesus, we are essentially saying, "Crucify Him." It is even possible that in departing from the Lord, we crucify Jesus afresh and put Him to open shame (Hebrews 6:4-6). Our choices matter, for by our actions, we tell Jesus what we want to do with Him.

Like Peter, we might deny Jesus (Matthew 26:69-75). Like Judas, we might betray Him (Matthew 26:47-50). Like Saul, we might persecute Him (Acts 9:4-5). And like Pharisees and others, we might test, plot, and try to find ways to justify why we shouldn't accept Him. The responses to Jesus ran across the spectrum back then as they do today. We all must come face to face with what we will do with Jesus.

Many did believe and accept Jesus and His claims. While Peter denied Jesus with great regret, Peter also showed tremendous insight and boldness in confessing Him. "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" Jesus asked. While there were

various opinions about Him (some said He was Elijah, Jeremiah, or one of the other prophets), when Jesus turned that question directly to the disciples, Peter responded, “*You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God*” (Matthew 16:13-20). Jesus commended this answer. Ultimately, it is the answer we must all give. “*Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins*” (John 8:24).

When Peter preached on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), he showed that the events occurring that day were what had been prophesied by Joel. He quoted from David in the Psalms to show how there was anticipation of messianic resurrection, then argued that Jesus fulfilled the promise given to David that he would have a descendent to sit on his throne (II Samuel 7:12-13). Jesus was raised from the dead to sit on that throne and so is declared to be Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36).

The message about Christ moved the hearers, prompting the same essential question: “*What shall we do?*” Peter told them to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins and to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). Over three thousand did so on that day. What would they do with Jesus? They would accept the truth about Him, respond to His gospel, and be added to His body by the Lord. He desires all to make this choice.

The book of Acts provides many positive and negative examples of people responding to this question about what to do with Jesus. We see thousands of Jews and Gentiles submitting themselves to the Lord. We also see many who disbelieved and, in some cases, tried to cause problems for the Lord’s people. Acts is all about what people do with Jesus.

One reason Jesus has been a divisive figure is because He forces people to deal with the most important questions of life. When we choose Christ, we are choosing self-denial (Luke 9:23), submission to others (Philippians 2:3-4), being living sacrifices, and replacing the old with the new (Romans 12:1-2; Colossians 3:1-11). “*What shall we do with Jesus?*” is not a question that can be dismissed, for in that very act, we are giving a definitive answer of choosing self over the Lord.

Is there any more important question we may answer? Our answer will affect every part of life, for once we put on Christ, everything we do will be to glorify Him (I Corinthians 10:31), please Him (II Corinthians 5:9), and live for Him (II Corinthians 5:15). Whatever we do will be done in His name as we thank Him for His grace and mercy (Colossians 3:17). Yet once we understand our need for Him and what He has done for us, how can we turn away from Him who died for us?

Make it personal. What shall I do with Jesus? What shall you do with Jesus?

**Abortion is when a baby gets the death penalty for someone else’s actions.**

## Jesus and Baptism

By Doy Moyer

On the third day of creation, God separated the dry land from the waters, and life came through the water (Genesis 1:9-13). This pattern was seen again when life came through the waters after the flood (Genesis 8:6-12). Again, it was seen when the children of Israel passed through the Red Sea into a new life in covenant with God (Exodus 14:26-31). This theme of life coming through water can be seen repeatedly throughout Scripture, with its New Testament counterpart and fulfillment in Christ and baptism (see I Peter 3:20-21; I Corinthians 10:1-4).

When John was going before Christ to prepare the way, he was baptizing for repentance and remission of sins (Luke 3:3). Jesus, who did not need to repent or be forgiven, came to John to be baptized. *“John would have prevented him, saying, ‘I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?’ But Jesus answered him, ‘Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.’ Then he consented”* (Matthew 3:14-15 ESV).

Why was Jesus baptized? *“To fulfill all righteousness”* is the immediate answer, but what does this mean? We can say, “to do the right thing,” but more is going on. Jesus began the process by which people are reconciled with God. He came to complete God’s plan, which meant identifying Himself with John’s work and purposes. John was the forerunner to Jesus, pointing to Him as the Messiah. Jesus validated John’s work by submitting to baptism and showing He was indeed the Messiah, the Son of God, and the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29-34). Jesus identified Himself with all believers who were looking for the kingdom. This act inaugurated His ministry, in which He preached the kingdom and told people to repent. It prepared the way for the new life in Him. It really was a beginning point that would culminate in His death, resurrection, and ascension.

Jesus’ baptism foreshadowed His own work that He would accomplish. Baptism is an immersion in which death, burial, and resurrection are represented. Paul pointed to this as a model for all believers: *“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life”* (Rom 6:3-4). Jesus’ baptism looked ahead to His death, burial, and resurrection, which, in turn, serves as a pattern for believers.

For Jesus, baptism was no trivial matter, and His example is to be followed. He never asked anyone to do what He was unwilling to do. His ministry began with baptism, and His instructions about baptism were foundational to what He wanted His disciples to do. We see this in the great commission: *“And Jesus came and said to them,*

*“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:18-20).*

Through baptism, disciples identify with Jesus and His shed blood. He taught people to baptize by His authority. On the day of Pentecost, when Peter preached the gospel, he said to those asking what they should do, *“Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).* Baptism is still for repentance and remission of sins, in the name of Jesus, and following His pattern.

As indicated, baptism means we are imitating the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus (Romans 6:3-4). Many other New Testament passages show this act's significance (cf. Galatians 3:26-27; Colossians 2:12-14; I Peter 3:20-21; Acts 22:16, etc.). It's not just some cold ritual; it's about appealing to God for forgiveness by the blood of Jesus and identifying with Him in His death and resurrection. We also identify with others in His kingdom who now look forward to His second coming. And because of that, we plead with others to be reconciled to God.

Jesus is the One who provides true meaning to baptism. He laid the foundation for it in His own baptism, told His disciples to go baptize others in their disciple-making, and continues to work through those who are baptized into Him now. *“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Galatians 3:27).* Life still comes through the water even as the blood of Christ saves us.

## Painful Truths

By Zeke Flores

Sometimes, the truth hurts.

You're losing your hair. (Ouch!)

You're a little overweight. (Double ouch!)

You're in sin. (OOOWWW!)

We've heard it said, “The truth hurts.” Who hasn't been stung when the truth is critical to us personally or contradicts us in some way? The truth can tend to expose our deficiencies and pierce our souls. Sometimes, our reaction to *constructive criticism* is hurt feelings, which might morph into resistance to the critique, even though we know that if we changed, it would be better for us. But, stubborn people that we can be, we dig in and refuse. Somebody once said, “The truth will set you free, but first, it will make you mad.” Yes, sometimes the truth hurts.

We can learn from some ancient priests and elders how they reacted to the truth when Jesus flatly brought them to a decision (Matthew 21:23-27). When they challenged Jesus' authority, He simply asked them about John's (the Baptist) baptism. Was it from God and thereby approved by Him, or was it simply a man-made ritual? They

were between the proverbial rock and a hard place. They couldn't say John's baptism was from God because that would authenticate Jesus and His work since John endorsed Jesus. To agree that John's baptism was from God would be to recognize the authority of Jesus. They couldn't repudiate John because everyone else thought John was certainly a God-approved prophet. So they played dumb.

Do we do as these ancient religious leaders did? When we read or hear God's word, and it flatly contradicts our beliefs, our inclinations, or our actions, do we just decide not to deal with it at all? Maybe we look for excuses ("I couldn't help it!"), or even rationalizations ("Look at him over there! He does the same thing!"). But all the excuse-making and rationalizing doesn't change the truth. As Winston Churchill once said, "The truth is incontrovertible. Malice may attack it, ignorance may deride it, but in the end, there it is."

Jesus said we'll be judged by truth, specifically the truth of His word (John 12:48). While the truth can hurt when it points out our flaws, ignoring it hurts worse. Yes, sometimes the truth hurts, but it always helps.

*"He who rejects me and does not receive my word has one who judges him. The words I spoke will judge him on the last day"* (John 12:48).

## Love Versus Trust

By Terry Wane Benton

Jesus loved everyone, including the Pharisees, but Jesus did not entrust Himself to everyone He loved. Otherwise, He would not have exited their presence those several times they wanted to capture and kill Him. Dying was on Jesus' schedule when the time and place were right. Therefore, He loved and wanted goodwill for them, but love and trust are not always the same.

I love my neighbors, but trust is another issue. I had one neighbor who asked me to go into his garage while he was away on vacation to get seeds to keep his birds fed. What he was doing was setting me up for a possible suspect. He hid his wife's jewelry and called the police to report a theft so he could collect insurance. I was a possible suspect since there was no sign of forced entry, and I had a key the week they were gone. Later, his wife confessed to me privately that he was a scoundrel, that she knew we had not stolen from them, and that there was no missing jewelry. Needless to say, I learned that I could love both my neighbors while not trusting one of them. My name could have been tarnished for trusting a man that had good motives in asking me to keep his birds fed.

You can love (have goodwill) for everyone, but that does not mean that love and trust are the same thing. Beware of false teachers! You can't trust everyone! You have to keep people in proper perspective. Not everyone has good motives and intentions! Some have terrible motives and intentions. Be careful and discerning while holding goodwill toward all!