

**“WHAT IS TRUTH?”**  
**John 18:33-40**  
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**INTRODUCTION**

Many have asked the question: “What is truth?” Some have asked sincerely and have found the real answer. More have asked *carelessly* or *skeptically*, or *cynically* and have died in spiritual confusion and bewilderment.

In the passage before us, we see three responses to Jesus at the time of His death: **faith** in those who believe the Truth He reveals, **hardness** in those who seek His death, and **unbelief** in the one who determines to remain skeptical.

We can find these same three responses in our society today. Which response is yours?

The apostle John shows us Jesus’ real identity, the believers’ obedient response, the hardened persons’ rejection, and the skeptic’s confusion.

**I. JESUS’ TRUE IDENTITY**

**A. His Kingship (ruler over a kingdom)**

1. Correct conclusion—**a king** (v. 37a)
2. Contrast false appearances (v. 33)

**B. His Source of Authority (36)**

1. Not of this world
  2. No fighting servants—soldiers
  3. Not from here
- Fourfold repetition of “**my**”.

**C. His Purposeful Life (37)**

1. His Origin
  - a. Birth (*have been born*)
  - b. Preexistence (*have come into the world*)
2. His Mission: “Bear witness to the truth.”
  - a. Objective reality of the **truth**—not merely a true testimony.
  - b. Supporting and defending the truth—not merely in regard to the truth.
  - c. Real relationship of His person to the truth (14:6).

**II. THE BELIEVER’S OBEDIENT RESPONSE (37c)**

- A. His spiritual origin is from the truth—the truth transforms his life.
- B. He hears and obeys the truth—that is **Jesus’ voice**.

**III. THE HARDENED PERSONS’ REJECTION (40)**

They choose a hardened criminal rather than the Son of God.  
Barabbas’ name means “a son of a father.” **In rejecting Jesus, they rejected THE Son**

**of THE Father.** They asked for the release of a true insurrectionist and murderer (see synoptic gospels) and asked for the death of an innocent man accused of those very crimes!

Notice the scorn: Not *this man*.

#### IV. THE SCEPTIC'S CONFUSION

##### A. His Opportunities

1. Confronted with Jesus (33)
2. Influenced by others (34-35)
3. Given an appeal by Christ (36-37)

##### B. His Rejection

1. His skeptical dismissal: **“What is truth?”** (38a)
  - Does not ask about “THE Truth”.
  - Does not have a sincere wish to know.
  - His is not the “despairing skepticism of a baffled thinker.”
  - He is not speaking in a “light spirit of jesting.” (Plummer)
  - This dismissal is “the half pitying, half impatient question of a practical man of the world.” He sees truth as but a “dream of enthusiasts.” For him, a kingdom where truth is supreme is “as visionary as the Stoics” (Plummer, p. 319).
2. His kind platitudes about Jesus' innocence: “I find no basis of legal condemnation in Him—none at all!” **Yet, he was not sufficiently impressed positively that he would consider submitting his life to Him!** (38)
3. His attempt at a deed of kindness (39-40)

Release Jesus according to the Passover custom—but as one supposedly condemned (though innocent!).

Even here his words are somewhat contemptuous—“The King of the Jews.

Many a skeptic and unbeliever has attempted religious good deeds, or offered some words of kindness or flattery while **still rejecting Christ's lordship over their lives.**

#### CONCLUSION

Which response will you have? **Jesus has made known His true identity.**

- Will you “hear and obey” His voice?
- Will you reject Him with a hard heart?
- Will you turn from Him as a confused skeptic?