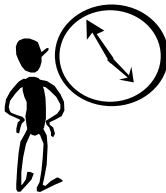


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Time of Assembly



Sunday:

Bible Study	9:00 a.m.
Worship	10:00 a.m.
Worship	5:00 p.m.

Wednesday:	7:00 p. m.
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The Unique Religion of Christ

By Dillard Thurman

There are many religions in the world, but Christianity is unique! It stands alone. Whereas our coins bear the inscription: "E Pluribus Unum," to signify "one among many," it is surely not true in regard to Christianity. It is a unique religion. That word, "unique," allows only one of a kind. Uniqueness is a dominant -- factor -- in Christianity. It is best set forth by the apostle Paul: "*There is one body, and one Spirit; even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in you all*" ([Ephesians 4:4-6](#)). Each facet is unique.

A recognition of the truths presented in the above passage would utterly destroy sectarianism and denominationalism in the world today. False teachers have sought to introduce the many, but God's Word has declared ONE. This is God's platform for religious unity.

IT IS UNIQUE: "THERE IS ONE BODY."

God's inspired Word declares there is ONE body. It also clearly defines that one body. Paul asserts that God raised Jesus Christ from the dead, "*And gave Him to be the Head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all*" ([Ephesians 1:22,23](#)). Thus, the body is the church, and Christ is the Head of it. "*He is Head of the body, the church*" ([Colossians 1:18](#)). There is ONE body and ONE Head. If there were several bodies, there would have to be several heads over them! But Christ is God's "*only begotten Son*" ([John 3:16](#)), and God gave Him to be Head over His church.

Paul wrote of the afflictions he endured, "*For His body's sake, which is the church*" ([Colossians 1:24](#)). The Lord

adds the saved to that one spiritual body, His church ([Acts 2:41,47](#)), when He saves them. He never added a member to any body other than that "one body" over which He is the Head. *"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews of Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit ... Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular ... So we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another"* ([1 Cor. 12:12,13,27](#); [Rom. 12:5](#)). One body -- one church!

False teachers point to hundreds of churches and implore men to "join the church of your choice." But God never set forth that concept. Nor is Christ the Head of churches which false doctrines have established. Rather, He said, *"Every plant, which My heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up"* ([Matthew 15:13](#)). Thus Jesus gave warning against denominations, and He prayed diligently against every one of them ([John 17:20-23](#)). There is one church which He approves: *"Christ also loved the church...and He is the Savior of the body"* ([Ephesians 5:23,25](#)). That church is unique; who will guarantee to save the other churches?

IT IS UNIQUE: "THERE IS ONE SPIRIT"

As there is but one body, so there is but ONE Spirit. That one Spirit gives life to the one body ([II Corinthians 3:6](#)). *"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body"* ([I Corinthians 12:13](#)). God promised that penitent believers would receive the Holy Spirit when they were baptized ([Acts 2:38](#)). As Paul wrote later, *"Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father"* ([Galatians 4:6](#)). These same saints were then exhorted to be led by the Spirit (Galatians 5). The Holy Spirit was to be shared by all: *"If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His ... The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God"* ([Romans 8:9,16](#)). This "one Spirit," though shared by all the believers, gave infallible inspiration to the apostles to enable them to reveal God's Will to mankind ([Hebrews 2:2-4](#); [I Peter 1:10-12](#); [I Corinthians 2:10-13](#)).

To offset the work of false teachers, it is shown that Spirit is singular! *"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit .. but all these worketh that one and selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will"* ([I Corinthians 12:4,11](#)). False teachers have many in number, and thus have repudiated the ONE Spirit which brought God's revelation to man. John had to warn against them: *"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world"* ([I John 4:1](#)). God again warns, *"The Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils"* ([I Timothy 4:1](#)). Please notice that both "spirits" and

"doctrines" are plural, whereas the Spirit of God is one -- unique.

IT IS UNIQUE: "THERE IS ONE HOPE"

Paul speaks of the "*Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope*" ([I Timothy 1:1](#)). And again to the saints he speaks of the "*mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory*" ([Colossians 1:27](#)). God's people must always be "*looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ*" ([Titus 2:13](#)). For we are "*made heirs according to the hope of eternal life*" ([Titus 3:7](#)). Here is the great motivation given to all "*who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil*" ([Hebrews 6:18, 19](#)). Ours is a "*better hope ... by which we draw nigh unto God*" ([Hebrews 7:19](#)). Gentiles were "*without hope and without God in the world,*" so Jesus Christ died to reconcile them to God, giving them hope ([Ephesians 2:12-16](#)). Jesus is not just A hope, but THE hope of the world!

Our hope is in the Lord Jesus Christ, for "in Christ" are "*all spiritual blessings*" ([Ephesians 1:3](#)), including salvation ([II Timothy 2:10](#)). There is no hope outside of Jesus Christ. Therefore, there is no hope outside of Jesus Christ. This means also that there is no hope outside of His body, the church, for Christ and His church are one ([Ephesians 5:22-32](#)). The hope of Christ is unique. But who offers hope outside of Christ and His body?

IT IS UNIQUE: "THERE IS ONE LORD"

Even before Paul set forth that there is "*one Lord,*" Peter had declared, "*He is Lord of all*" ([Acts 10:36](#)). Paul speaks of "*our Lord Jesus Christ, which in His times He shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords*" ([I Timothy 6:14,15](#)). Jesus Christ is ONE Lord over all who embrace the truth. And that will be recognized by saint and sinner at the judgment where "*every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*" ([Philippians 2:11](#)). Jesus taught this truth very pointedly, "*Ye call Me Master and Lord, and ye say well; for so I am*" ([John 13:13](#)). As He is the one Lord, it is then necessary that all people render obedience to Him as Lord!

The religious world has long accepted many lords, rather than accepting Jesus Christ as the ONE Lord. To all such He still asks, "*Why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?*" ([Luke 6:26](#)). Accepting Jesus Christ as the one Lord of life means far more than merely crying out to Him. "*Not everyone that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven*" ([Matthew 7:21](#)). When Jesus is accepted as the one Lord, then religious leaders will not be followed into sectarian churches and denominational practices!

IT IS UNIQUE: "THERE IS ONE FAITH"

The one faith is repeatedly referred to in the Scriptures. "*Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints*" ([Jude 3](#)). The ONE faith was once for all time delivered to the saints, and God has never authorized another. "What is your faith?" is just as absurd as "Which Lord do you serve?" or "Which God do you worship?" Paul exhorts the saints to "*continue in the faith*" ([Acts 14:22](#)), churches were "*established in the faith*" ([Acts 16:5](#)), and "*Felix heard Paul concerning the faith*" ([Acts 24:24](#)).

The Holy Spirit warned, "*Some shall depart from the faith*" ([I Timothy 4:1](#)). Different "faiths" have been promoted by religious teachers until the "one faith" is almost completely ignored! But, since "*faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God*" ([Romans 10:17](#)), it naturally will follow that only one faith is found where all of God's Word is accepted as authority and the source of faith, and all else is refused.

IT IS UNIQUE: "THERE IS ONE BAPTISM"

When Paul said there is one baptism, the baptism of John had long before served its purpose and passed away ([Acts 19:1-7](#)). The baptism of the Holy Spirit had been visited upon the apostles (Jews, [Acts 2](#)) and the house of Cornelius (Gentiles, [Acts 10 & 11:15](#)). Christ's baptism of suffering had been accomplished at Calvary. The baptism of fire ([Matthew 3:11, 12](#)) was far in the future. The "one baptism" is that which Jesus Christ set forth in the commission: "*Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned*" ([Mark 16:15,16](#)). This baptism was preached by Peter in Jerusalem on Pentecost ([Acts 2:38-41](#)), was presented to Saul ([Acts 22:16](#)), was baptism in water ([Acts 8:36-39; 10:47,48](#)) for the forgiveness of sins.

The "one baptism" puts one "into Christ" ([Galatians 3:27; Romans 6:3; I Corinthians 12:13](#)). It is to save people from their sins ([Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; I Peter 3:21](#)). God never authorized a saved person to be baptized, nor did He authorize any baptism into a denomination. There is ONE baptism, authorized by God, binding on men today. That one baptism is the one you find being recorded repeatedly in the book of Acts.

IT IS UNIQUE: "THERE IS ONE GOD"

Jesus Christ set forth this truth in bold relief in saying "*The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord*" ([Mark 12:29](#)). So it should not arouse controversy to introduce Paul's words, "*There is none other God but one*" ([I Corinthians 8:4](#)). Again he wrote, "*For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*" ([I Timothy 2:5](#)). Paul's entire discourse on

Mar's Hill was to convince the Athenians that there is only one God ([Acts 17:22-31](#)). One God sits above the whole of the universe He had made.

But you say there is one God? Let's see what must follow such an admission! All men out of Christ's body are "*without hope, and without God in the world*" ([Ephesians 2:12](#)). To become a child of God, it is necessary to "*be baptized into Christ*" ([Galatians 3:26,27](#)). It is then that we can look to God as Father, being in His house (the church, [I Timothy 3:15](#)). Now notice particularly the lineage of one who is IN Christ: "*But I would have you know, that the Head of every man is Christ ... and the Head of Christ is God*" ([I Corinthians 11:3](#)). One who has not come into Christ does not have Christ as the Head, and has no affiliation with God as his Father! And if this seems harsh, then listen to His Word: "*Whosoever goeth onward, and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God, he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son*" ([II John 9ff ASV](#)). If you accept this one God, you must abide in Christ's teaching.

Yes, Christianity is UNIQUE. You must be willing to accept the one body (church), one hope, one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism and one God. Don't accuse me of being too straitlaced. That is God's decree!

An Anecdote from "Raccoon" John Smith

By Louis Cochran

In passing a Methodist camp meeting one day in September he stopped to watch a young Methodist preacher baptize a howling, rebellious infant by sprinkling water on the squirming body. When the service was concluded, he stepped to the front of the crowd and, identifying himself, took the preacher firmly by the arm and attempted to lead him toward the creek a few yards away.

"What are you trying to do, Brother Smith?" the young preacher protested. "Are you out of your mind?"

"What am I trying to do?" John affected deep surprise. "Why, sir, I am going to baptize you by immersion into the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to his commandment."

"But I have no desire for such baptism. I know of you; you are called 'The Dipper.' But you are not going to dip me. I'm a Methodist; let me go!"

John tightened his hold on the man's arm while the crowd watched, some in apprehension, others in amusement. "That is a scoffer's blasphemy of a holy ordinance," John said sternly. "Are you a believer?"

"Of course I'm a believer," the preacher said indignantly. "But I'm not willing