

Worship, for many, has become a common event. This was very evident about 10 years ago when a push was made for casual dress. Today, people are told everything in life is worship. Your job is worship. Go fishing or golfing and “worship” God. Clean the house and you are worshipping. One lady even claimed that changing her baby’s diaper was worship. There is no longer a unique time when we come into the presence of God in a special way. In stark contrast to this, the Word of God shows that worship is an exceptional event. There is a special day set aside along with special activities (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1, 2). There are occasions when worship is conducted on a more frequent basis, but it is still distinguished from regular, every day life (Acts 2:42-47).

The religion of Christ is unique. Let us give it its due, holding it as something holy.

- Steven F. Deaton

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## Why?

“Why” is a powerful question. Why am I here? Why does it matter how I live my life? Why should I care about anything or anyone?

Every religion strives to answer the question of “why” in one way or another. Even the atheistic religion of secular humanism gives its answer, namely you are here by accident, it doesn’t matter how you live your life, and you should care because man is the guardian and god of the planet. These and all other answers from false religions are inadequate at best and soul-damning at worst.

First, let’s start with the fact that we exist. This fact means someone made us. The human body, universe, and planet earth are complex entities. Just as we know a computer or automobile were conceived and created by an intelligent being, so it is with us and our world (Heb. 3:4). Anyone who denies the fact that the universe and all things in it were made by someone is either delusional or willfully ignorant (Rom. 1:18-23).

Second, since we were created by a Creator, and are sustained by that Creator, we must seek to know Him (Acts 14:15-17). We can know of His existence from observing the world around us, but we can only know His will from His revelation (Psa. 19; 1 Cor. 2:10-13). As the creation, it is our obligation to seek to know and please our Benefactor.

Third, God has made know His will. Evidence that the Bible is the Word of God is overwhelming to the open-minded inquirer (Jn. 7:17). It stands head and shoulders above all other ancient documents for its authenticity and reliability. There are around 25,000 New Testament manuscripts, over 5,000 of which are written in Greek, some dating to within 25-50 years of the originals. No other ancient writing comes close. What we have is authentic.

Fourth, the Word we have—the all-inspired Word—tells us we will die and face

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judgment (Heb. 9:27). The fact that we will die is obvious. That we will be judged by an Almighty God is not discernable by man's innate abilities. So, the Creator's Word tells us about the day of reckoning and what we must do to prepare for it. We must love God and our fellow man (Matt. 22:37-40).

Finally, why? We are here because God created us to have fellowship with Him, to please Him (Gen. 1-3). It matters how we live because we will be held accountable for it (2 Cor. 5:10). We should care about others, because they are God's creatures and, again, we will be held responsible (Lk. 10:25-37).

- Steven F. Deaton

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## What?

Death is a part of life. Even Methuselah, who lived 969 years, died. The Bible says that we have an appointment with death, unless the Lord returns first (Heb. 9:27; 1 Thes. 4:13-17). What awaits man after death?

The Bible teaches that when men die, they will go to one of two places in the realm of the dead, Hades (Lk. 16:19-31). Those who are righteous will go to Abraham's bosom, or paradise (Lk. 23:43). Those who are unrighteous will go to torments. They will remain in their respective condition until the resurrection at the return of the Lord when Hades will give up the dead (Rev. 20:13).

On the Day of Judgment, those who were dead will be raised to live again, while those who are living will be changed in the twinkling of an eye (1 Cor. 15:50-53). Those who have done good will be raised to the resurrection of life; those who have done evil to the resurrection of condemnation (Jn. 5:28, 29). The resurrection of life leads to a home in heaven where there is no sorrow, pain, tears, or death, and no darkness (Rev. 21:4-7; 22:1-5). The resurrection of condemnation brings weeping and gnashing of teeth in eternal fiery torment (Mk. 9:44-48).

So, what do you want your fate to be? What are you going to do about it?

- Steven F. Deaton

## An Un-Unique Religion

The religion of Christ is presented as a unique religion in the New Testament. It is the religion that was so radical that it "turned the world upside down" (Acts 17:6). It was "spoken against everywhere" (Acts 28:22).

Jesus' religion was not a go-along-get-along movement. It confronted conflicting doctrines and practices, condemning them in no uncertain terms (2 Cor. 10:3-5). Those who were caught up in contrary religions were told to cease and desist, and submit to Christ (Acts 8:4-13; 14:8-18; 17:16-34; Eph. 4:17-24).

Sadly, most men do not see the religion of Christ as unique. No longer is there a definitive standard, singular head, special people, or distinctive worship. Little, if anything, is holy; all is common.

Most men no longer accept that the Bible is the final say in matters pertaining to life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3). Rather, it is each to his own. Your experience and personal interpretation is different than mine, the argument goes. What may be right for you is not right for me. However, the Word of God still declares there is one body of truth, called the faith, that is to guide all men (Eph. 4:5; Jude 3; Mk. 16:15).

Some gave up the idea that there is One Head of the church centuries ago. Roman Catholics believe the pope is head of the church on earth. Many denominations have governing, law-making bodies that oversee their churches. Whether it is one man or a group of men, the effect is the same—a rival to the authority of Jesus as THE Head of the church with the sole right to govern His religion (Eph. 1:22, 23). The Bible still teaches that Jesus has all authority, leaving none for men (Matt. 28:18).

Men do not believe there is one distinctive group of people going to heaven. The great majority of our religious friends and neighbors believe there are Christians in all churches who will go to heaven. In fact, you would be hard pressed to find someone in a denomination that would definitively declare that someone from another denomination is going to hell. Additionally, more people are accepting the idea that even those who reject Jesus as the Christ are doomed. As long as someone is sincere and generally good, they will probably go to heaven is the thought. Contrary to this, the Bible teaches the people of God are special and the ONLY ones going to heaven (1 Pet. 2:9, 10; Eph. 4:4; 5:22-27).