

ALLAH- ISLAM'S GOD

One of the most often used approaches in trying to downplay the difference in true Christianity as compared to the religion of Islam is that we worship the same God which is listed in the Bible. Unfortunately, this claim often goes unanswered. Is this claim accurate or is it simply given to politicize the Islamic religion while at the same time seeking compromise between Islam and “Judeo-Christian” religions. The easiest way to understand any religion is to take a close and careful look into the character of its god. This study will help us to understand the characteristics of Allah, and it will contrast what the Quran teaches about Allah and what the Bible teaches about God.

What Does Allah Mean?

Around the time when Muhammad claimed to begin having revelations from Gabriel, he became unsatisfied with the polytheistic worship being offered by the surrounding Arabs (Geisler 17). It is not sure to what extent the religions of Judaism and Christianity influenced Muhammad’s thinking, but it is known that Muhammad began to hold to a strict monotheistic teaching as opposed to the current polytheistic worship which was being practiced. As Muhammad’s influence grew, he began to be more forceful on those who were still practicing polytheism and adapted the word “Allah” which had been previously used in a general sense of “a god” to meaning the “one and only true God” (Geisler 18).

A common claim made today is that when Muslims use the term “Allah,” they are simply using the Arabic form of the word god. Furthermore, many claim that Arabic “Christians” use the same term to refer to the God of the Bible. Many Muslims believe that when they are referring to “Allah,” that they are referring to the same God which is represented in the Bible. For the average Muslim, this is a sincere belief based on what they have been taught. One of the verses used to support this claim is Surah 2:136.

Say: We believe in Allah and (in) that which has been revealed to us, and (in) that which was reveled to Abraham, and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and (in) that which was given to Moses and Jesus, and (in) that which was given to the prophets from their Lord, we do not make any distinction between any of them and to Him do we Submit. (Surah 2:136)

There are many problems with this idea that “Allah” is just another name for the God listed in the Bible. One of the key difficulties for Muslims who believe this is that the historical record of Muhammad and the historical beginning of the Islam faith neither proves nor maintains this teaching as it was recorded centuries later. Yet, the Bible does not teach salvation as recorded in the Quran and this produces serious confusion for the Muslim who believes Allah inspired both the Bible and the Quran. God cannot lie (cf. Tit 1:2), so the God of the Bible cannot be the Allah of the Qur’an given that the two are in contradiction. One is God and one is a god, but both cannot be God and the same.

What Is the Origin of the Muslim Idea of Allah?

Before Muhammad claimed “Allah” as the name of the only true god, “Allah” was the name of the Arabian moon god (<http://www.biblebelievers.org.au/moongod.htm>). Pre-Islamic Arabia was filled with idolatry. A pantheon of gods were followed and worshipped, similar to the much more familiar Greek and Roman gods and goddesses. “Allah” was the supreme deity, similar to Zeus in Greek mythology. Muhammad took the name of the supreme deity of Arabian culture and created a monotheistic religion with the supreme god (Allah) as its foundation.

The evidence that the name of “Allah” was used before Muhammad’s declaration of it as the supreme deity can be seen in the name of Muhammad’s father, Abdullah, or Adb-Allah, which means slave of god (Geisler 17). This is just one example of the name “Allah” having existed. These facts can also be noticed in the negative form of the Muslim creed, “there is no god except Allah” (Geisler 17). Why would there be the need for the negative statement, if that name had never been used in the past, or if the Arabs had not been polytheistic?

It is also interesting to make some connections between popular Muslim symbols and the origin of the religion. The Ka’aba, the most important landmark in Islam, was originally used as a temple to the Arabic pantheon (Geisler 18). The predominant symbol of Islam is the crescent moon, a symbol of “Allah,” the moon god of the Arabians. Another interesting fact to note is that Muslims use a lunar calendar, based upon the phases of the moon.

As mentioned above, the evidence shows that Muhammad was born into a paganistic society which worshipped many gods, the greatest of which was the moon god, “Allah.” Muhammad, who was determined to be monotheistic, decided “Allah” was to be recognized as the “only god” and not just “a god”. His technique was very much like many religions today. He did not desire the people to completely change in order to accept a slight variation of their currently held beliefs. In doing so, he allowed many of the traditions found in the other polytheistic religions to roll over into his new religion. This practice was also used by the Catholics which led to Christ’s birth being celebrated during the time of Saturnalia (a celebration of the Roman god Saturn) and on the day many celebrated the birth of the god Mithrus (a Persian mystery religion god who was worshipped in Roman culture).

What Are Some Major Similarities with Both Allah and the God of the Bible?

We will deal with these similarities very quickly because there would be very little debate amongst adherents to the Quran and the Bible to these ideas. Both Allah and Yahweh are described as being one in nature, as all powerful, as all-knowing, as the creators of all things, as having given revelation to man, and as being the judges of the world. Although things may be similar, that does not make them the same. I may get into a car that is similar to mine, but if I

drive away in that car there will be consequences for my mistake. The same is true for one who mistakes “Allah” of the Quran for the one true God described in the Bible.

What Are Some Major Differences Between Allah and the God of the Bible?

Contradiction of Deity

Although the statement is often made that the god of Islam (Allah) is the same God which is mentioned in the Bible, there are vast differences recorded in the Bible and the Quran as pertaining to their specific god's. How can God and Allah be one in the same when the God of the Bible has a Son (cf. John 3:16); Allah does not (Surah 19:35-36). Furthermore, Christians rely on the blood of Christ for their salvation (cf. Matt 26:28).

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

It is not befitting to (the majesty of) God that He should beget a son. Glory be to Him! when He determines a matter, He only says to it, "Be", and it is. Verily God is my Lord and your Lord: Him therefore serve ye: this is a Way that is straight. (Surah 19:35-36)

Contradiction of Jesus' Deity

A major conflict is found when one compares the teachings of the Quran to the Bible. The Quran states “He begets not, nor is begotten” (Surah 112:3). Yet, Numerous verses in the Bible declare Jesus as being the Son of God (cf. John 3:16) and at the same time being God himself in the flesh having, all while having the same divine nature. This can be seen in John 3:16, John 1:1-3, and others.

Say: He is God, the One and Only; God, the Eternal, Absolute; He begetteth not, nor is He begotten; And there is none like unto Him. (Surah 112:1-4)

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made (John 1:1-3).

Contradiction of the Godhead

The God of the Bible is one in nature, but three in persons and is confirmed by Jesus himself when he gave the great commission (cf. Matt 28:19) and is seen in numerous other verses declaring the Godhead (cf. Col 2:8-9).

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” (Matthew 28:19).

“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”⁹ For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the **Godhead** bodily” (Colossians 2:8).

“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: **God** was manifest in the **flesh**, justified in the **Spirit**, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory” (1 Timothy 3:16).

The Quran contradicts the Bible by teaching that the “Allah” of the Quran is one in nature and in person (Surah 5:76; 4:171). Furthermore, the Quran clearly states that Jesus was not part of the Godhead and was only an apostle (Surah 4:171). Yet, Jesus said He and His father were one (cf. John 10:30).

O People of the Book! Commit no excesses in your religion: Nor say of God aught but the truth. Christ Jesus the son of Mary was (no more than) an apostle of God, and His Word, which He bestowed on Mary, and a spirit proceeding from Him: so believe in God and His apostles. Say not "Trinity" : desist: it will be better for you: for God is one God: Glory be to Him: (far exalted is He) above having a son. To Him belong all things in the heavens and on earth. And enough is God as a Disposer of affairs. (Surah 4:171)

They do blaspheme who say: God is one of three in a Trinity: for there is no god except One God. If they desist not from their word (of blasphemy), verily a grievous penalty will befall the blasphemers among them. The God of the Bible was manifested in the flesh; Allah was not. (Surah 5:76)

However, when considering the contradictions regarding the Bible which was penned centuries prior to the Quran, we must keep in mind that their must first be an original for a counterfeit to be produced. This counterfeit being spoken of is the Quran and the Islamic faith. The original (Bible) was recorded by eyewitnesses of the fact that “Word” manifested himself in the person of Jesus Christ in order to make reconciliation to God possible for all men.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (John 1:1, 14).

Contradiction of God’s Inherent Nature

The God of the Bible loves all of humanity and desires that all would be saved. Contrastly, Allah, the god of the Quran does not love all humanity.

“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).

“Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4).

If a wound hath touched you, be sure a similar wound hath touched the others. Such days (of varying fortunes) We give to men and men by turns: that God may know those that believe, and that He may take to Himself from your ranks Martyr-witnesses (to Truth). And God loveth not those that do wrong. (Surah 3:140)

The God of the Bible does not want anyone to perish and loves them even in their state of sin (Romans 5:8), yet this love will not stop punishment for the unbeliever who will not obey. However, in contrast, Allah does not love those in a state of sin. This one sided love, according to the Quran makes him a respecter of persons, which is contradictory to the Bible (Acts 10:34). This shows the vast difference between the God of the Bible and Allah of the Quran. One permeated Love, while the other the constant promotion of a god with an unloving character.

“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).

Contradiction of Judgment

The God of the Bible will judge us based upon our obedience to Him; Allah will judge to see if good deeds outweigh bad deeds. This can be contrasted by realizing that the God of the Bible desires faith demonstrated through obedience to His word, whereas Allah of the Quran desires good deeds, which can be performed with or without faith. The Islamic thought leads to a legalistic mindset.

“He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (John 12:48).

The balance that day will be true (to nicety): those whose scale (of good) will be heavy, will prosper: Those whose scale will be light, will be their souls in perdition, for that they wrongfully treated Our signs. (Surah 7:8)

Contradictions on God’s Comforting Nature

The God of the Bible sent His Son to bear the burdens of those who would follow Him; Allah sent Muhammad who said no one could bear another’s burden.

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light. (Matthew 11:28-30)

Who receiveth guidance, receiveth it for his own benefit: who goeth astray doth so to his own loss: No bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another: nor would We visit with Our Wrath until We had sent an apostle (to give warning). (Surah 17:15).

Conclusion

Through this study, it is very clear that, even though Muslims claim to serve the God of the Bible, in reality they do not. The differences in teachings between the Quran and the Bible are to many and to great. The differences mentioned in this study are only the beginning of those which could be shown. The “Allah” of Islam has far too many human-like characteristics to be the one true god. For further study, a list of the 99 names of Allah are given, which gives pieces of information about his character as described in the Quran

Review Questions

Question 1) What MUST be true about the God of the Bible and the Allah of the Qur’an if the two are the same?

Question 2) Does the Qur’an claim that Allah is the same as the God in the Bible? Does the Bible claim that God is the same as the Allah in the Qur’an? Do the claims of the God of the Bible rely on the Allah of the Qur’an or do the claims of the Allah in the Qur’an rely on the God of the Bible? Discuss.

Question 3) According to Allah, can he be “God” and have a “Son”?

Question 4) What does Allah say about Jesus being the Son of God? Considering John 3:16, can Allah be the same as the God of the Bible?

Question 5) Does Allah say that Jesus is God? What does Allah say Jesus is “no more than” (Surah 4:171)?

Question 6) What is the difference between the God of the Bible and the Allah of the Qur’an in regards to the Godhead?

Question 7) Does Allah love those who do wrong? How is God’s love shown in spite of man’s wrong?

Question 8) How will the God of the Bible judge man? How will the Allah of the Qur’an judge man? Can Allah and God be the same?

Question 9) How does the God of the Bible compare to the Allah of the Qur’an when it comes to the burdens and struggles of mankind?

Works Cited

“Allah – The Moon God”. Bible Believers. <http://www.biblebelievers.org.au/moongod.htm> Web. 27 March 2014.

Geisler, Norman L. “Answering Islam: The Crescent in Light of the Cross”. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002. Print

“The Holy Bible”, King James Version. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Bible. 2003. Print. (All Scriptures taken from this version unless otherwise noted.)

“The Meanings Of The Holy Qur’an By Abdullah Yusuf Ali. New Dehli: Millat Book Centre, 2011. Print

