

WHAT DO MUSLIMS BELIEVE ABOUT JESUS?

The Qur'an has much to say about Jesus Christ. Some of what is written in the Qur'an is in alignment with the majority of Christian beliefs about Christ, while other parts completely contradict the Bible.

The Virgin Birth of Christ

Islam teaches the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, but leaves out some very important and necessary information which is provided by the Bible. Surah 66:12 states,

...Mary the daughter of 'Imran, who guarded her chastity; and We breathed into (her body) of Our spirit

and Surah 19:16-22 reads,

Relate in the Book (the story of) Mary, when she withdrew from her family to a place in the East. She placed a screen (to screen herself) from them; then We sent her our angel, and he appeared before her as a man in all respects. She said: 'I seek refuge from thee to (God) Most Gracious: (come not near) if thou dost fear God.' He said: 'Nay, I am only a messenger from thy Lord, (to announce) to thee the gift of a holy son. She said: 'How shall I have a son, seeing that no man has touched me, and I am not unchaste?' He said: 'So (it will be): Thy Lord saith, 'that is easy for Me: and (We wish) to appoint him as a Sign unto men and a Mercy from Us': It is a matter (so) decreed.' So she conceived him, and she retired with him to a remote place.

While many Muslims misunderstand the title “Son Of God” to mean that Jesus was conceived through physical relations with Mary, and therefore believe Christians hold to this erroneous belief, Muslims do hold to the correct teaching that Jesus was “born of a Virgin” as forewarned by Gabriel.

If we go to the Bible as our source, we can understand how she “conceived”. Luke 1:34-35 reads, “Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God”. The Holy Spirit “overshadowed” her and the “power of the highest” caused her to become pregnant. As recorded in both the Qur’an and the Bible, she was a “virgin”. Thus this child came about not by physical conception as often implied by Muslims, but rather by the “Power of the Highest”. This gives him the right to be called the son of the “highest” or the “Son of God”. So, it is not the case that God had physical relations with Mary to conceive Jesus, but that His miraculous powers were at work, thereby circumventing the physical need for relations to become pregnant.

Further, the Qur'an states that Mary's becoming pregnant will be "as a sign", but the Qur'an does not tell what His being "appointed as a sign" referred to. However, the Bible does provide this information. In Luke 2:34 one reads, "And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this *child* is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against". Jesus was THE "sign" of God "in the flesh", and was spoken against as a deceiver, liar, and a blasphemer. As God in the flesh, Christ was sinless and only a sinless sacrifice could atone for sins. Romans 6:23 makes it clear when Paul writes, "For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord". Christ was indeed born of a virgin, which both Muslims and Christians believe. However, the "sign" mentioned in the Qur'an and to which it points can only be answered by the Bible.

The Sinlessness of Christ and His Miracles

Both the Qur'an and the Bible record Christ was sinless, but only the Bible is consistent in its teachings. Christ claimed to be the "Son of God", which the Qur'an denies. The Bible and Qur'an are in total dis-harmony here as to His being "sinless". If Jesus claimed to be the "Son of God", and was not, He was a liar and thus not sinless as the Qur'an states.

According to Islamic beliefs and traditions, Jesus Christ is acknowledged as having performed many miracles. They believe He raised people from the dead and healed many sick and afflicted. Muslims also believe He had supernatural knowledge of things that were unknown to others. One of their teachings is that He fashioned a bird out of clay, breathed into it, and it came to life. Muslims believe Christ was a messenger sent to the Children of Israel, with His message recorded in Surah 3:49:

I have come to you, with a Sign from your Lord, in that I make for you out of clay, as it were, the figure of a bird, and breathe into it, and it becomes a bird by Allah's leave: And I heal those born blind, and the lepers, and I quicken the dead, by Allah's leave; and I declare to you what ye eat, and what ye store in your houses. Surely therein is a Sign for you if ye did believe.

Some of these miracles are in harmony with Biblical record, while others are found in uninspired apocryphal writings. Muslims therefore believe that Jesus performed miracles, through the power of Allah, and that these miracles were for the purpose of serving as signs so that the people might believe. This is the case, which can be seen from a look at John 20:30-31 which reads, "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name". We are told in the Bible that these miracles were done that we might have "life through his name" not the name of Muhammad. The signs were confirmation that he was from God, and that His message was therefore from God.

Additionally many Muslims teach that Jesus Christ was the Messiah sent from God, and that He was God's Word and mediator.

Behold! the angels said: "O Mary! God giveth thee glad tidings of a Word from Him: his name will be Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, held in honour in this world and the Hereafter and of (the company of) those nearest to God. (Surah 3:45)

Another translation, Picktall's, reads like this:

And remember when the angels said: O Mary! Lo! Allah giveth thee glad tidings of a word from him, whose name is the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, illustrious in the world and the Hereafter, and one of those brought near unto Allah.

The Arabization of the corresponding Syriac word, which is translated as "Messiah" by Picktall, is "al-masseh", which literally translated means "the anointed one, the messiah". This has the same meaning as the word Messiah in the Bible.

As the Messiah, Jesus was then also declared by the Qur'an to be the "Word of God".

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)

Here the Quran declares Jesus is the "Word of God" and spoke as one of His apostles. Yet Jesus claimed to be more than just "an apostle" of Allah, but God himself in human form, and the "Son of God (John 3:18; 5:25). And God himself declared Jesus to be the Son of God in Matthew 3:17. If Jesus was the "Word of God" as declared by Muslims, why do they not believe his claim to be the "Son of God" when both His miracles and words prove He was who he claimed? Once again we see the contradictions which are present in the Islamic teaching.

The Death and Resurrection of Christ

Two of the most controversial teachings in the Qur'an are the teachings of both the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, in which many Muslims will twist their own teachings to avoid. For this, let's look at Surah 3:55:

Behold! God said: 'O Jesus! I will take thee and raise thee to Myself and clear thee (of the falsehoods) of those who blaspheme; I will make those who follow thee superior to those who reject faith, to the Day of Resurrection: Then shall ye all return unto me, and I will judge between you of the matters wherein ye dispute.

Picktall translates the phrase "I am going to terminate the period of your stay" as "I am gathering thee". Many Muslims, therefore, claim that this does not indicate that Jesus died, but rather Allah merely brought Him up to him through ascension.

Similarly, many Muslims clearly understand that the Qur'an teaches the death and resurrection of John the Baptist in Surah 19:15:

So Peace on him the day he was born, the day that he dies, and the day that he will be raised up to life again!

It should be noted that this is almost the exact same wording in the Arabic as used when the Qur'an reports in Surah 19:33 that Jesus said

So peace is on me the day I was born, the day that I die, and the day that I shall be raised up to life (again)!

Yet, many Muslim will claim and defend that Jesus did not say he was going to die and be raised up again in this passage, instead claiming that it teaches the "ascension" mentioned earlier. However the term "take thee" is normally understood to mean death. They would rather make arguments which the Qur'an does not support, than admit that their scriptures report the death and resurrection of Christ. Furthermore, given that the Qur'an supports and validates the Bible- note the following Surah:

This Qur'an is not such as can be produced by other than Allah. on the contrary it is a confirmation of (revelations) that went before it, and a fuller explanation of the Book - wherein there is no doubt - from the Lord of the worlds. (Surah 10:37)

... it is interesting what Acts chapter 2 reveals. Peter when speaking to the Jewish people, who as a collective body had just murdered Jesus, states: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). Which Jesus did Peter say? Acts 2:32, "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses." The one they had just murdered! The same Jesus who was put on the cross- the same Jesus who DIED, according to the Biblical text which is validated by the Qur'an, was the Jesus who is resurrected!

The Qur'an teaches that Jesus was "the word", and they believe he was sinless. Let's look at the recorded words in the Bible, spoken by Jesus a sinless man. "And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them, ¹⁸ Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, ¹⁹ And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify *him*: and the third day he shall rise again" (Matthew 20:17-19). Jesus, a sinless man who could not lie, declared very plainly that he would be crucified and resurrected on the third day. Once again the inconsistency of the Qur'an is shown. Also keep in mind all of the historical proof which supports the death and resurrection of Christ. His death and resurrection is either the most well planned and cruel hoax of all time, or He was the Christ just as He claimed as recorded in the Bible.

Christ As Part Of The Trinity

Many Muslims say they honor and hold Jesus in high esteem, but do not even abide by the teachings of their own scriptures in the Qur'an about Jesus Christ. With all that the Qur'an states about Jesus, it still denies His divinity by not accepting His words as recorded in the Bible, over five hundred years prior to the writing of the Qur'an by Muhammad.

Muslims often use Surah 4:171 to deny the divinity of Christ:

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.

Using this verse, they will declare that Jesus was nothing more than a messenger of Allah, and that He is not part of the Trinity. They also claim that Allah is so far exalted that he would not lower himself to have a son, thus Christ is not the Son of God as declared in the Bible. Other verses from the Qur'an that Muslims claim deny the Trinity include:

In blasphemy indeed are those that say that God is Christ the son of Mary. Say: 'Who then hath the least power against God, if His will were to destroy Christ the son of Mary, his mother, and all every - one that is on the earth? For to God belongeth the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and all that is between. He createth what He pleaseth. For God hath power over all things. (Surah 5:19)

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. (Surah 5.76)

And behold! God will say: 'O Jesus the son of Mary! Didst thou say unto men, worship me and my mother as gods in derogation of God?' He will say: 'Glory to Thee! never could I say what I had no right (to say). Had I said such a thing, thou wouldst indeed have known it. Thou knowest what is in my heart, Thou I know not what is in Thine. For Thou knowest in full all that is hidden. (Surah 5:119)

Most Muslims misunderstand the doctrine of the Trinity, as the above verses demonstrate. Unfortunately, these Islamists think Christians teach and believe in "tritheism". According to the Merriam Webster's dictionary, "tritheism" is the doctrine that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three distinct Gods". Evidence of the trinity can be seen in the Bible in the following verses:

“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.” (Genesis 1:26)

“And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever:” (Genesis 3:22)

“Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.” (Genesis 11:7)

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” (Matthew 28:19-20)

“Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.” (1 Peter 1:1-2)

“And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” (Matthew 3:17)

“And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” (Mark 1:11)

“While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.” (Matthew 17:5)

Consider that the glory of the gospel is that it shows God's wisdom in that He did become man to save man (cf. Philippians 2:6-7). God says that this system of salvation, by man's wisdom is foolishness, but that it is by man's foolishness that he then does not believe (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:18-25). The doctrine and study of the “trinity” and one of the member's of the Godhead, Christ, becoming a man, is easily understood as monotheistic when and if one truly desires to consider the fascination and awe of it (cf. John 14:11; 17:21; 1 Corinthians 2:14).

Review Questions

Question 1) Does the Qur'an teach the virgin birth of Christ and how does it differ from the Bible?

Question 2) What do Muslims believe about Jesus being the Son of God?

Question 3) Does the Qur'an explain why Jesus was born a virgin (what was it a sign of)? Does the Bible- how?

Question 4) Was Jesus sinless according to the Qur'an and how can their claim relate to Who Jesus said He was?

Question 5) Explain the contradictions that arise from the Bible when Islamists claim that Jesus did not die, but only ascended.

Question 6) Does the Qur'an deny the deity of Christ and how does the Bible prove otherwise?



Works Cited

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

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