



SHARING THE GOSPEL WITH OUR MUSLIM FRIENDS

THE KORAN TEACHES ABOUT JESUS--BUT DENIES HIS SALVATION

The Koran omits the most important facts of Jesus. What we think God is like impacts how we see the world God made. Why did God create humans: to share intimacy with them or to test them? What does he think about people: are they his servants made only to worship him, or his children that God loves? Did God first love us, or must we first worship him to perhaps obtain his love?

How does God want us to live: focusing on love or focusing on law? What does God tell us about the afterlife: to anxiously anticipate unknown judgment or to have joyful faith in his grace? The Islamic view of God and the Christian view lend themselves to vastly different answers, and how we answer these questions changes how we see ourselves, other people, and the world around us. Both Muslims and Christians believe that there is no God but one, but is he Allah or is he Jesus? How we answer this question has the power to change our Muslim friends--in this life and the next!

On the surface even to some Christians, Islam may seem similar to Christianity. Misinformed people today seek tolerance and inclusion. Young people today say: "We all worship the same God of Abraham." But the Bible tells us this is not true! We cannot change the truth of the Gospel.

To pay for our sins, the Bible tells us over and over that God—specifically the second person of the Trinity—entered into the world. Without changing his divine nature, God took upon himself a human nature. This was the true Jesus, who was fully God and fully human.

Islam is opposed to the Holy Spirit, does not believe Jesus was crucified, denies Jesus is the Son of God, and does not believe Jesus was resurrected from the dead.

Thus Islam eliminates all of the essential ingredients for salvation.

Muslims know the Koran teaches that Jesus was born of a virgin (Koran 19:20); that He is among those closest to Allah (Koran 3:45); that He taught a message of kindness and compassion (Koran 57:27); that He healed the sick and raised the dead--only by the power of Allah (Koran 3:49)--; that He miraculously fed the hungry (Koran 5:112.); that He is alive now in heaven (Koran 3:55); and that He will return at the end of the age as a servant of Allah (Koran 43:61).

THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM

The first and most important pillar is Tawheed--the oneness of Allah. Tawheed means Allah has no Son, nor any partners--meaning no Holy Spirit. The statement of faith to this belief is the Shahada **{the Revelation Mark}**. The second pillar is prayer to the Kaaba **{the Revelation Image}** in Mecca. The Kaaba is called the House of Allah. The third pillar is charity. The fourth pillar is fasting. The fifth pillar is a pilgrimage to the Kaaba **{the Revelation Image}** in Mecca called the Hajj.

SHARING THE GOSPEL WITH MUSLIMS--AND ANSWERING THEIR OBJECTIONS

No Muslim knows if they are saved. They depend on Allah to make a decision. Allah is harsh. Jesus and the Holy Spirit are appearing to many Muslims in dreams today. For example, Christianity is growing very fast in Iran. All Muslims respect Jesus. Many Muslims want to know more about Jesus. But they were taught he was only a prophet. **Muslims generally consider only what Jesus said, not the Apostles.** At first, they do not generally trust the Apostles—especially Paul—since they are told the Apostles corrupted the “pure Gospel” given to Jesus from Allah.

When speaking to a Muslim friend about the truth of Christ, be prepared for what they have been told. One of their first objections is that the Koran claims the Holy Bible, especially the New Testament, was physically altered and “corrupted” to make Christ the man look like the Son of God. This gives them a reason to not listen to the truth of God’s salvation and forgiveness through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Be prepared to explain the common objections a Muslim might have. A careful study of the Bible will show all their objections have no merit. The Bible is truth.

Muslim objections generally follow four broad categories: 1) the Bible has been corrupted, 2) Jesus never said he was God, 3) Jesus was not crucified and therefore did not rise from the dead, and 4) Mohammad is described favorably in the Bible. Understanding these answers will increase your faith in Jesus as the true Son of God.

1 ISLAM BELIEVES THE BIBLE HAS BEEN CORRUPTED

Muslims are told the Bible was corrupted. The Koran says the Bible was given first in pure form by Allah, and then corrupted by man. This is not true. It would not have been possible to change all the texts in many countries at the same time. There are presently 5,686 Greek manuscripts in existence today for the New Testament, as studied by Norman Geisler & Peter Bocchino, (Unshakeable Foundations, Bethany House Publishers, 2001).

There are certainly more copies than any other ancient writing. The internal consistency of the New Testament documents is 99.5% textually pure. That is an amazing accuracy result. In addition, there are over 19,000 copies in the Syriac, Latin, Coptic, and Aramaic languages.

The total supporting New Testament manuscript base is over 25,000 copies. No organized program to alter text could have located all these copies in many countries and many languages. You can be sure the Bible is true.

What about the 0.5%? The copying mistakes do not change the message. None of these copying mistakes (0.5%) in any way take away the core Christian message--which is Jesus Christ was the Son of God, Jesus was crucified and rose from the dead, the Holy Spirit is God, and only Christ as the Son of God has the power and authority to offer forgiveness necessary to obtain eternal presence with God. Jesus is returning soon.

Muslims say the "lying pen of the scribes" prove this corruption. They quote Jeremiah 8:8 "How can you say, "We are wise, for we have the law of the Lord," when actually the lying pen of the scribes has handled it falsely?"

Muslims take this text out of context. For the full meaning, the entire chapter of Jerimiah 8 should be studied. Look at the next three verses (10-12) from the passage in question, since Jeremiah himself explains what this "lying pen" is all about. What exactly is it that these scribes are doing? If you read the larger context you will see clearly that the scribes, priests and prophets are telling the people that everything is okay, that the Law is being kept, and that there will be peace because "God is with us", His people. But they are lying. It doesn't say their lying pens are making the Torah into a lie by altering its text. It says they are writing things about a false peace as though they came from God's law and teaching them to the people.

These lying teachers are telling the people "peace, peace" although the true prophet tells them there is no peace and will be no peace. God has announced His judgment on Jerusalem for its idolatry and disobedience. The enemies are coming and God will NOT help. This verse has nothing to do with altering the books, it has to do with teaching false practices and giving false prophecies and saying these are based on the Lord's law. The law of God which clearly speaks of punishment for sin is disregarded and the people are told about the promises of God's goodness -- which are in the Law too, but each has its conditions. Because of this sinfulness that Jeremiah was pointing out the Israelites were soon sent into the Babylonian exile. There was no peace for the sinful Israelites.

Muslims are told Paul invented Christianity. The question, "Did Paul invent Christianity?", has frequently been asked. In fact, some have been so sure that Paul was the originator of this religion that they called him the first great corrupter of the simple religion of Jesus.

Some say Paul wrote most of the New Testament. In fact, Paul wrote about 28% of the New Testament.

Most all the earliest followers of Jesus were Jews, and all the books of the New Testament were written by Jews, with one or two possible exceptions (e.g. the author of Luke and Acts). Certainly the very earliest followers of Jesus did not see themselves as creating a new religion. They were sectarian Jewish followers of Jesus.

However, through a process which involved a variety of factors (growth, evangelization, and conversion of many Gentiles, Christocentric rather than Torah-centric focus, expulsion from various synagogues in the Empire) the Jesus movement de facto became a separate entity from early Judaism, and in fact it appears that this was already the case during the lifetime and ministry of Paul.

After his miraculous conversion, Paul was a catalyst which helped lead the Jesus movement out of Judaism and into the whole world. Paul was not the inventor of Christianity, but Paul was most responsible for there being many Gentiles finding salvation and not on the basis of becoming Jews first (i.e. having to keep kosher, be circumcised, keeping the Sabbath) but rather of the fact that Jesus was the Son of God, was crucified, and rose on the third day. Paul taught that salvation was from grace, not fulfilling the law.

#2 ISLAM BELIEVES JESUS NEVER SAID HE WAS GOD

Muslims will look through the Scriptures for texts that seem to indicate Jesus was not God. Here are some common questions they ask:

Muslim: If Jesus was God, then why in Isaiah 11:1-3 did God put the spirit of fearing God in Jesus?

Isaiah 11:1-3 (NIV) "A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord."

Christian Answer: This text cannot be used as an objection to Christ's deity. Jesus was both divine and human; and as a man, he was under the law and behaved and acted as a man. This would mean that he would have the fear the Lord just as any godly Jew would. Furthermore, the word fear does not mean simply to be afraid. The context means awe, respect, etc.

The miracle of the incarnation is that the Word added human nature to himself in order to become one of us, so that he might fulfill the law and take our place of punishment. In order for this to be done, the Word became flesh--became a man. This is why the Bible says that the word which was with God and was God, became flesh and dwelt among us. (John 1:1, 14). As a man, Jesus would naturally and properly have fear the Lord.

Muslim: Why in Matthew 19:16-17 did Jesus say, "There is only One who is good."

Matthew 19:16-17 (NIV) Just then a man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?" "Why do you ask me about what is good?" Jesus replied. "There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, keep the commandments."

Christian Answer: God is good. The simple question to ask here is, "was Jesus good?" If a Muslim wants to say that Jesus is not good, then he's saying that Jesus was evil. If, however, the Muslim wants to admit that Jesus was good, then the natural conclusion is that Jesus is God.

Muslim: Why did Jesus say: If Jesus was God, then why did he pray to his God in Luke 5:16?

Christian Answer: Luke 5:16 says, "But He Himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray." Again, the answer is simple. Jesus has two natures. He is divine and human. He was made under the law (Galatians. 4:4), lower than the angels (Hebrews. 2:9), after having emptied himself (Philimon 2:5-8) even though he was the Word of God, which was God, and was made flesh, (John 1:1, 14). Therefore, Jesus would properly pray to God the Father.

Muslim: Why did Jesus never said he was God, but let others say it?

Christian Answer: Jesus taught by allowing people to come to their own understanding. This is a more powerful form of learning, rather than just pushing the information on the Apostles. At Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asks who people say he is. He then lets Peter come to the truth. Mark 8:27-30 (NIV) Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, "Who do people say I am?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Messiah." Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.

Jesus and the Father are one. John 10: 28-30 (NIV) Jesus said: "I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one."

Jesus was worshiped by Thomas after the resurrection. John 20: 26-29 (NIV) A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Jesus could not reveal he was God until his time was right. He knew the Pharisees would kill him. The death of Jesus had to fulfill all prophecy, including that of the prophet Daniel giving the precise date of Jesus' death. (Daniel 9:24-27)

Jesus did say he was the Son of God. John 11:1-7 (NIV) Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. (This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.) So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick."

When he heard this, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it." Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days, and then he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea."

#3 ISLAM BELIEVES JESUS WAS NOT CRUCIFIED

The crucifixion of Jesus is well documented. Many people witnessed the resurrection and saw the living Jesus. Muslims believe that Jesus was not crucified because the Koran teaches that Jesus was not crucified. The Koran says someone else took his place. The Koran is in complete contradiction to what is taught in the Bible. Only the Bible is true. The Bible, of course, teaches over and over that Jesus was crucified and raised from the dead. In the New Testament, the crucifixion and resurrection is taught in all four Gospels. In fact, the crucifixion of Jesus is taught throughout the entire New Testament. The Jewish historian Josephus also wrote about it.

The crucifixion of Jesus was foretold in the Old Testament. Here are examples from Psalms:... a band of evil men has encircled me, they have pierced my hands and my feet.... They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing.... I will declare your name to my brothers; in the congregation I will praise you. You who fear the LORD, praise him! All you descendants of Jacob, honor him! Revere him, all you descendants of Israel! For he has not despised or disdained the suffering of the afflicted one.... All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations will bow down before him...." Psalms 22:16, 18, 22-24, 27 (NIV)

And there is clear prophecy from Isaiah: But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.... Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will ... prolong his days.... After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities." Isaiah 53:5-6, 10-11 (NIV)

#4 ISLAM BELIEVES MOHAMMAD IS DESCRIBED FAVORABLY IN THE BIBLE

In the Gospel of John (chapters 14 to 16), Jesus speaks about the coming of the “Spirit of Truth” or “Advocate” (in Greek, parakletos). Muslim interpreters have seen Mohammad as this “Advocate,” based on Koran 61:6, a verse in which Jesus predicts the coming of a future prophet named Ahmad: “O Children of Israel! Truly I am the Messenger of God unto you, confirming that which came before me in the Torah and bearing glad tidings of a Messenger to come after me whose name is Ahmad” Ahmad is another name for Muhammad.

Mohammad was a person who died. Jesus was predicting the Holy Spirit, not a person. He said the spirit would be with you forever. John 14:16-17 (NIV) "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you." The Spirit of Truth is not Mohammad.

Muslims have also been taught the "Prophet" mentioned in Deuteronomy was Mohammad. Deuteronomy 18:17-18 (NIV) The Lord said to me: “What they say is good. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him.” An Israelite must be a descendant of Isaac--the father of Jacob (Jacob was later renamed Israel). Mohammad was not an Israelite. Muslims believe he was from the line of Ishmael. Ishmael, whose mother was Hagar, was the half-brother of Isaac, so this future prophet could not be Mohammad.

Mohammad is in the Bible, but not favorably. Mohammad is the False Prophet of the Bible. Mohammad did everything the Bible warns the False Prophet will do.

IN THE BIBLE MOHAMMAD IS THE FALSE PROPHET OF REVELATION

People are often told the False Prophet of Revelation is a future “antichrist.” They have been taught the False Prophet will lead an end-times war and rebellion occurring during the Day of the Lord-- when the final trumpet sounds and Jesus Christ returns. However, there is nothing in Revelation that says the False Prophet leads any such battle. In fact, Revelation does not say the False Prophet is even alive at the end-times. An antichrist is anyone who opposes Jesus as the Son of God (1 John 4: 1-6), and the ultimate antichrist is Satan.

This individual in Revelation is referred to as "the second beast of the earth" (Revelation 13:11-18), as well as the "False Prophet" with demonic messages and spirits from his mouth (Revelation 16:13). He is associated with the lamb in some way (Revelation 13:11). In both Revelation 19:20 and 20:10, John is told the False Prophet is thrown in the lake of fire at the time of Christ's return. He must deceive a lot of people to receive such special wrath from Jesus Christ!

REVELATION SAYS THE FALSE PROPHET DOES FIVE THINGS:

1. The False Prophet will attempt to look like, claim to be connected to, or associated in some way to the lamb (Revelation 13:11)
2. The False Prophet deceives the world. (Revelation 13:14)
3. The False Prophet sets up an image of false worship to the false god. (Revelation 13:14-15)
4. The False Prophet creates a mark, or statement of faith, to a false god. (Revelation 13:16-18)
5. Demonic spirits and messages come out of the False Prophet's mouth. (Revelation 16:13-14)

Notes

Additional Information

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