

Are Allah and the Biblical God the Same?

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What does Islam teach about God and is he like the God of the Bible?

Islam teaches that the true God is the Muslim deity, Allah. All other views of God are false because the Koran teaches, “The true religion with God is Islam.”¹ The Koran emphasizes of Allah: “There is no God but he, the Living, the everlasting.”²

But who is Allah? Is he anything like the God of Christian faith? As we will see, the Muslim God is entirely different from the biblical God. First, the Koran stresses that Allah is one person only: “They are unbelievers who say, ‘God is the Third of Three.’ No god is there but one God. If they refrain not from what they say, there shall afflict those of them that disbelieve a painful chastisement.”³ Here, the Koran emphasizes that Christians are unbelievers because they accept the historic Christian doctrine of the Trinity.⁴ But, as we fully documented in our *Knowing the Truth About the Trinity* (Harvest House, 1997), the Bible unmistakably tells us that God has revealed Himself as a triune Being, as One God eternally existing in three Persons—Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Mt. 28:19; Jn. 1:1,14; Acts 5:3-4).⁵ Although many Muslims believe otherwise, Christians do *not* believe in three gods. This idea is a clear misrepresentation of Christian belief. Christians are not polytheists, who accept three gods, but monotheists who believe in one God.

Second, the Muslim God has a different character than the biblical God. It is significant that of the “99 beautiful names for Allah,” which Muslims memorize and use for worship, not one of these names is “love” or “loving.” The Koran stresses that Allah only “loves” those who do good, but that he does not love those who are bad. Allah himself emphasizes that he does *not* love the sinner.⁶ Thus, the love of Allah is not the love of the God of the Bible. The biblical God does love the sinner—in fact, He loves all sinners. God does not love the sin, but He does love the sinner: Christ died for the *ungodly*... God *demonstrates* his own *love* for us in this: while we were *still sinners*, Christ died for us... if when we were God’s *enemies*, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life?” (Rom. 5:6,8,10). Essentially, Allah is primarily a God of power, not a God of love. But the Bible declares, “God *is* love” (1 Jn. 4:6).

Next, through predestination of all things, Allah is considered the direct author of *both* good and evil. This is not the God of the Bible. While the biblical God is sovereign and permits evil, He is not its direct cause. Even when it is part of His plan, He frequently turns it to a higher good, as seen in the death of Jesus for our sins, Joseph being sold into slavery (Gen. 45:8; 50:20) and in Romans 8:28: “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” Again, the biblical God is not the direct author of evil. Rather, He is infinitely holy and righteous (1 Sam. 2:2; Ps. 77:13; 99:9; Rev. 15:4) and His “eyes are too pure to look on evil” (Hab. 1:3).

Third, Allah is ultimately unknowable and incomprehensible. In *Who Is Allah in Islam*, Abd-al-Masih writes, “Allah is the unique, unexplorable, and inexplicable one—the remote, vast and unknown God. Everything we think about him is incomplete, if not wrong. Allah cannot be comprehended.”⁷

In “What Is Allah Like?” George Housney writes, “we humans can never know Allah, be-

cause he is so far from us and so different from us. The only knowledge Muslims may admit to is knowledge about Allah, not a personal, experiential knowledge of him. People cannot know Allah and should not even try to know him. Allah is not involved in the affairs of humans.” Thus, Houssney goes on to point out the contrast between Muslim and Christian concepts concerning humanities’ relationship to God: “The Christian claim that humans can have a relationship with God is considered by Muslims to be a metaphysical impossibility. To Muslims, Allah has not revealed himself, but rather he has revealed his *mashi’at* (desires and wishes, i.e., his will). His will, according to Islamic teaching, is limited to Islamic law. A person performs the will of Allah when he follows the dictates of the Islamic legal system.” [This involves the Koran as *interpreted* by Muslim clerics; to submit to the “will of Allah,” is to submit to the religious leaders’ interpretations of the Koran which involve everything relating to life, including Islamic law, politics, cultural customs, family, etc. To submit to Allah is to submit to the Islamic powers that be. The concept of separation of church and state is never found in Muslim nations.] Finally, Houssney further illustrates the distinction between Muslim and Christian concepts of God at this point: “Allah has no personality and is indescribable by any characteristic attributable to man. Most of his attributes are absolute qualities which are unique to himself, like adjectives of majesty. Although some of his attributes may appear to be relational, such as mercy, they are nonmutual and one-directional. According to the Islamic doctrine of Allah, he is nonrelational. To claim that Allah is relational is to make him dependent on his creation.”⁸

All this stands in contrast to the biblical teaching that men and women *can* know God personally on an intimate, relational level. Consider the scriptures below: e.g., “This is eternal life to *know* Thee the only true God *and Jesus Christ* whom thou has sent” (Jn. 17:3). “Jesus said, ‘my sheep *know* me’” (Jn. 10:14).

The Apostle Paul prayed for Christian believers concerning God, “that you may *know* him better.” (Eph. 1:17) The Apostle Paul also said, “I *know* whom I have believed” (2 Tim. 1:12).

The Apostle John emphasized, “We *know* that we have come to *know* him if we obey his commands. The man who says, ‘I know him,’ but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (1 Jn. 2:3-4). Thus, he emphasized, “Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and *knows* God. Whoever does not love does not *know* God, because God is love” (1 Jn. 4:7-8).

The above reveals that the Muslim God, Allah, and the biblical God, Yahweh, constitute two distinct and opposing concepts of God. Regrettably, because Muslims teach that Allah alone is the one true God, they claim that Christians worship a false god.

[Excerpted from John Ankerberg, John Weldon, *The Facts on Islam* (Harvest House, 1991)]

Notes:

¹ A. J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted* (NY: MacMillan, 1976), p. 15.

² *Ibid.*, p. 65.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 140

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 139-140.

⁵ See our *Knowing the Truth About the Trinity* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1997). See also E. Calvin Beisner, *God In Three Persons* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1984) and Edward Bickersteth, *The Trinity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, rpt.).

⁶ E.g., Arberry, pp. 81, 91, 142, 178, 204.

⁷ Cited in a book review in *Reach Out*, Vol. 6, no. 3 & 4, 1993, p. 15.

⁸ George Houssney, “What is Allah Like?”, *Reach Out*, Vol. 6, no. 3 & 4, 1993, pp. 12-13.