

How Do Muslims View Jesus Christ?

By Dr. John Ankerberg, Dr. John Weldon

Muslims claim that they believe in the true Jesus Christ. Muslims praise Jesus as a prophet of God, as sinless, as “the Messiah,” as “illustrious in this world and the next,” as “the Word of Allah” and as “the Spirit of God.” (e.g. Sura 3:45) Muslims cite their Bible, the Koran, in confirmation of their belief in Jesus: ‘And we gave Jesus, Son of Mary, the clear signs, and confirmed Him with the Holy Spirit.’¹

But whatever Islam claims, it does not believe in the biblical Jesus.

First, it asserts that Jesus was only one of God’s endless prophets or messengers, and not God’s only begotten Son. Muslims adamantly reject the idea that Jesus is the Son of God. The Koran repeatedly emphasizes that Jesus Christ is not the literal Son of God:

“They say, ‘God has taken to Him a son’... Say: ‘Those who forge against God falsehood shall not prosper.’”²

“Praise belongs to God [Allah], who has not taken to Him a son....”³

“... Warn those who say, ‘God has taken to Himself a son’... a monstrous word it is, issuing out of their mouths; they say nothing but a lie.”⁴

“But who does greater evil than he who forges against God a lie?”⁵

“They are unbelievers who say, ‘God is the Messiah, Mary’s Son.’”⁶

Thus the Koran emphatically denies that Jesus Christ is the Son of God—a teaching that Jesus Himself just as emphatically affirmed (John 3:16,18; 10:36-38). In conclusion, the Christian view of Jesus Christ as God’s literal Son is blasphemy to the Muslim.

Second, Muslims deny that Christ was God incarnate. Any Muslim who believes that Christ is God has committed “the one unforgivable sin”⁷ called *shirk*—a sin that will send him to hell. Thus the Koran emphasizes that Jesus was only a man: “The Messiah, Jesus Son of Mary, was only the Messenger of God....”⁸ Sura 43:59 asserts: “Jesus was no *more than a mortal* whom [Allah] favored and made an example to the Israelites.”⁹

But even though Jesus Himself claimed on many different occasions that He is God, the Koran has Jesus denying His own deity. When Allah himself supposedly asked Jesus if He was God, Jesus replied in the Koran, “It is not mine to say what I have no right to.”¹⁰ In fact, even as a baby, Jesus allegedly claimed He was only a servant of Allah. According to Sura 19:20,34, Jesus praised his birth and then said, “I am the servant of Allah.” And Allah teaches, “It is not for God to take a son unto Him.”¹¹

Third, Muslims do not believe that Jesus was crucified and died on the cross.

Fourth, Islam teaches that Muhammad was a superior prophet to Jesus because he brought God’s final revelations to man. Badru D. Kateregga, a former lecturer and head of the Islamic studies and comparative religion at Kenyatta University College, University of Nairobi, Kenya, exemplifies the common Muslim view of Jesus as an inferior prophet to Muhammad.

The truth that all the previous prophets have proclaimed to humanity was perfected by Prophet Muhammad.... The Qur’an, which is Allah’s *final guidance to mankind*, was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad... the seal of all prophets, 600 years after the Prophet Isa (Jesus)... Muhammad... is *the one prophet* who fulfilled Allah’s mission during his lifetime.

Muslims believe in and respect all the prophets of God who preceded Muhammad.... They all brought a uniform message—Islam—from Allah. [But]

Muhammad is the last in seal of prophethood. Through him, Islam was completed and perfected. As he brought *the last and latest guidance* for all mankind, it is *he alone to whom Muslims turn for guidance.* ¹²

Thus “Muhammad... is the last prophet and messenger of Allah. His mission was for the whole world and for all times.” ¹³ In other words, Muslims must not turn to Jesus for spiritual guidance—only to Muhammad.

But Muslims are wrong. Jesus is far more than God’s mere messenger. Jesus Christ is God’s one *and only* Son (John 3:16-18). Further, He is the Second Person of the Trinity, God incarnate—God Himself (John 1:1,14; 5:18). Jesus claimed to be both “the Lord” and “God”

“You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am’, (John 13:13). ‘Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father [God]’ (John 14:9). “I and the Father [God] are one” (John 10:30).

When Muslims deny that Christ was crucified on the cross—and that God substituted someone else in His place—they deny the clearest teaching of the New Testament. Even Jesus prophesied—repeatedly—that He had to go to the cross and that this was God’s direct will for Him (Matthew 16:21; Luke 18:31-33; John 12:27). Innumerable eyewitnesses, both Jesus’ friends and enemies, saw Jesus die on the cross, and many of His apostles and friends were eyewitnesses to His resurrection from the dead (John 19:23-27,31-35).

In conclusion, both the Koran and the Muslim religion are in serious error concerning their teachings on the most important man of history, Jesus Christ. Islam claims that it honors and reverences Jesus even though it rejects what the Bible teaches about Him. It denies His divine nature when it teaches that He was only a servant of God, a mere man. It denies His mission when it teaches that Jesus never died on the cross. It denies Jesus’ own teaching concerning the reason He came into the world: “to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28).

No one can deny that Muslims reject the biblical Jesus. Yet it was Jesus Himself who warned all men, “...if you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins” (John 8:24).

Notes:

1. A.J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted*, (New York: MacMillan, 1976), p. 64.
2. Ibid., p. 233.
3. Ibid., p. 315.
4. Ibid., p. 316.
5. Ibid., p. 317.
6. Ibid., p. 130.
7. J.N.D. Anderson, *Christianity and Comparative Religion* (Downer’s Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1970 edition), p. 47; S.G.F. Brandon, ed., *Dictionary of Comparative Religion*, 1970, p. 306.
8. Arberry, *Interpreted*, p. 125.
9. J. N. Dawood, trans., *Koran*, p. 149, emphasis added.
10. Arberry, *Interpreted*, p. 147.
11. Dawood, *Koran*, p. 34.
12. Badru D. Kateregga and David W. Shenk, *Islam and Christianity: A Muslim and a Christian in Dialogue* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), p. 37, emphasis added.
13. Ibid., p. 35.

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