

THE STATUS OF JESUS IN ISLAM & CHRISTIANITY

Christians and Muslims have differed for centuries over the nature and status of Jesus Christ. Both religions revere him and both believe him to be of virgin birth. Both religions claim to know his true nature and purpose. Muslims believe that Christian leaders of old altered the scriptures in order to redefine the status of this noble and virtuous Prophet of Almighty God. In fact, eminent Christian theologians readily admit that the Bible has been altered throughout the ages, so in that respect there is no disagreement. The renowned Biblical scholar from the USA, Dr. Bart D. Ehrman, formerly the president of the Southeast Region of the Society of Biblical Literature stated: **“One of the most amazing and perplexing features of mainstream Christianity is that seminarians who learn the historical-critical method in their Bible classes appear to forget all about it when it comes time for them to be pastors. They are taught critical approaches to Scripture, they learn about the discrepancies and contradictions, they discover all sorts of historical errors and mistakes.. They find that there are other books that were at one time considered canonical but that ultimately did not become part of Scripture, they come to recognize that a good number of the books of the Bible are pseudonymous (written in the name of an apostle by someone else), that in fact we don't have the original copies of any of the biblical books but only copies made centuries later, all of which have been altered.”** (See: Bart D. Ehrman, *Jesus, Interrupted: Revealing the hidden contradictions in the Bible and why we don't know About them*). This altering of the original message of Jesus is also stated in the Islamic texts: the Quran and Prophetic tradition.

Muslims believe that God sent another prophet after the Prophet Jesus, whose coming was foretold in previous scriptures such as the Torah revealed to Moses and in the Gospels that were revealed to Jesus. This final Prophet was Muhammad. God stated in the Quran: **“Say O Muslims: We believe in Almighty God, and that which has been revealed to us, and that which has been revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and to the Tribes of Israel, and that which has been given to Moses and Jesus, and that which has been given to the Prophets from their Lord. We do not discriminate against any of them, and to Him (the one true God) we have submitted.”** (Quran 2:136) God also informed mankind that the previous scriptures have been changed,

altering much of the original message, and can no longer be relied upon. So from God's Mercy, He sent the final Prophet, whose name was Muhammad (peace be upon him) with the final revelation, the Quran. God protected it from corruption and alteration. The following are some important points of belief with respect to Jesus (peace be upon him):

1) Muslims believe that Jesus was born of miraculous birth: God said in the Quran: **“The example of Jesus in the sight of God is like the example of Adam. God created him from clay and then said to him: “Be!” And he came into being. This is the truth from your Lord so do not be from those who doubt.”** (Quran 3:59-60) From the outset it must be made clear that Muslims believe that Jesus is a Prophet of God, born from virgin birth, from a noble mother, Mary, who was untouched by any man.

2) Muslims believe Jesus was a Prophet sent by God, not the son of God, nor part of a Trinity. After Jesus was taken into the Heavens, Christians incorrectly began to believe that since Jesus had no worldly human father, then God must be his *literal* father, and so the author of the Gospels of John who never met Jesus, stated almost a century after Christ: **“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten son.”** (1 John 4:9) The vast majority of Christian scholars do not believe that John or any of the Apostles wrote these words. So these are clearly not the words of God, nor the words of Christ. And this ultimately led to the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) himself being worshipped by later Christians. Consequently this was the introduction of the worship of others besides God into Christianity. Islam categorically forbids this attribution of a son to God: **“Say: He is Allah, the One. Allah is the Self-Sufficient, He has no child, nor was He born, and there is none equal or comparable unto Him.”** (Quran 112:1-4) Indeed there is no proof to show that any of the disciples of Christ worshipped Jesus because they knew that to worship anyone other than God (whom the Muslims refer to as Allah) would be a clear violation of the first and most important of all the commandments in the Bible: **“You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourselves any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: You shall not bow down yourselves to them, nor serve them.”** (Exodus 20). Therefore to direct worship of any sort towards the Prophet Jesus or his mother is a clear violation of this universally agreed upon commandment. God commands similarly in the Quran: **“And from His signs are the night and the day, and the Sun and Moon - so do not**

prostrate to the Sun or the Moon but prostrate to God alone, the one who created them if it is He whom you truly [claim to] worship.” (Quran 41:37) Furthermore God states: **“They have disbelieved who say: God is the Messiah son of Mary.”** (Quran 5:72) And: **“They have disbelieved who say: God is the third of three [in a trinity].”** (Quran 5:73)

3) Muslims believe that Jesus and Mary were noble humans, servants of God and not objects of worship. As such Muslims revere the Prophet Jesus, and they likewise revere Mary, the mother of the Messiah. God stated in the Quran: **“The Messiah son of Mary is but a Messenger of God and Messengers before him have passed away, and his mother was a truthful woman - they both used to eat food.”** (Quran 5:75) In this verse God makes clear that Jesus is a Messenger of God, Mary is a truthful woman and both were humans because they ate food, which was provided to them by their Lord - showing that they were reliant upon their Lord. For any Muslim to direct worship to a Prophet or any other being besides God is considered to be idolatry.

4) Jesus was a sincere and humble servant of God: **“And behold! God will say on the Day of Judgment: 'O Jesus son of Mary! Did you say unto men, worship me and my mother as gods instead of Allah?' He will say: 'Glory to Thee! Never could I say what I had no right to say. Had I said such a thing, You would indeed have known it. You know what is in my inner-self, though I know not what is in Yours. For You know in full all that is hidden. Never did I say to them anything except what You commanded me to say: 'Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord.' And I was a witness over them while I lived among them. When You took me up, You were the Watcher over them, and You are a witness to all things'”** (Quran 5:116-117). Even in the Bible there are clear statements showing that Jesus (peace be upon him) would direct worship to Allah. Read here a verse from the Christian Bible read by all Christian Arabs: **“And Jesus said to him: Why do you call me good? No one is good except Allah alone!”** (Mark 10:18) Here Jesus distinguishes himself from God, i.e. that he is the worshipper and Allah is the one to be worshipped. In the Old Testament of the Arabic Bible, we find the following: **“In the beginning Allah created the Heavens and the Earth”** (Genesis, verse 1). Many Christians in the West become astonished when they read these words, because they imagined that Allah is exclusively the deity of the Muslims, but the reality is that Allah is the Lord and God who created Adam and made him the first Prophet, He is the same God who sent Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Ishmael, Jacob, Moses, John, Jesus and Muhammad (peace and

blessings be upon them all). Many people in the West perceive Allah as a “foreign” god of the Arabs. But now you can see that the name Allah refers to the One God, Lord and Creator of all existence, who has the sole right to be worshipped.

5) Muslims believe that Jesus was not crucified but rather he was taken up into the Heavens before he could be harmed: “They said in boast: “We killed the Messiah Jesus son of Mary, the Messenger of God.” But they killed him not, nor did they crucify him - but it was only made to appear as such to them.” (Quran 4:157) The Quran informs us: “And remember when God said: O Jesus, I will take you and raise you to Myself and clear you from the forged statements of those who disbelieve.” (Quran 3:55) So he was raised to the Heavens before they could capture him and kill him. Then God placed his image on another who was killed in his place. This further leads to the Islamic belief that he was not resurrected after death because he did not die. However the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) stated that Jesus will descend before the Last Day to establish God’s worship and justice on earth, he will then die as others die. This ascension of Jesus into the heavens is also mentioned in the Bible: “And while they were gazing into heaven as Jesus ascended, behold, two men stood by them in white robes (Angels), and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.” (Acts 1:11) Christian scribes however decided to make this ascension seem as though it occurred after the so-called resurrection so as to fit in with later Christian doctrine which prescribed that Jesus “the son of God” died for the sins of mankind. So without the death and subsequent resurrection of Christ, this doctrine would have no validity. Islam teaches that each individual carries the burden of his own sins or the sins he teaches others - and God readily accepts the repentance of the believing servant when he seeks forgiveness from God by calling upon Him directly and seeking His Mercy without any need of intercessors. Islam is vehemently monotheistic and regards any act of worship directed towards other than God to be polytheistic. So worship such as supplication, prostration, seeking refuge, seeking divine aid, assistance and support, seeking forgiveness and deliverance and so on can only be sought from the one true God, Allah.

6) Muslims affirm and believe in the Miracles of Jesus (peace be upon him) that took place by the permission of God: “O Jesus son of Mary! Remember my favour to you and to your mother when I

supported you with the Angel Gabriel so that you spoke to the people from the cradle as a baby and in maturity. Behold! I taught you the Book and the Wisdom, the Torah and the Gospel. And you made out of clay the figure of a bird and you breathed into it, and it became a living bird by my permission, and you healed those born blind, and the lepers by my permission. And behold! You brought forth the dead by my permission. And when I restrained the Children of Israel from you when they resolved to kill you after you came to them with clear proofs and those who disbelieved among them said, “This is nothing but magic.”” (Quran 5:110) These miracles were performed by the permission of God as a sign for the people of his Prophet-hood and truthfulness. Many of the Prophets were given miracles by the permission of Allah: Moses parted the Red Sea by God’s permission, Muhammad split the Moon in two by God’s permission and so on.

7) Jesus is the brother of the Prophets. The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said: “I am the closest of all the people to Jesus the son of Mary in this life and in the life after death.” His disciples asked him: “How is that O Messenger of God?” He replied: “The Prophets are paternal brothers - their mothers are different but their Religion is one, and there was no Prophet between myself and Jesus.” It is established by way of the Torah, the Gospels, the Quran and the authentic Prophetic tradition that the lineage of Muhammad and Jesus goes back to the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him). Abraham had two sons: Ishmael and Isaac. Isaac’s son was Jacob also known as Israel. Jacob had twelve sons from whom emanate the Children and tribes of Israel and its Prophets. From the lineage of the Prophet Ishmael descended the Prophet Muhammad through the Arabian tribes. All of mankind are obligated by these revealed texts to accept Muhammad as the final Prophet and the Quran as the final revelation that has abrogated all previous revelations. God commanded humans to testify that, “There is no deity worthy of worship in truth except for Almighty God and Muhammad is His servant and Messenger and Jesus the son of Mary is His servant and Messenger.” You too can testify to this right now and join the guided.

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