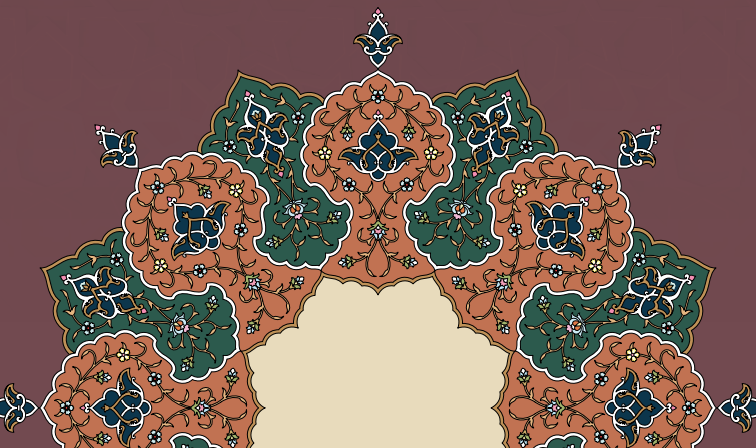




Jesus: A Prophet of Islam





Jesus was a Prophet



Muslims believe that Jesus (peace be upon him) is one of the Prophets of Allah, and that he was sent to guide the Children of Israel with a new scripture. In fact, belief in all Prophets and Messengers of Allah is a fundamental article of faith in Islam. The Holy Book of Muslims, the Qur'an, declares: *"Say (O Muhammad): 'We believe in Allah, and in what has been revealed to us and what was revealed to Abraham (Ibrahim), Ishma'el, Isaac (Ishaq), Jacob (Yaqub), and the Tribes, and in [the Books] given to Moses (Musa), Jesus (Isa), and the prophets, from their Lord: We make no distinction between one and another among them, and to Allah do we bow our will [in Islam]."* (Al-i 'Imran, 3/84)

Jesus (Isa) is seen in Islam as a precursor to Muhammad, and is believed by Muslims to have foretold the latter's coming. In fact, according to the Islamic faith, the original religion taught by all these prophets is and was always Islam, which means peaceful submission to the One and Only God.

Another verse in the Qur'an affirms that Jesus follows the line of Prophets like Moses before Him: *"And We sent after them [the previous messengers] in their footsteps Jesus, son of Mary, verifying what was before him in the Torah and We gave him the Gospel in which was guidance and light, and verifying what was before it in Torah and a guidance and an admonition for the God-fearing."* [Ma'idah, 5/46]

Jesus is mentioned by name in twenty-five places in the Qur'an. He is also addressed with respect as "son of Mary; messiah; servant of Allah; and messenger of Allah." He is also spoken of as "the word of God", "the spirit of God", "a sign of God", and numerous other epithets of honor spread over fifteen different chapters.

Mary and the Virgin Birth of Jesus



Muslims respect and honor Jesus and His mother Mary. Many Muslims name their children after them as Isa [Jesus] and Maryam [Mary]. There is indeed a chapter in the Qur'an named Maryam. There is also another chapter named after her father, Imran. According to the Qur'an,



Mary was a chaste and virgin woman who miraculously gave birth to Jesus: *"And when the angels said: O Mary, surely Allah has chosen you and purified you and chosen you above the women of the world."* (Al-i 'Imran, 3/42)

Muslims believe that Jesus was born from a noble virgin. Muslims do not, however, accept the virgin birth of Jesus as an evidence to the divinity of Jesus. *"She (Mary) said: 'O My Lord! How can I have a child when no man has touched me?' (God) said: 'Even so; Allah creates what He pleases. When He decrees a matter, He only says to it, "Be!", and it is.'"* (Qur'an 3/47). *"The similitude of Jesus before God is as that of Adam; He created him from*

dust, then said to him: 'Be.' And he was."

[Al-i 'Imran, 3/59]. Adam's creation was even more miraculous because he was born without a father or mother. When Mary brought the baby to her people, they said: *"O Mary! Truly, you have brought a strange thing! O sister of Aaron! Your father was not a man of evil, nor your mother a woman unchaste!"* Mary then pointed to the baby. They said: *"How can we talk to one who is a child in the cradle?"* Then a miracle occurred. In defense of his mother, baby Jesus spoke, and said: *"I am indeed a servant of Allah. He has given me revelation and made me a prophet; and He has made me blessed wheresoever I be, and has enjoined on me prayer and charity as long as I live; He has made me kind to my mother, and not overbearing or miserable; 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)!"* [Maryam, 19/27-33]

Miracles of Jesus



Allah the Almighty bestowed upon Jesus the ability to perform miracles as a support in his duty of prophethood. *"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 God's leave. And I heal those born blind, and the lepers, and I bring the dead into life, by God's leave; and I declare to you what you eat, and what you store in your houses. Surely therein is a Sign for you if you did believe. [I have come to you] to attest the Torah which was before me. And to make lawful to you part of what was [before] forbidden to you. I have come to you with a sign from your Lord. So fear God, and obey me. It is God Who is my Lord and your Lord; then worship Him. This is a way that is straight." [Al-i 'Imran, 3/49-51]

Was Jesus a God or the Son of God?



Muslims do not view Jesus as the Son of God or a God but consider him as an ordinary human being who, like other prophets, was divinely chosen to spread Allah's message among his people, the people of Israel. Islam forbids associating partners with Allah, emphasizing the oneness of Allah. The Qur'an declares: *"There is nothing like unto Him."* (Shura, 42/11); and, *"He begets not, nor was he begotten."* (Ikhlas, 112/3).

Was Jesus Crucified?



Trinitarian Christians believe that Jesus was God himself, or part of God; came to earth, and was crucified on the cross to purify our sins; then resurrected and ascended to heaven until the day he will come back again to earth.

Muslims believe that Jesus did not die on the cross at all. Allah saved him, and someone else was crucified in his place. The Qur'an states: *"That they said [in boast], 'We killed Christ Jesus the son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah'; but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them, and those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no [certain] knowledge, but only conjecture to follow, for of a surety they killed him not: rather, Allah raised him up unto Himself; and Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise."* [Nisa, 4/157-158]

There is a difference of opinion as to the exact interpretation of this verse with regard to the following statement: *"They [the Jews] killed him not: rather, Allah raised him up unto Himself."* Some hold the view that Jesus did not experience the usual human death, but still lives in body and flesh in heaven. This is the widely accepted view by Muslims. Others believe that he died, but not on the cross, and being "raised up" to Allah means that Allah saved him from the hands of those who wanted to kill him.

Did Jesus Die for Our Sins?



Most Christian denominations hold the belief that the sin of Adam and Eve's disobedience to God is passed on to their descendants and thus the whole of mankind is accursed with that Original Sin, from which no salvation is possible unless one believes in the atoning death on the cross of the Son of God.

Muslims believe that Jesus did not die for the purification of our sins and for our forgiveness. In contrast to the Christian teaching that human nature is basically evil [due to the original sin], Islam teaches that all humans are innocent by birth and they become sinful only when they consciously commit a sin. Therefore, there is no original sin in Islam.

The Islamic concept of sin is grounded on the belief that one man's sin cannot be transferred to another; nor can the rewards of good deeds. Every individual is responsible only for his or her actions, for Allah is never unjust. The Qur'an [17/15] makes clear that every individual is an independent person who is responsible for his or her actions alone. There is no need for salvation from the original sin for there is no original sin.



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