

## WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT ISLAM

### Part one: the name of God

#### *The name of God revealed to Moses for deliverance*

**Exodus 6:3** *And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them.*

**Psalm 83:18** *That men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth.*

The first and main difference between the Bible and Islam is the name of God. In the verses above, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob declares that his name is Jehovah. Jehovah has several shades of meaning, among which are the self-sufficient one and the eternal one. We do not find this name in the Quran. The deity of Islam is exclusively called Allah. The Quran states, “Allah! There is no Allah save Him. His are the most beautiful names” (Surah 20:8). Allah comes from the definite article *al-* “the” and *ilāh* “deity, god” combined to *al-lāh* meaning “the deity”, or “the God” in Arabic. Since the God of the Bible never used the name Allah, Bible believers conclude that this name describes and belongs to a foreign deity that Moses and the children of Israel never knew. Generally, knowing a person’s name is the first act in human relationships. God first *mentioned the name of Moses twice at the burning bush (Exodus 3:4), and Moses asked God his name: “And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?” (Exodus 3:13).* God graciously revealed his exclusive personal name to Moses in Exodus 6:3 – Jehovah.

Why is the name of God important? The answer has to do with deliverance. Pharaoh knew the name of many gods, but not the name of the God of Moses. “*And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go*” (Exodus 5:2). Pharaoh was unaware that the name of God is always closely associated with deliverance and salvation. Moses was not only armed with a staff invested with the power of God, he came with the knowledge of the name of this God, Jehovah. Pharaoh was about to learn to respect the name and power of the God of Moses and Israel.

**Exodus 3:8** *And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing*

*with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites.*

What the above means is that Allah cannot be the name of the God who delivered Moses and Israel from 430 years of bondage and slavery. It would not make sense to be delivered by Jehovah but give the glory to Allah, a name found in the Quran 2100 years after the time of Moses. Please understand that Bible characters were very careful to know the name of their would-be deliverers, whether they were angels or God himself – they were acutely aware of the potency in names to either curse or deliver. Two examples follow:

**Genesis 32:29** *And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there.*

**Judges 13:17** *And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD, What is thy name, that when thy sayings come to pass we may do thee honour?*

Furthermore, the question Bible believers would pose to our Muslim friends is: in what way is the name of Allah associated with deliverance? We do not find any story of deliverance from bondage or slavery. The biblical story is one of a severely oppressed people in a foreign country waiting on the activation of centuries-old promises given to their ancestral father, Abraham. The Muslim equivalent of Moses, Muhammad and his people, the Arabs, were not in bondage to any foreign forces. On the contrary, as any Muslim will tell you, Muhammad was inspired by Allah to unite the various Arab tribes and extend the dominion of Allah throughout the world. Clearly, the name of God and the story of the two peoples, Israel and the Arabs, diverges significantly. The Quran declares this conquering mission:

*Have these disbelievers not seen that We come to the land of the disbelievers diminishing it from its borders by spreading Islam and by the Muslims conquering it? Allah decides and decrees whatever He wills amongst His servants. No one can reverse, amend or alter His decision. He, may He be glorified, is swift in reckoning and He will take the earlier people and the later ones to account within one day (Surah 13:41).*

Subjugated peoples throughout history (e.g. African-Americans) easily identified and adopted the God of Israel as their God because of the narrative of deliverance from oppressors. This is not the case with Islam. In the next section, we go further and extend the comparison to the name of Jehovah which took on an important component, that of salvation

for all humankind. This extended name (notice, not a new name), the name of Jesus, is once more absent from the Quran.

***Jehovah becomes our salvation, Yahushua (Jesus)***

***Isaiah 12:2*** Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.

***Matthew 1:21*** And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

As was mentioned earlier, God's name is significant in relation to his mission in this world. Seven hundred years before coming to this world, God revealed the name through which he would not just deliver his people, but save them. Isaiah 12:2 actually contains the name *y'shû 'â*, where it says, "he is also become my salvation". The same God who revealed his name to Moses as Jehovah, now reveals the extension of that name to include salvation. Amen! For this reason, Bible believers declare that Jesus is in fact the same God who appeared to Moses in the burning bush – the same God who declared "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3). The name Jehovah was insufficient to save sinful humanity because it only referred to God's self-existence, his sovereignty and eternity. Now, however, with the collocation (addition to a word or name) *yasha* (salvation), God made it clear that he was not existing for himself alone, but for us. In other words, while Jehovah drew attention to his glory independent of creation, the name Jesus demonstrates his love for us in that he willingly deprived himself of his sovereign "otherness" and yoked himself to the cause of our salvation.

***Phil 2:5*** Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

***Phil 2:6*** Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

***Phil 2:7*** But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

***Phil 2:8*** And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

***Phil 2:9*** Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

***Phil 2:10*** That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

God alone can give salvation. In fact, salvation is literally through the flesh and blood of God. What this means is that salvation cannot come from outside of God - human thoughts and deeds, whether through prayers, fasting, penitence etc., cannot bring salvation. The Word of God has now been manifested concretely in the form of flesh and blood, and must be

partaken of to expunge our sins. “Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you” (John 6:53).

Let us now compare the above to the Quran. How is salvation conceptualized in Islam? The Quran states that salvation is based on the mercy of Allah and the good deeds of Muslims. “*On that day if the penalty is averted from any it is due to Allah’s mercy and that would be Salvation*” (Surah 6:16). “*Then those whose balance of good deeds is heavy they will attain salvation*” (Surah 23:102). Once again, this proves that the deity of the Quran is not the same as the God of the Bible. The Apostle Paul explicitly reminds Christians that reliance on human deeds do not bestow salvation. “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Titus 3:5). Furthermore, Jews have always associated salvation with the name of God. When the Pharisees noticed the mighty power of healing and deliverance wrought through the hands of the Apostles, their question zeroed in on the name of the power.

*Act 4:6 And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.*

*Act 4:7 And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?*

*Act 4:10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.*

Islam never claims salvation in the name of Muhammad, and yet the name of Muhammad is mentioned endlessly. There is no salvation without the shedding of blood, according to the Bible, but the Quran does not subscribe to such a theology. The Quran denies the Godhood of the Lord Jesus Christ. “*And [beware the Day] when Allah will say, "O Jesus, Son of Mary, did you say to the people, 'Take me and my mother as deities besides Allah?'" He will say, "Exalted are You! It was not for me to say that to which I have no right. If I had said it, You would have known it. You know what is within myself, and I do not know what is within Yourself. Indeed, it is You who is Knower of the unseen*” (Surah 5:116). These are obvious differences between the Bible and the Quran which both sides should be aware of. Our purpose in making explicit the differences in this study is to drive home the point that the two books and faiths are not, and cannot, be the same. As those who believe in the Bible as the only revealed book of God, we urge not just Muslims, but all people to turn to the Bible as the only guide for salvation. Believe that Jesus Christ is God manifest in the flesh (John 1:14)

and in him dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Colossians 2:9). Consider and obey the word of the Apostle Peter who declared, *“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38).*