

**the
Way**

by goldenrípe

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1 Bible and Qur'an

Hasn't the Bible (Torah, Zabur and Injil) been changed?

Both Jesus and Qur'an state clearly that God's Word can never be altered. Jesus said, "For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished" (Matthew 5:18). On another occasion Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away" (Matthew 24:35).

In the Qur'an we read, "Perfect is the Word of thy Lord in truth and justice. There is naught that can change His words. He is the Hearer, the Knower" (Surah Al-An'am 6:115). If the Qur'an states that no one can change God's words, why do you accuse God of not being strong enough to protect His Scripture from evildoers? Do you think that God was asleep when they changed it? Astagfirullah!

Perhaps it is best to read the Bible and try to determine for yourself whether or not it has been changed.

Wasn't the Bible already corrupted before Muhammad was born?

Muhammad believed that the Torah, Zabur and Injil available in his day were accurate. According to Islamic teaching, the Qur'an was given to confirm the validity of previous holy books. "He hath revealed unto thee (Muhammad) the Scripture with truth, confirming that which was (revealed) before it, even as He revealed the Torah and the Injil. Aforetime, for a guidance to mankind; and hath revealed the Criterion (of right and wrong)" (Surah Aal-'Imran 3:3-4).

Muhammad was instructed to read the Torah, Zabur and Injil. "And if thou (Muhammad) art in doubt concerning that which We reveal unto thee, then question those who read the Scripture (that was) before thee. Verily the Truth from thy Lord hath come unto thee. So be not thou of the waverers. And be not thou of those who deny the revelations of Allah, for then wert thou of the losers" (Surah Yunus 10:94-95). Certainly God would not have asked Muhammad to read corrupted revelation.

Muhammad also quotes many verses from the Torah, Zabur and Injil. If they had been changed, certainly a prophet would have known.

Didn't people change the Bible after Muhammad gave us the Qur'an?

Muslims believe that the Bible has been changed since passages in the Bible are not consistent with the teachings of the Qur'an. Since the Qur'an, written in the 7th century A.D., never states that the Bible has been changed people therefore assume that it must have been changed after Muhammad lived.

The Injil was originally written from 50–95 A.D. We have fragments from within one generation of its original writing and whole books from about 100 years after the original manuscript. Existing copies of the complete Injil are from the year 325 A.D. which predates Muhammad by several hundred years. Examination of the 24,000 ancient manuscripts in existence prove that no changes were made to the Torah, Zabur and Injil. It would be impossible for someone to gather the thousands of manuscripts from around the world and make changes to all of them.

Didn't the Jews change the Bible?

There is no way that Christians would have allowed the Jews to change what was written in the Injil. Any attempts, therefore, to change the Injil would have been resisted.

The Jews also knew that God told them never to change His Words. We read in the Torah, “Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the LORD your God that I give you” (Deuteronomy 4:2). No one would be foolish enough to alter the Torah. God promised to destroy them just like He destroyed those who worshipped idols (Deuteronomy 4:3).

Since God's Word is perfect, we are reminded not to change it. “Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. Do not add to his words, or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar” (Proverbs 30:5-6).

Didn't the Christians change the Bible?

The Bible warns Christians not to change the Bible. “If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this scroll. And if anyone takes words away from this scroll of prophecy, God will take away from that person any share in the tree of life and in the Holy City” (Revelation 22:18b-19). Anyone changing the Injil would put himself under great punishment. The price paid for changing the Injil is too great. Certainly no one is would so stupid that he would destroy his eternal future.

When talking about the end times, Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away" (Matthew 24:35). He did not say that during the end times everything will be fine. In fact there will be great tribulations. He even said that on that final day heaven and earth will pass away. But we can be certain that even though everything else passes away, the Injil will never change.

Why should a Muslim read the Injil since the Qur'an is the final revelation?

Some Muslims think that the Qur'an has made the earlier Scriptures irrelevant. But a Muslim is required to believe in all the holy books and not just the Qur'an. "O ye who believe! Believe in Allah and His messenger and the Scripture which He hath revealed unto His messenger, and the Scripture which He revealed aforetime. Whoso disbelieveth in Allah and His angels and His scriptures and His messengers and the Last Day, he verily hath wandered far astray" (Surah An-Nisa' 4:136). In order to believe in these holy books, you have to read them.

There is a lot of information that we can only get by reading the Torah, Zabur and Injil. For instance, the Qur'an lists 25 prophets such as Adam, Noah, Moses, etc. The Qur'an does not provide a detailed account of their lives and words. Therefore it is necessary to read the Torah, Zabur and Injil in order to know what these prophets did and taught.

Another example is the story of the plagues that God sent against Pharaoh and Egypt in order to free the Israelites. The Qur'an states that there are 9 plagues. But only 6 of them are recorded in the Qur'an. To learn of the other 3, you need to read the Torah.

Did God or man write the Injil?

Luke personally investigated all the eyewitness accounts concerning Jesus. Luke said, "Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught" (Luke 1:1-4). These verses show how God revealed the Injil through people like Luke. God gave experiences and spoke to individuals like Luke in order to bring them to a place where they could record revelation.

God's word is given to man in different ways. According to Islam, God's word was printed in a book that is distributed by people. In Christianity, God's word became a man. "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). If God's word could be in a book, then one would also have to admit that God's word could be in human form.

Which of the 4 gospels did Jesus bring?

Jesus did not bring a single book in the same way that Moses (Torah), David (Zabur) or Muhammad (Qur'an) did. Instead the Injil is a collection of writings that give a picture of the life of Jesus.

The followers of Jesus wrote down the words and actions of Jesus to ensure their accuracy. Although, the Holy Spirit used various people to write down the Injil, they clearly have one single source - Jesus.

How did they decide which of the many gospels were true?

There is only one Gospel or Injil that Jesus brought. However Christians use the term “gospel” to refer to the description of the actions and words of Jesus as recorded by His followers. Several of His followers were inspired to write record Jesus’ actions and words. A better question to ask is, “How did they decide which of these accounts were accurate?” 1.9.1.2 The writings accepted by the first Christians are almost identical to those which were gathered together to form the New Testament used today. Church councils held at Hippo Regius (located in modern day Algeria) in 393 and at Carthage (located in modern day Tunisia) in 397 did not determine which of the accounts were acceptable, but simply confirmed what was already being used by the church.

From early in the church’s history, the four accounts found in the Bible were made into a single collection. The Council in Carthage merely validated the 4 accounts recording the life of Jesus from among the many that were available. These 4 accounts were recorded by those who were within the original church (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John). The others that were rejected originated from sects who wrote them to bolster their beliefs.

These accounts did not become authoritative because the Council in Carthage formally decided to include them in the Bible. They were included in the Bible because they were already regarded as God’s Word.

Which translation of the Bible is correct?

None of the holy books were written in modern day languages. The Torah and Zabur were written in Hebrew and Aramaic, while the Injil was written in Greek. Like the Qur'an that was written in Arabic, a translation into a modern day language is needed so we can understand what we are reading.

In the 1380s, John Wycliffe completed the first English language translation of the Bible. Up until that time, most people used the 4th century Latin translation of the Bible by Jerome. For 300 years the King James Version, published in 1611, was the translation mostly used in Protestant churches. However, languages are continually changing. Many found it difficult to understand 17th century English language. Therefore updated English language translations were necessary.

Dr. Lewis Foster, one of those who helped translate the NIV and the NKJV says, "It is necessary to continue making new translations and revising old ones if people are to read the Word of God in their contemporary languages."

There are even many different English translations of the Qur'an. Several popular translations used by Muslims are the ones done by Dr. Hilali and Muhammad Muhsin Khan, Pickthall, and Yusuf Ali.

How do we know which holy books are the true word of God and not something which was made up?

God authenticated His holy books in a manner that could not be duplicated by mere humans. This authentication was done through prophecies which foretold events before they occurred.

For instance, Ezekiel 26 records the details of how the city of Tyre would be destroyed. The city would be torn down and its debris thrown into the sea. This happened exactly as God said it would. Alexander the Great made a land bridge using the rubble of the city of Tyre to attack a tower on an island.

There are also hundreds of prophecies that were fulfilled by Jesus. These prophecies predicted where Jesus would be born and how He would die. They even stated that He would come back to life again. All of these were fulfilled by Jesus. The resurrection of Jesus was witnessed by many people who testified to the accuracy of what was recorded in the Injil.

Only the Torah, Zabur and Injil record prophecies that were later fulfilled. The Qur'an does not record any prophecies to verify it even though Muhammad was asked to do so by his followers (Surahs Al-Isra' 17:91-95; Al-Ankabut 29:47-51).

How do we know that the Bible is the Word of God, and not the Apocrypha or the Book of Mormon?

Since prophecy is the test of a holy books authenticity (refer to the previous question), let's examine these books to see if they pass this test.

Joseph Smith, who wrote the Book of Mormon, tried to do some miracles but failed several times. He prophesied that Jesus would return in the year 1891. But Jesus never did. None of Joseph Smith's other prophecies came true.

The Apocrypha were written between 300 B.C. and 100 A.D. Yet none of these books were written by a prophet or record any fulfilled prophecy. Jesus quoted from many sections of the Torah and Zabur, yet He never once quoted from the Apocrypha. Neither did any of His disciples.

Why are there so many discrepancies in the Injil?

Many of the oral stories about Jesus were written down over time and compiled into a book called the Injil. The different accounts of Jesus' life are due to differing emphases by the writers and not discrepancies. The writers often summarized Jesus' words in order to better communicate them to their different audiences. But this does not mean that they are unreliable and should be discarded. An author must choose which details are relevant to his readers.

The Qur'an also records the same events using different words. Does this mean that there are discrepancies in the Qur'an and it should be discarded? For instance, in the account of Moses and the sorcerers, Moses is quoted in different ways in Surahs Ta-Ha 20:65-73 and Ash-Shu'ara' 26:41-52.

Commenting on the verbal variations of the same stories within the Qur'an, one Muslim scholar said, "Among the *mutashabih* (things which resemble one another) verses are those which tell the story of Moses in many places of the Qur'an, and those, like them, which employ different words to express similar meanings. Some examples of these are: 'Introduce therein' and 'Load therein' (Surahs Al-Mu'minin 23:27; Hud 11:40); 'Thrust thy hand' and 'put thy hand [into the bosom of thy robe]' (Surahs Al-Qasas 28:32; An-Naml 27:12); and 'So he cast it down, and lo! it was a serpent, gliding' and 'Then he flung down his staff and lo! it was a serpent manifest' (Surahs Ta-Ha 20:20; Al-Araf 7:107). Ibn Zayd then comments, "All this is in order to show God's judgment between the prophets and their peoples." Ibn Zayd goes on, "Anyone whom God wishes to test and cause to fall into error would say, 'Why is this not like that, and why is that like this!'" (Tabari, VI, pp. 177-179). (Mahmoud M. Ayoub, *The Qur'an and Its Interpreters*, Vol. II - The House of Imran [State University of New York Press, Albany; 1992], p. 23).

Why do Christians reject the Gospel of Barnabas?

Most Muslims consider the Gospel of Barnabas to be the only existing true Gospel of Jesus Christ. But analysis of the manuscript shows that the Gospel of Barnabas was written between the 14th and 16th century after Christ. There are only two existing manuscripts - one written in Spanish and the other in Italian.

The Gospel of Barnabas describes many of the events of Jesus' life such as His miracles, teachings, betrayal, and ascension into Heaven. But it contradicts the Bible when it claims that Judas was crucified in place of Jesus.

The Gospel of Barnabas prophesies that Muhammad is to be the messenger of God. Yet the Gospel of Barnabas also contradicts what is written in the Qur'an.

- It describes Hell as only a temporary place for sinners and states that Muhammad, not Jesus, is the Messiah. But the Qur'an itself states that Jesus is the Messiah.
- In the Qur'an, Jesus is born in Jerusalem beneath a palm tree. According to the Gospel of Barnabas, Jesus is born in Bethlehem in an inn.

- In the Qur'an, Mary suffers great pains at His birth (Surah Maryam 19:23), in the Gospel of Barnabas she gives birth to Jesus without any pain.

Both Muslims and Christians should reject the Gospel of Barnabas because of these contradictions.

Isn't the Gospel of Barnabas a reliable holy book?

A holy book must be accurate in its details in order to be considered reliable. No one would believe that the book's teachings are true if it is filled with historical errors. Descriptions in the Bible that were once considered inaccurate (such as names of rulers, etc.) were later proven accurate by subsequent archeological discoveries.^{1.15.1.2}. In the Gospel of Barnabas, there are many geographical and historical errors. It says that Nazareth is a village on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. However, Nazareth is located on the top of a hill. It also states that Jesus climbs up from the Sea of Galilee to Capernaum. However, Capernaum lies directly on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. The Gospel of Barnabas reports that Jesus boarded a ship to sail to Jerusalem, yet Jerusalem lies inland and cannot be reached by ship.

The Gospel of Barnabas mentions a golden coin, the dinari worth 60 minuti (RR, LIV/128). This coin was only used for a short period in medieval Spain. It also mentions wooden barrels to store wine, whereas in the Middle East bags made of leather were commonly used.

Imagine if someone told you they found a lost "book" from God. This book stated that Muhammad sailed on a boat to Mecca. It contradicted the teaching of the Torah, Zabur, Injil and Qur'an. The oldest manuscript was written in Italian, a language that did not exist in the time of Muhammad. Would you accept this book?

Does the Qur'an and Muhammad affirm or reject the Bible?

The Qur'an records God as saying, "And We caused Jesus, son of Mary, to follow in their footsteps, confirming that which was (revealed) before him in the Torah, and We bestowed on him the Gospel wherein is guidance and a light, confirming that which was (revealed) before it in the Torah - a guidance and an admonition unto those who ward off (evil)" (Surah Al-Ma'idah' 5:46).

In Surah Al-Ma'idah' 5:46, Muhammad admits to 4 things:

1. Jesus was sent to confirm that the Torah was accurate. How then can one claim that the Torah has been changed?
2. God gave the Gospel (Injil) to Jesus. This means that the Gospel is revelation from God.
3. In the Gospel, there is guidance and light. Everyone who reads it will be led on the straight path to Paradise.
4. The Gospel contains special and important teaching for those who fear God.

The Qur'an confirmed that the Bible existing in Muhammad's day had not been changed. "And unto thee have We revealed the Scripture (Qur'an) with the truth, confirming whatever Scripture (Bible) was before it, and a watcher over it" (Surah Al-Ma'idah 5:48).

Don't the Qur'an and Bible teach the same thing?

We should respect all peoples and religions. Respecting something, however, does not mean that it is true. Instead we must investigate the teachings of both books to determine if they are true.

The Bible and the Qur'an differ on several things. The crucifixion and resurrection are viewed by Christians to be historical fact. The Qur'an claims that these events did not occur. The Qur'an teaches that one can enter paradise if they observe the 5 pillars of Islam. However, the Injil teaches that the only way to paradise is through faith in Jesus and not by our religious works. "Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me'" (John 14:6).

They both could be wrong, but certainly they both cannot be correct since their claims contradict each other. Each of us should do further study and read both books in order to determine which one is true.

Are there any errors in the Qur'an?

There are many historical errors in the Qur'an. The Qur'an claims that:

- Haman was pharaoh's prime minister even though Haman lived in Babylon 1,000 years later (Surah Ghafir 40:36-37; Esther 3:1).
- A Samaritan (Samiri) made the golden calf for the children of Israel and the golden calf was lowing (Surah Ta-Ha 20:85-88). However the Samaritans did not exist at that period in history and only came after the Babylonian exile.
- The Virgin Mary gave birth to Christ under the shade of a palm tree and not in a manger as stated in the Injil (Surah Maryam 19:23; Luke 2:7).

There are also scientific problems in the Qur'an. Surah Al-Kahf 18:85-86 tells of when Alexander the Great (Zulqarnain) came to the place where the sun set. There he "found it setting in a muddy spring." As part of a historical narrative of Alexander the Great's life, this passage must be taken literally. To believe that the Qur'an is without error, then you must believe that the sun sets in a pond of mud.

The Qur'an gives two different accounts of creation. Surah Al-A'raf 7:54 says that God created the heaven and the earth in 6 days. But Surah Fussilat 41 states that creation took 8 days and not 6 days - 2 days to create the earth (Surah

Fussilat 41:9), then 4 days for the earth's nourishment (Surah Fussilat 41:10), and another 2 days to create the heavens (Surah Fussilat 41:12).

It only takes one error to prove that the Qur'an is not a perfect book.

How can people like David and Solomon be prophets since they committed grave sins?

Both Muslims and Christians hold prophets in high regard since they are sent by God to speak His words to us. But Islam teaches that Allah protected prophets from sins and bad diseases.

Christians do not believe that the prophets were sinless. The Torah, Zabur and Injil always present people as they really are. This includes their weaknesses and sins. No one can fully obey the Law so they deserve death. But the prophets knew that God would one day forgive their sins through a great sacrifice just as He spared Abraham's son by providing a substitute sacrifice.

The prophets' sin did not negate the truth of their message since that message originated with God. This shows that God's mercy and kindness are stronger than even the prophets' weaknesses and sins. Even the sin of the prophets cannot keep God's plans from taking place.

Only Jesus was without sin according to the testimony of the Injil and Qur'an.

2 Muhammad and Islam

Is Muhammad a prophet?

A prophet is one who tells what will happen in the future. So to determine whether or not Muhammad was a prophet, we need to ask what future prophecy did Muhammad give that was subsequently fulfilled? There was none.

Even Muhammad said this of himself. “Say: I am no new thing among the messengers (of Allah), nor know I what will be done with me or with you. I do but follow that which is inspired in me, and I am but a plain warner” (Surah Al-Ahqaf 46:9).

Muhammad says that he does not know about the future like prophets did. He was only able to warn and guide.

Do Christians recognize Muhammad as the Messenger of Allah?

Christians and Muslims alike value Muhammad as an exceptional historic personality. Politically, Muhammad is recognized by Christians to be a reformer and a leader. Additionally we know that Muhammad called people to turn away from idolatry.

Muhammad, however, did not recognize the great love that God had for the world. God revealed that love through the life, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus.

Christians are not able to agree with what Muslims confess about Muhammad. The Muslim creed states that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. Christians do not accept the Qur'an's teaching that he is the last prophet.

Why don't Christians believe the Bible's prophecies about the coming of Muhammad?

Muslims believe that Moses prophesied about the coming of Muhammad in Deuteronomy 18:18. "I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him." This verse says that the coming prophet will be "from among their fellow Israelites." Jesus was a Jew whereas Muhammad was not. This verse fits Jesus better than Muhammad.

Muslims also apply Deuteronomy 34:10-11 to Muhammad. "Since then, no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, who did all those signs and wonders the LORD sent him to do in Egypt—to Pharaoh and to all his officials and to his whole land." But this verse could not possibly apply to Muhammad since he never said he got his words directly from Allah. Muhammad claimed to receive revelation through angels (Surah Al-Baqarah 2:97). It is Jesus who communicated directly with God (John 1:18).

Also Deuteronomy 34:10-11 talks about performing signs and wonders. Muhammad never performed signs and wonders (miracles), except for reciting the Qur'an (Surah Al-Isra' 17:90-93). This is also recorded in the Hadiths (Sahih Bukhari 9:92:379). The Injil, on the other hand, records many miracles that Jesus performed.

Isn't Muhammad the promised Paracletos?

The Injil has a lot to say about the promised Paracletos. It would be good to read John 14:16-26; 15:26; 16:5-15. These verses have many descriptions that will help you decide if Muhammad is the promised Paracletos. For instance, in John 14:17 it says that the Paracletos cannot be seen and that He will live in you. Yet Muhammad could be seen and does not live in you. Therefore the Paracletos could not possibly be Muhammad.

Jesus says that the Paracletos would be sent by God, "in my name" (John 14:26) and also that "I will send him to you" (John 16:7). This means that if Muhammad was the promised Paracletos, then Muslims would have to accept that God sent Muhammad in Jesus' name (John 14:26) and that Muhammad was also sent by Jesus too (John 16:7). No knowledgeable Muslim would ever accept that. So these verses must refer to another who was sent from God.

Is Muhammad the last prophet?

Muslims say that Muhammad came to complete and perfect previous religions. "Muhammad is not the father of any man among you, but he is the Messenger of God and the last (end) of the Prophets. And God is Ever All-Aware of everything" (Surah Al-Ahzab 33:40).

According to Islam, Allah has sent 124,000 prophets. Muhammad is one of these. Yet only one of these prophets was called the Messiah. It is more important to know why only one was called the Messiah than it is to know which is the last in a list of 124,000 prophets.

Messiah means “The Anointed One” or “The Chosen One.” The Messiah was chosen or anointed, “to redeem those under the law” (Galatians 4:5). The prophet Isaiah foretold that the Messiah will bring salvation to the ends of the earth (Isaiah 49:6, Zechariah 9:9-10). It is not surprising, therefore, to find that the name Jesus means “God’s salvation” (or “the Lord saves”).

Why don’t Christians accept that Islam is the final religion?

Muslims say that Islam is the perfect religion; “Innaddinn aindallah hilislam,” and the Qur’an is the complete and perfect book. In order to say that Islam completes the teaching of the Injil, there must be continuity between the two. Yet much of the teachings of the Injil and Qur’an do not coincide with each other. For instance, the Injil teaches that humans were born with a sinful and corrupted nature, but Muslims deny this. They also disagree about the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Muhammad came to correct and improve upon the writings of the other prophets.

Jesus came not to correct and improve but to complete that which was given through the prophets before Him. Jesus says, “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End” (Revelation 22:13). Jesus is the sum total of all that God wants to speak to man. All previous messages through the prophets were partial and preparatory, awaiting the full revelation of Jesus, the Kalimatullah (John 1:1, 14, 18).

Why don’t Christians convert to Islam?

God created Adam and Eve without sin, but they disobeyed God and were cast out of Paradise. Before God expelled them from Paradise He promised that one of their descendants will destroy Satan and remove man’s sin.

When God called Abraham, He promised that the descendants of Abraham’s son will bless the world by destroying the works of Satan. Later God tested Abraham by instructing to sacrifice that son. In response to Abraham’s obedience, God provided a lamb to be sacrificed in the son’s place.

Later God caused the Virgin Mary to become pregnant by the Holy Spirit. When the child was born, He was given the name Jesus which means “God saves” because Jesus will save man from their sin.

Someone asked the Prophet John, “Are you the one that was prophesied about that will come and destroy Satan and remove man’s sin?” John said it was not him but that he came to prepare the way for the promise of God. When he

saw Jesus, the Prophet John proclaimed, “Look, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world!” Jesus died as a sacrifice to pay the penalty for our sin. By doing so He destroyed the power of Satan and freed us from our sin.

This is why Christians believe in Jesus. He is the Spirit of God (Rohullulah) and the Word of God (Kalimatullah) that was promised to Adam and Abraham.

3 God

Do Christians worship three Gods?

Muslims believe that Christians are polytheists and accuse them of worshipping three gods: the Father, Jesus, and Mary. This accusation shows their misunderstanding of what Christians believe. There is not a single Christian that believes in three gods or that Mary is one of them. The word “Trinity” refers to the belief that God exists as a unity of three distinct persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit each have attributes which only God can have. In each of the following, the first verse refers to the Father, the second on to the Son and the final one to the Holy Spirit. Each are called God (Philippians 1:2; John 1:1,14; Acts 5:3-4). The Bible also states clearly that they are all the Creator (Isaiah 44:24; Colossians 1:15-17; Job 33:4). They are all described as being everywhere at once (1 Kings 8:27; Matthew 28:20; Psalm 139:7-10) as well as being all-knowing (1 John 3:20; John 16:30; 1 Corinthians 2:10-11).

In the Injil (Mark 12:28-31), Jesus affirmed what was written in the Torah, “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one” (Deuteronomy 6:4). At the same time, Jesus forgave sin (Mark 2:5-12) which only God can do. He claimed to be the final judge who will determine each man’s final destiny (Matthew 7:22, 23). Jesus demonstrates that the Son and the Father are one.

How can Jesus leave the Trinity in heaven to enter Mary’s womb and assume the human form?

Muslims claim that if God were a Trinity then it would be impossible for only one of the Trinity to come down to earth separately from the others.

The Injil says that not the entire Godhead but only the Second Person of the Trinity is incarnated. We see evidence of this in the communication between Father and Son (John 12:27-28) and when at the baptism of Jesus, the Spirit descends from heaven to rest on Him, and the voice of the Father in heaven speaks with respect to His son (Matthew 3:16-17). These verses indicate that the other two divine Persons remain in heaven.

Islam accuses Christians of promoting a mere human being, Jesus, whom they view simply as a prophet to the status of deity. But man did not become God. God took human nature alongside His divine nature without ceasing to be God. Deity and humanity are not confused in the One Person of Christ. Deity is not diluted, nor humanity elevated.

2,000 years ago, Jesus did not exist. How can something be added to God?

Jesus is only the name given to the incarnate Second Person of the Trinity. However He existed before time began in the Trinity. John 1:1 speaks not only of the Kalimatullah (Jesus) as being pre-existent, but identifies Him as the Agent of Creation.

And John 1:14 indicates that the Son became a true human being, and entered the world. “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.” The Second Person of the Trinity, while still God, puts aside His heavenly glory to enter the world as a man and subject himself to the limitations and obligations of the world (Galatians 4:4).

Other verses which indicate His pre-existence are John 8:58 and Philippians 2:6-11.

When Jesus was on earth, was heaven empty?

This statement shows that one still considers God to be like man. They figure that if someone is in Mecca, then they cannot be in Pakistan. It is impossible for a human to be in two places at once.

But God is beyond time and space. He is not constrained by these things. When Jesus came to earth, it was an act of God taking on human form and entering time and space. It is impossible for a man to become God. But it is not impossible for God to take on a human nature. When Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary, He entered time and space. This was truly a miracle.

The incarnation when Jesus entered human history does not mean that heaven was empty since heaven is beyond time and space.

Show me where in the Injil do you find the word Trinity?

You are correct when you say that the word “Trinity” is not found in the Injil. But this does not mean that the concept is not taught there. The doctrine of the Trinity was developed by theologians like Athanasius (c. 296-373 A.D.) and Augustine (354-430 A.D.), but it was not invented by them. It came out of their reading of the Injil.

The Injil did not develop the doctrine of the Trinity. Instead, it was assumed that everyone would recognize that the Injil clearly taught the full deity of Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

An example of this is the baptism of Jesus. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were all present. When Jesus came up out of the water, “he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven

said, ‘This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased’ ” (Matthew 3:16-17). The Father’s voice sounded from above and affirmed the Sonship of Jesus, while the Holy Spirit descended on Him.

The Trinity is a mystery. There is no way that someone can fully know God. We fall into error if we reduce truth to make God comprehensible and understandable to our minds.

How can Mary be the “mother of God”?

Mary is not the focus of the Injil, but Jesus Christ. Mary gave birth to Jesus the Messiah and therefore is His mother. Mary devoted her life to the high calling which God gave to her. According to Matthew 1:20, “what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.” Mary conceived her child as a virgin without having relations with a man. The Qur’an also records this event in Surah Aal-‘Imran 3:47 and Surah Maryam 19:19-22.

All this could happen only because Mary believed and agreed to it. And so she became the mother of God. “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14). The meaning of the name Immanuel is ‘God with us.’

Mary must not be worshipped. Worship is due to God alone. Her title, “mother of God,” simply refers to the unique role she had in the incarnation and is given to her as a sign of respect.

Do Christians and Muslims worship the same God?

There is a fundamental difference between the character of God in the Bible and in the Qur’an. The whole Bible is the story of God seeking man. After Adam and Eve disobeyed God and ate the fruit in the garden, they tried to hide from God. The Torah describes how God came and called out to them, “Where are you?” (Genesis 3:9). Man is still is trying to run away from God because he knows that he is guilty before God.

God comes seeking after us so we can have a restored relationship with Him. God’s highest desire is for us to be with Him for eternity in heaven. The Injil describes how our life will be in heaven. “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God” (Revelation 21:3).

In contrast, the Qur’an describes God as one who is far. Islam teaches that God only makes known his will. He never reveals Himself to us. Even though he is near as the jugular vein as stated in Surah Qaf 50:16, this is only a “technical” nearness. Most of the time we are not aware of our jugular vein nor have an intimate relationship with it. This “technical” nearness only conveys that God is everywhere (far and near) like the air that is around us.

Islam is about man trying to please God by obeying his will. The Bible reveals God as taking the initiative and coming down to seek after us.

4 Jesus

Why do Christians refer to Jesus as the Son of Man?

The phrase “Son of Man” is used around 200 times in the Torah, Zabur and Injil. In many instances it simply refers to an ordinary man. But in Daniel 7:13-14 we read, “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.”

The Prophet Daniel saw the Ancient of Days, a title referring to God. But the Prophet Daniel also saw one who was like a son of man who is given sovereign power, worshipped by all nations, and is the king of an eternal kingdom. The “one like a son of man” in the Prophet Daniel’s vision could not be merely man for He is an eternal king.

Jesus uses this term to describe Himself. Jesus never calls Himself “a son of man.” He calls Himself THE Son of Man. He chose to use a term which identified Himself with the lowly status of mankind while showing that He is the Son of Man as described by the Prophet Daniel.

Why do Christians refer to Jesus as the Son of God?

Often the term “Son of God” is misunderstood to mean that God literally had sexual relations with Mary and produced an offspring named Jesus. The term “Son of God” refers not to procreation, but to the special relationship that Jesus has with the Father (Luke 1:26-38).

The basic requirement of the son is to honor and obey his father. But he should also love him and emulate him. And this is what Jesus did as the Son of God. “Do not believe me unless I do the works of my Father. But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father” (John 10:37-38). “Son of God” is a title for the heavenly, eternal Son who is equal to the Father (John 5:18-24).

Jesus fully reveals the Father (Matthew 11:27) and is the exact representation of the Father (Hebrews 1:1-3). Angels, humans and nature can reveal things about God. But only God alone can reveal God! "All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him" (Matthew 11:27).

Since God does not have a physical body, how can Jesus be the Son of God?

Not a single Christian believes that Jesus is the Son of God in a physical sense. They do not believe that the Father had sexual relations with Mary which produced an offspring named Jesus. The conception of Jesus was supernatural event. "The angel (Gabriel) answered, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you.... So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.'" (Luke 1:35).

The use of expressions such as "son of" or "father of" or "mother of" is common around the world. The Qur'an itself uses the expression "Mother of the Book" (Surah Ar-Ra'd 13:39). Does that mean that there is a "Father of the Book" and "Sons of the Book" somewhere? Shi'ite Muslims have a similar concept. When they say, "Ali is the finger of God," they do not believe that God has ten fingers like people do.

Rather this term is an expression of how Jesus is different from every created being. This was stated by the Father. "As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased'" (Matthew 3:16-17). The Father declares from heaven to all mankind that Jesus is His Son. How is it then that we will not accept this?

Why do Christians say that Jesus is "more than all the Prophets"?

Muslims believe Jesus is one of a long line of prophets but is not greater than Muhammad. Muhammad did not claim to be more than all the prophets before him, and did not know where he or his followers would go after death. Muhammad said, "I am nothing new among prophets; I do not know what will become of me or my followers. I am just a voice of warning" (Surah Al-Ahqaf 46:9-10).

But in contrast to Muhammad, Jesus promised to take all those who believe in Him to the Father in Paradise. He said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). Also in Luke 23:43, there was a thief that was crucified next to Jesus. After that thief believed that Jesus was the Savior, Jesus said to him, "Today you will be with me in paradise."4.4.1.3. If you want to go to Paradise when you die, which of these two can help you get there? Muhammad or Jesus? Who do you think is greater?

Jesus is more than any other prophet. Even Muhammad confessed about Jesus in the Hadith, “Isa faa innahu rohullah wa kalimatuhu” (Jesus is the Spirit of God and the Word of God).

If Jesus is God, why didn't the people die when they looked at Him?

In the Torah God said to Moses, “no one may see me and live” (Exodus 33:18-23). God was telling Moses that because all have sinned and are unclean, it is impossible for anyone to appear before the Most Holy God.

In the Injil, we read that God's majesty is revealed in Jesus (John 1:14; 11:40). During His time on earth, Jesus' glory was hidden by His human nature. “Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness” (Philippians 2:6-7). Jesus hid His majesty from us because we could not stand to view His holiness with our physical eyes.

No one has seen the Father but Jesus the Son (John 1:18, 6:46; 1 John 4:12). Human beings will only come face to face with God in heaven (1 John 3:2; 1 Corinthians 13:12; cf. 2 Corinthians 4:4-6).

Doesn't John 5:30 prove that Jesus did not have any power?

Jesus will perform the greatest task of all when He judges the world. Aware of this authority handed Him, Jesus humbled Himself saying, “By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me” (John 5:30). He consistently gave all the honor to the Father.

Jesus desired to do the Father's will in both word and deed. This resulted in Jesus willingly dying on the cross to set us free from the penalty of our sins. The night before His crucifixion, Jesus prayed, “Not my will, but yours be done” (Luke 22:42). He humbly submitted to the Father's will even though it led Him to the agony of the cross.

If Jesus was willing to obey God to this extent, we also know that He will dispense God's judgments according to the Father's will. God's Spirit examines our hearts, revealing all the sins that we have concealed. Jesus, who is in constant communion with the Father and the Spirit, knows your heart and will judge you rightly. By confessing your sins before God and accepting the forgiveness that Jesus offers you, Jesus will set you free from God's wrath.

Isn't Jesus only a messenger from God and not the Lord?

Muhammad often looked to Moses as a pattern of what a messenger was to be like. Moses was a mediator between God and His people and governed them as their judge. Therefore Muhammad understood himself and Jesus as having the same authority as Moses held.

But that is not what Jesus understood about Himself. Jesus clearly saw Himself as being more than a messenger. Consider the statements Jesus made about Himself:

- “And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began” (John 17:5)
- “Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me’” (Matthew 28:18)
- “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die” (John 11:25)
- “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6)

Jesus’ followers and even the Jews understood that Jesus was revealing that He was Lord and not only a messenger.

- John: “Making Himself [Jesus] equal with God” (John 5:18)
- The Jews: “You, a mere man, claim to be God” (John 10:33)
- Thomas: “My Lord and my God” (John 20:28)

Where did Jesus ever ask us to worship Him?

Nowhere does Jesus say, “I am God. Worship me,” because that statement would have caused an immediate, hostile reaction. If someone said to you, “I am God,” wouldn’t you accuse them of being either a blasphemer or a lunatic?

Jesus knew that no one would believe Him if He declared directly that He is God. Therefore He chose to reveal this in indirect ways. Jesus claimed things about Himself that only God could claim. Jesus did things that only God could do. For instance, Jesus says, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die” (John 11:25). Jesus makes eternal life conditional on faith in Him. On another occasion, Jesus’ disciples asked Him to show them the Father (God). “Jesus answered, ‘Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father... Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence [miracles] of the works themselves’” (John 14:9-11).

Jesus expected people to recognize His true identity from His words and deeds. For Jesus to come out and say, “I am God,” adds nothing of substance to the question regarding His true identity. His identity is established by the proof He gives, not by claims anyone can make.

How could Jesus be both God and man?

Revelation is the disclosure of previously unknown truth. We can only understand anything as it relates to our immediate experience. So God used the form of a man to reveal Himself to us. “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

Now it is impossible for a man to take on a divine nature. But it is possible for God to take on a human nature. This process is described in Philippians 2:5-11.

The real question we should be asking is why would God do this? In the Injil we read, “But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship” (Galatians 4:4-5). Jesus is man’s Redeemer. Our desperate situation necessitated the coming of the Redeemer. There was no hope of deliverance apart from Jesus. God’s righteousness demands that every sin must be dealt with impartially.

In order to deal justly and, at the same time, mercifully, someone had to suffer the death penalty for the sin of the world. In Jesus, God solved this problem. The Father sent His Son to die as our perfect Substitute, and thereby redeemed us.

Wasn’t Jesus a Muslim?

Islam regards itself as the original religion from which Judaism and Christianity developed. In the Qur’an we read that, “Abraham was not a Jew, nor yet a Christian; but he was an upright man who had surrendered (to Allah), and he was not of the idolaters” (Aal-‘Imran 3:67). Muslims believe that many prophets of the past received the one religion of Islam (Ash-Shura 42:13). These prophets are Ibrahim (Abraham), ‘Ishaq (Issac), Yaqub (Jacob), Nuh (Noah), Dawud (David), Sulaiman (Solomon), Ayyub (Job), Yusuf (Joseph), Musa (Moses), Harun (Aaron), Zakariyya (Zachariah), Yahya (John the Baptist), Isa (Jesus), Ilyas (Elijah), Al-Yash’a (Elisha), Yunus (Jonah) and Lut (Lot) according to Surah Al-An’am 6:83-87.

The Qur’an calls Jesus the Messiah. Jesus spoke as an infant in His cradle (Surahs Aal-‘Imran 3:46; Al-Ma’idah’ 5:110; Maryam 19:30). He performed miracles such as breathing life into clay birds, healing the blind and lepers, and raising the dead (Surahs Aal-‘Imran 3:49; Al-Ma’idah’ 5:111). Jesus, as described in the Qur’an, is not divine. Instead it presents Jesus as a servant of God who was not crucified. This contradicts the clear teaching of the Injil which records Jesus’ death on the cross and His resurrection from the dead.

When Muslims say Jesus was a Muslim, they simply cannot be referring to the Jesus of the Injil and of history.

When did Jesus' status change to become Lord?

In Acts we read that “God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it... Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah” (Acts 2:32, 36). What does it mean that Jesus was made Lord and Messiah?

Previously Jesus was in heaven with only a divine nature. When the Son entered time and space, He clothed His divine nature with a human nature. Acts 2 refers to Jesus' return to heaven where He is given a high honor. Jesus is returning with both a divine and human nature.

The Injil makes it clear that Jesus was Lord and Messiah from the beginning. The angels proclaimed, “Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord” (Luke 2:11). John also writes, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made... The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth... No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known” (John 1:1-18).

The question should not be about how Jesus became Lord but how the Word (Kalimatullah) became flesh in Jesus. The question needs to be turned round. The proper question should be how God took on human form.

How can Jesus have the power to forgive sins? Only God can forgive sins.

In the Injil, we read that a paralyzed man was brought to Jesus. Because a crowd stood between the man and Jesus, the man's friends lowered him through the roof to the place where Jesus sat. “When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, ‘Son, your sins are forgiven’” (Mark 2:5). The religious leaders present heard this and concluded that Jesus was guilty of blasphemy. “Who can forgive sins but God alone?” (Mark 2:7).

The religious leaders were right that only God can forgive sins. But they were wrong in failing to see that Jesus has the authority to forgive sins. The healing of the paralyzed man demonstrated this authority (Mark 2:11-12). Sickness, disease, and death are the result of the presence of sin in the world. Jesus came to solve this problem by becoming the curse for us and taking our sins on Himself. This was prophesied in Isaiah 53.

Jesus can take care of the effects of sin. He healed the paralyzed man, cleansed a leper, and raised the dead. Since He can do this, then we know that He can also remove the ultimate cause of all sickness by forgiving sin. As God, Jesus has the legal right to issue pardon for our sins. Our sins are forgiven not by following the law but by our faith in Jesus.

If Jesus is not a created being, how can He be begotten of God?

There is confusion over how the Greek term μονογενής (or monogenes transliterated) used in the Injil should be translated. Some translations translate it as “begotten” but a better translation would be “one and only.”

Monogenes means “come from” without necessarily being created. It is similar to how Muslims believe the Qur’an was from Allah yet uncreated. Jesus, the eternal Kalimatullah (Word of God), came from the Father (John 1:1, 14). Both Muslims and Christians say the Word of God came from God but was uncreated. Jesus of Nazareth, the man, was begotten of God the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35).

Monogenes is also used in the Torah in reference to Isaac, one of Abraham’s sons. There were other sons born to Abraham. What is meant when the Torah calls Isaac the “only begotten” son of Abraham? Since God’s covenant purposes were to be carried out through Isaac, he was called “only begotten” in the sense of his uniqueness.

Jesus is unique in that only by believing in Him can one enter Paradise. “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6).

5 Death and Resurrection

Wasn't Jesus taken right up to heaven and someone else died on the cross in His place?

Some Muslims believe that God made someone look like Jesus who was subsequently crucified in the place of Jesus. This is known as the substitution theory. Muslims cannot agree who was made to look like Jesus. Some say that it was Judas while others say it was a different one of Jesus' disciples.

But there are many problems if we agree that people can be changed into someone else's likeness. If that were the case, then we can never be certain that what we saw really happened. A criminal in court could proclaim his innocence by saying that God must have made someone else look like him and that impostor committed the crime.

Also, what is the purpose of changing someone else into the likeness of Jesus? God could have taken Jesus into heaven or killed those who wanted to crucify Jesus. Wouldn't that have been simpler? Instead someone else was made to die a pointless death.

Remember, people died a slow death on the cross. If someone who was not Jesus was crucified, all he would have to do is shout out, "I am not Jesus. I am someone else." Certainly these words would spread throughout the crowd. But that never happened.

Didn't Jesus only faint on the cross and not die?

Some Muslims believe that Jesus was crucified but did not die. He swooned on the cross and became unconscious. The Roman soldiers thought He was dead so they buried Him in a tomb. Then the disciples entered the tomb some time later and resuscitated Jesus. Although this is an interesting theory, nowhere does the Qur'an state that Jesus swooned on the cross.

The Injil, on the other hand, clearly states that Jesus died on the cross. "But when they (the soldiers) came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break His legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a

spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water” (John 19:33-34). Muslims say that the Roman soldier pierced Jesus’ side with a spear in an effort to revive Him. But spearing someone in the side is how you kill them not assist their recovery.

To accept the Qur’an’s claim that Jesus did not die on the cross would mean that you also have to deny the prophecies of God’s prophets concerning Jesus’ death.

How can you know Jesus died on the cross rather than sometime later?

Out of more than 6,000 verses in the Qur’an, there is not a single verse that says Jesus did not die on the cross or that Jesus was never crucified. Only one verse discusses the crucifixion. “And because of their (the Jews) saying: We slew the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, Allah’s messenger - they slew him not nor crucified him, but it appeared so unto them; and lo! those who disagree concerning it are in doubt thereof; they have no knowledge thereof save pursuit of a conjecture; they slew him not for certain. But Allah took him up unto Himself. Allah was ever Mighty, Wise” (Surah An-Nisa’ 4:157-158). This verse does not say that Jesus never died on the cross. It only says that the Jews did not crucify Jesus.

The Qur’an mentions that Jesus will die. “Peace on me the day I was born, and the day I die, and the day I shall be raised alive!” (Surah Maryam 19:33).

The Qur’an tells those in doubt, “And if thou art in doubt concerning that which We reveal unto thee, then question those who read the Scripture (that was) before thee” (Surah Yunus 10:94). The People of the Book know how Jesus died because the Injil gives a clear answer (see Matthew 27:33-51). “This man [Jesus] was handed over to you by God’s deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him” (Acts 2:23-24).

How could God allow Jesus to suffer a shameful death on the cross?

Death on the cross was filled with shame. It was reserved for only the worse criminals (Deuteronomy 21:22-23). Being hung on the cross is a sign of God’s curse on Jesus. This led many Jews to reject Jesus as the Son of God because dying on the cross proved that He was cursed by God.

But God predestined Jesus to die in this way. “He (Jesus) said to them, ‘How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?’ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself” (Luke 24:25-27).

The Torah and Zabur record 333 prophecies that were fulfilled by Jesus. God tells us through His prophet that Jesus will be pierced (Zechariah 12:10). Why did this happen? “On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity” (Zechariah 13:1).

Jesus bore our sins and came under the curse of God. “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: ‘Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole’” (Galatians 3:13). The curse that was on us was put on Christ and we were redeemed from it by Him.

If Jesus died on the cross, did the part of Him that was God also die?

Nowhere in the Bible does it say, “God died.” God is the source of all life. He is life itself (Psalms 36:9). Since God is immortal (1 Timothy 6:16), He cannot possibly die.

On the cross, Jesus gave His life for mankind. God was present in the crucified Jesus and then raised Jesus up. But when Jesus died on the cross, God did not die. Only Jesus’ body, which He had taken on when He became human, died.

This is similar to what happens to Christians when they die. Until Jesus’ return, their bodies decay and turn to dust in the grave. Yet their souls live on in God’s presence. When Jesus returns, their bodies will be resurrected (Romans 8:9–11; I Corinthians 15:50–54).

Is God so weak and helpless that He can be crucified by humans?

Muslims say that Matthew 27:46 shows that Jesus was not willing to be crucified. Yet there is no way that Jesus could have been crucified unless He was willing. Muslims believe that God sent the angel Jibril to always be with Jesus. Certainly no harm could come to Jesus because the tip of Jibril’s wing is enough to guard all of mankind. So the only logical conclusion is that Jesus allowed Himself to be crucified. Why would He do this?

God is Holy but also just (Hebrews 6:10). Because of this, He must punish sin. Islam teaches that our good works will cancel out our sins and if the scale tilts in our favor, we will enter Paradise. Yet Adam only committed one sin, and because of that God expelled Adam from Paradise. If you have committed even one sin like Adam, what hope do you have of entering Paradise?

Since it is impossible that our good works will ever be enough to outweigh a single sin, we need a different way to enter Paradise. Jesus was willing to die on the cross so we could be set free from the penalty of our sins. Only through believing in Jesus can we enter Paradise.

Why is Judas guilty if it was God's will for Jesus to die?

The Bible records prophecies such as Psalm 41:9 and Zechariah 11:10-13 that foretold Jesus' betrayal. Do these prophecies mean that Judas was forced into action in order to fulfill these prophecies?

God is both King and Judge. As King, He is the sovereign and controls all things according to His will. As Judge, He holds everyone responsible for their choices.

We know that God is able to do anything He desires. "I know that you can do all things; no purpose of yours can be thwarted" (Job 42:2). God may act directly or indirectly through the laws of nature, etc. He may even fulfill His plan by taking His hands off in a given situation. God created humans as free creatures responsible to God for the decisions that they make. God allows them to act even though He knows what they will do before they do it. Judas made the free choice to betray Jesus therefore he is responsible for his actions.

Jesus knew that Judas would betray Him (John 6:64, Matthew 26:25) and allowed it to happen (John 13:27-28). The Injil points out that Judas betrayed Jesus as a voluntary act (Luke 22:1-6; Matthew 26:14-16). After the betrayal, Judas confessed his own sin. "I have sinned," he said, "for I have betrayed innocent blood" (Matthew 27:4).

Where was Jesus for the 3 days that He was dead?

When Jesus died on the cross, He did not swoon or faint. He really died. On the third day He rose from the dead. Between His death and resurrection, Jesus' human body was in the tomb, but He was alive. Jesus, the author of life, could not die. The Bible records some details about what Jesus was doing during this period of time.

The Bible says that Jesus visited the realm of the dead by the Spirit where He delivered a message to spirit beings (1 Peter 3:18-20). Peter did not tell us what Jesus proclaimed to these spirits. It was probably a declaration of victory over Satan and his hosts (1 Peter 3:22).

During these 3 days, Jesus was not giving people a second chance for salvation. The Injil tells us that we face judgment after death (Hebrews 9:27).

While hanging on the cross, Jesus promised the thief being crucified next to Him, "Today you will be with me in paradise," (Luke 23:43). This means that Jesus went immediately to Paradise after He died on the cross. With His last breath, Jesus cried out, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit," (Luke 23:46). Jesus' Spirit departed His body at this point and went directly into His Father's presence.

Why didn't Jesus save Himself from being crucified?

At the crucifixion, the enemies of Jesus mocked Him as He hung on the cross. They called out to Jesus telling Him to prove that He was the Messiah by coming down from the cross. “‘He saved others,’ they said, ‘but he can’t save himself!’” (Mark 15:31).

Don't be mistaken. Jesus could have prevented Himself from being crucified. Jesus could have come down from the cross at any time but He chose not to. He went to the cross willingly to die in our place. His death was necessary to satisfy the law which demanded that the penalty for sin be paid for by death. If Jesus had not died, we would have had to die for our own sins.

The only way we could be spared this death was if Jesus did not save Himself. “He told them, ‘This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem’” (Luke 24:46-47).

Did Jesus really rise from the dead?

If Jesus did not rise from the dead, then Christianity is a lie and no one should believe it. Jesus claimed that He would prove that He was the Lord by rising from the dead. On five separate occasions, Jesus predicted that He would die and then three days later come back to life.

Jesus' lifeless body was placed in a solid rock tomb. A heavy boulder was rolled over the entrance of the tomb. Because Jesus had publicly said He would rise from the dead, a group of trained Roman soldiers was stationed at the tomb to stand guard. Yet three days later, the tomb was empty. Only the grave clothes remained.

If Jesus' enemies wanted to put an end to Christianity, all they needed to do was show Jesus' corpse to the people in Jerusalem. That would prove once and for all that Jesus did not come back to life. But they could not produce Jesus' body.

Thomas, one of Jesus' disciples, heard the news that Jesus had risen. But Thomas would not believe it. He said that he would not believe it unless he saw the wounds on Jesus for himself. When Jesus later appeared to His disciples, Jesus said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.” Thomas replied, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus told him “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed” (John 20:24-29).

6 Paradise and Redemption

How is it fair that we are condemned by Adam's sin?

Muslims reject the idea of original sin because they understand it to mean that everyone inherited the guilt of Adam and Eve's sin. It seems unfair to them that others should have to accept guilt for Adam and Eve's disobedience.

The Injil teaches, "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death [the result of sin] came to all people, because all sinned." Adam's sin led to the condemnation of all mankind. (Romans 5:12-18; I Corinthians 15:21-22).

Christians do not believe in inherited sin, but original sin. We did not inherit any sin from Adam and Eve, but only the desire to sin. Because of that desire, we have all sinned. Thus, we are condemned because we ourselves have sinned against God.

But God gave us a way to be set free from this judgment and condemnation. "Consequently, just as one [Adam's] trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people" (Romans 5:18). Jesus acquitted us from God's judgment.

How can Jesus pay the penalty for someone else's sin?

Ransom or redemption means paying the price to secure someone's freedom. For instance, the Qur'an states, "Then We ransomed him with a tremendous victim" (Surah As-Saffaat 37:107). Abraham's son was ransomed by a substitute.

The Qur'an also states that only those who have a strong covenant with God can redeem others (Surahs Maryam 19:87; Ta-Ha 20:109). The Qur'an teaches that no sinner can ever be a substitute for another sinner because they do not have a strong covenant with God. "No laden soul will bear another's load" (Surah Az-Zumar 39:7). But the converse of

this is also true. Someone who has never sinned can bear another's sin. Muhammad could not bear the sins of others because he had sinned himself.

Jesus has a strong covenant with God so He has the right to redeem others. According to the Qur'an, Jesus never sinned (Surah Maryam 19:19). Four times Muhammad wrote that he had sinned (Surahs Ghafir 40:55; Muhammad 47:19; Al-Fath 48:12; An-Nasr 110:3). Jesus never needed to ask God for forgiveness because He never sinned. Jesus, the sinless Lamb of God, bore the sins of the world (John 1:29).

If Jesus died to save us, then doesn't that mean we don't take responsibility for our own sins?

God is just. Because we have sinned, God must punish us by condemning us to death. But God is love (I John 4:8). He wants to spare us from His wrath. This creates a dilemma since His love cannot contradict His justice.

God provided a law that would maintain justice (sin punished with death), while offering love and mercy. God accepted the blood of an innocent animal as a payment for guilty sinners. "For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement (a covering for sin) for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life" (Leviticus 17:11).

These sacrifices were a symbol of a future sacrifice. The prophets foretold that God would one day send a perfect sacrifice, i.e. the Messiah, who would give His life as the final sacrifice for sin. Jesus, the only sinless one who has ever lived, became the sacrifice in our place. He bore the punishment for our sin so we might be set free.

God accepted Jesus' sufferings and death as a sufficient payment for our sin. The proof that Jesus' sacrifice was accepted is that Jesus rose from the dead. This is what Christians call grace. We received what we did not deserve. God spared us His wrath. It is a gift we can receive only by believing in Christ.

Why doesn't God, the merciful Lord, simply forgive sin?

Because of our sin, we are destined to suffer in Hell forever. God's holiness does not tolerate sin. "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). This is God's law and justice. Yet, God is love (I John 4:8). Thus He planned a way of salvation for mankind. His plan is the only straight path which delivers man from the punishment of death. God's holiness demanded justice while His love pleaded for mercy and forgiveness.

God's justice means He cannot just forget about our sin. Imagine if a judge said that a thief who stole \$1,000,000 from you did not have to pay it back because he felt sorry and wanted to forgive the thief. That would not be fair to you.

A righteous God cannot judge unjustly. In order to meet the requirements of His justice and love, Jesus was punished instead of us. The Injil explains, “that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:19).

“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Can keeping the Five Pillars of Islam get one into Paradise?

Many people think, “If my good deeds outweigh my bad deeds, then God will welcome me into Paradise.” To accumulate good deeds, Muslims perform the Five Pillars of Islam. But wouldn’t we consider it unjust if a judge freed a murderer simply because the murderer has a history of doing many good deeds.

God’s justice demands that every sin be punished. If a murderer’s good deeds cannot set him free, certainly God will not free us from the penalty of our sins because of our good deeds. Only a single sin condemns us to death. If a single drop of poison is put in a glass of water, isn’t the entire glass of water contaminated? Adding more water to it will not remove the poison. Neither can good works erase the sins that we have committed.

Because God loves us so much, He provided a way for us to enter Paradise. “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). We must admit to God that we are a sinner separated from Him, and that the Son of God, Jesus, died to pay our penalty. We must believe in Jesus as our Savior who can forgive us.

How can someone be certain they will go to Paradise?

The Qur’an says that all Muslims (apart from those who die in the Jihad) must go to Hell. “Here is not one of you but shall approach it (Hell). That is a fixed ordinance of thy Lord. Then We shall rescue those who kept from evil, and leave the evil-doers crouching there” (Surah Maryam 19:71-72). Muslims have no confidence that God will forgive their sins on the last day. As a result, many face Judgment Day with great fear. No matter how diligent and fervent they perform their prayers or fast, there is no certainty that they will be accepted by God.

The Injil teaches a wholly different message. It gives all who believe proof that God will forgive their sins and bring them into Paradise. Jesus’ resurrection from the dead was a sign that Jesus’ sacrifice for our sins was accepted and death was defeated. Only by accepting the offer of a pardon through Jesus who paid for our sins can a person be saved from the judgment to come. “Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life” (John 5:24).

7 Additional Questions

If Christianity forbids divorce, then why are the divorce rates in Western countries so high?

A differentiation needs to be made between Westerners and Christians. Not all Westerners are Christians. Not all who call themselves Christians are true believers as well. Most of those who get divorced in the West are not true Christians.

Contrary to the Bible's instructions on marriage, the divorce rate in Western countries is extremely high. This certainly is a problem. This unfortunately illustrates the teaching from the Bible that everyone sins and needs a Savior (Romans 3:22-24).

The Torah says that God made both man and woman in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). In marriage, the two become "one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). Jesus quoted from these verses to emphasize that marriage is sacred. He only permitted divorce in cases of unfaithfulness (Matthew 19:3-12). Many Christians believe that the definition of the word "unfaithfulness" includes abandonment and abusiveness.

Christian marriage is so sacred that it is used throughout the New Testament to illustrate God's love for His people (Ephesians 5:31-32). In the same way a man and a woman make a sacred, eternal and intimate covenant with one another, so too has God made His covenant with all who believe in Him.

If God is love, why did the Crusaders slaughter innocent people in God's name?

In the Middle Ages, some evil politicians used the name of God to justify their greed and desire for power. "Christian" Crusaders took Jerusalem on 15 July 1099 and viciously murdered all the Jews and Muslims. They committed sin in the name of Christianity.

Religious wars in the name of Christ do not reflect the spirit of the Injil. Jesus said, "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you" (Luke 6:27-28). The Injil teaches us

to respond in love and not repay evil with evil.

The Injil also describes the true crusade that Christians should be involved in. “All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God” (2 Corinthians 5:18-20). Christians are to spread the Good News by loving others. The Crusaders did the very opposite of what Christians are to do.

Jesus, called the Prince of Peace, never commanded His followers to kill someone because they had a different religion.

Which of Abraham’s sons did he sacrifice? Isaac or Ishmael?

There is only one place in the Qur’an that mentions Abraham’s sacrifice of his son (Surah As-Saffaat 37:99-106). However, this passage does not provide the name of the son that was to be sacrificed.

The Torah clearly provides the name of the son saying it was Isaac (Genesis 22:2). Isaac was the only boy in Abraham’s household at that time. Ishmael, who was 14 years old when Isaac was born, had already been sent away with his mother Hagar on the day Isaac was weaned (Genesis 21:8-10).

Isaac, not Ishmael, was the only promised child of Abraham (Genesis 17:15-21; Surahs Hud 11:69-73; As-Saffaat 37:112-113; Adh-Dhariyat 51:24-30). Isaac was conceived miraculously by a barren mother and an aged father (Genesis 17:15-17, 18:9-15, 21:1-7; Surahs Hud 11:69-73; Adh-Dhariyat 51:24-30). Ishmael was conceived normally.

The Qur’an gives no reason as to why God tested Abraham. But the Injil explains that Abraham and Isaac were an example of what would happen 2,000 years later on the same mountain where Isaac was to be sacrificed. In the same way that Abraham displayed unconditional love for God in his willingness to sacrifice his son, so too God gave up His only Son who hung on the cross to prove that He is the source of unconditional love.

God kept Abraham from completing the sacrifice. But God did not withhold His own hand from sacrificing His only Son so that we would be able to enter Paradise.

Don’t Jesus’ words in John 3:13 contradict what happened to Elijah (2 Kings 2:11) and Enoch (Hebrews 11:5)?

Jesus’ statement in John 3:10-13 refers to the revelation of heavenly mysteries. Jesus is the only One who originates from heaven and descended from there to reveal these mysteries to us. Elijah and Enoch ascended into heaven but

never returned again to tell of the heavenly mysteries that they had witnessed. Rather, they remained in heaven, in God's presence.

Jesus came from His Father and returned to Him after His resurrection to sit at the right hand of the Father (Mark 16:19). Only Jesus can tell of heavenly truths from personal experience since he comes from heaven. "No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known" (John 1:18).

Since Jesus has come down to reveal God to man, there is no need for us to try and go up to heaven to access God's truth. Jesus brought God's Word near to us so that we can know and live by it. "'The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,' that is, the message concerning faith that we proclaim: If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:8-9).

Why do Christians eat pork?

The Torah consists of two parts - the moral law and the civil law. The moral law dealt with ethics. The civil law consisted of rules and regulations pertaining to everyday life such as food, clothing, and religious ritual. The purpose of the civil law was to set the Children of Israel apart from all other nations. They were to be different from all other people of the earth because they worshipped the one true God. Therefore they were not to adopt the practices of the idolatrous worship around them.

One of the civil laws was that you were not allowed to eat pork. The Torah forbids the eating of pork (Leviticus 11:7-8). Jews regard the eating of pork as an unholy act.

By the time of Jesus, these civil laws had become a mere sign of holiness. The people had become hypocrites only pretending to be holy while their hearts were evil. Jesus saw how they were abusing the civil law. So He declared all food clean for the purpose of exposing their hypocrisy and refocusing on the true holiness of the heart.

Jesus declared it permissible to eat all food (Mark 7:14-19). The Qur'an quotes Jesus as saying, "And (I come) confirming that which was before me of the Torah, and to make lawful some of that which was forbidden unto you" (Surah Aal-'Imran 3:50).

Why are there so many different churches?

Muslims point to their unity to show that their religion is preferable to Christianity. Islam's unity results from uniformity to rules and religious forms. Muslims can go to any mosque anywhere in the world and know exactly how to perform their ritual prayers.

All Christians are unified on their core beliefs as expressed in statements such as the Apostles' Creed. Although churches may use different styles to worship God, they all believe in the Trinity, salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, and that the Torah, Zabur and Injil are God's Word.

Christians have three main groups (Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant). Muslims are divided into two main groups (Sunni and Shiite). Muslims and Christians alike have much diversity of opinions on the non-core tenets of their faiths. One reason that there are so many different churches and mosques is because of the pride, selfishness and rebelliousness found in the heart of the worshippers.

Many think that a church is a building, something like a mosque. The word, "Church," is translated from the Greek word "Ecclesia," which means "those that have been called out." Jesus has called His followers out of their sin and into a relationship with God and other believers.

Why don't Christians fast?

Muslims want to please God by doing good deeds. Fasting is one of these deeds. They believe that fasting makes them pure from "within" as other aspects of Shari'ia make him externally pure. "O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, even as it was prescribed for those before you, that ye may ward off (evil)" (Surah Al-Baqarah 2:183).

In contrast to Muslims, Christians do not have an organized period of fasting but instead give alms and fast in private for God's sake. Fasting is a personal matter. Jesus taught that we should not be obvious in our fasting so that other people praise us (Matthew 6:16-19). Fasting does not only need to be abstaining from food. Examples of fasting are (1) Jonah 3 – because of repenting, (2) Esther 4:15-17 – asking for God's help (3) Acts 13:1-3 – seeking God's guidance.

God draws near to those who fast according to His law. "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?" (Isaiah 58:6-7).

Why don't Christians obey commands like circumcision and resting on the Sabbath?

Both Islam and Christianity teach that some commands that were previously given no longer need to be applied. But Christianity does not hold to the principle of abrogation as described in the Qur'an. Abrogation means that God chose to reveal a verse that supersedes an earlier revelation. "Nothing of our revelation (even a single verse) do we abrogate or cause be forgotten, but we bring (in place) one better or the like thereof. Knowest thou not that Allah is able to do all things?" (Surah Al-Baqarah 2:106).

The Injil, on the other hand, doesn't blot out previous revelations but completes them. Jesus declared, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them" (Matthew 5:17). The laws in the Torah find their true meaning and completion in the Messiah's work. They were merely a shadow of the reality that is Jesus and were never intended to continue in the form in which they were initially revealed.

The Torah was for a certain people (the Israelites) and for a certain time (until the coming of the Messiah). None of the prophets abrogated their own words. Instead the whole covenant changed at once. The Qur'an is different. Muhammad gave all the abrogated and the abrogating verses to the same people within a few years, sometimes even abrogating them within a few months.

What is meant by the Kalimatullah (Word of God)?

Four times Muhammad used the term Kalimatullah declaring that Jesus is a Word of God or his word (Surah Aal-Imran 3:39, 45; An-Nisa' 4:171).

God's Word cannot be separated from God Himself. Through His Word, God unleashes His creative power, His healing power, His forgiving authority, His comforting mercy. When it says that Jesus is the Kalimatullah, it means that all the attributes of the word of God are present in Jesus.

Jesus in the Injil states, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). Jesus is closest to God as He is the Word of God. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:1, 14).

Why do Christians pray to statues?

Of the main groups in Christianity, only Catholics and Orthodox use images and statues. Protestants do not. Statues are a teaching tool used to help one recall the person depicted. In the Early Church they were especially useful for the instruction of the illiterate.

God's law given through Moses forbids the worship of images as gods, but He doesn't ban the making of images. Moses himself instructed that a bronze snake should be made to heal the Israelites. It is idolatry when people consider a statue to be a god. When the Jews began to worship the bronze serpent made by Moses, King Hezekiah had it destroyed (2 Kings 18:4).

Though bowing can be used as a posture in worship, not all bowing is worship. A Catholic can kneel in front of a statue without worshipping the statue. If a Muslim kneels in prayer with the Qur'an open before him, no one considers him to be worshipping the Qur'an or praying to it.