

Muslims and Christians by Paul G. Humber*

Christians, affirming recent creation and the reality of Adam, may be gratified to learn that their Muslim neighbors and friends affirm the same. According to the Koran,¹ Islam's holy book, the "heavens and the earth" were created in "six days" (S.7:54).² Adam and many other biblical names are found in this document: Noah, Job, Satan, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Pharaoh, Aaron, Sinai, David, Goliath, Solomon, Elisha, Jonah, Gabriel, Mary, John the Baptist, and Jesus.³

People of various faiths who believe in the sanctity of human life can appreciate the following words from the Koran: "He it is Who shapes you/ In the wombs as He pleases" (S.3:6).⁴

There are words in this book that are surprising and/or strange, however. Changing men into "apes" (S.2:65)⁵ is curious, but the announcement to Mary of the "gift of a pure son"⁶ is somewhat surprising. Christians believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is indeed "pure"--without sin of any kind.

People affirming biblical creation also do not find plural pronouns for deity offensive. Muslims, who are staunchly Unitarian (denying the Tri-Personality of God), have the word, "We," often appearing in the Koran and standing for God.⁷ In the Bible, God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Gen.1:26).

The fact that the Lord Jesus Christ is Creator God, however, is denied in the Koran.

According to the Muslim scriptures, He, "Christ Jesus the son of Mary/ Was (no more than)/ A Messenger of Allah."⁸ Additionally, we read, "They disbelieved indeed/ Those that say/ That Allah is Christ/ The son of Mary/ Say: 'Who then/ Hath the least power/ Against Allah, if His Will/ Were to destroy Christ/ The son of Mary, his mother,/ And all-every one/ That is on the earth?/ For to Allah belongeth/ The dominion....'"⁹

The Koran also denies another key teaching of the Christian faith--the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ as an atonement for sin (cf. S.4:157). Some Muslims are of the opinion that the Lord Jesus was received up into heaven without dying. These two doctrines, Christ's deity and His atonement for sin on the cross, are at the core of biblical faith.

How, in love, can Christians respond to Muslims?

One place to start is with Scripture. The Koran does not categorically deny previous revelation. The Bible was around long before Mohammed's birth, and he undoubtedly was familiar with its teachings. The Koran gives credence to the Bible. Not only are there explicit references to both Old and New Testament passages in the footnotes, but the following passages are found in the Koran itself:

Let the People of the Gospel/ Judge by what Allah hath revealed/ Therein. If any do fail/ To judge by/ What Allah hath revealed,/ They are/ Those who rebel.// To thee We sent the Scripture/ In truth, confirming/ The scripture that came/ Before it, and guarding it/ In safety: so judge/ Between them by what Allah hath revealed...(S.5:47-48).

If thou wert in doubt/ As to what We have revealed/ Unto thee, then ask those/ Who have been reading/ The Book from before thee:/ The Truth hath indeed come/ To thee from the Lord:/ So be in no wise/ Of those in doubt" (S.10:94).

The Title, Christ, is Applied to Jesus in the Koran.

This fact, the Lord's being referred to as "Christ Jesus" in the Koran,¹⁰ is remarkable, for it unwittingly admits that the Lord Jesus is the promised Messiah.¹¹ Why was/is there not, correspondingly, a large body of literature spanning centuries prophesying the arrival of Mohammed? There was and is for Messiah Jesus! The entire Old Testament, written hundreds of years before the Lord Jesus came and by many authors, prophesied of a coming Messiah who would accomplish salvation for God's people. Moreover, some of these spoke of His death and resurrection. [See the author's book, *400 Prophecies, Appearances or Foreshadowings of Christ in the Tanakh* (available in Amazon.)]

Second, this body of literature, spanning many centuries, indicates that the coming Messiah would be far more than a mere prophet. He would be the Creator, Jehovah God in human flesh:

The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the JEHOVAH, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. ... O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! Behold, JEHOVAH GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young."¹²

This passage (Isaiah 40:3ff) was fulfilled when John the Baptist prepared people for the Lord Jesus Christ. John was the "voice" (cf. Matthew 3:3) preparing the way for Jehovah Jesus.

Verses 9-11 of the same chapter speak of God's coming and of His tender care (like that of a shepherd) of lambs. This was perfectly fulfilled with the coming of the Lord Jesus. He claimed to be "the good shepherd" (John 10:11) and gathered children ("lambs") into His arms and blessed them (Mark 10:16).

Only four verses of this chapter have been cited, but the entire chapter, pointing to the tremendous creative power of the Messiah, is rich in exalting Creator Christ.

The author of Hebrews similarly applies the wonderfully creative acts of Jehovah God as set forth in Psalm 102:25-27 to the Lord Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:10). The connection with the Lord Jesus is made clear by reading Hebrews 1:8, "But unto the Son...." It is an understatement to say that the Lord Jesus was and is a believer in creation. Not only is He a wonderful prophet and a believer in creation, He is Himself the Wonderful Creator.¹³ Thomas the Apostle addressed Him with, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28).

But the Koran also Points Unwittingly to the Cross of Creator Christ.

The following words appear in the Koran: "And remember Moses prayed/ For water for his people;/ We said: 'Strike the rock/ With thy staff.' Then gushed forth/ Therefrom twelve springs."¹⁴ This passage is reminiscent of the first six verses of Exodus 17. The Israelites were traveling in the desert and came to Rephidim, but there was no water for them to drink. They were upset with Moses and demanded water. Moses thought they were about to stone him to death.

The Lord instructed Moses to walk on ahead of the people with some elders. He was to hold the staff he had used to strike the Nile River. Astoundingly, the Lord Jehovah then said, "Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel."¹⁵

This solemn scene is a remarkable preview of the judgment that fell on Jehovah Jesus when He hung on Calvary's cross. The staff of judgment had previously been used to strike the waters of the Nile. Now it was to come down upon the rock. Jehovah God placed Himself on trial before Moses and the people on the rock. The Apostle Paul tells us that "that Rock was Christ" (1 Cor.10:4). The picture of the Sovereign Lord Jesus standing before Pilate and the crowds who were demanding His crucifixion comes to mind. Jehovah Jesus, the Rock, did receive the punishment due to others on the cross. He only gave the one and true atoning sacrifice for sin, and He offers today living water (John 4:10; 7:37). Those who receive such water are forever satisfied.¹³

Submission?

Muslims stress the importance of submitting to God, and Christians agree that such is very fitting and proper. There is a major, spiritual problem, however. Mere human attempts at submission before the Maker fall so far short of the mark. All, Muslims and Christians alike, are in a hopeless state. The Koran, as seen above, only vaguely hints at the solution.

The Bible communicates a clear message of hope. That hope involves submission--the submission of the Lord Jesus Christ who was struck on the head by a staff repeatedly (Matt.27:30) and who then submitted to the ignominy of crucifixion. Why? So that God's righteous judgment against the heinousness of sin might be met. Creator Christ was the sacrificial Lamb who would atone for the sins of the world. Where in the Koran is there any real atonement for sin?

The story does not end on the cross, however. As the Prophet Jonah was vomited out of a whale's belly, the Greatest Prophet, the Incarnate Word, burst forth from death in triumph--conquering it. The Lord Jesus is the Glorious Victor over sin, Satan, and death. He is the only Savior. [There are *17 Predictions/Foreshadowings of the Messiah's Resurrection in the Old Testament*. Get the free resource about this on the CR Ministries website; go to "resources" at the menu bar. Many followers of Christ are aware of Old Testament passages that predict His suffering, but not so many are aware of passages that predict His resurrection. It is the purpose in the article to share 17 passages from the Old Testament that point to the resurrection of the Messiah.]

Ishmael and Isaac?

The Lord Jesus, before His incarnation, appeared as Jehovah's Messenger to Hagar, Ishmael's mother.¹³ He also appeared to Abraham, the father of both Ishmael and Isaac.¹³ Identified also as God Himself, this wonderful Creator eventually came to earth and proved His love to all the children of Abraham and to all peoples of the earth. He said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (John 12:32).

May all who read these words bow in humble submission, repentance, and faith before the One who went to the cross and conquered death for people of every tribe, kingdom and tongue. May His Name be praised forever.

You?

If you would like to receive real forgiveness for sins, pray to Jehovah Jesus. Since He is God, He can hear the cries of your heart. Perhaps you could pray something like this: "Lord Jesus Christ, I believe you came to earth to die on a cross for my sins. Please come into my heart and forgive me. I have done many unworthy things, but I believe your blood alone can cleanse me. I'm glad you conquered death by becoming alive again. Please receive me as you own, and help me to live my life here on earth in a way that pleases you. I look forward to being with You forever in heaven."

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REFERENCES

1. Also written, Qur'an.
2. Surat 7:54 is roughly equivalent to chapter 7, verse 54. THE HOLY QUR'AN English translation of the meanings and Commentary, revised and edited by the Presidency of Islamic Researches (Medina, Saudi Arabia: King Fahd Holy Qur'an Printing Complex, no date), p. 413.
3. Ibid., p. 2035-2082 (Index).
4. Ibid., p. 140.
5. Ibid., p. 28. See also S.7:166, p. 455.
6. Surat 19:19, p. 857.
7. See S.2:38 (p. 18), S.2:53 (p. 22), and quotations in the article.
8. Surat 4:171, p. 272.
9. Surat 5:17, p. 286.
10. Surat 3:45 and 4:171.
11. The title, Christ, is the Greek equivalent to the Hebrew title, Messiah.
12. Isaiah 40:3,9-11
13. Ibid., p. 84-85, 17-18, 9-10, 12-13.
14. Surat 2:60, p. 24. Note, also, the plural "We" for deity.
15. Exodus 17:6.