

# ISLAM & CHRISTIANITY AS SEEN IN THE BIBLE



**ENGLISH**



# Islam and Christianity as seen in The Bible

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## PREFACE

Christianity and Islam are two great religions of the world, each with over a billion followers. Though they have many things in common, practically speaking, there is a wide gulf separating them. One of the main reasons is lack of knowledge and proper understanding of each other's views. We need to explore the possible avenues that can bring them together so as to be able to mutually benefit from their common heritage.

One such approach could be for a Muslim to explain to his Christian brother or sister that Islam is not an alien religion as he or she might think; but is very much Biblical, in the sense that what was taught by all the prophets of God (as we find them in the Bible) is being followed today by Muslims.

This booklet is an attempt to put together certain relevant verses and passages from the Bible that substantiate the Muslim claim that Islam is not a new religion, unfamiliar in its outlook and fundamental principles. References are quoted from the New Revised Standard Version and the New International Version of the Bible. "Muhammad (peace be upon him) in the Bible" is a complementary topic and two articles on the subject (originally published elsewhere) are appended.

It is hoped that this will not only help to erase various misconceptions that some Christians may have but will also equip Muslims with tools for better communication with their Christian brothers and sisters.



*In the name of Allah, the Entirely Merciful,  
the Especially Merciful.*

# INTRODUCTION

The reader may be wondering what Islam has to do with the Bible as the Bible is Christianity's sacred text and Islam is a different religion altogether. As we shall see, the two religions have more in common than we think.

The fact is, there is a great deal of common ground between Muslims and Christians: both share similar beliefs; belief in one God, His messengers and prophets, the divine revelation sent to them, the Day of Judgment, heaven and hell, etc. Outside of Christianity, there is no other religion besides Islam which makes it an article of faith to believe in Jesus Christ (peace be upon him) and in God's revelation to him, the Gospel. Muslims believe that he was conceived supernaturally without a human father and that he performed great miracles like giving life to the dead and healing the blind and the lepers by God's power. Muslims also believe in his Second Coming (the anticipated return of Jesus Christ to Earth), and Jesus and his mother, Mary, (peace be upon them) are highly respected and revered in Islam.

With this orientation, let us proceed to examine both Islam and Christianity in the Bible. The subject will be treated under the following titles:

## Islam

1. The origin and meaning of the name 'Islam'
2. The concept of Islam in the Bible
3. The practice of Islam in the Bible.

## Christianity

1. The origin and meaning of the name 'Christianity'
2. The practice and meaning of Christianity in the Bible.

## Conclusion

## Appendices

Appendix A: Muhammad in the Bible (by Dr. Jamal Badawi)

Appendix B: Muhammad Prophesied by Jesus (by S. S. Mufassir)

*Muslims use the phrase 'peace be upon him' or its abbreviation (pbuh) whenever any prophet's name is mentioned; this is an expression of respect and reverence for him.*

## 1. THE NAME 'ISLAM': ITS ORIGIN AND MEANING

When a person is born, s/he is given a name. S/he is recognised and identified by this name and proof of their name is contained in an official document. In the same way, to validate the name of a religion we should look for two things:

- ❁ The identity certificate. Is that really its valid name? If so, where is it recorded?
- ❁ The certifying authority. Who has given it this name?

### The identity certificate:

'Islam' is the original name of the religion revealed by God. It is recorded in the holy book of Islam - the Qur'an.

*The [only true] religion (way of life) in the sight of God is Islam. (Qur'an, chapter 3: verse 19)*

*If anyone desires a religion (way of life) other than Islam, never will it be accepted of him; and in the Hereafter he shall be among the losers. (Qur'an 3:85)*

A person who practices 'Islam' is called a 'Muslim'.

### Who is the certifying authority?

Did Muslims decide upon the name 'Islam' themselves? Did the Arabs, other people, or the prophet, Muhammad, (pbuh) decide upon the name? Or has the name itself acquired its usage in the course of time? The answer is that the names 'Islam' and 'Muslim' are given by none other than God Himself.

*A 'Muslim' is 'the one who submits/self-surrenders'. The words 'Islam' and 'Muslim' both have the same root letters (s, l, m). Arabic is a sister language to Hebrew (of the Old Testament) and a sister language to Aramaic, spoken by Jesus (pbuh).*

*This day have I perfected your religion (way of life) for you, completed my favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion (way of life). (Qur'an 5:3)*

*It is He Who has named you Muslims, both before and in this [Revelation]. (Qur'an 22:78)*

This is one of the reasons why “Mohammedan” is not an acceptable term in place of “Muslim”; even though Muslims are the followers of Muhammad (pbuh). Why should anyone call them ‘Mohammedans’ when they already have the name ‘Muslim’?

Note: - The name ‘Islam’ is not just a word for identification; it also carries functional meaning. Its meaning conveys the essence of the religion’s outlook and objectives. It has two elements of meaning:

**a- Submission to the will of the one and only God, the true god**

**b- Peace.**

These two meanings are not separate from each other; they are interrelated. Thus, the most complete meaning of Islam is the attainment of peace through submission to the will of the one true god.

## **2. THE CONCEPT OF ‘ISLAM’ IN THE BIBLE**

Do we find the word ‘Islam’ in the Bible?

We do not find it as a term and there are three main reasons:

- ❁ ‘Islam’ is an Arabic word and the Bible is an English translation of ancient Greek and Hebrew texts.
- ❁ ‘Islam’ is a translatable word. Since it bears a meaning it lends itself to translation.
- ❁ Many of today’s religions that have names ending with “ism” and “ity” did not exist during Biblical times. There was either the religion of obeying the one and only god, or there was idolatry. People were either believers in the one god or they were pagans or heathens.

Obviously, when we want to look for a word equivalent to ‘Islam’ in the Bible we have to look for its translated meaning only: submission and peace.

**(a) “Submission to the will of the one true god”**

What does submission mean here? It means total obedience and loving and willing submission. In the Biblical terminology it means ‘keeping the commandments’ or ‘doing the will of God’. We find these phrases in many places in the Bible, both in the Old Testament and the New Testament. The following are a few examples:

1. In the Old Testament, we read about what God requires of his people:

*So now, O Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you? Only to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to observe the Lord’s commands and his decrees, that I am giving you this day for your own good? (Deuteronomy 10: 12-13)*

These verses clearly state that God requires us to fear Him, to walk in all His ways, to love Him and to serve Him with heart and soul, while keeping his commandments.

One phrase that encompasses all the above points is: “Total loving, and willing submission to Him”. The Arabic term, ‘Islam’, has just this meaning.

God is fair and just - He does not require different things from different people. He is the singular, one and only god for all people in the world; He is the creator and sustainer of all. It is evident, therefore, that God wants man to be nothing but ‘Muslim’ in relationship to Him.

2. Not only this, God wants man to be ‘Muslim’ with full conviction and at all times, as we read in The Great Commandment:

*Hear O Israel: The Lord, our God, is one! You shall love the Lord your*

*Muslims greet each other with the phrase: ‘As-salam Alaikum’. which means ‘peace be unto you’. Here the word ‘salam’ (compare Hebrew: ‘shalom’) is derived from the same root letters (s-l-m) as those of the words ‘Islam’ and ‘Muslim’.*

*God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and, when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)*

Furthermore, there is a blessing in submission and a curse in not doing so:

*See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse; the blessing if you listen to the commandments of the Lord, your God, which I am commanding you today; and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn from the way that I am commanding you today, by following other gods which you have not known. (Deuteronomy 11:26-28)*

Other prophets of God proclaimed the same message. Here are some examples:

3. David charged his son Solomon, saying:

*'I am about to go the way of all the earth ' he said. 'So be strong, show yourself a man, and observe what the Lord your God requires: Walk in his ways, and keep his decrees and commands, his laws and requirements, as written in the law of Moses, so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go.' (1 Kings 2:2-3)*

4. Solomon, addressing the congregation of Israel:

*'... so that all the people of the earth may know that the Lord is God; there is no other. But your hearts must be fully committed to the Lord our God, to live by his decrees and obey his commands, as at this time.' (1 Kings 8:60, 61)*

5. Samuel, addressing the people:

*If you fear the Lord and serve and obey him and do not rebel against his commands, and if both you and the king who reigns over you follow the*



*Lord, your God - good! But if you do not obey the Lord, and if you rebel against his commands, his hand will be against you, as it was against your fathers. But be sure to fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you. (1 Samuel 12: 14,15 & 24)*

6. Joshua, in his farewell address:

*Then Joshua said, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen to serve the Lord." "Yes we are witnesses", they replied. And the people said to Joshua, "We will serve the Lord our God and obey him." (Joshua 24:22,24)*

In the New Testament, we find Jesus (pbuh) teaching the same: to keep the commandments and to do the will of God. Here are a few examples of this:

7. Eternal life through submission to God's commands:

*Now a man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?" "Why do you ask me about what is good?" Jesus replied. "There is only one who is good. If you want to enter life, obey the commandments." (Matthew 19:16-17)*

8. The kingdom of heaven through submission to the will of God:

*Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 7:21)*

9. Blessing through submission:

*He replied, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it." (Luke 11:28)*

10. Jesus declaring his 'Islamic' mission:

*"My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me, and to finish his work." (John 4:34)*

11. Jesus (pbuh) humbly showing his submission to God:

*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)*

12. Jesus (pbuh) recognised Muslims as his brothers and sisters:

*For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.” (Matthew 12:50)*

13. The word ‘submit’ is used in the Bible:

*Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (James 4:7)*

### **(b) ‘Peace’**

The word ‘peace’ is used in a comprehensive sense: peace with the creator, peace of mind, peace at heart, peace in society, etc. This element of meaning of the term ‘Islam’ does not seem to occur so frequently in the Bible as does the first one. Let us take a look at some verses that express this part of the translation:

1. *The fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever. (Isaiah 32:17)*

Righteousness is the result from keeping the commandments (Deuteronomy 6:25) and peace is the result of righteousness. ‘Peace’ is the meaning of ‘Islam’ in the sense of eternal silence, confidence, trust and assurance i.e. salvation.

2. *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not be afraid. (John 14:27)*

Jesus (pbuh) was talking about peace: his peace, the peace he was passing onto others, the peace that was not worldly peace and peace to comfort the heart and remove fear.

The peace to which Jesus is referring to above was the one he called his food and mission, as we have read in John 4:34. He possessed it and wanted to pass it on to others. It was to remove the fear of damnation and was to comfort the heart for eternal life. This peace is included in the meaning of ‘Islam’.

3. *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God. (Matthew 5:9)*

Here Jesus (pbuh) seems to be referring to those who submit themselves to God (‘Muslims’) as ‘peacemakers’, who as a result are called ‘Children of God’, meaning the people of God or the people loved by God. God certainly loves the people who keep His commandments and submit themselves to His will, as stated in the Ten Commandments:

*But showing love to a thousand [generations] of those who love me and keep my commandments. (Exodus 20:6)*

The above expression in Matthew 5:9 is comparable to that in the Psalms:

*Praise the Lord. Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who finds great delight in his commands. (Psalms 112: 1)*

*A song of ascents. Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in his ways. (Psalms 128:1)*

Based on the above discussion, one may wonder:

How is it that all the prophets of God, including Jesus (pbuh), were teaching ‘Islam’? Were they, in fact, ‘Muslims’?

The answer is ‘yes’. ‘Islam’ was the religion of all the prophets, including Jesus (pbuh). Their true followers were also ‘Muslims’. This is what Muslims believe.

The fact is that:

- ❁ Islam is not a new religion which was founded or started by the prophet Mohammed (pbuh)

- ✿ The term ‘Muslim’ goes back much further than Muhammad (pbuh).
- ✿ The prophet Muhammad’s role was simply completion of the original message, fulfilment of the original religion and presentation of the final, pure and permanent guidance to mankind, as revealed to him from God.

The Qur’an tells us:

*Say [O Muslims!]: ‘We believe in God, and the revelation given to us and to Abraham, and Ishmael, and Isaac and Jacob, and the Tribes and that given to Moses and Jesus, and that given to [all] Prophets from their Lord; we make no distinction between any of them; and we bow to God [in Islam]’: (Q 2: 136)*

*He established for you what He enjoined upon Noah and that which We revealed to you (Muhammad) and what We enjoined upon Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, that you should remain steadfast in religion and make no divisions therein. (Q 42:13)*

*Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian but he was a strict Muslim (having surrendered himself to God). (Q 3:67)*

These points will become clearer as we proceed further.

### **3. THE PRACTICE OF ‘ISLAM’ IN THE BIBLE**

If it is granted that, functionally speaking, ‘Islam’ is not a new religion and that all the prophets of God, even Jesus (pbuh) and their true followers were ‘Muslims’, then a question arises as to whether Islamic beliefs and practices are also found in the Bible. Let us take a look.

#### **A. THE ISLAMIC CREED:**

Islam teaches pure monotheism. The most fundamental belief in Islam is the oneness of God. He has no partners in His divinity and lordship. Without this belief, there is no Islam. The Islamic creed is expressed in a simple but highly meaningful statement:

*‘There is no deity except the One True God (Allah), and Muhammad is the*

*Messenger of Allah.'*

Any person who has a firm belief in this statement is, functionally, a Muslim. This statement of creed comprises two parts:

- i. The first part concerns the divinity, authority and sovereignty of God, that He alone is the creator, sustainer, savior, redeemer, and deity and there is none else.
- ii. The second part concerns the channel of communication between the creator and mankind known as 'prophethood'. A Muslim has to believe in the Messenger of God and follow his teachings because he is the only way to God.

We said earlier that Islam was the religion of all the prophets of God. If this is true, then the Islamic creed before the prophet Muhammad (pbuh) should include both:

- ❁ Belief in the one true God and that none is worthy of worship except Him,
- ❁ Belief in the then current Messenger of God, as part of the institution of prophethood.

### **i) The belief in the one true God found in the Bible:**

This belief means pure monotheism which remains as it has been throughout history. Examples of this include:

1. The first of the Ten Commandments:

*I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to third and fourth generation of those who hate me ... (Exodus 20:2-5)*

2. *So that all the people of the earth may know that the Lord is God and that there is no other. (1 Kings 8:60)*

3. *Acknowledge and take to heart this day that the Lord is God in heaven above and on the earth below. There is no other. (Deuteronomy 4:39)*
4. *... and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no God was formed, nor shall there be any after me. I, even I, am the Lord, and apart from me there is no savior. (Isaiah 43:10, 11)*
5. *... There is no other God apart from me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none but me. Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other... Before me every knee will bow, by me every tongue will swear. (Isaiah 45:21-23)*
6. *... I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. (Isaiah 46:9)*
7. Jesus (pbuh) also said the same:

*... the Lord our God, the Lord is one; ... (Mark 12:29)*

## **ii) The belief in the Messenger of God found in the Bible:**

This has varied with time, dependent on the prophet in question. Therefore, at the time of Moses (pbuh) the second part of the Islamic creed would be:

*“and Moses is [the current] Messenger of God”*

And after the advent of Jesus (pbuh) it would be:

*“and Jesus is [the current] Messenger of God”*

This implies that one should believe in all the previous Messengers of God and in the current Messenger. Moses (pbuh) proclaimed the word of God to his people so he was the Messenger of God or the mediator of God’s will. He said to his people:

*I stood between the Lord and you to declare to you the word of the Lord. (Deuteronomy 5:5)*

And the people answered Moses (pbuh):

*Then tell us whatever the Lord our God tells you. We will listen and obey.  
(Deuteronomy 5:27)*

The declaration of the will of God started with the first commandment:

*I am the Lord your God... you shall have no other gods before me.  
(Deuteronomy 5:6-7)*

From the above statements in the Bible, we get the Islamic creed:

*“There is no deity except the one true God, and Moses is a Messenger of God.”*

Jesus (pbuh) expressed the complete Islamic creed in a single sentence:

*Now this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. (John 17:3)*

What does this verse convey to us? It tells us that eternal life or salvation depends upon these two things:

- a. “To know the only true God’: Here, the word ‘know’ does not mean passive knowledge; it is something more than this. It implies:
  - ❁ knowing that He is the only one worthy of worship or He is the only deity,
  - ❁ knowing that He is the only saviour and redeemer,
  - ❁ accepting Him to be the only one worthy of worship and to reject all others who are worshipped and
  - ❁ being conscious of God and to be in constant communication with Him.

Mere knowledge for the sake of knowledge has no significance:

*You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that and shudder. (James 2:19)*

- b. “To know Jesus Christ as the [current] Messenger of God [in his time and place]”:

The statement implies that only his teachings should be followed and not those of other ideologies. The verse (John 17:3) can, therefore, be paraphrased to read in a way parallel to the present Islamic creed:

*“There is no deity except the one true God and Jesus Christ is the Messenger of God”.*

Another example of the Islamic creed at the time of Elijah:

*... the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: ‘O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel, that I am your servant, and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. (1 Kings 18:36)*

We can paraphrase this as:

*“There is no deity except the one true God, and Elijah is the Messenger of God”*

## **B. ISLAMIC PRAYERS AND ACTS OF WORSHIP AS SEEN IN THE BIBLE**

Muslims pray and worship God in a way similar to that of earlier prophets of God. Although the Bible does not give a detailed account of all the acts of worship and devotion, we do find glimpses of many of these things:

### **1 Bowing and prostrating on the ground:**

❁ Jesus (pbuh):

*Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed.  
(Matthew 26:39)*

❁ Moses (pbuh):



*Moses bowed to the ground at once and worshipped. (Exodus 34:8)*

✿ Moses and Aaron (pbuh):

*Moses and Aaron went from the assembly to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting and fell facedown... (Numbers 20:6)*

✿ Abraham (pbuh):

*Abram fell facedown ... (Genesis 17:3)*

✿ Abraham's servant:

*When Abraham's servant heard what they said, he bowed himself to the ground before the Lord. (Genesis 24:52)*

✿ Joshua (pbuh):

*Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence ... (Joshua 5: 14)*

✿ Ezra and the people:

*Then they bowed down and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground. (Nehemiah 8:6)*

2. **Reciting** in the five daily Islamic prayers what could be called **the Lord's Prayer** of Muslims (the opening chapter of the Qur'an) is comparable with what Jesus (pbuh) is reported to have taught. (Matthew 6:9-13)

**Islamic Prayer (in the Qur'an)**

**Christian Prayer (in the Bible)**

(Part 1: Praising the Lord and remembering His attributes)

*In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. All praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds. Most Gracious, Most Merciful. Master of the Day of Judgment.*

*Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.*

## (Part 2: Seeking His help)

*Thee only do we worship, and thine aid only we seek. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.*

## (Part 3: Supplicating for guidance)

*Guide us to the straight path, the path of those whom thou hast favoured, and those whose (portion) is not wrath, and who go not astray. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom and the power and glory are yours forever.*

*Aameen*

*Aameen*

### 3. **Praying from dawn to evening**, as mentioned in Psalms 113:3.

*From the rising of the sun to the place where it sets, the name of the Lord is to be praised. (Psalms 113:3)*

### 4. **Offering prayers a number of times in a day**: Daniel (pbuh) used to offer prayers three times a day:

*Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before. (Daniel 6: 10)*

### 5. **Offering prayers at specified times of day**, as did Peter and John, the disciples of Jesus (pbuh), which was the equivalent of the Muslim's afternoon (Asr) prayer.

*One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer at three in the afternoon. (Acts 3: 1)*

### 6. **Supplicating, with hands raised**:

✻ Solomon (pbuh):

... he rose from before the altar of the Lord, where he had been kneeling with his hands outstretched toward heaven. (1 Kings 8:54)

✿ Ezra and the people:

*Ezra praised the Lord, the great God; and all the people lifted their hands and responded, 'Amen! Amen!' Then they bowed down and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground. (Nehemiah 8:6)*

## 7. Making ablution before offering prayers.

*and Moses and Aaron and his sons used it to wash their hands and feet. They washed whenever they entered the Tent of Meeting or approached the altar, as the Lord commanded Moses. (Exodus 40:31, 32)*

## 8. Taking off shoes at entering the place of prayer, as God commanded Moses (pbuh).

*"Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." (Exodus 3:5)*

*Then the Lord said to him, 'Take off the sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground: (Acts 7:33)*

*The commander of the Lord's army replied, 'Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy: And Joshua did so. (Joshua 5:15)*

## 9. Referring to the temple of God as 'the house of prayer' ("masjid" in the Arabic language), as Jesus (pbuh) did:

*"It is written," he said to them, "My house shall be called a house of prayer"; (Matthew 21:13)*

## 10. Following the lunar calendar:

*From one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all mankind will come and bow down before me, says the Lord. (Isaiah 66:23)*

**11. Fasting** is a form of worship in Islam. It is obligatory for a Muslim to fast for one whole month (called Ramadhan) of the year as an exercise in awakening and renewing righteous awareness and action.

Jesus (pbuh) fasted for forty days (Matthew 4:2), and of those who observed the fast, he said:

*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. (Matthew 5:6)*

His teaching on fasting is ‘Islamic’ in character:

*And whenever you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces so as to show men they are fasting. (Matthew 6:16)*

**12. Charity** is another obligatory act of worship in Islam, called ‘Zakah’ (Biblical term: ‘Tithe’). The laws concerning this are mentioned in Leviticus (27:30-33). Jesus (pbuh) reminded them of the spirit behind it which is exactly the teaching of Islam:

*“Be careful not to do your ‘acts of righteousness’ before men, to be seen by them. If you do then you have no reward from your Father in heaven ... But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. (Matthew 6: 1,3)*

**13. Pilgrimage:** The Bible mentions that at a place chosen by God, people should come and glorify His name.

*But you are to seek the place the Lord your God will choose from among all your tribes to put his Name there for his dwelling. To that place you must go; there bring your burnt offerings and sacrifices... There, in the presence of the Lord your God, you and your families shall eat and shall rejoice in everything you have put your hand to, because the Lord your God has blessed you. (Deuteronomy 12:5-7)*

When Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) came, he carried out this instruction. Muslims go to Makkah (Mecca), in Saudi Arabia - a place blessed by God, where the prophet Abraham (pbuh) had built a house of prayer or a ‘House

of God', ('Baitullah' in Arabic, and 'Bethel' in Hebrew) to glorify God:

*... it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory. (Isaiah 66: 18)*

During the pilgrimage, Muslims ritually drink water from a well called Zamzam. This was the well from which Hagar had collected water for her thirsty son, Ishmael (pbuh):

*Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. She went and filled the skin of water, and gave the boy a drink. (Genesis 21: 19)*

Thousands of years later, the well still produces water.

### C. SOME ISLAMIC PRACTICES AS SEEN IN THE BIBLE:

1. Muslims do not eat pork. The Bible prohibits **eating pork**:

*The pig, for even though it has divided hoofs, and is cleft-footed, it does not chew the cud. Of their flesh you shall not eat, and their carcasses you shall not touch; they are unclean for you. (Leviticus 11: 7-8, Deuteronomy 14:8)*

Those who eat the flesh of pigs are referred to by God as rebellious people ... who walk in ways not good, pursuing their own imaginations. (Isaiah 65:2-4)

2. Muslims do not eat the **meat of a dead animal** or an animal torn up by wild beasts. These prohibitions are also found in the Bible:

*Do not eat anything you find already dead. (Deuteronomy 14:21)*

*You are to be my holy people. So do not eat the meat of an animal torn by wild beasts. (Exodus 22:31)*

3. Muslims keep away from **prostitution and wine**. The Bible gives the reasoning for this:

*To prostitution, to old wine and new, which take away the understanding of my people ... A spirit of prostitution leads them astray; they are unfaithful to God. (Hosea 4:11, 12)*

*Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise. (Proverbs 20:1)*

*And the Lord spoke to Aaron; You and your sons are not to drink wine or other fermented drink whenever you go into the Tent of Meeting, or you will die. This is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. (Leviticus 10:8-9)*

*Do not join those who drink too much wine or gorge themselves on meat, for drunkards and gluttons become poor, and drowsiness clothes them in rags. (Proverbs 23:20, 21)*

*Do not gaze at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup and goes down smoothly! In the end it bites like a snake and poisons like a viper. (Proverbs 23:31,32)*

4. Muslims are prohibited from participating in **usury** (interest on money) and the Bible commands thus:

*If you lend money to any of my people among you who is needy, do not be like a moneylender; charge him no interest. (Exodus 22:25)*

*If a man is righteous and does what is just and right ... does not lend at usury or take excessive interest ... that man is righteous; he shall surely live, declares the Sovereign Lord. (Ezekiel 18:5, 8-9)*

5. Muslim men are circumcised. Jesus himself was **circumcised** (Luke 2:21), and so were Abraham (pbuh) and all the Israelite prophets and the faithful Jewish men.
6. A Muslim woman is required to **dress modestly**. Nuns observe a dress code that is similar to the Islamic dress code. The Bible says that Rebecca, the prophet Isaac's wife to be, was covering herself with a veil:

... *So she took her veil and covered herself. (Genesis 24:65)*

According to the New Testament, a woman not covering the head in public worship is considered disgraceful:

*If a woman does not cover her head, she should have her hair cut off; and if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut or shaved off, she should cover her head. (1 Corinthians 11:6)*

Another Islamic dress regulation is seen in the Bible:

*A woman must not wear men's clothing, nor a man wear women's clothing, for the Lord your God detests anyone who does this. (Deuteronomy 22:5)*

7. Muslims **greet each other** by saying 'Assalam Alaikum', which means literally 'Peace be upon you'. The Bible gives us evidence that this was the practice of Jesus (pbuh):

... *Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you'. (John 20:19,21,26; Luke 24:36)*

In fact, Jesus (pbuh) instructed his disciples, when he was sending them on a mission, that they should use this greeting when they enter a house. This is an Islamic teaching.

*As you enter the home, give it your greeting. If the home is deserving, let your peace rest on it; if it is not, let your peace return to you. (Matthew 10:12-13)*

8. Muslims frequently use the phrase 'Insha Allah', which means 'God willing' or 'if God wills'. We find this instruction in the Bible:

*Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, 'If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that'. (James 4:14,15)*

Based on the comparisons of religious texts, it is clear that Islamic practices are not new or out of the ordinary, as it may seem to some Christians but are, in fact, Biblical. It is also clear that Islam was the religion of all the prophets of God and was very much the religion of Jesus (pbuh).

Apart from this, the continuity of the Abrahamic faith till Muhammad (pbuh) is also seen in the Bible where we find prophecies, both in the Old and the New Testaments, about the coming of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). This matter is a topic in itself and warrants a full and separate discussion. Two articles on this subject are reprinted in the Appendix.



*The Ka'bah in Makkah is the first house built on Earth for the worship of One God, Allah. (Qur'an 3:96)*



We will see that ‘Christianity’ as it is now known, is not entirely the teachings of Jesus (pbuh). One must remember that no person can call himself a Muslim unless he believes in Jesus (pbuh). As outlined earlier, both Muslims and Christians have a common heritage and both should benefit from it. This is why the teachings of Jesus (pbuh) need special attention. Let us proceed to learn about ‘Christianity’ in the Bible.

## 4. THE ORIGIN AND MEANING OF THE NAME ‘CHRISTIANITY’

We will put forth the same two questions that were put forth regarding Islam.

- a. The name ‘Christianity’ - Is it really a valid name? If so, where is it recorded? In other words, where is its certificate of identity?
- b. Who has gave it its name? Who is the certifying authority?

The word ‘Christian’ was used for the first time in Antioch, as we read in the Bible:

*Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for an entire year they met with the church and taught a great many people, and it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called ‘Christians’.* (Acts 11:25-26)

Who gave the religion this name? Neither God nor Jesus (pbuh) did. The name does not bear authority from God or from Jesus (pbuh). It was given by Jews and Pagans in Antioch (a city in the then Roman Empire) by foes, it seems, rather than by friends. The name was coined after Jesus (pbuh) had left this world and was initially a derogatory term, as determined by historians.

One may contend, ‘What’s in a name? Does the name matter?’ This may or may not be a valid objection but for the sake of argument, let us proceed to explicate its meaning.

The word ‘Christianity’ does not carry a functional meaning, unlike the word Islam. It is a word for identification, derived from ‘Christ’ and ‘Christian’ (as

‘Buddhism’ took its name from Buddha). The next question then is, what is the definition of ‘Christianity’?

-One may say that a Christian is one who believes in Jesus Christ (pbuh). Muslims also believe in him (it is an article of faith to believe in him) so they can also be called ‘Christians’ by this standard.

-One may say that a Christian is one who worships Jesus Christ (pbuh). However, this definition is hard to fathom because Jesus (pbuh) never claimed that he is God and should be worshipped. He has never claimed to be equal to or as eternal as God and has never advised his followers that they will enter heaven if they believe in his sacrifice. It is difficult to accept that Jesus (pbuh) would have chosen to be vague about a matter of the highest importance, leaving it to people’s imagination and interpretation. In fact, this matter of the nature of Jesus (pbuh) and his ‘divinity’ is the product of speculation on the part of the later Church Fathers and theologians.

What was Jesus’ (pbuh) teaching? What was the essence of his mission?

## **5. THE PRACTICE AND MEANING OF ‘CHRISTIANITY’ IN THE BIBLE**

The word ‘Christianity’ is not found anywhere in the Old Testament. In the other books of the New Testament, ‘Christian’ is mentioned only a few times (Acts 11:26, Acts 26:28, I Peter 4:16). This is understandable because the term was coined much later, after Jesus (pbuh) had left this world.

Now, let us briefly examine the beliefs and teachings of ‘Christianity’. One thing specifically which emerges very clearly and conspicuously is that there exist two contrasting profiles regarding the Christ of ‘Christianity’.

## THE TWO PROFILES OF CHRIST:

### ONE PROFILE

1. a historical Jesus (pbuh)
2. existed during the life time of Jesus (pbuh)
3. preached and practiced by Jesus
4. invites to pure monotheism
5. in line with the teachings of ALL the prophets of God
6. simple, clear, and logical
7. authentic, according to the words of Jesus
8. originated in the revelation from God to the Messenger of God
9. authorised by Jesus

### THE OTHER PROFILE

1. a mythical, interpreted Jesus
2. formulated after his departure from this world
3. contrary to his teachings and practices
4. influenced by Greco-Roman polytheistic mythology and philosophy
5. in line with NONE of the prophets of God
6. mysterious, tenuous, and illogical
7. contrived, in answer to later philosophical questions
8. originated in the vision of an enemy-turned-apostle of Jesus.
9. uthorised by St. Paul, the self-appointed disciple

Such differences between the teachings of Jesus (pbuh) and the teachings of the Church have created problems for the common man to understand the true God-revealed religion and have resulted in confusion and conflict. There seem to be so many disagreeing points of view within the Christian world itself, each denomination claiming to be on the correct path.

Let us look into the teachings, found in each of the two versions; of Christianity.

### (A) CHRIST AND HIS TEACHINGS:

For a proper understanding of the teachings of Jesus (pbuh), it is important to examine who he was, in what capacity he taught and what his mission was. The

answers are given by Jesus (pbuh) himself as recorded in the ‘Gospel’ writings of the New Testament:

### ❁ SON OF MAN:

Jesus (pbuh) referred to himself as the ‘son of man’:

*So Jesus said. ‘When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will realize that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own...’ (John 8:28)*

*For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost. (Luke 19:10)*

### ❁ A MAN:

*but now you are trying to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. (John 8:40)*

### ❁ A PROPHET OF GOD:

Jesus (pbuh) presented himself as a prophet and a messenger of God, and a representative of the kingdom of heaven. He always invited people to follow him in that capacity only:

*In any ease, I must keep going today and tomorrow and the next day - for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem! (Luke 13: 33)*

*Jesus said to them, “Only in his hometown, among his relatives and in his own house is a prophet without honor.” (Mark 6:4)*

People did recognise him as a Prophet of God.

*The crowds answered, ‘This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee. (Matthew 21:11)*

### ❁ A MESSENGER OF GOD (i.e., one who is ‘sent by God’):

*Jesus answered them, ‘My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me: (John 7: 16)*

*... and whoever welcomes me, welcomes not me, but the one who sent me.  
(Mark 9:37)*

*For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it.. (John 12:49)*

### **AIM OF HIS MISSION:**

He believed exclusively in the worship of God and made it the ultimate aim of all his activities:

*Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only. (Matthew 4:10)*

*“My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me, and to finish his work. (John 4:34)*

*Jesus prayed to God: Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. (Matthew 6: 10)*

### **THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS (pbuh):**

Arriving at the teachings in Christianity as derived from Jesus (pbuh), we confine our discussion to the two basic and most significant issues: obeying the Law, and Salvation.

#### **i. Concerning the Divine Law:**

Jesus (pbuh) laid emphasis on obeying the Divine Law and submitting to God’s commands; the same thing which had been taught by Moses and other prophets earlier. Jesus, (pbuh) himself, obeyed the Law and taught others to uphold it. Consider his statement contained in the ‘Sermon on the Mount’:

*Do not think that I have come to abolish the law, or the prophets; I have come not to abolish, but to fulfil. (Matthew 5:17)*

He wanted the people to obey the Divine Law rather than to substitute man-made law and to leave the hypocrisy that was common to the Jewish leadership of his day:

*You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you: These people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men. (Matthew 15:7-9)*

## ii. Concerning Salvation:

Jesus' (pbuh) teachings regarding salvation was also not different from those delivered by earlier prophets and messengers of God. He made it very clear that salvation is through keeping God's commandments, following the teachings of Jesus (pbuh), doing righteous deeds and through repentance from sin.

*Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you wish to enter into life, obey the commandments. (Matthew 19:17)*

*Now this eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. (John 17:3)*

*Very truly, I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life, and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. (John 5:24)*

*For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:20)*

*I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. (Luke 13:3)*

## (B) PAUL AND HIS APOSTLESHIP:

Let us examine the profile of Paul, the author of about 13 of the 27 books in the New Testament.

- ✿ Paul was **not one of the disciples chosen** by Jesus (pbuh) nor did he ever meet Jesus (pbuh). He was a native of Tarsus (a city in modern day Turkey). Although he was a Jew, he enjoyed the privilege of being a citizen of the Roman Empire. He had influential connections with the ruling elite. He was an intelligent, educated person with knowledge of Greek literature and

non-Jewish culture.

✿ Paul strongly **opposed Jesus (pbuh) during his life time**; he tortured and killed many of his followers (Acts 26:9-11, Galatians 1:13). He was present at the stoning of St. Stephen, the first Christian martyr (Acts 7:58-60). He made havoc of the church (Acts 8:3). According to his own report, he was travelling to Damascus to arrest the followers of Jesus (pbuh) when he experienced a visionary encounter with Jesus (pbuh), who, as Paul claimed, commissioned him to be his apostle.

✿ Paul **did not learn his ‘gospel’** from any of Jesus’ disciples or followers:

*I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ. (Galatians 1:12)*

✿ He always believed in the Jesus (pbuh) of his vision, the mystic Christ and was not interested in the person of Jesus (pbuh) who lived among the Jewish people and preached the God-sent Gospel:

*From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view, even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. (2 Corinthians 5: 16)*

✿ Accordingly, **Paul preached his own revealed version of Christianity** which was fundamentally different from what Jesus (pbuh) himself taught and different from what Jesus’ chosen disciples believed. He achieved tremendous success among the Gentiles (non-Jews) as he used all means to win them:

*To the Jews I became a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from God’s law but am under Christ’s law) so that I might win those outside the law. (1 Corinthians 9:20-21)*

We see that Paul portrays the law of the mystic Christ as different to God’s law. He himself admits to using deceit to win acceptance:

*But if through my falsehood God’s truthfulness abounds to his glory, why*

*am I still being condemned as a sinner? And why not say (as some people slander us by saying that we say), 'Let us do evil so that good may come?' (Romans 3:7-8)*

✿ He explained his position admitting that:

- He was **not necessarily innocent**:

*For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord. (1 Corinthians 4:4)*

- His preaching was of **his own founding**:

*What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Only servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. (1 Corinthians 3:5-6)*

*By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. (1 Corinthians 3: 10)*

- He spoke on **his own authority**:

*But to the rest I say - (I, not the Lord)... (1 Corinthians 7: 12)*

*In this self-confident boasting I am not talking as the Lord would, but as a fool. (2 Corinthians 11: 17)*

*Now about virgins, I have no command of the Lord, but I give a judgment as one who by the lord's mercy is trustworthy. (1 Corinthians 7:25)*

- He preached the mysterious doctrine of Jesus' resurrection in this world as **his own 'gospel'**:

*Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my Gospel, for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. (2 Timothy 2:8-9)*

*But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel*



*other than the one we preached to you, he is to be accursed! As we have said before, so I say again now: If any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed! (Galatians 1:8-9)*

✿ For deviating from the original teachings of Jesus (pbuh), Paul **was rebuked** by James, the Head of the Church in Jerusalem. James considered Paul no better than a renegade with a polluted soul and hence prescribed for Paul to go and cleanse himself according to the Law (Acts 21: 22-24).

✿ In the process of making **give-and-take adjustments** with the pagans:

- the Roman Sunday was made to take the place of the Jewish Sabbath (Friday nightfall to Saturday nightfall) as the weekly day of Christian congregational meeting, chosen because the ‘empty tomb’, part of the Jesus resurrection story, occurred on the ‘first day of the week’, Sunday.

- the traditional birthday of the Sun god (25 December) came to be annually celebrated as the birthday of Jesus (pbuh), and

- the pagan spring festival of renewal (‘Easter’) was adopted as an annual celebration of the new teaching of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

- Even the Indo-European concept of the trinity was imported; such a ‘trinity’ was, and still remains, offensive to the Hebrew/Semitic religious traditions.

## **PAUL’S TEACHINGS:**

### **i. Concerning the Law:**

Paul repeatedly insists that the Law is to be left behind:

*But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code. (Romans 7:6)*

*For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law, there is no transgression. (Romans 4:15)*

*You who want to be justified by the law have cut yourself off from Christ: you have fallen away from grace. (Galatians 5:4)*

*Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness to everyone who believes. (Romans 10:4)*

*Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ, and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God. (Hebrew 6:1)*

*So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law. (Galatians 3:24-25)*

These statements imply that while the Law was binding on Jesus (pbuh), it was not binding on Paul and his followers. We are reminded of what Jesus (pbuh) said, almost as if he had anticipated Paul's later position of influence:

*I tell you the truth, 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. Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:18-19)*

## **ii. Concerning Salvation**

Paul presented a very simplistic formula to attain salvation, in sharp contrast to the teachings of Jesus (pbuh):

*That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord', and believe in your heart that God raised him from dead, you will be saved. (Romans 10:9)*

These two versions of Christ and his message ('Gospel') lead us to ask whether Paul better comprehended the meaning of the Gospel than Jesus (pbuh) himself did.

## (C) JESUS' VERDICT

The question as to who is correct need not go unanswered. Jesus (pbuh) himself has provided us with the solution to this question; after all, he was first and foremost a messenger of God and he foretold such situations. The solution is to be seen in these following statements:

- a. Jesus (pbuh) clearly stated:

*A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master. (Matthew 10:24)*

*I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. (John 13: 16)*

We can only conclude, thus, that Paul had no authority to nullify or supersede what was preached openly and clearly by Jesus (pbuh) himself.

- b. Jesus (pbuh) did not teach anything in secret or anything complicated. In his own words:

*I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. (John 18:20)*

The same openness of teaching is true of God's previous revelation:

*I have not spoken in secret, from somewhere in a land of darkness; I have not said to Jacob's descendants, 'Seek me in vain.' I, the Lord, speak the truth; I declare what is right. (Isaiah 45: 19)*

So, Paul cannot be justified when he pushes aside Jesus' (pbuh) own teachings and establishes, in its place, a contrasting theology of his own making, marketed under the name of 'Christ'. Can we believe that:

- Jesus (pbuh) taught one thing to his chosen disciples during his lifetime but that he taught something different to Paul after leaving this world, rendering his original message invalid?

- Jesus' (pbuh) own preaching to the disciples was useless and his life's mission was in vain, since something totally different was to be preached later by his 'true' followers?

- c. In fact, in no uncertain terms did Jesus (pbuh) enjoin on his followers "to do the works" which he himself was doing.

*Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will do what I have been doing ... (John 14:12)*

In fact, Jesus (pbuh) regarded obedience to his commands as a test of his disciples' love for him and as friendship with him:

*If you love me, you will obey what I command. (John 14:15)*

*Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. (John 14:21)*

*You are my friends if you do what I command you. (John 15:14)*

It is not understandable, then, how the Church could accept Paul's version of Jesus' "Gospel" when Paul excluded himself from obeying Jesus' (pbuh) commands and taught others to do so.

Nothing could be more clear and befitting as a parable regarding these two versions of the Gospel than the characterization that Jesus (pbuh) himself gave. Referring to those who call him 'Lord', he said:

*Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord', and do not do what I say? I will show you what he is like who comes to me, hears my words, and puts them into practice. He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house and could not shake it, because it was well built. But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete. (Luke 6:46-49)*

This 'foundation' could be understood to mean the Abrahamic faith of pure

monotheism and the divine law - the things that Jesus (pbuh) was preaching. In fact, when Jesus (pbuh) taught his people, he compared himself to Abraham as an authentic spokesman of God's message (John 8:31-59). Thus, the religion which Jesus (pbuh) had taught (the 'Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven') became, under Paul's hand, a religion about Jesus (pbuh), Paul's 'gospel of Jesus Christ'; called Christianity.

## (D) JESUS' WARNING

Jesus (pbuh) warned those Christians who do not follow him:

*Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord, ' will enter into the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many deeds of power in your name?' Then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; go away from me, you evildoers.' (Matthew 7:21-23)*

He also warned the people against not heeding his warning:

*But I tell you that men will have to give account on the Day of Judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned. (Matthew 12:36-37)*

It is of the utmost importance to know which message Jesus (pbuh) preached is correct. A Christian must be careful to believe and teach others the correct 'Gospel'. Can Paul's interpretation of 'Christ' be more accurate than Jesus' own clear statements?



## CONCLUSION

1. Islam and the original form of Jesus' (pbuh) teachings are not different religions in concept or in historical origin.
2. Islam is, in fact, a Biblical religion. Islamic beliefs and practices are fully evident in the Bible, both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament.
3. The message of Islam, as brought by Muhammad (pbuh), is the continuation and fulfilment of the same Abrahamic faith which was taught by Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, Jesus (peace be upon them) and all the other prophets. All of them, as well as their followers, were Muslims, in the truest sense of the word.

وَالَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا  
إِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ هُوَ الْحَقُّ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ  
يَدَيْهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِعِبَادِهِ لَخَبِيرٌ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٣١﴾

*And that which We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], of the Book is the truth, confirming what was before it. Indeed, Allah, of His servants, is Acquainted and Seeing. (Qur'an 35:31)*

## Appendix - A

## MUHAMMAD (pbuh) IN THE BIBLE

*(Extracted from the article by Dr. Jamal Badawi which appeared in “ Al-Ittehad’, Jan-Mar 1982 issue, published by the Muslim Students’ Association of US and Canada, Plainfield, Indiana, USA. It is gratefully acknowledged.)*

Turning to the Bible, some may hasten to ask: “I read the Bible several times but never saw the name Muhammad; what is the justification of the title ‘Muhammad in the Bible?’” Many Christian theologians find no difficulty in pointing out what they consider as clear prophecies of the advent of Jesus. Where in the Old Testament does the name Jesus appear? Nowhere! The main question is whether or not the profile of “that prophet” to come has materialised and who fits that profile?

There are several Old Testament prophecies that have been misinterpreted for a long time so as to apply to Jesus which, in fact, refer to the prophet Muhammad. The profile of the prophet Muhammad was so clear to many Jews and Christians among his contemporaries that many of them accepted him (Muhammad) as the fulfilment of numerous Biblical prophecies.

## I

One such prophecy is in the Book of Deuteronomy wherein the prophet Moses was quoted as saying:

*The Lord said to me: “What they say is good. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him.” (Deut. 18: 17-18)*

Three important elements are included in this prophecy:

- i. A prophet will come from among the ‘brethren’ of the Israelites
- ii. This prophet will be ‘like unto Moses’
- iii. God will put his words in the mouth of this prophet.

Let us look closely at each of these elements:

## **1. A PROPHET FROM AMONG THE BROTHERS OF THE ISRAELITES**

These words were addressed to the Israelites. The most notable ‘brethren’ of Israelites (descendants of Abraham through his second son Isaac), are the Ishmaelites (descendants of Abraham through his first son Ishmael). Obviously, the ‘brethren’ of a nation cannot be a tribe or a family of the nation itself, but another nation related to it racially. The Bible also refers to the Israelites as the brethren of the Ishmaelites (e.g. Genesis 25:18).

## **2. A PROPHET LIKE UNTO MOSES**

It is sometimes contended that the ‘prophet like unto Moses’ was Jesus. After all both were Israelites and spiritual teachers. Was this prophecy really about Jesus?

To start off, Jesus himself was an Israelite, not of the ‘brethren’ of the Israelites, which shows that this particular prophecy is not about the coming of Jesus but about another prophet ‘like unto Moses’. That prophet could have been none but the prophet Muhammad.

The following is a comparison between a few crucial characteristics of Moses, Muhammad and Jesus which may clarify the identity of “that prophet” who was to come after Moses:



<b>Area of Comparison</b>	<b>Moses</b>	<b>Muhammad</b>	<b>Jesus</b>
Birth	Normal	Normal	Unusual
Death	Normal	Normal	Unusual
Family life	Married, children	Married, children	No marriage
Career	Prophet & Statesman	Prophet & Statesman	Prophet only
Forced Emigration	To Median	To Madina	None
Encounter with enemies (military)	Hot pursuit	Hot pursuit	No similar encounter
Results of encounter	Moral, physical victory	Moral, physical victory	Moral victory
Writing down of revelation	In his life time	In his life time	After him
Nature of teachings	Spiritual, legal	Spiritual, legal	Mainly spiritual
Acceptance of leadership (by his people)	Rejected, then accepted	Rejected, then accepted	Rejected by most Israelites

The table shows that not only were Moses and Muhammad very much alike in many respects but also that Jesus does not fit this particular prophecy.

### **3. GOD WILL PUT HIS WORDS IN THE MOUTH OF ‘THAT PROPHET’**

Generally speaking, this description may apply to any messenger of God who is communicating God’s message to mankind. While that message may come in “written tablets”, as is believed to have been the case with Moses, the specific wording of the above verse is a vivid description of the type of revelation received by Muhammad. The angel Gabriel used to come and dictate to him specific portions of the Qur’an that were then repeated by the prophet Muhammad exactly as he had heard them.

Mohammed's own thinking or authorship were not involved in any way in what he uttered. The words of God (the Qur'an) were "put into his mouth". As the Qur'an itself described: "He (Muhammad) does not speak of his own desire, it is no less than a revelation sent down to him". (The Qur'an 53:3-4). Numerous passages in the Qur'an command Muhammad in such terms as: 'say', 'remind', 'inform'; other passages start with such expression as: 'and your Lord said', still in other passages it reads: 'and they ask you (O Muhammad)... say... '.

## II

In the **Book of Genesis** we read that after the birth of Ishmael and before the birth of Isaac God made a promise to Abraham to bless his descendants:

*As for me, this is my covenant is with you: You will be the father of many nations. (Gen. 17:4)*

*I will make the son of the maidservant into a nation also, because he is your offspring. (Gen. 21: 13)*

*Lift the boy up and take him by the hand, for I will make him into a great nation. (Gen. 21: 18)*

Fulfilment of God's promise through the Israelite branch of Abraham is clearly and abundantly articulated in the Bible. How was that promise fulfilled through the Ishmaelite branch of the Abrahamic family tree? After Jesus, the last Israelite messenger and prophet, it was time that God's promise to bless Ishmael and his descendants be fulfilled. Less than 600 years after Jesus, came the last messenger of God, Muhammad, from the progeny of Abraham through Ishmael, whose followers constitute one-fifth of the total world population in all corners of the earth.

## III

A most revealing profile is found in the Book of Isaiah, chapter 42 which relates to Kedar, son of Ishmael and no other descendants of Ishmael fit these descriptions but the prophet Muhammad:

*1. Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him; ... (42:1) [also called “my messenger” in verse 19]*

Surely all prophets were indeed servants, messengers and elects of God. Yet no prophet in history is as universally called by these specific titles [abduhu, rasooluhu, and mustafa respectively in Arabic] as is Muhammad. The very testimony of faith by which a person enters into the fold of Islam reads: “I bear witness that there is no deity but Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger”. Virtually the same is repeated by Muslims five times a day during the call to prayers, five times immediately before the beginning of prayers and a minimum of nine times a day during the mandatory prayers. The most common title of the prophet Muhammad, since his mission until today, is Rasool Allah (the messenger of Allah). The Qur’an gives him this title.

*2. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth;... (42:4); ...he shall prevail against his enemies. (42: 13) ... he shall bring forth judgment to the gentiles. (42: 1)*

In comparing the lives and missions of Jesus and Mohammed, we find Jesus expressing, on more than one occasion, how disappointed he was in the Israelites rejection of him. Nor did Jesus live long enough to prevail over his enemies (beyond a moral victory which is a common feature for all prophets). On the other hand, in the case of the prophet Mohammed, we find no trace of discouragement even in the most critical moments of his mission. After the bitter struggle, he ‘prevailed against his enemies; established a strong community of believers who indeed ‘brought judgment to the Gentiles’.

*3. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. (42:2)*

Not only was this his distinct characteristic and mark of decency, it was indeed the embodiment of the revelation given to him. [“Be moderate in thy pace and subdue thy voice:’ (The Qur’an 31:19)

*4.... and the isles shall wait for his law. (42:4)*

The only prophet who came after this prophecy with a complete and

comprehensive code of law was the prophet Muhammad. The law revealed to him spread in a relatively short span of time to all corners of the earth.

*5. To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house. (42:7)*

People who lived in the darkness of an unholy life came to the light of truth completed through the mission of the prophet Muhammad. Many of those who were opposed to the truth and bitterly fought against him ended up among the most devout believers. Their blindness to truth was cured. God addresses the prophet Muhammad in the Qur'an: "A book which We revealed unto you, in order that you may lead mankind out of the depths of darkness unto light..." (The Qur'an 14:1)

*6. I am the Lord; that is my name; and my glory will I not give to another... (42:8)*

The greatest glory a person receives from God is to be entrusted as His messenger to mankind and receive His glorious revelation. Not only did this apply to the prophet Muhammad but it is uniquely applied to him as the last messenger and prophet of God as he is the 'seal' of all prophets as described in the Qur'an. It has been 1400 years since Muhammad was sent as a messenger and the Qur'an was revealed to him and since then there have been no prophets that can be compared with the likes of Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad. Nor do we find any holy book after the Qur'an which has influenced mankind and continues to influence mankind to such a degree.

*7. Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth... (42:10)*

A new song may be a reference to a new scripture in another language. This seems consistent with a mention of 'another tongue will he speak' in Isaiah 28:11. The praise of God is chanted five times daily from the minarets of millions of mosques around the world ('from the ends of the earth').

*8. Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the village that Kedar doth inhabit; let the inhabitants of the rock sing; let them shout from the top of the mountains. (42:11)*

Kedar was the second son of Ishmael (Gen. 25:13). The most well-known prophet who came from Ishmael's descendants is Muhammad. His enemies, who were misled by their leaders or mighty men (as described in Isaiah 21 :17) ultimately embraced Islam. Indeed they had reason to 'lift up their voice'; to 'sing' praise of God and 'shout from the top of the mountains'. This is possibly a reference to the shouting of "Here I come (for your service) O Allah. Here I come. There is no partner with you. Here I come. Verily yours is the praise, the blessings and sovereignty" that is chanted annually from Mount Arafat, near Mecca, by multitudes of Muslims from all over the world, as part of the annual rites of the Hajj or pilgrimage.



*Muhammad, peace be upon him*

## Appendix- B

### MUHAMMAD - PROPHESED BY JESUS

(PEACE BE UPON THEM)

(This article by S. S. Mufassir, a former Baptist Church Minister, is taken from 'Impact International', 33 Stroud Green road, London N43EF, UK, 28 Dec., 1973. It is gratefully acknowledged.)

There are an amazing number of things that the Christian reader of the New Testament misses, even in the most thorough reading, because his frame of reference and his scrutiny are controlled carefully by official church dogma. My own case is instructive. I was raised and baptized in the Baptist church and spent much of my youth seriously studying the Bible and religious discipline. At a still young age, I entered the ministry. I thought I knew the Bible well. As paradoxical as it seems, I must admit that I never possessed as complete a knowledge of the Bible as a Christian as I have gained since embracing Islam. The reason is that, in general, the Christian interpretation presents a puzzle with major parts missing and those parts can be supplied only by Islam. The Christian sees the Bible as an end in itself, whereas in reality it is but an indicator pointing the way to something else which was then yet to come. Until this event occurred, the Bible was an incomplete, unfulfilled Book, and many of its profound prophecies could not be grasped completely. Christian theologians and scholars, eager to impress their following, often erred in assigning premature "fulfilments" to those foregleams of the future. When the prophecies actually came true these erroneous conjectures had assumed the status of dogma, blinding Christians to the fruition of their own beliefs.

An exceptional example of the dangers of such hasty interpretation is the standard Christian exegesis of John (14:16-17) and John (16:7-14). Giving Christian scholars the benefit of doubt, we will assume that the accepted Greek text records, in general, the actual sayings of Jesus, peace be upon him. In these verses, Jesus highlights the brevity of his own mission, showing its intermediate status as a link between the prophetic past and the prophetic future. It is significant that Jesus never called himself the last prophet or even a universal prophet, though Christians later came to consider him as both. On the contrary, here, when read carefully with regard to the Greek text rather than the creeds of the Establishment Churches, Jesus points specifically to the coming of another

prophet after him who would -

1. be eminently truthful and trustworthy,
2. teach only what God revealed, and
3. honour Jesus by carrying the prophetic mission on to its logical conclusion.

A characteristic of what is termed Biblical prophecy is that it merely gives outlines, which become perfectly distinct only upon the unfolding of reality. Thus, we have no instance here of Jesus saying, in the unreal fashion of the Italian “Gospel of Barnabas”, ‘after me there shall come the Last Prophet, Muhammad bin Abdullah’. But Biblical prophecy does have certain safeguards which makes the intended interpretation sure beyond all doubt. The New Testament records Jesus as saying:

*And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. And I will ask the Father and he will give you another Counselor (Greek; Parakleetos) to be with you forever the Spirit of truth ... John (14:3, 16, 17)*

Jesus says that the prophet who would come after him would be a true messenger commissioned by God who, like Jesus, would possess a heavenly revelation from God, teaching not words of his own composition but whatever God gave him to speak:

*But when **he**, the spirit of truth, comes, **he** will guide you in all truth. **He** shall not speak on his own; **he** will speak only what **he** hears, and **he** will tell you what is yet to come. **He** will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. John (16: 13,14)*

Thus, additionally, this coming prophet would not spurn the mission of Jesus but would recognize it and actually “glorify” Jesus by removing from association with him all the false doctrines with which others surrounded the name. Unlike the Jews in general, this prophet would not belie the mission of Jesus but take the prophetic mission on to its conclusion. Now, **who would this be?** Jesus calls him the “Paraclete”. We cannot discount the opinion that what Jesus really said, in his own language of Aramaic, was nearer in meaning to the similar Greek word “Periclyte”, “The Praised One” and that John, an unknown writer in the second century of the Christian era, picked up “Paraclete” in error. However,

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until positive textual evidence is available, we shall continue to give the benefit of the doubt because, even in its admittedly defective condition, the light of truth shines forth in it with startling brilliance.

For centuries, based on the King James' Version, Christendom has translated "Paraclete" as "the Comforter" though that is not precisely what "Paraclete" means. Even so, "Comforter" would be an acceptable title for the one who is the 'Mercy of all creatures'. What "Paraclete" means though is an "advocate", one who pleads the cause of another, one who counsels or advises. The word points to one who would be an advocate for and counsellor to mankind, who, as the Our'an puts it, would be *hareesun alaikum*, 'solicitous for your welfare'. (Likewise, in English "solicitor" is synonymous with "advocate" in the legal sense).

Another indication which acts as a safeguard for the true meaning of these verses is that the "Paraclete" is also given the title "Spirit of Truth" (Greek: to pneuma tees aletheais). This is clear when one realizes that in New Testament Greek, pneuma can mean "possessor of a spiritual communication" i.e., an inspired person, as well as a "spirit" per se. (A Greek-English Lexicon to the New Testament, by Rev. Thomas S. Green). Thus, to pneuma tees aletheais "the inspired truthful one" means that the "Paraclete" would be so truthful and trustworthy in discharging his responsibilities to the divine revelation that "the Truthful" or "the Trustworthy" would be identifying titles for him. The Greek aletheais corresponds exactly with the Arabic Amin, and "Al-Amin", "the Trustworthy", which was an early title of Muhammad ( peace be upon him).

A hasty editor was not satisfied with the expression "spirit of truth", or did not understand it and assumed that this must be the same as the "Holy Spirit". The words at John (14:26), which identify the "Paraclete" as the 'Holy Spirit' are the result of this. Such words are found nowhere else and are obviously an addition to the text. Yet, this premature interpretation, unsound textually, is the one generally acceptable by the Church for explaining who the "Paraclete" is! Nonetheless, Jesus spoke of someone who would dwell physically with mankind, advising and counselling them; in effect, "pleading their case" with God and showing them the sure way of return by adherence to the truth and Divine Judge. He, the "Paraclete", was not someone who was already present but someone yet to come. As for the Holy Spirit, the angel of revelation, his presence was already manifest. David knew him and asked God "take not



Thy holy spirit for me”. (Psalms 51 :11). The holy spirit was present already during the ministry of Jesus, a fact which the New Testament acknowledges abundantly (cf. Matthew 3:16,17; 12:27-33, etc.). It would have been ridiculous and redundant for Jesus to speak of the future coming (‘He shall/will give you...’) of what presently existed.

Jesus points to a fundamental distinction between the “Paraclete” and all other prophets: “that he may abide with you forever”. This is the same as saying: ‘the Last Prophet whose mission has permanence, voiding the need of any additional prophets’. In plain English, Jesus is saying: ‘Look, **I must go away soon my mission among you having been completed but I will ask our Lord to send for all of you another counsellor, the prophet who will stand as your guide until the end of time**’.

To prove conclusively that “John” understood the “Paraclete” to be a flesh and blood person, not a disembodied spirit or an angel, in another New Testament book attributed to him (1 John 2:1), he used the same term with reference to Jesus: “We have an advocate (Greek parakletos, the same word rendered ‘Comforter’ earlier) with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous”. Jesus, as God’s messenger, was considered to be a “Paraclete”. The term was thus not understood by early Christians to mean someone supernatural. The fact is that “Paraclete” or “Counselor” or “Advocate” refers to a human being, an inspired person, which is a legitimate meaning of “pneuma” and not a “spirit” per se. In practical terms, the meaning of “Paraclete” is nearly synonymous with “prophet”, with emphasis on the teaching and counseling aspects of prophethood. If Jesus said ‘another Paraclete’ at John (14:16), the significance is ‘another prophet, outstanding for his teaching and counselling’. Furthermore, Jesus qualifies this “Paraclete” by terming him the one to ‘abide forever’, the last or permanent one.

There is yet another possibility for the serious researcher. There are numerous instances in the history of biblical textual transmission wherein words have been added inadvertently to the Hebrew and Greek texts; likewise, there are instances wherein words, indeed, complete sentences, have been omitted inadvertently from those texts by copyists, especially where the letters of the omitted word were similar to another word which preceded or followed it. In the ancient texts, the letters were all run together, without spacing, so that Jesus’ words at John (14:16) would have looked like this in the Greek text:

“KAIEGOEROOTEESOOTONPATERAKAIALLONPARAKLEETONDOOSEIMIN”

Later, words were spaced so that we have:

“KAI EGO EROOTEESOO TON PATERA KAI ALLON  
PARAKLEETON DOOSEI UMIN”

(And I will ask the father, and he will give you another Paraclete)

The point is that the received Greek text’s “Paraclete” may not be a corruption of “Pericylte”. The original text might well have contained both words, but one became omitted in later copying because of being so close in position and in spelling to the other. Only further research can resolve the matter but it is quite possible that what Jesus said originally was along these lines:

“I will request our Lord, and He will send you another Counselor, the  
Praised One, who will be permanent for you until the end of time.”

Nevertheless, there is **no one else** in all of history that John 14:16 et seq. could refer to but Muhammad bin Abdullah, peace be upon him. Christians admit that these verses do not refer to Jesus himself and the premature identification of the “Paraclete” with the Holy Spirit is untenable in view of other verses of the Bible. Furthermore, **no one else** has come as a prophet giving due recognition to the mission of Jesus (“He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you”.) (John 16:14). **No one else** has led mankind into “all truth” (John 16:13). **Only one man** has received God’s revelation since the time of Jesus, and **only one man** stands as Counsellor and Advocate (“Paraclete”) for mankind for all the ages to come, Praised (“Pericylte”) by God and millions of people also.

## Islam & Christianity as seen in the Bible

This booklet is an attempt to put together certain relevant verses and passages from the Bible that substantiate the Muslim claim that Islam is not a new religion, unfamiliar in its outlook and fundamental principles. References are quoted from the New Revised Standard Version and the New International Version of the Bible. "Muhammad (peace be upon him) in the Bible" is a complementary topic and two articles on the subject (originally published elsewhere) are appended.

### About Islamic Information center

The Islamic Information center, Sultanate of Oman, is a nonprofit organization which is under the support and guidance of The Sultan Qaboos Higher Center for Culture and Science. Its mission is to provide information on the teachings of Islam and its practices to non-Muslims. The center offers introductory literature on Islam in the form of booklets, the Qur'an translations in different languages, pamphlets and audio/video CDs & DVDs.



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