

In Quest of the Real Jesus: Islam vs. Christianity

Overview

Islam: Submission

Muslim: One who submits

Qur'an: The Recitation (Contains 114 revelations, written as surahs)

Mohammed: The reformer of Islam: The Greatest of the prophets (A.D. 570-632)

Hadith: "Collected traditions" Used in conjunction with the Qur'an

Main schools of thought: Sunni and Shi'ite

Caliphs: "Deputies" the main leaders of Islam

The Tip of the Iceberg: What a Muslim would say to a Christian

1. We recognize the Torah, the writings of David (Psalms), and the gospels
2. We validate the Virgin Birth of Jesus (Surah 3:47; 19:15-22; 21:91;23:50)
3. We believe Jesus was a messenger of God (Surah 3:45-46; 5:75; 61:6)
4. We believe Jesus was the Messiah (Surah 5:75)
5. We believe Jesus Performed Miracles (Surah 3:48)
6. We believe Jesus is coming back again (Surah 4:159; 43:61)

The Middle of the Iceberg: What a Muslim really Means

1. They believe the scribes and the early church corrupted parts of the Torah and the gospels {i.e. the sacrifice of Isaac, the gospel of Jesus} (Surah 2:75-279)
2. They believe that the virgin birth was a sign that pointed mankind to Allah, and that Jesus began preaching to others in the cradle (Surah 3:46).
3. They believe Jesus was a messenger who had two main purposes: He confirmed the Torah, and he foretold about Mohammed, an the great prophet that would come after him (Surah 61:6)
4. Jesus was a Messiah to the Jews; but he was no more than an apostle along with the other apostles who passed away before him (Surah 5:75)
5. They believe Jesus performed miracles to confirm to glorify Allah (Surah 61:6)—not to validate his claim as the Savior of the world.
6. They believe Jesus is coming back again, but only temporarily, and then he will die.

When he dies, the People of the Book will believe in the teachings of Islam (Surah 4:159). There are traditions outside the Qur'an that state Jesus will return as a subordinate to a spiritual or military leader, he will kill the anti-christ, bear witness against the People of the Book (Christians and Jews), marry and have children, and live for another forty years. At that time he will die and be buried beside Mohammed (Wali ad-Din, Miskat Al-Masabih, (tr. James Robson), Vol.II, p.1159; Sahih Muslim, Vol.1, p.92). But not before the people of the book believe in the teachings of Islam (Surah 4:159).

The Foundation of the Iceberg: The True Heart of the Matter

1. They would vehemently deny Jesus as the Son of God (Surah 6:101; 19:88; 72:3; 112).

"And they say, The All-Merciful has taken unto Himself a son. You have indeed advanced something hideous. As if the skies are about to burst, the earth to split asunder and its mountain to fall down in the utter ruin for that they have attributed to the All-merciful a son; and behaves not the All-merciful to take a son. None there in the heavens and earth but comes to the All-Merciful as a servant" (Mary 19:88-93)"

2. They would vehemently deny the doctrine of the Trinity (Surah 4:171; 5:73,116).

Then God will say: 'Jesus son of Mary, did you ever say to mankind: 'Worship me and my mother as gods besides God? 'Glory be to You he will answer, 'I could never have claimed what I have no right to. If I ever said so, You would have surely known it. You know what is in my mind, but I know not what is in Yours. You alone know what is hidden. I told them only what you bade me (Surah 5:116).

3. They would vehemently deny Christ was crucified on a cross (Surah 3:54-55;4:157-158)

They denied the truth and uttered a monstrous falsehood against Mary. They declared: 'We have put to death the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, the apostle of God.' They did not kill him, nor did they crucify him, but they thought they did (Surah 4:157).

4. They would vehemently deny Christ was raised from the dead

Those that disagreed about him were in doubt concerning him; they knew nothing about him that was not sheer conjecture; they did not slay him for certain. God lifted him before his death; and on the Day of the Resurrection he will bear witness against them (Surah 4:158).

Further Objections from Muslims

1. **The Qur'an is a direct revelation received by Mohammed—while the Bible is not.**

Not true. The Qur'an was transmitted five times before it became known in its present day form.

- a. God supposedly gave the angel Gabriel the message of the Qur'an
- b. Gabriel then supposedly gave the Qur'an to Mohammed, which was revealed in parts
- c. Mohammed received the revelation and committed it to memory. He also wrote down sections
- d. Mohammed's followers committed the Qur'an to memory and wrote other portions on scrap objects.
- e. The 4th Caliph, Uthman, organized a committee and compiled these oral traditions and fragments to complete the task. He also disposed of variant readings that differed from his compiled Qur'an.

2. **We have the original manuscript of the Qur'an—whereas the church does not**

This is a highly debated issue. The earliest known dated manuscripts are in museums in Turkey and Russia, and scholars have dated those in to be 150 years after Mohammed (note: 1st Corinthians is dated about 15 years after the resurrection of Christ A.D. 55). The issue revolves around the script that is used. It is believed the type of script in those manuscripts are different than what was used during the era of Mohammed.

Muslim's have claimed they have even earlier manuscripts—but they will not allow them to be scientifically studied and therefore cannot be verified one way or the other.

3. Why should I believe the biblical version of Jesus instead of that found in the Qur'an?

- a. The Qur'an was written six centuries after Christ. There were no eyewitnesses to the ministry of Christ. No one could say I was there. They relied on second hand information.
- b. The manuscript evidence is still overwhelming which easily dismisses the notion that the Torah and gospels were corrupted by the Jews and the early church.

Old Testament

There are Hebrew Old Testament manuscripts pre-dating Muhammad. Until 1947, the oldest copy of the Old Testament available to us came from around 900 AD (after Mohammed). Then, the Dead Sea Scrolls were found and we got partial or complete copies of *every book of the Old Testament except Esther*. They are all dated before AD 70, and many can be dated to a century earlier.

We also have available to us lists of Old Testament books pre-dating Muhammad. For example Josephus, a first century Jewish historian, who wrote to Greeks and Romans extensively in defense of the Jewish nation and their faith. We have the list of the Council of Jamnia (AD 75-117). At this assembly the Jewish elders in the course of their discussion listed Old Testament books. Later the Council of Laodicea (AD 363), a Christian church council was held to recognize the books of Scripture in the Old and New Testament. There are several other lists available to us in the writings of various early church fathers and all these lists show that the Jews were very serious and sure of the contents of the word they had received. Christians accepted the same Hebrew Scriptures as the word of God also.

New Testament

As for the New Testament, the evidence is even greater. We have about 4,500 manuscripts in whole and part. Comprehensive ones known as the Vatican, the Sinaiticus and the Alexandrian are world famous. They date back to AD 300-450.

There are 192 Greek New Testament manuscripts pre-dating Muhammad currently in existence and available for study. Five Greek lectionaries, books that were used in church services and which contain Scripture portions, predating Muhammad are presently in existence. We have available to us about 30 translations of the Greek New Testament from the time before Muhammad.

The earliest papyrus fragment containing portions of the verses of John 18:31-33, 37-38 is dated as AD 125 and is housed at the John Rylands Library in Manchester, England. There are also two Greek fragments from the Dead Sea Scrolls that may very well be from the Gospel according to Mark and 1 Timothy. Both of these fragments date to before AD 70.

We also have the evidence from the early Christian leaders (AD 69-150). They wrote about the Bible and quoted in their writings portions of the Scriptures so that today almost the entire New Testament can be found. In Old Testament times the Jews revered the sacred scriptures deeply, as many do the Qur'an today. For this reason they would not allow any part of them to become dirty or ripped and thrown away like a piece of rubbish. They were committed to memory, accurately copied, and then the original was disposed of with great ceremony and dignity.

4. Jesus even testifies to the great prophet Mohammed

Muslims believe that Jesus testified to Mohammed both in the Qur'an and in the gospels (Surah 61:6). It is true that the Qur'an makes such a claim. However, their interpretation in the gospels is clearly bad hermeneutics.

In short, they have interpreted Jesus' pronouncement of the Helper (i.e. the Holy Spirit), as evidence that Mohammed would come *after* him (John 14-116). However, Mohammed did not come until six hundred years after the death of Christ. It would make no sense for Jesus to tell his disciples to wait for the promised Helper, who would not come for another six hundred years. All of them would have been pushing up daisies by then (Acts 1:4-5).