

Jesus and Muhammed in the Qur'an: A Comparison and Contrast

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Islam is the second largest and the fastest growing religion in the world. One out of every five persons on earth is a Muslim—some 1.2 billion. As such, it presents one of the greatest challenges to Christianity in the world today. It behooves us, then, to understand it better. And there is no better way to understand Islam than through its own Holy Book, the Qur'an. We will begin with a comparison of Jesus and Muhammed in the Qur'an.

those nearest to God; He shall speak to the people in childhood and in maturity. And he shall be (of the company) of the righteous." She said: "O my Lord! How shall I have a son when no man hath touched me?" He said: "Even so: God createth what He willeth: When He hath decreed a plan, He but saith to it, 'Be,' and it is! And God will teach him the Book and Wisdom, the Law and the Gospel, and (appoint him) an apostle to the Children of Israel, (with this message): "'I have come to you, with a Sign from your Lord, in that I make for you out of clay, as it were, the figure of a bird, and breathe into it, and it becomes a bird by God's leave: And I heal those born blind, and the lepers, and I quicken the dead, by God's leave; and I declare to you what ye eat, and what ye store in your houses. Surely therein is a Sign for you if ye did believe; (I have come to you), to attest the Law which was before me. And to make lawful to you part of what was (before) forbidden to you; I have come to you with a Sign from your Lord. So fear God, and obey me'" (Surah 3:45-50).

A Brief Comparison of Jesus and Muhammed in the Qur'an

Jesus in the Qur'an	Muhammed in the Qur'an
Virgin Born	Not Virgin Born
Sinless	Sinful
Called "Messiah"	Not called "Messiah"
Called "Word of God"	Not called "Word of God"
Performed Miracles	Did not Perform Miracles
Ascended Bodily into Heaven	Did not ascend bodily into heaven

Now let's examine the Quranic texts that support the above comparison.¹ This will be extremely helpful for witnessing to Muslims about the Christian Faith.

An Examination of the Quranic Texts on Jesus and Muhammed

Those not familiar with the Qur'an and Muslim teaching about Jesus may be surprised at the honored place Jesus is given among the prophets of Islam. Consider this text alone:

Behold! the angels said: "O Mary! God giveth thee glad tidings of a Word from Him: his name will be Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, held in honour in this world and the Hereafter and of (the company of)

Jesus Was Virgin Born and Muhammed Was Not

It is noteworthy that this text affirms the virgin birth of Christ for Mary said: "O my Lord! *How shall I have a son when no man hath touched me?*" He said: "Even so: God createth what He willeth: When He hath decreed a plan, He but saith to it, 'Be,' and it is!" (3:45-47, emphasis added). Surah 19 also affirms that Jesus was born of a virgin: "He [the angel] said: 'Nay, I am only a messenger from thy Lord, (to announce) to thee the gift of a holy son.' She said: '*How shall I have a son, seeing that no man has*

touched me, and I am not unchaste?’ He said: ‘So (it will be): Thy Lord saith, “That is easy for Me: and (We wish) to appoint him as a Sign unto men and a Mercy from Us”’: It is a matter (so) decreed’” (19:19-21, emphasis added).

Nowhere in the Qur’an is a supernatural conception of Muhammed recorded. In fact, both his father (Abdullah) and mother (Aminah) are known from the history of Islam. Muhammed’s birth was as natural as any mortal since Adam.

Jesus Is Sinless and Muhammed Is Not

In the nearly one hundred references to Jesus in the Qur’an, never once does it refer to him as committing a sin. Indeed, he is called a “righteous” prophet (6:85). His sinlessness can be inferred from His virgin birth which the Qur’an affirms (implies Jesus’ sinlessness, as does His title of “Messiah” [cf. Isa 53:5, 9]). Further, the “Book” or Bible² to which Muhammed referred his antagonist (see Surah 4:171; 5:46), speaks of Christ as sinless (2 Cor 5:21; Heb 4:15; 1 Pet 1:19; 1 John 3:3).

In contrast to the sinlessness of Jesus, Muhammed is repeatedly said to have sinned. In Surah 47 the prophet is told to ask God to forgive his faults. We read, “Know, therefore, that there is no god but God, and *ask forgiveness for thy fault*, and for the men and women who believe: for God knows how ye move about and how ye dwell in your homes” (47:19, emphasis added). Again, we read of God saying to Muhammed: “*That God may forgive thee thy faults of the past and those to follow; fulfil His favour to thee; and guide thee on the Straight Way*” (48:2, emphasis added). In fact, Muhammed is rebuked by God for his sin in Surah 33 which affirms, “It is not fitting for a Believer, man or woman, when

a matter has been decided by God and His Apostle to have any option about their decision: if any one disobeys God and His Apostle, *he is indeed on a clearly wrong Path.*” But “*thou didst hide in thy heart that which God was about to make manifest: thou didst fear the people, but it is more fitting that thou shouldst fear God.... And God’s command must be fulfilled*” (33:36-38, emphasis added).

Jesus Is Called the “Messiah” and Muhammed Is Not

Jesus is called Messiah (Christ) eleven times in the Qur’an. Surah 3:45 declares, “Behold! the angels said: ‘O Mary! God giveth thee glad tidings of a Word from Him: his name will be *Christ [Messiah]* Jesus, the son of Mary, held in honour in this world and the Hereafter and of (the company of) those nearest to God.’” Again we read: “That they said (in boast), ‘We killed *Christ [Messiah]* Jesus the son of Mary, the Apostle of God’;—but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them...” (4:157). Later in verse 171 it adds, “O People of the Book! Commit no excesses in your religion: Nor say of God aught but the truth. *Christ [Messiah]* Jesus the son of Mary was (no more than) an apostle of God...” (see also 5:72, 75; 9:30, 31).

Nowhere in the Qur’an is Muhammed called Messiah. He is merely called an “apostle” or “prophet” of God. For example, “And remember, Jesus, the son of Mary, said: ‘O Children of Israel! I am the *apostle* of God (sent) to you, confirming the Law (which came) before me, and giving Glad Tidings of an *Apostle* to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad [Muhammed]’” (61:6, emphasis added). Elsewhere Muhammed is called a “prophet” (cf. 7:158; 33:45). Indeed, he is

considered the last of the prophets: “Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but (he is) the Apostle of God, and *the Seal of the Prophets*: and God has full knowledge of all things” (33:45, emphasis added). Thus, he is affectionately labeled “the prophet” by Muslims. Nowhere is Muhammed honored with the title “Messiah” as Jesus is.

Jesus Is Called the “Word of God” and Muhammed Is Not

In the Qur’an Jesus is referred to as the “Word of God.” It speaks of “Christ Jesus the son of Mary” who was “*His [God’s] Word*” (4:171). Again, “Behold! the angels said: ‘O Mary! God giveth thee glad tidings of a *Word from Him*: his name will be Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, held in honour in this world and the Hereafter and of (the company of) those nearest to God” (3:45, emphasis added). Of course, Muslims do not believe He is the eternal Word of God as Christians do (John 1:1; cf. Rev 19:13), since they believe it is untenable to affirm God has an eternal Son. For “Behold! Allah will say: ‘O Jesus the son of Mary! Didst thou say unto men, worship me and my mother as gods in derogation of Allah?’ He will say: ‘Glory to Thee! never could I say what I had no right (to say). Had I said such a thing, thou wouldst indeed have known it’” (Surah 5:116). Again, “They say: ‘God hath begotten a son!’—Glory be to Him! He is self-sufficient! His are all things in the heavens and on earth! No warrant have ye for this! Say ye about God what ye know not?” (10:68).

Muslims believe that it is not only spiritually repugnant (5:17; 9:30)³ but also rationally incoherent to speak of an eternal Father and an eternal Son. Repeatedly the Qur’an declares “Allah has no part-

ners” (7:145; 41:47). However, there is an inherent inconsistency here since many Muslims believe that the Qur’an is eternal and yet is not identical to Allah. Why then cannot Jesus be the eternal Word, a perfect expression of God and yet not identical to the Father? For example, they believe the Qur’an is the eternal Speech of God, existing in the Mind of God from all eternity. Surah 85:21-22 declares, “Nay, this is a Glorious Qur’an, (Inscribed) in a Tablet Preserved! [in heaven].” And in Surah 43:3-4, we read, “We have made it a Qur’an in Arabic, that ye may be able to understand (and learn wisdom). And verily, it is in the Mother of the Book, in Our Presence, high (In dignity), full of wisdom” (cf. 13:39). This eternal Original is the template of the earthly book we know as the Qur’an. So, while Muslims insist the Qur’an is uncreated and perfectly expresses the mind of God, yet they acknowledge that the Qur’an is not identical to the essence of God.

Some Muslim scholars even liken the Qur’an to the Divine Logos view of Christ, held by orthodox Christians. As Professor Yusuf K. Ibish stated of the Qur’an, “it is not a book in the ordinary sense, nor is it comparable to the Bible, either the Old or New Testaments. It is an expression of Divine Will. If you want to compare it with anything in Christianity, you must compare it with Christ Himself.” He adds, “Christ was the expression of the Divine among men, the revelation of the Divine Will. That is what the Qur’an is.”⁴ But if this is so, then it is not incoherent to speak about Christ the “Word of God” as also being God. However understood, no such special title as “Word of God” is given to Muhammed in the Qur’an.

Jesus Performed Miracles and Muhammed Did Not

The Jesus of the Qur'an performed many miracles including resurrecting the dead. Surah 3:49 declares of Jesus, "And (appoint him) an apostle to the Children of Israel, (with this message): *"I have come to you, with a Sign from your Lord, in that I make for you out of clay, as it were, the figure of a bird, and breathe into it, and it becomes a bird by God's leave: And I heal those born blind, and the lepers, and I quicken the dead, by God's leave"* (emphasis added). Again we read, "And remember, Jesus, the son of Mary, said: 'O Children of Israel! I am the apostle of God (sent) to you, confirming the Law (which came) before me, and giving glad Tidings of an Apostle to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad.' But when he came to them with Clear Signs, they said, 'this is evident sorcery!'" (61:6, emphasis added).

While Jesus' "signs" included everything from creating life to raising the dead, Muhammed did none of these. Indeed, many Quranic texts inform us that Muhammed refused to perform miracles, even though he acknowledged that other prophets before him had done so to prove their prophetic credentials. Surah 3 records, "They (also) said: 'God took our promise not to believe in an apostle unless He showed us a sacrifice consumed by Fire (From heaven).' Say: 'There came to you apostles before me, with clear Signs and even with what ye ask for: why then did ye slay them, if ye speak the truth?' Then if they reject thee, so were rejected apostles before thee, who came with Clear Signs, Books of dark prophecies, and the Book of Enlightenment" (3:183-184; cf. 4:153; 6:8-9; 17:90-93).

Muhammed even admitted that God performed miracles through prophets like

Moses before him, saying, "To Moses We did give Nine Clear Signs" (17:101). And, of course, he acknowledged that Jesus even created life and raised the dead, but his response was the same: Read the Qur'an; this is my sign from God (see 17:102-108). But there is nothing miraculous about the Qur'an as a book that could not also be said about other books, like the Bible, that claim to come from God.⁵ The truth is that truth is not determined by how beautifully it is expressed.

In one place Muhammed used the excuse that he did not do miracles because the people who saw miracles did not believe anyway. He said, "We refrain from sending the signs, only because the men of former generations treated them as false" (17:59). He added elsewhere, "They swear their strongest oaths by God, that if a (special) sign came to them, by it they would believe. Say: 'Certainly (all) signs are in the power of God: but what will make you (Muslims) realize that (even) if (special) signs came, they will not believe'" (6:109).

But this is an insufficient response since (1) some did believe because of Jesus' miracles; (2) those who do not believe are even more responsible for not doing so because they saw miracles (Matt 12:40-41); and (3) if miracles do not work, then why did Muhammed offer another alleged miracle (the Qur'an) to them as proof his message was from God?

Even more strange, Muhammed calls those who reject his "signs" persons who are "dumb" because God "willeth" them to be so: "They say: 'Why is not a sign sent down to him from his Lord?' Say: 'God hath certainly power to send down a sign: but most of them understand not.... Those who reject our signs are deaf and dumb,— in the midst of darkness profound: whom

God willeth, He leaveth to wander: whom He willeth, He placeth on the way that is straight'" (Surah 6:37, emphasis added).

Jesus Ascended Bodily into Heaven and Muhammed Did Not

According to the Qur'an, Jesus is also said to have ascended bodily into heaven. This is based on texts like Surah 3:55 which affirms that "Behold! God said: 'O Jesus! I will take thee and *raise thee to Myself* and clear thee (of the falsehoods) of those who blaspheme; I will make those who follow thee superior to those who reject faith, to the Day of Resurrection'" (emphasis added). Surah 4:157-158 adds: "That they said (in boast), 'We killed Christ Jesus the son of Mary, the Apostle of God';—but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them, and those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no (certain) knowledge, but only conjecture to follow, for of a surety they killed him not:—Nay, *God raised him up unto Himself*; and God is Exalted in Power, Wise" (emphasis added). Jesus did not die on the cross. Rather, God "raised him up unto Himself," that is he ascended bodily into heaven without dying. After Jesus returns to earth he will die and then rise in the general resurrection with all other people. In Surah 19:33 Jesus (Isa) says: "So peace is on me the day I was born, *the day that I die, and the day that I shall be raised up to life (again)*" (emphasis added)!

Unlike Jesus, Muhammed never bodily ascended into heaven. Some mistakenly believe that He did based on Surah 17:1 which says, "Glory to (God) Who did take His servant for a Journey by night from the Sacred Mosque to the farthest Mosque, whose precincts We did bless,—in order that We might show him some of Our Signs." However, even some noted Mus-

lim scholars reject this interpretation, pointing out that this "Journey by night" was only a—"vision" as the text says it was (17:60). Both Yusuf Ali and Muhammed Ali, noted Muslim commentators, understand it as a vision.⁶ In any event, it is indisputable that Muhammed never had a permanent bodily ascension since his body is entombed in Mecca where faithful Muslims make their life-time pilgrimage to pay homage to him.

Furthermore, his "night journey" was called a "Miraj" from which we get our word "mirage," The great Muslim scholar and translator of the Qur'an, Yusuf Ali, calls it a "mystic Vision" and "mystic story."⁷ If Muhammed had ascended bodily, he would have to have had an immortal body which cannot die, as the Qur'an says He will when he returns (19:33).

Other Unique Features of Jesus

Jesus spoke at His birth (19:29, 30). He had supernatural knowledge (3:49). He is blessed (19:31). He was endowed with the Holy Spirit (4:171). He is called "Spirit of Him [God]," meaning not the Holy Spirit but (as Ali translates it) "a Spirit proceeding from Him [God]" (4:171). But even so, this is a distinctive designation of Christ indicating that He was a being of special spiritual significance that was sent from God. He also was to be given "honour in this world and the Hereafter and of (the company of) those nearest to God; an honored place in heaven among those closest to God" (3:45).

An Evaluation of the Evidence from the Qur'an

We begin our evaluation by noting the many common teachings between Muslims and Christians about Christ. Then, attention will be drawn to the tension

between the superiority granted to Muhammed by Islam (by claiming he is the last and “seal” of the prophets) in light of the obvious superiority given to Christ in character, titles, and actions in the Qur’an.

The Common Ground

There is indeed much common ground in communicating with Muslims. Among the more important common doctrines are the following: (1) The belief in one God; (2) the creation of heaven and earth; (3) the sinfulness of mankind; (4) the need for forgiveness; (5) belief in moral absolutes; (6) acknowledgment of revelation from God in the Law (*Taurat*), Psalms (*Zabur*), and Gospels (*Injil*); (7) the belief in prophets of God (including Adam, Noah, Abraham, and Jesus); (8) the virgin birth of Christ; (9) the sinlessness of Christ; (10) that Christ was called the “Messiah”; (11) His bodily ascension into heaven; and (12) His second coming. In the light of this, it is ironic that evangelicals have far more in common with orthodox Muslims than we do with liberal Christians!

Of course, there are many significant differences, since Muslims reject crucial orthodox Christian beliefs such as the Trinity, the deity of Christ, His atoning death,⁸ and His bodily resurrection. And since these are at the heart of the gospel which is alone the power of God unto salvation (Rom 1:16) and without which no one can be saved (Rom 10:9; 1 Cor 15:1-7, 17), it follows that we cannot neglect the importance of communicating this message to Muslims. For “there is no other name [than Jesus] under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). And in the presentation of this unique message of salvation, we are aided considerably by the many things the Qur’an affirms about Christ.

A Summary of the Above Evidence

A summation of the above comparison between Jesus and Muhammed will help bring into focus the superiority of the former. According to the Qur’an, Jesus was sinless, and Muhammed was not. Jesus was virgin born, and Muhammed was not. Jesus was called “Messiah,” and Muhammed was not. Jesus was called the “Word of God,” and Muhammed was not. Jesus was also called “Spirit of [from] God,” but Muhammed was not. Furthermore, Jesus was said to be strengthened by the Holy Spirit. And perhaps most important of all, Jesus performed miracles including raising the dead, while Muhammed refused to do such miracles. Finally, unlike Muhammed, Jesus ascended bodily into heaven, and Muhammed is entombed in Mecca.

Other Comparisons between Jesus and Muhammed

There are a number of other unusual or supernatural things about Christ mentioned in the Qur’an that are not true of Muhammed. Several of these stand out.

Jesus Spoke at His Birth

Naturally speaking, no one speaks from the moment of their birth. But according to the Qur’an Jesus did. Surah 19 declares, “At length she brought the (babe) to her people, carrying him (in her arms). They said: ‘O Mary! truly an amazing thing hast thou brought!’ . . . But as she pointed to the baby, They said: ‘How can we talk to one who is a child in the cradle?’ He said: ‘I am indeed a servant of God: He hath given me revelation and made me a prophet; and He hath made me blessed wheresoever I be, and hath enjoined on me Prayer and Charity as long as I live’.... Such (was) Jesus

the son of Mary: (it is) a statement of truth, about which they (vainly) dispute" (19:27-35).

Jesus Created Life

Another incredible thing the Qur'an attributes to Jesus is the creation of life—something only God can do. Twice we read that Jesus gave life to clay birds. Surah 3 records, "And (appoint him) an apostle to the Children of Israel, (with this message): "I have come to you, with a Sign from your Lord, in that I make for you out of clay, as it were, the figure of a bird, and breathe into it, and it becomes a bird by God's leave"" (3:49, emphasis added). Likewise, Surah 5 asserts, "Then will Allah say: 'O Jesus the son of Mary!... Behold! I taught thee the Book and Wisdom, the Law and the Gospel and behold! thou makest out of clay, as it were, the figure of a bird, by My leave, and thou breathest into it and it becometh a bird by My leave, and thou healest those born blind, and the lepers, by My leave'" (5:110, emphasis added).

While this kind of miracle is not found in the canonical Gospels but only in the apocryphal Gospel of Thomas, nevertheless, the fact that the Qur'an attributed such supernatural powers to Jesus is amazing. How then can Muhammed, who admittedly never performed any such act, be considered in the same class as Jesus?

Jesus Raised the Dead

Moreover, according to the Qur'an, Jesus raised the dead. We read, "And (appoint him) an apostle to the Children of Israel, (with this message): "I have come to you, with a Sign from your Lord, in that... I quicken the dead, by God's leave"" (3:49, emphasis added). Again, "Then will Allah say: 'O Jesus the son of Mary! Recount My favour to thee and to thy mother. Behold! I

strengthened thee with the holy spirit, so that thou didst speak to the people in childhood and in maturity. Behold!... And behold! thou bringest forth the dead by My leave'" (5:110, emphasis added). Even though it is by God's permission that Jesus does this miracle of resurrection, nevertheless, God never gave Muhammed any such powers. Indeed, given the fact that Jesus alone is able to do such feats, it reveals that the traditions about Jesus passed on to Muhammed portray someone who is more than a prophet but is truly the "Messiah" who was confirmed by incredible miracles.

Some Concluding Comments

We will conclude our study with quotations from three noted persons: Blaise Pascal, William Paley, and Muhammed himself.

From Blaise Pascal

The famous French mathematician and philosopher Blaise Pascal summarized the superiority of Christ over Muhammed succinctly:

The Mahometan religion has for a foundation the Koran and Mahomet. But has this prophet, who was to be the hope of the world, been foretold? What sign has he that every other man has not, who chooses to call himself a prophet? What miracle does he himself say that he has done? What mysteries has he taught, even according to his own tradition? Any man can do what Mahomet has done; for he performed no miracles,⁹ he was not foretold. No man can do what Christ has done.¹⁰

It is important to notice in this connection that Jesus was predicted by nearly 113 prophecies,¹¹ but Muhammed by none.¹² Jesus had no earthly father, but Muhammed had two natural parents. Jesus' name is mentioned ninety-seven times in the

Qur'an and Muhammed's name only twenty-five times. Jesus taught peace, and Muhammed waged war. Jesus motivated by love, and Muhammed by fear. Jesus ordered the death of no one, but Muhammed commanded the assassination of hundreds.¹³ Jesus never married, and Muhammed had as many as fifteen wives.¹⁴ Jesus established only a spiritual kingdom while on earth (John 18:36), and Muhammed established an earthly empire. The early growth of Muhammed's religion was by using the sword on others, while the early growth of Christianity was by others using the sword on it. When Jesus' alleged followers used the sword (in the Crusades) it was contrary to the teaching and example of their Leader, but when Muslims use the sword it is consistent with the teaching and example of their leader.

From William Paley

The famous Christian apologist William Paley put the contrast between Jesus and Muhammed in these words:

For what are we comparing? A Galilean peasant accompanied by a few fishermen with a conqueror at the head of his army. We compare Jesus, without force, without power, without support, without one external circumstance of attraction or influence, prevailing against the prejudices, the learning, the hierarchy, of his country, against the ancient religious opinions, the pompous religious rites, the philosophy, the wisdom, the authority, of the Roman empire, in the most polished and enlightened period of its existence—with Mahomet making his way amongst Arabs; collecting followers in the mist of conquests and triumphs, in the darkest ages and countries of the world, and when success in arms not only operated by that command of men's wills and persons which attend prosperous undertakings, but was considered as a sure testimony of Divine

approbation. That multitudes, persuaded by this argument, should join the train of a victorious chief; that still greater multitudes should, without any argument, bow down before irresistible power—is a conduct in which we cannot see much to surprise us; in which we can see nothing that resembles the causes by which the establishment of Christianity was effected.¹⁵

From Muhammed

According to the popular contemporary Muslim biographer Haykal, here is how Muhammed originally understood his alleged "revelations":

Stricken with panic, Muhammad arose and asked himself, What did I see? *Did possession of the devil which I feared all along come to pass?* Muhammad looked to his right and his left but saw nothing. For a while he stood there trembling with fear and stricken with awe. *He feared the cave might be haunted* and that he might run away still unable to explain what he saw.¹⁶

Haykal notes that Muhammed had feared demon possession before, but his wife Khadijah talked him out of it. For "[a]s she did on earlier occasions when *Muhammed feared possession by the devil*, so now stood firm by her husband and devoid of the slightest doubt." Thus "[r]espectfully, indeed reverently, she said to him, 'Joy to my cousin! Be firm. By him who dominates Khadijah's soul I pray and hope that you will be the Prophet of this nation. By God, He will not let you down.'"¹⁷

Herein is a final contrast between Muhammed and Jesus. On the one hand, we have Muhammed who at first believed he was demon-possessed and was later talked out of it by the *voice of his wife* who was no doubt ambitious for her husband's success. On the other hand, we have Jesus who knows from the beginning where he

came from (Luke 2:49; cf. John 17:5) and who was later confirmed three times to be the Son of God by the *voice of God* (Matt 3:17; 17:5; John 12:28).

ENDNOTES

¹All citations from the Qur'an come from the Ali translation: Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'an*, 3rd ed. (Cairo, Egypt: Dar Al-Kitab Al-Masri, 1938).

²Muslims are inconsistent in admitting the Bible of Muhammed's day was a valid source of truth from God and yet claiming, on the other hand, that the Bible has been corrupted. We have abundant manuscript evidence going back centuries before Muhammed demonstrating that the text of the Bible today is substantially the same as it was in Muhammed's day (see N. L. Geisler and William Nix, *General Introduction to the Bible* [Chicago: Moody, 1986] Chapter 22).

³Muslim moral and spiritual repugnance to the deity of Christ is based largely on a misunderstanding of what it means for Christ to be a "son" of God. They understand it in a physical sense of resulting from a sexual union between God and Mary (see 10:68), rather than in a spiritual sense. There are two Arabic words for "son," one meaning son in a physical sense (*walad*) and one meaning son in a metaphorical or relational sense (*ibn*). In dialogue with Muslims, Christians should use the latter when referring to Christ to avoid misunderstanding.

⁴Cited by Charis Waddy, *The Muslim Mind* (London/New York: Longman, 1976) 14.

⁵The Muslim claim that the miraculous nature of the Qur'an is found in its beautiful style is insufficient as a test of its divine origin for several reasons: (1)

Parts of the Qur'an are poorly constructed (see Ali Dashti, *Twenty Years: A Study of the Prophetic Career of Muhammed* [London: George Allen & Unwin, 1985] 48-49); (2) There was other literature produced in Arabic which equals the Qur'an in beauty (e.g., Mu'allaqat, Magamat, and Hariri), yet Muslims do not consider them inspired. Further, by the same argument Shakespeare should be canonized; (3) Muslims would not accept another book as inspired that opposed monotheism and Muhammed, even if it were more beautiful Arabic; (4) Parts of the Bible (like Isaiah), which Muslims reject, are beautiful literature.

⁶See Joseph Gudel, *To Every Muslim an Answer* (unpublished thesis at Simon Greenleaf School of Law, 1982) 80.

⁷Ali, 691; and "Introduction" to Surah 1.

⁸Muslims reject the death of Christ on *a priori* grounds, not on *a posteriori* evidence which is abundant (see N. L. Geisler, *Answering Islam*, 2nd ed. [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2002] Chapter 11).

⁹The Muslim claim that Muhammed performed many miracles lacks credibility because (1) it contradicts the Qur'an in which Muhammed refused to do miracles (3:181-185; 4:153; 6:8-9); (2) it is based on apocryphal stories from the Hadith (traditions) composed one hundred to two hundred years after the time of Muhammed; (3) even many Muslim scholars admit that most of these stories are not true (See Joseph Horowitz, "The Growth of the Mohammed Legend" in *The Moslem World* 10 [1920] 49-58). Of the 300,000 stories collected by Muslim Hadith scholar Bukhari, he admitted there were errors in over 290,000 of them!; (4) none of these alleged miracles fit all the nine criteria laid down by Muslims scholars for a genuine miracle to

confirm a prophet's claim; and (5) the origin of the miracle claims of Islam are suspect since the stories arose as a result of Christian apologists demonstrating the superiority of Jesus to that of Muhammad by way of Jesus' miracles (Daniel J. Sahas, "The Formation of Later Islamic Doctrines as a Response to Byzantine Polemics: The Miracles of Muhammad," *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 27 / 2-3 [Summer-Fall 1982] 312).

¹⁰Cited by Gudel, 82.

¹¹J. Barton Payne's *Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1973) 665-668, lists 113 Old Testament predictions that were fulfilled at Christ's first coming.

¹²Muslims have offered some alleged predictive prophecies in the Qur'an, but none are really predictive (see Geisler, Chapter 9) nor do they measure up to the biblical standard of numerous, clear predictions made hundreds of years in advance that were literally fulfilled.

¹³In the earliest and most authoritative book on the topic, *The Life of Muhammed*, written in the second century of the Islamic era, many stories of Muhammed's bloodshed, including the orchestration of the execution of 600 to 900 Jews are related (Ibn Ishaq, *The Life of Muhammed*, trans. A. Guillaume [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955] 464).

¹⁴See Geisler, 171, for documentation from Muslim sources.

¹⁵William Paley, *Evidences of Christianity* (London: 1851) 257. Muslim critics argue that the spread of Christianity in many lands was certainly not always due to peaceful procla-

mation of the gospel but also through the use of wars. While this may be true of some later periods, such as the Crusades (eleventh and twelfth centuries), it certainly was not true of early Christianity (first to third centuries) when it grew from 120 (Acts 1-2) to the dominant spiritual force in the Roman world before Constantine was converted in A.D. 313.

¹⁶Muhammad Husayn Hasykal, *The Life of Muhammad* (USA: North American Trust, 1976) 74 (emphasis added).

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 75 (emphasis added).