

JESUS IN ISLAM (PART 2 OF 3)

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Description: The second of a three part article discussing the Islamic concept of Jesus: Part 2: The question of his divinity and mission.

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His Divinity

Muslims believe in the Absolute Oneness of God, Who is a Supreme Being free of human limitations, needs and wants. He has no partners in His Divinity. He is the Creator of everything and is completely separate from His creation, and all worship is to be directed towards Him alone.

This was the same message brought by all prophets of God, including Jesus. He never claimed any qualities of divinity, nor did he claim that he deserved to be worshipped. He did not say that he was the “son” of God or part of the “Trinity”, but rather that he was only a servant of God sent to the Jews to bring them back to the true religion, worshipping One God and following his instruction. The majority of the verses in the Quran which mention Jesus discuss this aspect. They prove that he was only taken as an object of worship as a result of lies which people invented against him. It confirms accounts of his life where Jesus himself clearly denies that he deserved any worship, and it supports the notion that the parables and examples which God has given showed his mortal nature, not his divinity or filial relationship to God. God narrates of Jesus in the Quran:

“They have certainly disbelieved who say, ‘God is the Messiah, the son of Mary’ while the Messiah has said, ‘O Children of Israel, worship God, my Lord and your Lord...’”
(Quran 5:72)

God says about the belief that Jesus is part of a “Trinity”:

“They have certainly disbelieved who say, ‘God is the third of three.’ (Rather) there is none worthy of worship except One (God). And if they do not desist from what they are saying, there will surely afflict the disbelievers among them a painful punishment. So will they not repent to God and seek His forgiveness? And God is Forgiving and Merciful. The Messiah (Jesus), son of Mary, was no more than a Messenger before whom many Messengers have passed away; and his mother adhered wholly to

truthfulness, and they both ate food (as other mortals do). See how We make Our signs clear to them; and see where they are turning away!” (Quran 5:73-75)

And also:

“O People of the Book (Jews and Christians)! Do not exceed the limits in your religion, and attribute to God nothing except the truth. The Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, was only a Messenger of God, and His command that He conveyed unto Mary, and a spirit from Him. So believe in God and in His Messengers, and do not say: ‘God is a Trinity.’ Give up this assertion; it would be better for you. For God is indeed (the only) One God. Far be it from His glory that He should have a son. To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and in the earth. And God is sufficient for a guardian.” (Quran 4:171)

God deems this belief as an enormity against His Essence:

“And they say: ‘The Most Merciful (God) has taken (for Himself) a son.’ Assuredly you utter a hideous thing, whereby almost the heavens are torn, and the earth is split asunder and the mountains fall in ruins; That they ascribe unto the Most Merciful a son, when it is not suitable for (the Majesty of) the Most Merciful that He should take a son. There is none in the heavens and the earth but comes unto the Most Merciful as a slave.” (Quran 19:88-93)

On the Day of Judgment, Jesus again will free himself from this false attribution. God gives us a glimpse of what he will say when he is asked about why people worshipped him:

“And (beware the Day) when God will say, “O Jesus, Son of Mary, did you say to the people, ‘Take me and my mother as deities besides God?’” He will say, ‘Exalted are You! It was not for me to say that to which I have no right. If I had said it, You would have known it. You know what is within myself, and I do not know what is within Yourself. Indeed, it is You who is Knower of the unseen. I said not to them except what you commanded me – to worship God, my Lord and your Lord...” (Quran 5:116-117)

In these verses, God proclaims that ascribing to Jesus the attribute 'son of God' or 'part of a Trinity' is indeed a great blasphemy. The reason for this returns to the key fundamental assertion that God is Unique and unlike any of his creation; as well as in His Essence, He is Unique in His Divinity, His Attributes and His Lordship. All of the above make up the strict monotheism which He revealed in His Scriptures, from them the first of the Ten Commandments:

“I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” (Exodus 20:1-3)

Ascribing a son to God is in clear opposition to that principle for which He created the Creation and sent prophets. God says in the Quran:

“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.” (Quran 51:56)

He also said:

“And We certainly sent into every nation a messenger, (saying), ‘Worship God and avoid all false objects of worship...’” (Quran 16:36)

His Mission

As discussed earlier, the Quran clearly affirms that Jesus was a prophet, as well as the fact that he was no more than that. Prophets are indeed the best of creation. They are those whom God chooses to receive His revelation, yet at the same time, they are mere emissaries of God and do not deserve to receive worship. Jesus, as mentioned in the Quran, is no different than any of them in this respect.

Throughout the Quran, Jesus is identified fundamentally as a prophet of God sent to the Jews who had over time deviated from the teachings of Moses and other messengers.

“And (remember) when Jesus, son of Mary, said: ‘O Children of Israel, I am the Messenger of God sent to you, confirming the Torah (which came) before me...’” (Quran 61:6)

Jesus Christ, the son of Mary, was the last in the line of Jewish prophets. He lived according to the Torah, the Law of Moses, and taught his followers to do likewise. In Matthew 5:17-18, Jesus stated:

“Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the (way of) the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them.”

In this aspect, he and his message was no different than the previous prophets chosen by God, who all called to the worship of God and God alone, as well as to obedience to His commandments. As he was miraculously supported by God in his conception, birth, and childhood, he was also supported by numerous miracles to prove that he was a messenger from God. However, the majority of the Jews rejected his prophethood.

Not only did Jesus affirm the scriptures revealed before him, but he also foretold of another prophet to come after him. God says:

“And when Jesus, son of Mary, said: ‘O Children of Israel! Indeed I am the messenger of God unto you, confirming that which was (revealed) before me in the Torah, and

bringing good tidings of a messenger who will come after me, whose name is the Praised One.” (Quran 61:6)

This fact is also mentioned in the New Testament. Careful study shows that Jesus, peace be upon him, refers to the same prophet in John 14:16-17:

“And I will give you another Counselor (the Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him), to be with you forever, even the Spirit of Truth.”

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