

The Person of Jesus

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The Qur'an acknowledges that Jesus is a prophet and the promised Messiah. It affirms that Jesus is God's Word and 'the spirit from Him' (Surah 4:171). Even so, some Muslims believe that Christians are accused of believing that Allah is 'the third of three' and warned: "Say not three ... Allah is only one God" (Surah 4:172). It is claimed that Allah will ask Jesus: "Didst thou say unto mankind: 'Take me and my mother for two gods beside Allah?' Jesus will reply, 'I spake unto them only that which Thou commandest me: Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord' " (Surah 5:116,117).

These references show three gods having unity as God the Father, Jesus as the Son and Mary as another god. When we look into the history, we find that in the 6th century some heretic groups held such a belief but were condemned by other Christians. However, this mistaken view led the Qur'an to reason: "How can God have a son when He has no consort, no wife? He hath taken neither wife nor son" (Surah 6:102, 72:3).

Although Christians through the ages have responded that they do not believe that God took a wife who gave birth to Jesus, some Muslims keep writing against the Christian idea of the divinity of Christ by saying, "One can only have a son when one has a wife. God has no spouse,

so He cannot have a son. Moreover, as God is the creator of everything and possesses perfect knowledge, He does not need a son to help Him, or succeed Him." (Malik Farid, *The Holy Qur'an*, p. 304).

Father, the mother, the Son?

The Bible does not say that God had a wife and then he had a son called Jesus. Nor does the Bible present the idea of a Trinity that is composed of the Father, the Mother, and the Son. Jesus never said that his mother is to be taken as God. Many Muslims think that if the Qur'an has said it, then the accusation is appropriate. In fact, the Qur'an only says that the Trinity is not Father, Son and mother and Jesus was not the result of intercourse between God and Mary. Christians agree with this, as does the Bible.

Sons by the tons?

Some Muslims are trying to reinterpret the concept of Sonship rather than deny it. They have found references in the Bible where other people were addressed as son, or sons and use these examples to show that the expression Son of God, when spoken by Jesus about himself, or by others, meant no more in his case than it means in its application to others in Scripture. For example, a Muslim writer, Deedat, quotes several texts from the Bible in his booklet, *Christ in Islam*, to show that the expression, Son of God,

"was a metaphorical descriptive term, commonly used among the Jews". He adds that in the Bible, "God has sons by the tons" (p. 28). The fact is that Jesus never claimed to be the Son of God in the same sense in which all true believers are sons of God. One should not overlook many occasions where Jesus' Sonship is stated as being unique. For example:

"All things have been committed to me by my Father. No-one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no-one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him." (Luke 10:22).

Jesus said that everyone should honour him as the Son of God, even as they honour the Father. Why? Because ...

"... the Father judges no-one, but has entrusted all judgement to the Son, that all may honour the Son just as they honour the Father. He who does not honour the Son does not honour the Father, who sent him." (John 5: 22 - 23).

No other person has claimed such authority. It is clearly an exclusive statement. In another place Jesus said: "No one comes to the Father but by me" (John 14:6).

Furthermore, it is not only Jesus who refers to himself as the unique Son of God. God the Father himself bore witness to him: "This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17; 17:5). God spoke through Jesus, not only as a prophet but as 'the Son', through whom he made all things (Hebrews 1:3).

The Divinity of Jesus

When Christians say: "Jesus is God", they mean that Jesus shares the divine nature with the Father and the Holy Spirit. He took human form and voluntarily chose to subject himself to the limitations and weakness of human nature. This is why the Bible declares about him:

"Christ, who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death - even death on a cross!" (Philippians 2:5-8).

Some Muslims argue that 'nowhere in the Gospels or the Epistles is it said that Jesus referred to himself as God, or implied that he was God.' They want to see a categorical statement from Jesus saying: "I am God".

Back in 922 CE a Sufi saint called Al-Hallaj was executed because he said of himself: "*Ana al haqq*", which means, "I am the truth", a statement which in orthodox ears was equivalent to identifying himself with God. Jesus had long before said, "*Ana huwa Sirat, al-haqq, al-hayat*, I am the way and the truth and the life" (John 14:6) and many Muslims are still asking: "Show us where did Jesus say, 'I am God'.". Had Jesus made the blunt statement: "I am God", he would have been excluding the Father and the Holy Spirit. For this reason he used the term, "I am" (John 8:58), which is a clear reference to God in the Old

Testament (Ex 3:14) and was clearly understood by his audience who tried to stone him. In other places we see that he allowed himself to be called "The Son of the Living God" (Matthew 16:16). The

Christian Scriptures can tell you more about the person of Jesus. If you would like a copy in the English language, please contact us*.

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