

# THE QURAN AND THE BIBLE



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## 1. ISLAM AND THE SWORD

The attacks on New York and Washington DC on 11 September 2001 generated a lot of questions on what Muslims believe. It is conspicuous that what happened in New York fits a description of terror in the Quran like a glove, "Those who have gone before them also plotted. But God smote their edifice at its foundations, and its roof collapsed upon their heads. The scourge overtook them whence they did not know" (Q 16.26). And, "There is no community but We shall destroy or sternly punish before the Day of Resurrection. This is decreed in the Eternal Book" (Q 17.58). And, "How many cities, teeming with sin, have we laid waste. They lie in desolate ruin, their wells abandoned and their proud palaces empty" (Q 22.45). And, "How many nations have rebelled against the commandments of their Lord and His apostles! Stern was Our reckoning with them, and harrowing was Our scourge. They tasted the fruit of their misdeeds: and the fruit of their misdeeds was ruin. God has prepared a grievous scourge for them." (Q 65.8,9). And, 'Fight for the cause of the Lord' (Q 22.78; cf 61.11). Is it then strange that the main suspect of these terror acts saw what happened in the U.S.A. as the punishment of God.

Andrew Sullivan sees the attacks on the U.S.A. as "a war of fundamentalism against faiths of all kinds that are at peace with freedom and modernity," and describes fundamentalism as, "The blind recourse to texts embraced as literal truth, the injunction to follow the commandments of God before anything else, the subjugation of reason and judgment and even conscience to the dictates of dogma." But this is surely not the whole truth about fundamentalism. The word fundamentalism is generally explained as anything that serves as the foundation or basis of a system of belief, a law, a primary and necessary truth; a principle which holds that belief in the literal interpretation for example: the Bible for the Christians, or the Quran for the Muslims, is essential to either the Christian faith or the Islam; distinguished from modernism. Fundamentalism is therefore the strict maintenance of that which is seen as fundamental, especially in religion. Therefore there is nothing wrong with fundamentalism as such, on condition that the basis or foundation on which it rests, is sound and nothing else but the truth. The Bible (cf Deut 6:17; 17:18-20; Eccl 12:13; 2 Thess 2:15) as well as the Quran (cf Q 3.131; 4.59,64,80,81) expect of the believers to obey its commandments in full. It is for this reason that the Quran and the Bible is at stake and not fundamentalism as such.

A missionary, who is working amongst the Muslims (whose name I do not mention for safety reasons) writes, "Most Muslims you will encounter are moderates and abhor such acts of violence or extremism...What we have to keep in mind, as we approach Muslims and the teachings of Islam, is what does the Quran, the life of Muhammad and the historical teachings of Islam teach? It comes as a rude awakening to many Muslims and secularists that the Quran actually teaches what some "fundamentalists" practice. Some of it is a matter of interpretation of certain verses which the moderates declare as not having their literal meaning or they (the moderates) emphasize other verses against ones on killing for Islam. Which verses should a Muslim look as to what to do? Since the life of Muhammad is exemplary, they should do what Muhammad did. Hence the life of Muhammad is authoritative. Muhammad

was the leader of the Islamic army and political process as well as the religion. The 'fundamentalists' who take the teachings of the Quran seriously as well as the life of Muhammad, do not choose selectively but they have the weight of evidence on their side against the moderate Muslims."

The evidence in this regard is overwhelming. The Quran says: "Let those who would exchange the life of this world for the hereafter, fight for the cause of God, whoever fights for the cause of God, whether he dies or triumphs, on him We bestow a rich recompense" (Q 4.74). And, "Those that deny God and His apostles, and those that draw a line between God and His apostles, saying, we believe in some, but deny others,' thus seeking a middle way – these indeed are the unbelievers. For the unbelievers We have prepared a shameful punishment" (Q 4.150). And, "God revealed His will to his angels, saying, "I shall be with you. Give courage to the believers (Muslims). I shall cast terror into the hearts of the infidels (Jews, Christians and Gentiles). Strike off their heads, strike off the very tips of their fingers (Q 8.12). And, "Prophet, rouse the faithful to arms. If there are twenty steadfast men among you, they shall vanquish two hundred, and if there are a hundred, they shall rout a thousand unbelievers, for they are devoid of understanding" (Q8.65). And, "If you do not go to war, He will punish you sternly, and will replace you by other men" (Q 9:39). And, "When you meet unbelievers in the battlefield strike off their heads and, when you have laid them low, bind your captives firmly" (Q 47.4). And, "We shall say, "Lay hold of him and bind him. Burn him in the fire of hell. Then fasten him with a chain seventy cubits long. For he did not believe in God, the Most Great, nor did he care to feed the destitute" (Q 69.33,34; cf 4.56,74,84,91; 7.182; 8.66,69; 9.12,14,29; 11.123; 17.16,58; 25.52; 29.69; 48.16; 49.9; 55.8; 61.4; 65.8; 96.18, etc.). The quotations above from the Quran are explicit and to the point, the aim of Islam is world domination, as it is written in the Quran, "Make war on them (the unbelievers - the Jews, the Christians and the Gentiles) until idolatry shall cease and God's religion (Islam) shall reign supreme" (Q 8.39).

The above mentioned missionary asks, "So whom should we believe? Again this comes as surprise to most Muslims who have little understanding of these things and abhor violence or extremism." It is clear: the problem of violence and war for the cause of God lies with the Quran, "Do not befriend them until they have fled their homes in the cause of God. If they desert you, seize them and put them to death wherever you find them" (Q 4,89; cf 4.74,84, etc). The Quran not only condones violence but actually commands it, "Slay the idolaters (infidels, pagans, Jews and Christians) wherever you find them. Arrest them, besiege them, and lie in ambush everywhere for them" (Q 9.5). And what are the Muslims supposed to do to the people who resist Islam? The Quran says, "Those that make war against God and His apostle and spread disorder in the land shall be slain or crucified or have their hands and feet cut off on alternate sides, or be banished from the land" (Q 5.33). Robert Morey writes, "In the West such things as cutting off someone's hands and feet because he would not accept your religion is unthinkable." In the Bible we read, "It is not by force nor by strength, but by my Spirit, says the Lord Almighty" (Zech 4:6). Jesus said to Peter, "Put away your sword. Those who use the sword will be killed by the sword" (Matt 26:52). Though we may and must defend our own lives (Luke 22:36), we may not ever avenge ourselves (Rom 12:19).

## 2. THE ISLAM RELIGION

Muslims don't want to be called "Muhammadans." They say they are not followers of Muhammed. Muhammed was only a prophet like all the other prophets. They wish to be called Muslims and their faith, Islam. The words Muslim and Islam come from an Arabic verb *aslama* – to submit. A Muslim is therefore a person who has submitted himself to God and lives according to His will, "And who has a nobler religion than he who submits to God, does what is right, and follow the faith of saintly Abraham, whom God chose to be his friend" (Q 4.125). The Muslims are convinced that they follow the same faith as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Ishmael and all the prophets from their Lord (Q 2.136). Total or complete submission is also what God demands from us as Christians, "And so dear Christian friends, I plead with you to give your bodies to God. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice – the kind He will accept. When you think of what He has done for you, is this too much to ask? Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect His will really is" (Rom 12:1,2). And also, "Because we have these promises, dear friends, let us cleanse ourselves from everything that can defile our body or spirit. And let us work toward complete purity because we fear God" (2 Cor 7:1).

The Quran calls us to "the true faith," saying, "Believe in your Lord," and we believed. Lord, forgive us our sins and remove from us our evil deeds and make us with the righteous. Lord, grant us what You promised through Your apostles, and do not hold us up to shame on the day of Resurrection. You never break Your promise" (Q 3.193). But faith alone is not decisive; it must be faith and good works. Therefore we read in the Quran time and again, "Those who have faith and do good works..." (Q 2.277). It is the good works that bring the final assurance, "But the believers who do good works, both men and women, shall enter Paradise" (Q 4.124). Superficially this standpoint of the Quran is exactly in accordance with the Bible, "Just as the body is dead without a spirit, so also faith is dead without good deeds" (James 2:26). But assuredly there is a huge difference between what the Quran teaches and what the Bible says, because it is not our faith and our good deeds that guarantee our salvation. It is written, "And yet we Jewish Christians know that we become right with God, not by doing what the law commands, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be accepted by God because of our faith in Christ – and not because we obey the law. For no one will ever be saved by obeying the law" (Gal 2:16). And a little further, "I am not one that treats the grace of God as meaningless. For if we could be saved by keeping the law then there was no need for Christ to die" (Gal 2:21). It is therefore not our faith in our faith and in our good deeds that save us, but Christ.

## 3. SALVATION AND THE BIBLE

And it is exactly here that the message on salvation in the Quran and in the Bible goes apart. Islam however reacts by saying, "The true religion of Jesus (P.B.U.H.) was no other than Islam. It was St. Paul who introduced fanciful ideas into this pure and simple

religion of Jesus" (Ishmail S. Bhula). This implies that the teachings of Paul differ from that of Jesus. But this is not true. Paul himself writes: "Then fourteen years later I went back to Jerusalem again, this time with Barnabas and Titus came along too. I went there because God revealed to me that I should go. While I was there I talked privately with the leaders of the Church. I wanted them to understand what I had been preaching to the gentiles. I wanted to make sure they did not disagree, or my ministry would have been useless. And they did agree... And the leaders of the church who were there had nothing to add to what I was preaching" (Gal 2:1-3,6).

Bhula however writes, "That this true Prophet of God (Jesus) did not teach an unnatural law, is a fact borne out by the gospel of St Matthew 19:16-19." Someone came to Jesus with the question, "Teacher, what must I do to have eternal life?" It is in this Scripture that Jesus said to that young man, "You can have eternal life if you keep the commandments." Bhula writes, "The above verses clearly testify that Jesus taught Islam. He exhorted the man to follow the commandments in order to attain Salvation. He did not advise him to believe in Atonement." He goes on and writes, "Christ did not come to abolish the law but to fulfil it" (Matt 5:17-19). He asks: "Who is right, Jesus, who is the founder of Christianity, or St Paul?" It is clear that Bhula misunderstood Jesus. All that Jesus said to the rich young man is that if he wants to do anything to have eternal life he has to keep the commandments, "If the inquirer thinks that he will be able to obtain everlasting life by doing good, let him then by all means keep the commandments" (William Hendriksen). And when the young man replied that he has obeyed all the commandments, Jesus put him to the test (Matt 19:21), and he failed to keep the first commandment because his many possessions was his God (cf Eph 5:5). The lesson here is that no man can keep the commandments.

Bhula writes, "Jesus did not propound the Theory of Atonement, a belief that is so preponderant amongst the present-day Christians." That is also not true. Jesus, at the last Supper, took a loaf of bread, broke it in pieces and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it and eat it, for this is my body." And He took a cup of wine and gave thanks to God for it. He gave it to them and said, "Each of you drink from it, for this is my blood which seals the covenant between God and the people. It is poured out to forgive the sins of many" (Matt 26:26-28; cf 1 Cor 11:23-26). He also said: "I lay down my life for the sheep" (John 10:15). And, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). Paul writes, "But those who depend on the law to make them right with God are under the curse, for the Scriptures say, 'cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey all these commands that are written in God's Book of the law.' Consequently it is clear that no one can ever be right with God by trying to keep the law. For the Scriptures say, "It is through faith that the righteous person has life. How different from this way of faith is the way of the law, which says, "If you wish to find life by obeying the law, you must obey all the commands." But Christ has rescued us from the curse pronounced by the law. When He was hung on the cross, He took upon Himself the curse for our wrongdoing, for it is written in the Scriptures, "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree" (Gal 3:10-13; cf Deut 27:26; 21:22,23). We understand this because all people violate the law of God (cf Rom 3:19,20). John writes, "If we claim that we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar and showing that his word has no place in our hearts" (1 John 1:10).

Therefore we are all under the curse. But God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, "For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ" (2 Cor 5:21).

But Bhula objects. He writes, "The theory of blood-sacrifice had no link with true Christianity. It was a later innovation of Paul who contaminated the pure and simple teachings of Christ with paganistic doctrines. Human sacrifice was a belief that existed long, long before the dawn of Christianity. It was a common belief of the pagans in the olden days. What a pity that the beautiful teachings of Jesus had to be painted with paganistic ideas. St Paul was a student of Greek and Roman mythology and was also well acquainted with the Alexandrian school of Platonic Philosophy. It was from these sources that he derived his ideas and he spoke under the inspiration of these man-made ideologies. Hence his doctrines are far too remote to be called Divine."

It may be true that Paul was acquainted with the Greek and Roman mythology as well as with the Alexandrian school of platonic philosophy, but it is definitely not true that he derived his ideas from these sources. Paul writes, "Dear friends, I solemnly assure you that the Good News of salvation which I preach is not based on mere human reasoning or logic. For my message came by a direct revelation from Jesus Christ himself. No one else taught me" (Gal 1:11,12). And also, "When we tell you this we do not use words of human wisdom. We speak words given to us by the Spirit, using the Spirit's words to explain spiritual truths" (1 Cor 2:13).

Bhula writes, "No one in his full senses will accept a theory which goes against the grain of commonsense. According to the law of justice, no human being can be punished for wrong perpetrated by another." There is an element of truth in this reasoning, because it is written, "Parents must not be put to death for the sins of their children, nor the children for the sins of their parents. Those worthy of death must be executed for their own crimes" (Deut 24:16; Ezek 18:1-4). It is however also written, "All of us have strayed away like sheep. We have left God's paths to follow our own. Yet the Lord laid on him the guilt and sins of us all" (Is 53:6; cf 1 Pet 2:21-25). God in his sovereign love provides a way of escape for us. He laid on his own Son the guilt and sins of us all. "He was handed over to die because of our sins, and He was raised from the dead to make us right with God" (Rom 4:25).

#### 4. THE MESSIAH HAD TO DIE

Jesus was crucified by the Roman government at the request of the Jews because of his claim that He was the Christ, the Son of God (Matt 26:63,64; John 19:7), the king of the Jews (Mark 15:2). It was already announced in the Old Testament (Gen 3:15) that the Messiah would be put to death. This we understand because Scripture teaches that it would be through his death that the head of the snake would be crushed. We read, "Because God's children are human beings – made of flesh and blood – Jesus also became flesh and blood by being born in human form. For only as a human being could He die, and only by dying could He break the power of death. Only in this way could He deliver those who have lived all their lives as slaves to the fear of dying" (Heb 2:14,15).

A sacrifice for the sins of the world (cf 1 John 2:1,2) was necessary (cf Heb

7:27; 9:15-18; 10:9,10,12-14). Our salvation is dependent upon the death of Christ Jesus, because "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins" (Heb 9:22). Christ brought a sacrifice for our sin once and for all when He offered Himself (Heb 7:27; 9:26-28). John the Baptist said of Jesus, "Look! There is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29,36). He is the Lamb without defect (cf Ex 12:5) who was sacrificed as our Passover Lamb (1 Cor 5:7). For that reason only, not one of his bones was broken (cf Ex 12:46). We read, "These things happened in fulfillment of the Scriptures that say, 'Not one of his bones will be broken'" (John 19:36; cf Ps 34:20).

Of this Lamb, Isaiah wrote that, "He was led as a Lamb to the slaughter. And as a sheep is silent before his shearers, He did not open his mouth. From prison and trial they led him away to his death. But who among his people realized that He was dying for their sins – that He was suffering their punishment? He had done no wrong, and He never deceived anyone. But He was buried like a criminal; He was put in a rich man's grave" (Is 53:7-9; cf Matt 27:57-61; Luke 22:37). This was the passage which the eunuch was reading (Acts 8:32,33) and of which he asked Philip, "Was Isaiah talking about himself or someone else?" (Act 8:34). Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Philip "began with this same Scripture and then used many others to tell him the good news about Jesus" (Act 8:35). Isaiah therefore was not referring to himself or to Israel as a nation, but rather to someone else, who was to be punished on behalf of the sins of his people (Is 53:8). In John 12:37-40, for example, John teaches that Isaiah 53:1 and Isaiah 6:10 were fulfilled in the life of Jesus and then he writes, "Isaiah was referring to Jesus when he made this prediction, because he was given a vision of the Messiah's glory" (John 12:41). Therefore Isaiah refers to Jesus in the same way that Philip did (cf Acts 8:34,35). Peter also testifies and says, "For you know that God paid ransom to save you from the empty life you inherited from your ancestors. And the ransom He paid was not mere gold or silver. He paid for you with the precious lifeblood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God" (1 Pet 1:18,19).

#### 5. IT SPECIFICALLY HAD TO BE DEATH BY CRUCIFIXION

The death Jesus had to die, specifically had to be something like a crucifixion because the world had to be delivered from the curse (cf Deut 27:26), since it is said that everyone who was hung on a tree was under God's curse (cf Deut 21:22,23). Satan knew it. Therefore he tried his utmost to kill Jesus beforehand. First through the hands of king Herod when his soldiers killed all the boys in and around Bethlehem who were two years old and under (Matt 2:16). But an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream saying, "Get up, and flee to Egypt with the child and his mother" (Matt 2:13). So they left the country just in time. The second effort was to drown Jesus and his disciples by means of a storm at sea (Mark 4:35-40). When the inhabitants of Nazareth wanted to throw Jesus down the cliff, He did not allow it (Luke 4:28-30). When the Jews in Jerusalem wanted to stone Him, He went into hiding and slipped away from the Temple (John 8:59). It is clear that He had to die in some other way. That was death by crucifixion. Therefore, when Pilate turned Him over to the Roman soldiers to

crucify Him (Matt 27:26), He did not pray to his Father for thousands of angels to protect Him (cf Matt 26:53), but He gave Himself over, because the Scriptures should be fulfilled (cf Matt 26:54).

In Psalm 22 David describes matters which, according to various Scriptures in the New Testament, refer to events concerning the crucifixion (cf Ps 22:2 with Matt 27:46; Ps 22:7-9 with Matt 27:39-47; Ps 22:15 with John 19:28; Ps 22:16 with John 19:37; Ps 22:17 with John 20:25,27; Ps 22:18 with Matt 27:35).

In the same way Matthew (8:17) proves Isaiah 53:3 was referring to Jesus, just as Peter does with Isaiah 53:4,5 (1 Pet 2:24,25). Similarly, Isaiah 53:5 and Zechariah 12:10 (cf John 19:33-37) undoubtedly refer to the hands and the mark in the side of Jesus (cf John 20:25 with verse 27). For that reason Jesus showed his disciples his hands and his feet (Luke 24:38-40). Jesus himself said, "And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so, I, the Son of man, must be lifted up on a pole, so that everyone who believes in me will have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:14-16). It is man who lifts up the Son of man. Only then does one realize that He is what He is (John 8:28). That is why Jesus said, "And when I am lifted up on the cross, I will draw everyone to myself." He said this to indicate how He was going to die" (John 12:32,33).

## 6. ONE DIES FOR ALL

In John 11:49-52 we read, "And one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said, 'How can you be so stupid? Why should the whole nation be destroyed? Let this one man die for the people.' This prophecy that Jesus should die for the entire nation came from Caiaphas in his position as high priest. He didn't think of it himself, he was inspired to say it. It was a prediction that Jesus' death would be not for Israel only, but for the gathering together of all the children of God scattered around the world." Of course, Caiaphas did not even understand what he was saying (cf Dan 12:8,9; 1 Pet 1:10-12), as Peter said to the people of Israel, 'You killed the author of life, but God raised Him to life. And we are witnesses of this fact...Friends, I realize that what you did to Jesus was done in ignorance, and the same can be said of your leaders" (Act 3:15,17). And Paul writes, "No, the wisdom we speak of is the secret wisdom of God which was hidden in former times, though He made it for our benefit before the world began. But the rulers of this world have not understood it, if they had, they would never have crucified our glorious Lord" (1 Cor 2:7,8). But what Caiaphas said, is true, because Christ had died for all (2 Cor 5:14,15).

## 7. WHY HE HAD TO DIE FOR US

Bhula writes, "Islam teaches the inherent sinlessness of man. When a child is born it is sinless. Sin according to Islam is acquired and not inherited. A life of sin or virtue only begins with the dawn of intellect. It stands to reason that sin can only be attributed to someone who is able to distinguish the right from the wrong. According to present-day Christianity sin is inherited...If the son is not held responsible for the sins of the

father (Ezek 18:20-22) then why on earth should Adam's sin be inherited by the whole of humanity? Above all Adam was already punished for the mistake according to Genesis 3:19, 'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.' Is God a blood-thirsty God, that He should condemn the whole mankind for Adam's sin?" The Bible however teaches that Adam and Eve, the parents of us all (Acts 17:26), disobeyed God's command and therefore we all became guilty, "When Adam sinned, sin entered the entire human race. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned" (Rom 5:12). How can we explain it? Job asks, "Who can create purity in one born impure? No one!" (Job 14:4). And Paul writes, "We were born with an evil nature, and we were under God's anger just like everyone else" (Eph 2:3). The iniquities of the father are therefore transferred to the child.

Because God created all nations from one human being (Acts 17:26) and his wife Eve is mother to all mankind (Gen 3:20), we are all organically linked to each other. We read for example, "For although Levi wasn't born yet, the seed from which he came was in Abraham's loins when Melchizedek collected the tithe from him" (Heb 7:10). The Levites therefore had acted in the body of their forefather 500 years prior to their birth because they then had already been in the body of their ancestor. Likewise we all have sinned in Adam because we had all been in the body of Adam when he sinned. For this reason David said, "For I was born a sinner – yes, from the moment my mother conceived me" (Ps 51:5). And because all people are organically linked to one another, God can bless a whole family (cf Gen 39:5) and even a thousand generations (cf Ex 20:6) because of one man who loves Him, and God can punish a whole nation and destroy a whole family because of the sin of one man (Josh 7), He can use only one man to save as many as He wants through the sacrifice of only one man (cf Rom 4:25).

But the righteousness of God demands that he who sins must pay for his sin, "The person who sins will be the one who dies" (Ezek 18:4). And no one is capable of settling his own debt (Ps 103:3; Nahum 1:6). Jesus said, "I assure you, unless you are born again, you can never see the Kingdom of God...Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives new life from heaven" (John 3:3,6). And also, "It is the Spirit who gives eternal life. Human effort accomplishes nothing" (John 6:63). This means that all people are irrevocably on their way to a lost eternity if God Himself did not provide deliverance.

However, to comply with the demands of the law of God (cf Rom 8:4) the one who would have to pay the ransom for the debt of sin would have to be truly human, without sin himself, and organically linked with all other human beings. God proclaimed in Genesis 3:15 that the offspring of the woman would crush the head of the snake. He would therefore be truly human, but at the same time would not have an earthly father because he must be the offspring of the woman. A virgin would therefore give birth to Him (cf Matt 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38).

Because what was conceived in Mary was from the Holy Spirit (Matt 1:20), and He was therefore born from a virgin, He is called holy. When the angel Gabriel said to Mary, "You will become pregnant and have a son, and you are to name Him Jesus" (Luke 1:31), Mary asked the angel, "But how can I have a baby? I am a virgin" (Luke 1:34). The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of

the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby born to you will be holy, and He will be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). Jesus was the only human being of whom ever it could be said that He was born without sin (cf 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 4:15; 1 John 3:5).

Although Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Luk 1:35; John 10:36), and at the same time God (John 1:1; 10:30; Rom 9:5), He is also truly human as he adopted flesh and blood and became human just as we are (Heb 2:14; Phil 2:6,7), but without sin (Heb 4:15).

Because Jesus is also truly human He is organically linked to us, and because He is without sin, He could bear the guilt of our sin on our behalf (2 Cor 5:21), and in such a way as though we experienced it in person. Therefore we all have died with Him (Rom 6:5); we have been resurrected with Him through faith (Rom 6:5) and we have been seated with Him in heaven (Eph 2:5-7). Christ Jesus alone meets the three requirements to be the Saviour of the whole world (John 3:16; 1 John 2:1,2).

## **8. EVERYTHING PROCLAIMED BY THE PROPHETS WAS COMPLETELY FULFILLED IN JESUS**

Very often in the New Testament, when some event or another concerning Jesus took place, we read that it so happened in order for Scripture to be fulfilled (cf Matt 1:21-23; 2:13-15; 4:12-16; 8:14-17; 12:15-21; 13:34,35; 21:1-5, etc). Jesus testified about Himself that He is the Messiah (cf John 4:25,26), but how do we know that his testimony is the truth? Jesus also said that He would be put to death by the people and that He would be raised to life on the third day (Matt 16:21). And it happened exactly as he said (1 Cor 15:1-4). If his testimony that He would be raised on the third day happened as He had proclaimed, and it did happen exactly like that, then He is a trustworthy witness, and then His testimony that He is the Messiah is just as true and reliable, because one can't draw fresh water from a salty pool (cf James 3:11,12). The testimony of Jesus of Nazareth that He is the Messiah, does not stand unconfirmed. Apollos for example "refuted all the Jews with powerful arguments in public debate. Using the Scriptures, he explained to them, 'The Messiah you are looking for is Jesus'" (Acts 18:28). The same is said of Paul (Acts 28:23). Yes, everything that happened with Jesus of Nazareth, happened exactly as was written about Him in the law of Moses, by the prophets and in the Psalms (cf Luke 24:25,26,36-48).

## **9. WHAT THE QURAN SAYS**

The Quran teaches that Jesus did not die on the cross, "They (the Christians) 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. 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 up to Himself; God is mighty and wise. There is none among the people of the Book that will believe in him before his death; and on the Day of the Resurrection he will bear witness against them" (Q 4.157,158).

Deedat writes: "The Muslim believes this categorical Quranic statement to be

from God. Hence he asks no questions and seeks no proof." He even reckons to find in the Bible proof for this Quranic statement. Teachers of the religious laws and Pharisees came to Jesus and said, "Teacher we want you to do a miraculous sign to prove that you are from God" (Matt 12:38). But Jesus replied, "Only an evil, faithless generation would ask for a miraculous sign; but the only sign I will give them is the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was in the belly of the great fish for three days and three nights, so I, the Son of Man, will be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights" (Matt 12:39,40). Jesus speaks of the sign of the prophet Jonah (Matt 16:4). This means that Jesus must have been in the grave in the same manner like Jonah was in the belly of the great fish and asks, "How was Jonah in the whale's belly for three days and three nights – Dead or Alive?" Jonah was alive because he prayed to God from inside the fish (Jonah 2:1). Then Jesus also must have been alive in the grave to correlate with the manner of Jonah, Deedat infers. But Jesus told his disciples that "He would be killed, and He would be raised on the third day" (Matt 16:21). It means that Jesus Himself testified that He would be dead inside the grave. It means that it was therefore the time factor as the central message that was the exact point of comparison (tertium comparationis) that Jesus was talking about.

The second argument comes from the soldier who lanced Jesus with a spear in the side, "and blood and water flowed out" (John 19:34). For Deedat it "was a sure sign that Jesus was alive." Medical authority also stated that blood and water could not flow from a wound such as this after death has set in. But this opinion is far from general. "Dr Schaff appears willing to accept the hypothesis that the blood, being first separated into its two constituents, was thus liberated from the pericardium – a phenomenon that might seem to justify the supposition of the evangelist that it was blood and water. Dr Stroud endeavored, with much medical learning, to show that this might follow the side-piercing if the Lord's physical death has followed, as he argued, from rupture of the heart due to His intense agonies. Sir R. Bennet has accepted this solution" (H.R. Reynolds). It is exactly in accordance with Scripture, "Their insults have broken my heart" (Ps 69:20). What is clear is that the soldiers saw that Jesus was dead already (John 19:33), and John writes, "This report is from an eyewitness giving an accurate account; it is presented so that you can believe" (John 19:35). "This is certain, the spear thrust, followed by the issue of blood and water, establishes also in John's mind the fact of Jesus' death. By this thrust all doubt is removed that Jesus was merely unconscious, that life could still remain in his body, and that He did actually and truly arise from the dead on Sunday morning. Jesus was dead beyond question" (R.C.H. Lenski).

The third argument comes from Hebrews 5:7, "While Jesus was here on earth, He offered prayers and pleadings, with loud cry and tears to the One who could deliver Him out of death. And God heard His prayers because of his reverence for God." Bhula writes, "Why was he (Jesus) not willing to die for his people? Surely if his mission was to die for sins he would have done it willingly as was the case with Abraham when he was commanded by God to sacrifice his son. Instead we find that Jesus prayed to God to save him from this "accursed" death on the cross and his prayer was answered." The assumption is that the prayer of Jesus was answered and for that reason He did not really die on the cross. But what is the real truth? Jesus

really prayed for deliverance from death but in a certain manner, "Please take this cup of suffering away from Me. Yet I want your will, not mine" (Mark 14:36 cf Matt 26:39,42). Jesus was truly human. His suffering was genuine. He eventually accepted his death on the cross as the final and complete execution of God's will. And in this way the prayer of Jesus was fully and truly granted. "The ultimate obedience was learned in Gethsemane, after Gethsemane and on the cross the obedience was only carried out" (Lenski).

The fourth argument comes from the testimony of Jesus Himself when He said to his disciples, "Why are you so frightened? Why do you doubt who I am? Look at my hands. Look at my feet. You can see that it's really me. Touch me and make sure that I am not a ghost, because ghosts don't have bodies, as you see I do!" (Luke 24:38,39). As He spoke, He held out his hands for them to see, and He showed them his feet. Still they stood there doubting, filled with joy and wonder. Then He asked them, "Do you have something to eat?" (Luke 24:41). They gave Him a piece of broiled fish, and He ate it as they watched. Deedat takes exactly this testimony of Jesus to declare that Jesus was not raised from the dead, but that it proves that Jesus only recovered from his unconsciousness in the grave, 'Because a resurrected 'body' becomes spiritualised.' It is clear that Deedat confuses the concept 'to be raised from the dead' with the resurrection on the last day when "our perishable earthly bodies must be transformed into heavenly bodies that will never die" (1 Cor 15:53). Jesus was raised from the grave in the same manner as Lazarus, who was already dead for four days, was raised from the grave with his earthly body (John 11:35-44). We read, "Then Jesus shouted, "Lazarus, come out! And Lazarus came out (not as a ghost but), bound in graveclothes. His face wrapped in a headcloth. Jesus told them, "Unwrap him and let him go" (John 11:43,44). In Matthew 27:51,52 we read, "The earth shook, rocks split apart, and tombs opened. The bodies of many godly men and women who had died were raised from the dead after Jesus' resurrection. They left the cemetery, went into the holy city of Jerusalem. and appeared to many people." And in Hebrews 11:35 it is written, "Women received their loved ones back again from death." It is a question Deedat and his associates have to answer, "Did Jesus lie when He told his disciples, "He would be killed, and He would be raised on the third day?" (Matt 16:21).

Yes, the death of Jesus on the cross is an indubitable historical fact. Paul writes, "I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me – that Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day as the Scriptures said" (1 Cor 15:3,4).

## 10. WHAT THE QURAN PROCLAIMS

The Quran proclaims, "We have sent you with the Truth to proclaim good news and give warning; for there is no community that has not a warner" (Q 35.24). Bhula writes, "As they (these warners) were all national Prophets, their missions were only confined to their respective people and above all, their messages were not of a universal nature. God did not send a universal Prophet at that period of history for humanity had not yet reached a stage when it would be possible for one nation to communicate

with another. There was no need for a universal prophet. With the development of Science, humanity reached an epoch when it had to live as one human race. A universal religion therefore became a dire necessity. It was in this grave hour of need, that God through His Mercy sent the last of a long chain of Prophets, Muhammad (P.B.U.H.), the World Prophet whose advent was already prophesied in the ancient Scriptures of the world. He was also prophesied by Moses in the Old Testament (vide Deut 18:18). Jesus, whose mission was only confined to the children of Israel (vide Matthew 15:24) clearly prophesied the coming of Muhammad. The Holy Bible bears out the above facts in St John 16:7,8 and 13." The Quran proclaims in no uncertain words the coming of Muhammad, "And of Jesus, son of Mary, who said to the Israelites, I am sent forth to you from God to confirm the Torah already revealed, and to give news of an apostle that will come after me whose name is Ahmad (Muhammad)" (Q 61.6). And, "I will show mercy to those that keep from evil and give alms, and to those that in Our signs believe; to those that shall follow the apostle – the Unlettered Prophet – whom they shall find described to them in the Torah and the Gospel" (Q 7.156,157). The above Quranic passages and the testimony of Bhula call on us as Christians for a clearcut answer.

## 11. THE PROPHECY OF MOSES

Moses writes, "Then the Lord said to me. Fine, I will do as they have requested. I will raise up a prophet like you amongst their fellow Israelites. I will tell the prophet what to say, and he will tell the people everything I command him. I will personally deal with anyone who will not listen to the messages the prophet proclaims on my behalf" (Deut 18:17-19). Deedat fixed our attention on the words "like you." The prophet will be a prophet like Moses. And he goes on to show his readers with several arguments that, "Jesus is not like Moses, but Muhammad is like Moses." I quote, "Moses had a father and a mother. Muhammad also had a father and a mother. But Jesus had only a mother, and no human father. Moses and Muhammad were born in normal, natural course, i.e. the physical association of man and woman; but Jesus was created by a special miracle (Matt 1:18; Luke 1:35). And the Quran confirms it (Q 3.47). Moses and Muhammad married and begot children, but Jesus remained a bachelor all his life. Therefore Jesus is not like Moses, but Muhammad is like Moses."

It is immediately clear that it is a very dangerous method of interpretation, because one could likewise prove that Muhammad was not like Moses. Moses, for example, could write (Deut 31:9,24,30) and read (Ex 24:7), and Jesus could write (John 8:8) and read (Luke 4:16), but Muhammad was an illiterate as the Quran testifies, "I will show mercy to those that keep from evil and give alms, and to those that in Our signs believe, to those that shall follow the apostle – the Unlettered Prophet – whom they shall find described to them in the Torah and the Gospel" (Q 7.157). N.J Dawood writes, "These words are addressed to Muhammad." As far as the illiteracy of Muhammad is concerned, he was therefore not like Moses, but Jesus was. It is crystal clear from this example only that we cannot interpret Scriptures the manner in which Deedat did.

But even the illiteracy of Muhammad, writes Deedat, was predicted in the Bible, "Muhammad's experience in the cave of Hira, later be known as Jabal-un-Noor – The

Mountain of Light, and his response to that first Revelation is the exact fulfilment of another Biblical prophecy. In the Book of Isaiah, chapter 29 verse 12, we read: 'AND THE BOOK (AL-Kitaab al-Quran – The "reading," the Recitation), IS DELIVERED TO HIM THAT IS NOT LEARNED (the unlettered Prophet, Holy Quran 7.158) SAYING, READ THIS, AND HE SAITH, I AM NOT LEARNED.' Deedat writes, "It may be noted that there were no Arabic Bibles in existence in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century of the Christian Era when Muhammad lived and preached! Besides, he was absolutely unlettered and unlearned. No human had ever taught him a word. His teacher was his Creator, 'He does not speak out of his own fancy. This is an inspired revelation. He is taught by one who is powerful and mighty' (Q 53:3-5). Muhammad only repeats the words as they were put into his mouth. Isaiah writes: 'All these future events are a sealed book to them. When you give it to those who can read, they will say, 'We can't read it because it is sealed.' When you give it to those who cannot read, they will say, 'Sorry, we don't know how to read' (Is 29:11,12). He concludes, "See how the prophecies fit Muhammad like a glove. We do not have to stretch prophecies to justify their fulfilment in Muhammad."

It is however clear from the context of this chapter in Isaiah that Deedat misunderstood the message proclaimed by the prophet. These verses has nothing to do with someone that would later appear on the scene, "Isaiah knows that his warning will fall dead – that the people and their rulers have neither 'eyes to see' nor 'ears to hear.' He places on record this knowledge, while at the same time striving if by any means he may arouse some from their condition of dull apathy" (George Rawlinson).

## 12. THE EVIDENCE FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT

Bhula writes, "Jesus, whose mission was only confined to the children of Israel (vide Matt 15:24) clearly prophesied the coming of Muhammad. He also did not claim religion had reached perfection in Christianity. Jesus wanted to impart many things to his people but they were not morally and spiritually developed to accept the complete message, hence the necessity arose for another prophet after him. The Holy Bible bears out the above facts in St John 16:7,8,13, 'But it is actually best for you that I go away, because if I don't, the Counselor won't come. If I do go away, He will come because I will send Him to you. And when He comes, He will convince the world of its sin, and of God's righteousness, and of the coming judgement... Oh, there is so much more I want to tell you, but you can't bear it now. When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not be presenting his own ideas, He will be telling you what He has heard. He will tell you about the future.'" The Holy Prophet Muhammad came as a fulfilment to the above prophecies of Jesus. History bears testimony to this universal Truth. It was Muhammad who guided mankind unto all truth for he presented to the world a religion which contains within itself the essence of all the great religions of the world. With his advent religion reached its perfection. The Quran proclaims it in explicit terms, 'This day I have perfected your religion for you and completed My favour to you. I have chosen Islam to be your faith' (Q 5.3).

A weaker proof as the above texts concerning a proclamation of Muhammad to come can assuredly never be found. In John 16:7,13 and 14:16 Jesus identifies the Counselor with the Spirit of Truth, and in no ways could the Spirit of Truth refer to a

human being. "Moreover, the Father's purpose in giving this other Paraclete is that 'He may be with you forever,' *eis ton aióna*. In this phrase *aión* denotes unlimited time and thus eternity, here with *eis* eternity a *parte post* (from now forward). The stay of Jesus was limited, not so the stay of this other Paraclete. Compare and correlate in v. 16,17: *meth humón*, in your company; *par humón*, within you – the last being the most intimate. Since the Spirit has been given and remains forever, it is a misconception to speak of or to pray for a new Pentecost" (Lenski). This means that Jesus says of his disciples, You know Him with the inner knowledge of experience, because He remains with you and will be in you. Yes, these words of Jesus, 'You know Him,' was true in its present sense.

When Jesus fed the five thousand, the people who saw this miraculous sign, exclaimed, "Surely, He is the prophet we have been expecting!" (John 6:14 cf 7:40). Peter preaches in the Temple to the people of Israel, saying, "Now turn from your sins and turn to God, so you can be cleansed of your sins. Then wonderful times of refreshment will come from the presence of the Lord, and He will send Jesus your Messiah to you again. For He must remain in heaven until the time for the final restoration of all things, as God promised long ago through his prophets. Moses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up a Prophet like me from among your own people. Listen carefully to everything He tells you. Then Moses said, 'Anyone who will not listen to that Prophet will be cut off from God's people and utterly destroyed'" (Acts 3:19-23; 7:37 cf Deut 18:15,18,19). It is evident from this Scripture that Jesus is the Prophet God promised long ago through Moses.

## 13. JESUS AND ISRAEL

The Quran says, "We raised an apostle in each community" (Q 16.36). "It means, writes Bhula, that every nation had a Prophet. As they were National Prophets, their missions were only confined to their respective people..." And therefore he concludes that the mission of Jesus was only confined to the children of Israel. There are certain passages in the New Testament that seem to support this statement of Bhula. When Jesus sent his twelve apostles He told them, "Don't go to the Gentiles or the Samaritans, but only to the people of Israel – God's lost sheep. Go and announce to them the Kingdom of heaven is near" (Matt 10:5-7). And when a Gentile woman pleaded with Jesus to help her daughter, He said to her, "I was sent only to help the people of Israel – God's lost sheep – not the Gentiles" (Matt 15:24).

Jesus however told his disciples at what time in history this approach towards the Gentiles would be changed altogether. He said, "The time of judgement for the world has come, when the prince of this world will be cast out. And when I am lifted up on the cross, I will draw everyone to myself.' He said this to indicate how He was going to die" (John 12:32,33). "Hence, through the death of Christ the power of satan over the nations of the world is broken. During the old dispensation these nations had been under the thralldom of satan (though, of course, never in the absolute sense of the term). With the coming of Christ a tremendous change takes place. On and after Pentecost we begin to see the gathering of a church from among all the nations of the world. By means of his crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and coronation Jesus

attracts to Himself all of God's elect, from every age, clime, and nation" (William Hendriksen; cf John 3:14-16; Rev 20:2,3).

Not to go to the Samaritans (cf Matt 10:5), was therefore a temporary arrangement as we read in Acts 8:5, "Philip, for example, went to the city of Samaria and told the people there about the Messiah." Jesus Himself, after He was raised from the dead, commands his disciples, "Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone everywhere" (Mark 16:15). He said to them, "But when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, you will receive power and will tell people about me everywhere – in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). And Paul wrote to the Romans, "Let me say first of all that your faith in God is becoming known throughout the world" (Rom 1:8; cf 10:18; Col 1:6,23). It was already prophesied in the Old Testament that it was God's promise to give the whole world to Abraham and his descendants (cf Rom 4:13). Paul writes, "Through the work of Christ Jesus, God has blessed the Gentiles with the same blessing he promised to Abraham and we Christians receive the promised Holy Spirit through faith" (Gal 3:14). It is therefore not true that the mission of Jesus was only confined to the children of Israel.

#### 14. THE WORSHIP OF JESUS

The Quran forbids idolatry, "God will not forgive idolatry. He will forgive who He will all other sins. He that serves other gods besides God has strayed far indeed" (Q 4.116). And, "Say, 'Do but consider. When God's scourge smites you and the Hour of Doom suddenly overtakes you, will you call on any but God to help you? Answer me, if you are truthful! No, on Him alone you will call; and, if He pleases, He will relieve your affliction. Then you will forget your idols'" (Q 6.40,41). And, "Long ago, We sent forth Noah to his people. He did, 'Serve God, my people, for you have no god but Him. Beware the torment of a fateful day'" (Q 7.59). And, "As for myself, God is my Lord. I will associate none with my Lord... Would that I had served no other gods besides my Lord! He cried. He had none to help him besides God, the true God, nor was he able to save himself. In such ordeals protection comes only from God, the true God" (Q 18.38,42). And, "On that day He will call out to them, saying, 'Where are the gods whom you alleged to be my partners? From each community We will seize a witness, and We shall say to them, 'Show us your proof.' Then shall they learn that the truth is God's, and the deities of their own invention will forsake them" (Q 28.74-76). In this regard Scripture says, "I am the Lord; that is my name! I will not give my glory to anyone else. I will not share my praise with carved idols" (Is 42:8). And, "I am the Lord, He says, and there is no other" (Is 45:18). And, "According to some people, there are many so-called gods and many lords, both in heaven and on earth. But we know that there is only one God, the Father, who created everything, and we exist for Him. And there is only one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom God made everything and through whom we have been given life" (1 Cor 8:5,6). And, "What am I trying to say? Am I saying that the idols to whom the pagans bring sacrifices are real gods and that their sacrifices are of some value? No, not at all. What I am saying is that these sacrifices are offered to demons, not to God. And I don't want any of you to be partners with demons" (1 Cor 10:19,20). When Satan tempted Jesus, he took Him to

the peak of a very high mountain and showed Him the nations of the world and all their glory, saying, "I will give it all to you, if you will kneel down and worship me." Jesus reacted, saying, "Get out of here, Satan. For the Scriptures say, ' You must worship the Lord your God; serve only Him'" (Matt 4:8-10; cf Deut 6:13,14). John twice mistook an angel for Christ, and fell down at his feet to worship him. But every time the angel stopped him, saying, "No, don't worship me. For I am a servant of God, just like you and other believers who testify their faith in Jesus. Worship God" (Rev 19:10; 22:8). This means we may not worship Satan or the angels, we must only worship God. But Jesus allowed his disciples to worship Him (cf Matt 28:9,17). And Paul writes to the Corinthians saying, "We are writing to the church of God in Corinth, you who have been called by God to be his own holy people. He made you holy by means of Christ Jesus, just as He did all Christians everywhere – whoever calls upon the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and theirs" (1 Cor 1:2). What does it mean? The Scriptures (cf Deut 6:13,14), Jesus (Matt 4:10) and the angels (Rev 19:10; 22:8) testify that we must worship God, but the Christians (Matt 28:9,17; 1 Cor 1:2) worship also Jesus, and Jesus allowed them to do so. It can only mean that Jesus is God, one in essence with his Father (cf John 10:30).

#### 15. JESUS, SON OF GOD

The Quran discards the idea that God has a son, saying, "God is but one God. God forbid that He should have a son" (Q 4.173). And, "Creator of the heaven and the earth. How should He have a son when He had no consort" (Q 6.101). And, "The Jews say Ezra is the son of God, while the Christians say the Messiah is the son of God. Such are their assertions, by which they imitate the infidels of old. God confound them! How perverse they are. They make of their clerics and their monks, and of the Messiah, the son of Mary, Lords besides God; though they were ordered to serve one God only. There is no God but Him. Exalted be He above those they deify besides Him!" (Q 9.29-31). And, "They say, 'God has begotten a son.' God forbid! Self-sufficient is He. His is all that the heavens and the earth contain. Surely for this you have no sanction. Would you say of God what you know not? Say. 'Those that invent falsehoods about God shall not prosper'" (Q 10.70). And, "Those who say, 'The Lord of Mercy has begotten a son,' preach a monstrous falsehood, at which the very heavens might crack, the earth split asunder, and the mountains crumble to dust. That they should ascribe a son to the Merciful, when it does not become the Lord of Mercy to beget one" (Q 19.88-92). And, "We have revealed to them the truth; they are surely lying. Never has God begotten a son, nor is there any other god besides Him. Were this otherwise, each god would govern his own creation, each holding himself above the other. Exalted be God above their falsehoods" (Q 23.90,91). And, "Say, 'God is One, the eternal God. He begot none, nor was He begotten. None is equal to Him'" (Q 112.1-4).

It is clear from these quotations out of the Quran that Islam abhors even the thought that God might have a son. The words, "He had no consort" (Q 6.101; cf 2.116; 10.68; 16.57; 19.35; 23.91; 37.149,157), is an indication that the Muslims take the phrase "Son of God" to the letter and therefore as blasphemy. It means, according to the Quran, that the Bible teaches that God has a male body and had

intercourse with a woman. But the Bible says, "God is Spirit" (John 4:24) and that Mary was a virgin when Jesus was conceived in her by the Holy Spirit (Matt 1:20-23; Luke 1:28-38). Jesus is the Son of God, but not in the sexual sense that Muhammad understood. What the Bible gives us to understand under the phrase Son of God, is the peculiar relation in which the Son of God stands towards God his Father. Jesus said, "The Father and I are one" (John 10:30). The diversity of person as well as the unity in essence with his Father is expressed here. He affirms his complete equality with the Father. Then the Jewish leaders picked up stones to kill Him. When Jesus asked them for what reason they want to kill Him, they answered, "For your blasphemy, because you, a mere man, have made yourself God" (John 10:33). Jesus replied, "It is written in your own law that God said to certain leaders of the people, 'I say, you are gods!' And you know that the Scriptures cannot be altered. So if those people, who received God's message, were called gods, why do you call it blasphemy when the Holy One who was sent into the world by the Father says, 'I am the son of God?' (John 10:34-36).

Jesus said, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). It was God the Father who clothed Jesus with glory when a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son. Listen to Him" (Matt 17:5; cf 2 Pet 1:16-18). And John writes, "And who is the great liar? The one who says that Jesus is not the Christ. Such people are antichrists, for they have denied the Father and the Son. Anyone who denies the Son doesn't have the Father either. But anyone who confesses the Son has the Father also" (1 John 2:22,23). The twenty-four elders sang a new song before the Lamb with these words, "You are worthy to take the scroll and break its seals and open it. You were killed, and your blood has ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation" (Rev 5:9). Yes, "Blessed are those who wash their robes (in the blood of the Lamb – 1 John 1:7), so they can enter through the gates of the city and eat from the tree of life" (Rev 22:14).

## 16. WHO IS ALLAH

Allah is the Arabic word for God. The Quran writes, "Praise be to God, Lord of the Universe" (Q 1.1). He is the Creator of the universe, "He made the heavens and the earth" (Q 11.7). And, "God is the Creator of all things" (Q 13.17 cf 7.54; 17.64; 21.31-33; 25.61; 30.8,26; 36.71; 38.27; 39.6; 40.67). He is the Creator of man, "It was He who created you from dust, then from a little germ, and then from a clot of blood. He brings the infants into the world; you reach manhood. Then decline into old age (though some of you die young), so that you may serve your appointed term and grow in wisdom. It is He who ordains life and death. If He decrees a thing. He needs only say, 'Be,' and it is" (Q 40.67-70). In this regard it sounds similar to the words of the Bible, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen 1:1). And also, "Then God said, 'Let us make people in our image, to be like ourselves...So God created people in his own image; God patterned them after himself; male and female He created them" (Gen 1:26,27).

The Quran declares that the God of Islam and the God of the Christians is one

and the same God, "Be courteous when you argue with the people of the Book (the Christians), except with those among them who do evil. 'We believe in that which has been revealed to us and was revealed to you. Our God and your God is one. To Him we submit" (Q 29.46,47). But right here we have a problem because the Quran rejects the idea of a triune Godhead, "People of the Book, do not transgress the bounds of your religion. Speak nothing but truth about God. The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was no more than God's apostle and His Word which He cast to Mary, a spirit from Him. So believe in God and His apostles and do not say, 'Three.' Forbear, and it shall be better for you. God is but one God! He is all that the heavens and the earth contain. God is the all-sufficient protector. The Messiah does not disdain to be the servant of God, nor do the angels who are nearest to Him. Those who through arrogance disdain His service shall be brought before Him" (Q 4,171-175).

And, "Unbelievers are those who declare, 'God is the Messiah, the son of Mary.' Say, 'Who could prevent God, if He so willed, from destroying the Messiah, the son of Mary, his mother, and all the people of the earth?' (Q 5.17). And, "Unbelievers are those who say, 'God is the Messiah, the son of Mary.' For the Messiah himself said, 'Children of Israel, serve God, my Lord and your Lord.' He that worships other deities besides God, God will deny him Paradise, and the Fire shall be his home. None shall help the evildoers. Unbelievers are those that say, 'God is one of three.' There is but one God. If they do not desist from so saying, those of them that disbelieve shall be sternly punished...The Messiah, the son of Mary, was no more than an apostle.." (Q 5.72-75). And, "Say, 'What counts most in testimony? Say, 'God is my witness and your witness. The Quran has been revealed to me that I may thereby warn you and all it may reach. Will you really testify there are other gods besides God? Say, I will testify to no such thing! Say, 'He is but one God. I disown the gods you serve besides Him" (Q 6.19-21). And, "Creator of the heavens and the earth. How could He have a son when He has no consort? (Q6.100). And, "They say, 'God has begotten a son.' God forbid! Self-sufficient is He. His is all that the heavens and the earth contain. Surely for this you have no sanction. Would you say of God what you know not. Say, 'Those that invent falsehoods about God shall not prosper. They may take their case in this life, but to Us they shall then return, and for their unbelief We will make them taste the grievous torment" (Q10.68-70). And, "We have revealed to them the truth; they are surely lying. Never has God begotten a son, nor is there any other god besides Him...Exalted be God above their falsehoods" (Q23.90,91).

From the above Quranic quotations it is clear that the God of the Muslims and the God of the Christians is not the same God. Islam rejects in no uncertain terms the God of the Christians, because the God of the Christians is a triune God (cf 1 John 5:7).

## 17. THE TRIUNE GOD OF CHRISTIANITY

God reveals Himself in the Bible to us as the Triune God – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. We read, "Then God said, Let us make people in our image, to be like ourselves..."(Gen 1:26) and then again, "So God created people in his own image; God patterned them after Himself; male and female He created them" (Gen 1:27).

The variation of the word "us" (plural form) and "his" and "He" (singular form) indicates one Divine Being who consists out of more than one "person." It doesn't indicate how many "persons." But that which is not quite clear in the Old Testament is quite clear in the New Testament. We read, "Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the Name (singular form) of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" (Matt 28:19; cf 2 Cor 13:13).

Although the word *trium* is not found in the Bible, the Trinity of God is taught very clearly in the Scriptures. It is written for example, "For there are three that bear witness in heaven. The Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit. And these three are one (1 John 5:7). Despite the fact that this text doesn't appear in all the Biblical versions, it is an excellent summary of what is witnessed by the Scriptures in connection with the Trinity of God. The Bible teaches for example that God the Father is God (Matt 11:25,26); that Jesus Christ is God (Rom 9:5) and that the Holy Spirit is God (Acts 5:1-4) and that there is only one God (1 Cor 8:6). This one true God is therefore three "persons" in one Being.

The Quran knows about the Spirit (cf Q 70.4; 78.38; 97.4) and writes, "To Moses We gave the Scriptures and after him We sent other apostles. We gave Jesus son of Mary veritable signs and strengthened him with the Holy Spirit" (Q 2.87,253), This is true as the coming down of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus is the anointing that had been prophesied in the Old Testament, "Your throne, O God, endures forever and ever. Your royal power is expressed in justice. You love what is right and hate what is wrong. Therefore God, your God, has anointed you, pouring out the oil of joy on you more than on anyone else" (Ps 45:6,7). And this prophesy is fulfilled in Jesus, "This shows that God's Son is far greater than the angels, just as the name God gave Him is far greater than their names. For God never said to any angel what He said to Jesus, 'You are my Son. Today I have become your Father.' And again God said, 'I will be his Father, and He will be my Son.' And then, when He presented his honored Son to the world, God said, 'Let all the angels of God worship him.' God calls his angels messengers swift as the wind, and servants made of flaming fire. But to his Son He says, 'Your throne, O God, endures forever and ever. Your royal power is expressed in righteousness. You love what is right and hate what is wrong. Therefore God, your God, has anointed you, pouring out the oil of joy on you more than anyone else" (Heb 1:4-9). It is evident that God the Father calls Jesus, God.

Isaiah writes, "The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is upon me, because the Lord has appointed me to bring good news to the poor" (Is 61:1). Jesus said in Nazareth of Himself in the synagogue to the congregation, "This Scripture has come true today before your eyes!" (Luk 4:21). Peter also testified, "And no doubt you know that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power" (Acts 10:38).

But the Quran however doesn't mention the things that occurred at that specific moment with Christ. We read, "One day when the crowds were being baptized, Jesus Himself was baptized. As He was praying, the heavens opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on Him in the form of a dove. And a voice from heaven said, 'You are my beloved Son, and I am fully pleased with you" (Luke 3:21,22). "It is most noteworthy that all three persons are revealed at Jesus' baptism so that we here have one of the clear proofs for the Holy Trinity...In what sense the Father meant *ho huios mou*

cannot be in doubt. The Son of God is the second "person" in the Godhead. He is God. "They who deny the deity of Jesus must settle accounts with the Father and the declaration He makes here" (Lenski).

## 18. THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE QURAN AND THE BIBLE

It is clear that there are several differences between the messages of the Quran and that of the Bible. We may ask the question which one of the two is right and how shall we know for sure? The Quran recognized Jesus as a prophet. "To Moses We gave the Scriptures and after him We sent other apostles. We gave Jesus, son of Mary veritable signs and strengthened him with the Holy Spirit" (Q 2.87). The Quran says about Jesus and the other prophets, "We chose them and guided them to a straight path" (Q6.85,86). And, "We made a covenant with you, as We did with the other prophets; with Noah and Abraham, with Moses and Jesus son of Mary. A solemn covenant We made with them, so that He might question the truthful about their truthfulness" (Q 35.7,8). The Bible says that God almighty spoke with a voice from heaven saying about Jesus, "This is my beloved Son...and I am fully pleased with Him. Listen to Him" (Matt 17:5). And He spoke the truth (John 8:45).

Jesus answered all the questions of the people with the Bible (cf Luke 22:27-38); used the Bible as basis for His arguments (cf Matt 22:41-45); warned the people with examples in the Bible (cf Luke 17:32); used the Bible as weapon against the Satan (cf Matt 4:4,7,10); saw the contents of the Bible as historical facts (cf Luke 4:27) and put Himself under the authority of the Bible (cf Matt 26:47-56). It is Him that said, "And the Father leaves all judgment to the Son, so that everyone should honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. But if you refuse to honor the Son, then you are certainly not honoring the Father who sent Him" (John 5:22,23). Therefore, if Jesus Christ is what He said He is, the Son of God (John 10:36), equal to the Father (John 10:30), and we describe Him as only a messenger of God, like all the other prophets, then we certainly do not accentuate the necessary tribute to his person; then we do not realize that in Him the fullness of God is manifested (Col 2:9).

## 19. THIS WE AS CHRISTIANS BELIEVE AND THUS WE CONFESS

We receive all the books of the Old and New Testament, and these only, as holy and canonical, for the regulation, foundation, and confirmation of our faith; believing without any doubt all things contained in them, not so much because the Church receives and approves them as such (cf Eph 3:18; 1 Thess 2:13), but especially because the Holy Spirit witnesses in our hearts (cf Rom 8:16), and because the Scriptures testify (Ps 19:7-9; 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:16-21) that they are from God, and that they carry the evidence thereof in themselves.

We believe that these Holy Scriptures fully contain the will of God, and that whatsoever man ought to believe unto salvation is sufficiently taught therein. For since the whole manner of worship which God requires of us is written in them at large, it is unlawful for anyone, though an apostle, to teach otherwise than we are taught in the Holy Scriptures. Paul writes, "Let God's curse fall on anyone, including

myself, who preaches any other message than the one we told you about, even if an angel comes from heaven and preaches any other gospel than the one you welcomed, let God's curse fall upon that person" (Gal 1:8). For since it is forbidden to add unto or take away anything from the word of God (cf Deut 12:32; Rev 22:18,19), it does thereby evidently appear that the doctrine thereof is most perfect and complete in all respects.

Neither may we consider any writings of men, however holy these men may have been, of equal value with those divine Scriptures, nor ought we to consider custom, or the great multitude, or antiquity, or succession of times and persons, or councils, decrees or statutes, as equal value with the truth of God, since the truth is above all; for all men are of themselves liars (Ps 116:11; Rom 3:4) and more vain than vanity itself. (cf Confession of Faith, art V & VII; Job 25:5; Ps 119:141; 1 Cor 1:20; 3:20).

Paul writes, "He called you to salvation when we told you the Good News; now you can share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. With all these things in mind, dear brothers and sisters, stand firm and keep a strong grip on everything we taught you both in person and by letter" (2 Thess 2:15). He taught the elders by saying, "He must have a strong and steadfast belief in the trustworthy message he was taught; then he will be able to encourage others with right teaching and show those who oppose it where they are wrong" (Tit 1:9). It was Paul's calling to defend the truth and to tell others the Good News (Phil 1:7). The Bible had the final say in Paul's ministry. We regularly find in his letters the words, "As the Scriptures tell us..." (Rom 10:11; cf Rom 4:3,17; 11:8; 1 Tim 5:18, etc.).

In this regard our Lord Jesus is the perfect example. He put Himself under the authority of the Scriptures. When Peter wanted to defend his Master with the sword, He said to him, "Put away your sword. Those who use the sword will be killed by the sword. Don't you realize that I could ask my Father for thousands of angels to protect us, and He would send them instantly? But if I did, how would the Scriptures be fulfilled that describe what must happen now?" (Matt 26:52-54).

## 20. THE ONLY MEDIATOR

The Quran disallows the idea of a Mediator between God and man, "Warn those who dread to be assembled before their Lord that they have no guardian or intercessor besides Him, so that they may guard themselves against evil" (Q6.51; cf 6.70; 7.53; 10.3; 26.100; 39.43; 40.18; etc.). It is contrary to the Bible that says, "For there is only one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and people. He is the man Christ Jesus. He gave his life to purchase freedom for everyone. This is the message that God gave to the world at the proper time. And I (Paul) have been chosen – this is the absolute truth – as a preacher and apostle to teach the Gentiles about faith and truth" (1 Tim 2:5).

The Quran denies the fact that Jesus was crucified, and writes, "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. Those that disagreed about him were in doubt about concerning him; they knew nothing about him that was not sheer conjecture; they did not slay him for certain" (Q 4.157; cf 4.159).

Since Muslims deny that Jesus was crucified, they cannot appeal to His atoning sacrifice for salvation. The Bible says, "How we praise God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we belong to Christ. Long ago, even before He made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. His unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to Himself through Jesus Christ. And this gave Him great pleasure. So we praise God for the wonderful kindness He has poured out on us because we belong to his dearly loved Son. He is so rich in kindness that He purchased our freedom through the blood of his Son, and our sins are forgiven" (Eph 1:7; cf 1 Pet 1:18,19; 1 John 1:7; Rev 5:9).

Jesus Himself said, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one can come to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6). Peter confirmed it about Christ Jesus when he said to the Jewish Council, "There is salvation in no one else! There is no other name in all of heaven for people to call on to save them" (Acts 4:12). And Paul writes, "All the newness of life is from God, who brought us back to Himself through what Christ did. And God has given us the task of reconciling people to Him. For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. This is the wonderful message He has given to us to tell others. We are Christ's ambassadors, and God is using us to speak to you. We urge you, as though Christ Himself were pleading with you, 'Be reconciled to God! For God made Christ, who has never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ" (2 Cor 5:18-21).

It is absolutely necessary for us to be reconciled to God because it is written, "And this is what God has testified: He has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. So whoever has God's Son has life, whoever does not have his Son does not have life" (1 John 5:11,12). Therefore I urge you: accept Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour! (cf John 1:11-13). Tell Him that you accept the fact that He was handed over to die because of your sins, and that He was raised from the dead to make you right with God (cf Rom 4:25). You can be assured that God is listening to you and will answer your prayer (cf Matt 7:7,8; 1 John 5:9,14,15). Go to your friends and tell them what the Lord has done for you. Don't be afraid. Jesus said, "If anyone acknowledges Me publicly here on earth, I will openly acknowledge that person before my Father in heaven" (Matt 10:32). God bless you!

**Dr Willie Marais.**

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