

Do Muslims Worship God?

A. Knowing the Challenge

1. Muslims claim to believe many of the things we believe as Christians:
 - a. They say they believe in and worship the one true God
 - b. They believe Jesus was born to the virgin Mary, that He was a messenger of God, that He was a good moral person and wise teacher, and that He even performed miracles
 - c. They believe in Adam, Abraham, Moses, David and the prophets
 - d. They believe in heaven and hell, and that ultimately God judges people and determines where they end up
2. For this reason, many people, including many Christian denominations, believe that Muslims worship the same God as the Jews and Christians
 - a. Catholics: the Second Vatican Council affirmed that Muslims “adore the one God, living and subsisting in Himself; merciful and all- powerful, the Creator of heaven and earth, who has spoken to men; they take pains to submit wholeheartedly to even His inscrutable decrees, just as Abraham, with whom the faith of Islam takes pleasure in linking itself, submitted to God. Though they do not acknowledge Jesus as God, they revere Him as a prophet”
(http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html)
 - b. Insider Movement:
 - 1) An approach to evangelism that seeks to make the Gospel attractive to people of other faiths or cultures by eliminating offensive aspects of the Gospel, making it socially and culturally acceptable, as well as easy to accept.
 - 2) This form of evangelism now dominates many of the U.S. missionary organizations to Muslims
 - 3) For instance, since referring to Jesus as the Son of God is offensive to Muslims, “insiders” claim we should refrain from referring to Jesus as the Son of God
 - 4) The Quran is given not only high regard by proponents of the insider movement, but often it is considered partially inspired
 - 5) They will often refer to Jesus as a prophet, just like the Muslims do
 - 6) Converts are encouraged to continue practicing many (if not all) of the traditions of Islam and still refer to themselves as Muslims with phrases like “Muslim followers of Jesus”
 - 7) In other words, proponents claim you can be both a Muslim and a Christian
3. However, there are many differences that demonstrate that Muslims do not worship the God of the Bible

B. Knowing the Truth

1. God the Father:
 - a. Muslims are monotheistic (one God) as are Christians, but they reject the true nature of God
 - b. First, they reject the Trinity, but the Bible clearly declares that God is one God who exists in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit

- 1) Passages that describe God as one God do not deny the Trinity, but rather are generally referring to or stressing His *uniqueness*, or that there is no *other* God except Him, and are in contrast to the polytheistic beliefs of the pagan cultures that surrounded Israel
 - a) Deuteronomy 6:4: **"Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! 5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might."**
 - b) Deuteronomy 4:35-39: **"To you it was shown that you might know that the Lord, He is God; there is no other besides Him. 36 Out of the heavens He let you hear His voice to discipline you; and on earth He let you see His great fire, and you heard His words from the midst of the fire. 37 Because He loved your fathers, therefore He chose their descendants after them. And He personally brought you from Egypt by His great power, 38 driving out from before you nations greater and mightier than you, to bring you in and to give you their land for an inheritance, as it is today. 39 Know therefore today, and take it to your heart, that the Lord, He is God in heaven above and on the earth below; there is no other."**
- 2) In fact, God is spoken of in the plural in the Bible:
 - a) Genesis 1:26: **"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth"**-Elohim (God) is plural, and while this is often referred to as a plural of majesty, it also reflects His plural nature (e.g. three in One)
 - b) Genesis 1:26: **"Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness;'"**—both the verb (make) is plural as is "our"
 - c) Genesis 11:7: **"Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another's speech."** (Tower of Babel)
 - d) Isaiah 6:8-9: **"Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?' Then I said, 'Here am I. Send me!' 9 He said, 'Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on listening, but do not perceive; Keep on looking, but do not understand.'"**—Here we have God referred to in both the plural ("us") and the singular ("he")
 - e) Isaiah 48:16: **"...and now the Lord God (lit. Yahweh) has send Me (Messiah), and His Spirit (Holy Spirit)"**—all three are distinct yet One
- c. Second, they reject the personal, relational nature of God:
 - 1) Muslims refer to their god as Allah, which was actually a pagan god worshipped at Mecca long before Mohamad borrowed the name
 - 2) Allah of the Quran is a distant god who reveals his will but not much else; he is impersonal and too holy to have personal relationships with man
 - 3) In contrast, the God of the Bible is a personal and relational God, full of love for mankind; He cannot only be known but has gone to great lengths to reveal Himself and His nature to us
 - a) Jeremiah 23:7: **"I will give them a heart to know Me, for I am the LORD; and they will be My people, and I will be their God, for they will return to Me with their whole heart."**
 - b) Read 1 John 4:7-19 and notice how many times God's love for us is mentioned, and that we abide in Him, that He gave us his spirit, etc.
 - c) And, unlike Allah who is too holy to interact with man on a personal level, the God of the Bible became man, and even died on a cross to save us from our sins

d. You cannot reject who God is and still claim to worship the God of the Bible

2. Jesus

a. Muslims believe that Jesus was a prophet, but ultimately reject at least two critical aspects of who He is:

b. First, they reject the deity of Jesus Christ, but the Bible makes it clear that Jesus was God:

1) There are explicit statements in the Bible regarding Jesus's deity:

- a) Matthew 1:23: **"Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel," which translated means 'God with us.'"**
- b) John 1:1, 14: **"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."**
- c) Colossians 2:9: **"For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form..."**
- d) Hebrews 1:8: **"But of the Son he says, 'Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the righteous scepter is the scepter of His kingdom.'"**

2) Jesus Himself claimed to be God:

- a) John 5:17-18: **"For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God."**
- b) John 8:58: **"Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am. Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him..."**
- c) John 10:30-33: **"I and the Father are one." 31 The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him. 32 Jesus answered them, "I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?" 33 The Jews answered Him, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God."**
- d) John 14:7-11: **"If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him." 8 Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." 9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10 "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. 11 "Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves."**

3) Jesus's disciples believed He was God:

- a) John 20:27-28: **"Then He said to Thomas, 'Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing.' 28 Thomas answered and said to Him, 'My Lord and my God!'"**
- b) Matthew 14:32-33: **"And those who were in the boat worshiped Him, saying, "You are certainly God's Son!"**
- c) 2 Peter 1:1 and Titus 2:13: **"...our God and Savior, Jesus Christ"**

4) Jesus could not have simply been a prophet as Muslims claim because He called Himself God; if He were not God, then He would be a false prophet.

- c. Second, Muslims reject Him as Savior:
 - 1) They ultimately reject any notion that mankind needs a savior, because one's salvation is determined by one's own efforts
 - 2) They also claim that Jesus wasn't crucified:
 - a) Some believe that the crucifixion story is made up
 - b) Others believe that his image was put over another man and that man was crucified
 - c) Others believe that he was nailed to a cross but that God saved Him before He died
 - 3) But, the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus is central to the Gospel; without these things there is no salvation:
 - a) 1 Corinthians 1:23: **"For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; 23 but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness,"**
 - b) 1 Corinthians 15:1-4: **"Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, 2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. 3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,"**
 - c) 1 Corinthians 15:11-23: **"Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; 14 and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain. 15 Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we testified against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; 17 and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. 18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19 If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied. 20 But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. 21 For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. 23 But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming,"**
 - d. You cannot revere Jesus, as the Muslims claim, but then reject who He was and everything He lived—and died—for
3. Holy Spirit
- a. The phrase "holy spirit" is used a number of times in the Quran, but most Muslims believe the Holy Spirit is the angel Gabriel
 - b. Just as they deny the deity of Jesus, they deny the deity of the Holy Spirit
 - c. But, the Bible makes it clear that the Holy Spirit, while being a distinct person, is also God (the third member of the Trinity)
 - 1) The Holy Spirit is often placed into a triad with God the Father and God the Son to express both distinctness (e.g. a separate person) but equality with God:

- a) Matthew 28:19: **"Matthew 28:19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,"**
 - b) 1 Corinthians 12:4-6: **"Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. 6 There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons."**
 - c) 2 Corinthians 13:14: **"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all."**
- 2) God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit are often spoken of interchangeably in the Bible:
- a) Hebrews 10:15-17: **"And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us; for after saying, 16 'THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THEM AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAWS UPON THEIR HEART, AND ON THEIR MIND I WILL WRITE THEM,' He then says, 17 'AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE.'—here, the author equates what God said to the Israelites with what the Holy Spirit said**
 - b) Peter associated lying against the Holy Spirit with lying to God (Acts 5:3-4): **"But Peter said, 'Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land? 4 'While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.'"**
 - c) Our bodies are said to be temples of God and temples of the Holy Spirit: **"Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?"** (1 Corinthians 3:19)
 - d) When Jesus is speaking to John in Revelation 2-3 he refers to what He says to John as **"what the Spirit says to the churches"** (2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22)
- 3) The Holy Spirit speaks and acts as God:
- a) Acts 13:2-4: **"While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' 3 Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. 4 So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia and from there they sailed to Cyprus."**
 - b) Acts 20:28: **"Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood."**
 - c) Acts 16:6: **"They passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia; 7 and after they came to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them;"**
- d. The Muslims view of the Holy Spirit as Gabriel, or some other created being, and their rejection of His deity put them at odds with the Bible.
4. When Muslims claim to worship the one true God, but then reject His true nature as One God in three persons—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, they are not worshipping the God of the Bible. **Allah and Yahweh are not the same!**

C. Knowing How to Respond

- S. Muslims just worship God by a different name.
- A. Muslims do share some similar beliefs with Christians, but Allah is very different from the God of the Bible. For instance, the Bible teaches that God is one God in three persons: God the Father, God the Son (Jesus) and God the Holy Spirit. For instance, in Titus 2:13 it refers to Jesus Christ as “our great God and Savior.” And, in Acts 5:3, when Peter accuses Ananias of lying to the Holy Spirit he says it was a lie against God. These passages, and others, make it clear that God the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit are all God, but Muslims reject this. Another way Allah differs from the God of the Bible is that Allah is a very distant, impersonal god, who reveals little about himself and only loves people when they earn his love. But, the God of the Bible is quite different. Throughout the Bible we see God seeking out relationships with people like Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David and the people of Israel. He is relational and personal and loves unconditionally. In fact, the Bible says that God demonstrated His love for mankind by sending His son to die for us while we were still sinners (Romans 5:8). There are many other ways that the God of the Bible and Allah are different but these two alone show that Muslims don’t worship the same God as Christians.
- S. Muslims believe in Jesus
- A. Muslims believe that Jesus was a prophet, but they don’t believe in who He truly is. The Quran teaches that Jesus was merely a prophet and Muslims reject the Bible’s claim that He is God. However, the Bible not only states that Jesus is God, but Jesus Himself claimed to be God. For instance, in John 10:30 Jesus said, “I and the Father are one.” When the Jews heard this, they accused Him of claiming to be God, “You, a mere man, claim to be God” (John 10:33). In John 5:17-18, John wrote that the primary reason the Jews were seeking to kill Jesus was because he was “making himself equal with God.” In other passages, like 2 Peter 1:1 and Titus 2:13 Jesus is referred to as “our God and Savior.” So, if the Bible says that Jesus is God, and if Jesus claimed to be God, but Muslims reject those claims, then they really don’t believe in Jesus.
- S. Jesus was a prophet, but not God
- A. If Jesus were only a prophet then He certainly wasn’t a very good one. In fact, if He isn’t God then He was a false prophet. Can I ask you a question? Should a prophet always speak the truth? The Bible says that God detests lying lips (Proverbs 12:22). It also says that the prophet who misled people should be put to death (Deuteronomy 13:5). So, since Jesus claimed to be God, that was either true or Jesus was lying which makes Him a false prophet. You see, you can’t claim Jesus was a prophet for God and then ignore what He said about being God. He can’t be a prophet if the claims He made about Himself are not true.