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What You Need to Know about Islam - Part 5

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It is amazing how widespread Islam is around the world, but also how little most people know about it. It does have its own reputation, but that only tells part of the story. Reputations are generalizations that tend to be rather shallow. They may reveal some of the “what” about a faith, but not much about the “why.”

This article is part five of a five part series to provide a more in-depth understanding. Here is what will be covered in each of the installments. Today’s article shares Islam’s beliefs about Christianity.

- Part One - The History of Islam - <https://www.marketfaith.org/2025/11/what-you-need-to-know-about-islam-part-1-history-of-islam/>
- Part Two - Islam’s Authority Sources - <https://www.marketfaith.org/2025/11/what-you-need-to-know-about-islam-part-2-islams-authority-sources/>
- Part Three - Islam’s Worldview Beliefs - <https://www.marketfaith.org/2025/12/what-you-need-to-know-about-islam-part-3-islams-worldview-beliefs/>
- Part Four - Islam’s Moral Beliefs - [http://www.marketfaith.org/2025/12/what-you-need-to-know-about-islam-part-4-islams-moral-beliefs/](https://www.marketfaith.org/2025/12/what-you-need-to-know-about-islam-part-4-islams-moral-beliefs/)
- **Part Five - Islam’s Beliefs about Christianity**

What You Need to Know About Islam

Islam’s Beliefs about Christianity

Introduction

Muslims obviously believe in their faith, and a big part of their confidence is the belief that the Qur'an was a direct revelation from Allah – given directly, word-for-word, to mankind through Muhammad. Thus, anything written in it is considered true. However, when it comes to the Qur'an's teachings about the Christian faith, there are some very serious errors. Because of that, Muslims believe certain things about the Christian faith that are simply not true. If you ever get into a discussion with a Muslim about faith matters, it can be very important to understand these misconceptions. It may be just the opening you need to effectively share the gospel.

The errors in their beliefs about Christianity fall broadly into two categories – theological and historical. In the area of theology, they think Christians believe things that Christians simply don’t believe. When it comes to history, the Qur'an teaches

certain things about Christianity that are simply not historically accurate.

Theological Errors

Denial of the Trinity

In Islam, the Christian doctrine of the Trinity is explicitly rejected as incompatible with their belief in the absolute oneness and uniqueness of Allah. Anything that even appears to compromise that unity is considered the gravest sin in Islam. Their foundational theological claim is that:

- Allah is one in essence, person, and will (unitarian belief),
- Allah does not share His divinity (Jesus cannot share Allah's essence), and
- Allah does not divide, incarnate, or enter into relationships of essence (Jesus is not divine, nor is he Allah's Son in any sense).

The Trinity is viewed in Islam as a later theological corruption of original monotheism. This reflects a total misunderstanding of trinitarian doctrine.

As a result, Islam does not accept the classical Christian definition of the Trinity (one God in three persons). Rather, the Qur'an teaches that Christians believe the Trinity is comprised of God, Jesus, and Mary. This belief likely reflects popular or heretical Christian beliefs that Muhammad encountered in his travels, rather than actual Christian trinitarian theology.

Christian Response

Christianity does not teach that there are three Gods. It is also fiercely monotheistic, but conceives of God in terms that Muslims simply do not understand. While there are people who follow some form of unitarian (non-trinitarian) Christianity while claiming to be Christians (ex. The Way International, Jehovah's Witnesses, Oneness Pentecostals), that is not mainstream biblical Christianity. The Bible teaches one God in three Persons, not three gods.

Beyond that, Mary is never considered to be a part of the Trinity. That is simply a false belief.

Denial of the Deity of Christ

Islam rejects the Christian doctrine of the deity of Christ. This notion, together with their misunderstanding about the Trinity, emerges out of their belief in the absolute oneness and uniqueness of Allah. Affirming Jesus as divine is seen as a direct violation of this core principle. The Qur'an teaches

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specifically that Jesus was a prophet of Allah, and thus a created being. And since they understand Allah to be one, indivisible, and without partners who could share His essence, attributes, or authority with any created being, Jesus could not possibly be a divine being.

Islam categorically denies that Allah has a Son – either biologically or metaphysically. They believe that Christians are simply in error concerning this doctrine. They assert that Christians either misunderstand the metaphorical language about the Son in the Bible, or consider this teaching a later theological corruption of Jesus' original monotheistic message.

Essentially, Muslims consider the term "Son of God" to have a purely physical meaning. Based on Qur'anic teaching, Jesus ate food, prayed to Allah, and lacked omniscience. That is, He was human, not God. In fact, there is a passage in the Qur'an (5:116) that portrays Allah questioning Jesus on the Day of Judgement. In this verse, Jesus explicitly denies being deity. Their doctrine teaches specifically that:

- Jesus was a prophet only,
- Jesus was created,
- Jesus is not divine, and thus
- cannot be the Son of God.

Christian Response

The Muslim understanding of Jesus totally mischaracterizes the Christian concept of the "Son of God." By limiting the meaning of the term to a purely physical expression, they totally miss its actual meaning. Based on their belief about the Trinity, they could hardly believe anything else, but their belief simply does not correspond to what Christianity teaches. The Christian belief is that Jesus is fully God and fully man, and the concept of the Sonship of Christ is eternal, not biological or sexual.

Beyond that, the Christian Scriptures are not theologically corrupted. The sheer number of existing manuscripts and the ability to trace them back centuries before Islam even existed is profound evidence that the theological corruption that Islam alleges is simply not true.

Denial of the Crucifixion

The doctrine of atonement is central to Christian salvation, and Christ had to die for the sins of mankind to accomplish it. Islam, on the other hand, believes a person is "saved" by: 1) submitting to Allah in faith and obedience, 2) living righteously, and 3) receiving Allah's mercy on the Day of Judgment. There is no need for atonement, so it explicitly rejects that Jesus was killed or crucified.

The first reason Muslims deny the crucifixion is because it is denied in the Qur'an. The Qur'an directly states that "They did not kill him, nor did they crucify him, but it

was made to appear so to them... rather, Allah raised him to himself." Obviously, anything that contradicts the Qur'an cannot be considered true.

The second reason the crucifixion is denied is to defend the preservation of prophetic honor. Islam holds that Allah protects His true prophets from ultimate humiliation and defeat at the hands of their enemies. Since crucifixion was a form of public shame and associated with a curse, from an Islamic perspective, allowing Jesus – one of the greatest prophets – to be executed in that way would contradict Allah's justice and care for his messengers.

The majority belief is that someone else was made to look like Jesus and was crucified in his place. A couple of minor alternate theories state that the Jews believed they killed Jesus but were mistaken, or that Jesus was put on the cross but did not actually die.

The New Testament testimony concerning the crucifixion is summarily dismissed. It is considered either corrupted history, a misinterpretation of events, or a theological invention. In any case, it is totally denied.

Christian Response

Contrary to the assertions of Islam, the crucifixion is among the best-attested facts in ancient history. Muslim attempts to downplay the accuracy of the New Testament text is totally without historical support. It is affirmed by all four Gospels, Paul's letters, and early Christian fathers. The reason it is denied in Islam is because it contradicts the Qur'an. Unfortunately for them, the evidence for the accuracy of the Qur'an on that point is totally lacking.

Rejection of Atonement and Original Sin

Islam's rejection of atonement and original sin flows from its core theological convictions about Allah's justice, human nature, and moral responsibility. Based on Islam's understanding of sin, forgiveness, and salvation, the idea that humanity inherits guilt or needs a sacrificial redeemer is seen as unnecessary and unjust.

Islam teaches that every human being is born with a natural disposition inclined toward obedience to Allah. Concerning Adam and Eve, they believe that the original couple sinned, but repented and were forgiven by Allah. Thus, their sin is not inherited by their descendants. The Qur'an specifically affirms personal moral responsibility and denies the concept of original sin and substitutionary atonement – which they consider to be incompatible with divine justice. They consider that people sin because of choice and weakness, not because they possess a corrupted nature requiring redemption. Islam teaches that Allah forgives sins directly when a person repents sincerely, and that forgiveness is an act of divine mercy, not the result of a legal transaction.

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Therefore, since Islam denies both original sin and atonement, Jesus' death cannot be redemptive in any sense. Thus, the crucifixion of Christ can't possibly have any connection to salvation. Jesus was a prophet, not a redeemer. Salvation, in Islam, is grounded in submission, not in redemption from a fallen nature. It is achieved through works, obedience, and Allah's arbitrary mercy.

Christian Response

While Islam claims to recognize the Old and New Testaments as coming from Allah, they believe those texts have become corrupted and are no longer reliable documents – particularly in places where the teachings deviate from the teachings of the Qur'an.

This particularly applies to matters related to the spiritual condition of mankind and Allah's remedy for sin. The Bible specifically teaches that mankind is born into this world in a fallen condition, and that Christ's death on the cross was, literally, an atoning sacrifice that God arranged to atone for the sins of those who would receive it.

Claim That Christians Worship Multiple Gods

Islam judges Christianity based on categories that come completely from Islamic theology. From the Islamic perspective, Christianity does not preserve monotheism, but rather redefines it in a way Islam cannot accept. They cannot conceive of the idea that the laws of eternity are not subject to the laws of the natural universe, so even their conception of one God has to fit into that paradigm. Even though Christianity does not actually teach what Muslims assert about it, they are insistent that what they believe is true. Islam claims that Christians worship multiple gods because their faith allows no internal distinctions within Allah. Based on their thinking:

- The Trinity appears to involve three divine beings,
- Jesus is worshiped as divine,
- Divine Sonship is seen as incompatible with monotheism, and
- Worship practices involve multiple recipients.

At the heart of Islam is total inflexibility concerning the meaning of the concept of one God. Thus, Islam does not distinguish between "one being" and "three persons" in the way Christianity does. For them, any kind of distinction at all is defined as plurality. Their belief affirms that:

- Allah is one in essence, person, and will
- Allah is not divisible, composite, or internally plural
- Allah does not share his attributes or authority with any created being
- Any distinction within Allah that is more than purely conceptual is seen as compromising divine unity.

Although Christians insist that the Trinity is one God in three persons, Islam interprets it as:

- Three gods who are eternal
- Three gods who are worshiped
- Three gods who act with divine authority

From the Islamic perspective, this amounts to three objects of worship – which equals polytheism. Thus, even if Christians claim they worship "one God," Islam judges worship practices rather than definitions.

Concerning Jesus – Islam affirms Jesus as a prophet, but rejects any claim that he is divine. From the Islamic standpoint, worshiping Jesus equals worshiping a created being. By attributing divine attributes to Jesus, they claim that makes him a second god. Additionally, praying to Jesus implies that Allah has a partner.

Also, Islam categorically denies that Allah has a Son. It understands "Son of God" language as literal biological or metaphysical procreation, which is impossible for Allah.

Concerning the Holy Spirit - When Christians affirm the Holy Spirit as fully God, Islam interprets that as a third divine object. For them, worship of the Spirit compounds the problem of plurality. In Islamic thought, the Spirit (often identified with Gabriel) is a created servant, not God.

Christian Response

The fact is, Christianity is rigorously monotheistic. Christian teachings are not nullified by the fact that Muslims cannot comprehend the idea that God exists outside of natural laws and is thus not subject to them. Just because there can't be three persons in one being in the natural universe does not eliminate the possibility that a God like that can exist in eternity where the laws of the natural universe do not apply. The fact that Muslims will not accept that explanation does not mean it is not true. In fact, the Bible teaches both monotheism and a God who consists of three persons. The doctrine of the Trinity was developed precisely to safeguard monotheism while accounting for biblical revelation.

II. Historical Errors

Belief That the Original Gospel Was Lost or Corrupted

Islam teaches that there was an original Gospel given to Jesus, in much the same way that the Qur'an was given to Muhammad. They believe that this original was later lost, corrupted, or distorted. Islamic theology holds that the New Testament is, thus, a later, human composition that mixes fragments of Jesus' original message with theological interpretation and error.

The Qur'an specifically teaches that Jesus was not crucified, was not divine, and that He taught pure monotheism. Since the New Testament teaches the deity of Christ, the crucifixion of Christ, the Trinity, and an atonement theology, all which contradict Islamic teaching, Muslim scholars had to come up with some explanation for the difference. At that point, they had two options. They had to either admit that there never was a correct teaching in Christianity (which would contradict the Qur'an's teaching that an earlier true revelation existed), or that the original revelation was later corrupted or lost. Islam chose the second option. As a result, the lost-Gospel belief functions as a theological harmonization device, not a historical conclusion.

The idea that Christianity's original Gospel was corrupted did not exist at Islam's founding. Early Qur'anic passages speak more of Christians misinterpreting the Gospels rather than there being an actual textual loss. It was only later as Muslim theologians had to face Christian objections that it became necessary to develop a stronger theory of textual corruption. They posited a lost Gospel to explain the gap. Specifically, the Qur'an *does not* describe the Gospel as lost at the time of Muhammad. Rather, it:

- affirms the Torah and Gospel as guidance and light,
- commands Christians to judge by what God revealed in the Gospel, and
- assumes the Gospel is present and accessible.

What the Qur'an *does* describe is a particular model of revelation. In the Qur'an:

- Allah gives prophets books (Torah, Psalms, Gospel, Qur'an),
- Revelation is conceived of as direct divine speech,
- Prophets function primarily as recipients and transmitters of scripture.

This Qur'anic framework was then projected backwards onto Jesus. It assumes that Jesus must have received a divine book comparable in form to the Qur'an. So, when Christianity's texts did not fit that model, the conclusion followed that the original must be lost.

Christian Response

From a historical and textual standpoint, Islam's claim about the New Testament is erroneous and internally inconsistent. History clearly shows that the Gospels were written within the first century, that they were widely circulated across the Roman world, that thousands of manuscripts exist in multiple languages, that these manuscripts show remarkable textual stability, and that there is no identifiable moment when an original Gospel disappeared. Christian manuscripts pre-date Islam by centuries, are geographically diverse, and all contain the same core doctrines. There is no manuscript tradition that reflects an "Islamic Jesus."

Islam's claim of manuscript corruption faces several fatal logical issues.

First, Islam never identifies what exact text was corrupted, when the corruption occurred, who did it, and which verses were changed. An undefined corruption claim is completely unfalsifiable and therefore meaningless.

Second, universal corruption is implausible. In order to sustain Islam's claim, Christians across Europe, Africa, and the Middle East would all have had to corrupt their texts identically without leaving any evidence. This is historically impossible.

Third, early Christian theology predates Islam by centuries. Salvation through the cross is attested in the New Testament, but also in first-century Christian writings, early creeds and hymns, and the writings of the early church fathers – all long before Muhammad.

Additionally, the Qur'an misunderstands the nature of the Gospel. Islam assumes things that are simply not true. It assumes the Gospel is a single book and was dictated to Jesus just as the Qur'an was dictated to Muhammad. As opposed to that, Christianity understands the Gospel as the message about Jesus that was preserved through multiple inspired witnesses and rooted in historical events. Islam critiques a concept of "Gospel" that never existed.

The corruption theory exists not because of evidence, but because the biblical Gospel contradicts Islamic theology. Rather than revise its theology, Islam has chosen to dismisses the prior revelation.

Confusion of Christian Sects with Orthodoxy

Islam's confusion of Christian sects with Christian orthodoxy arises from a combination of historical context, limited exposure, disputable purpose, and theological assumptions. As a result, the Qur'an and later Islamic theology often critique beliefs and practices that were never a part of orthodox Christianity, while treating them as representative of Christianity as a whole.

In Muhammad's younger days when he was traveling around serving as a camel driver, he had many opportunities to encounter people from various religions. Many of those he encountered claiming to be Christian were actually not from orthodox Christian groups, but from various marginal and heretical groups. What Islam has done is to generalize these various false expressions, and has gone on to claim that they are actual teachings of Christianity. The kind of beliefs Muhammad encountered included such groups as:

- Nestorians - They emphasized a separation between Christ's natures.
- Monophysites - This cult confused Christ's natures.
- Ebionites - They denied Christ's deity.
- Marian-devotional sects - There were numerous groups that, in various ways, exaggerate veneration of Mary.

Thus, when Muhammad critiqued Christianity in the Qur'an, he did it based on positions no orthodox Christian ever held. In particular, they included beliefs such as:

- Mary being part of the Trinity (Qur'an 5:116) - The Qur'an depicts Allah asking Jesus whether he taught people to take Jesus, Mary, and God as three deities. The problem is, no orthodox Christian creed has ever included Mary in the Trinity. This reflects confusion with Marian excesses and heretical beliefs of various local fringe groups. Orthodox beliefs distinguished clearly between veneration and worship. This is a distinction Islam did not recognize or accept.

- The Trinity is reduced to numerical tri-theism (the belief that there are three gods) - Islam critiques the Trinity as being comprised of three separate gods, with a “numerical three” replacing the Christian understanding of “one.” In truth, orthodox Christianity has always rejected belief in three gods and the belief that the Trinity represents a divided essence. The Qur'an attacks a caricature of the Trinity rather than its actual formulation.
- Islamic theology simply does not have conceptual categories that allow them to understand biblical Christianity - Christian beliefs depend on certain distinctions that Islam rejects outright. Since they reject these distinctions, they are simply unable to understand the concept of the Trinity as is it believed in the Christian faith. Specifically, Islam's definition of monotheism does not allow any kind of internal distinctions within Allah whatsoever. Therefore, even correct explanations of Christian beliefs are rejected as incoherent or deceptive. As a result, Christianity is judged not by what it actually teaches, but by what Islam can allow Allah to be. (Note: The following explanations are rather technical theological explanations, but are necessary in this case in order to explain the distinctions between Islamic and Christian teachings.)
 1. Essence vs. person - Essence refers to what God is – the single, indivisible divine being (God Himself), while person refers to who God is as three persons (Father, Son, Holy Spirit). The Christian concept of Trinity is expressed as one divine essence shared fully by three distinct Persons. Not three parts or gods, but one God in three unique ways of existing.
 2. Nature vs. hypostasis - Nature refers to “what” something is (its essence), while hypostasis refers to “who” something is (a concrete, distinct person). In Christian theology, this distinction explains the Trinity (the one divine nature with three persons) and the Hypostatic Union (two natures – divine and human – united in the one person of Jesus Christ).
 3. Immanent vs. economic Trinity - The immanent Trinity describes God's eternal, internal relationships within Himself (Father, Son, Holy Spirit), while the Economic Trinity refers to God's distinct actions and roles in the created world (Father as Creator, Son as Redeemer, Spirit as Sustainer). They are not two different Trinities, but two perspectives on the one God focusing on His inner life versus His outward activity in history.
 4. Incarnation without division - Incarnation without division means that God (the divine nature) and man (the human nature) have been united in one single person, Jesus Christ, without either nature being split, confused, changed, or separated.
- Apocryphal texts influenced Islamic understanding - Some Islamic narratives about Jesus and Mary are derived from non-biblical sources such as the Infancy Gospel of Thomas, the Protoevangelium of James, and others. These texts were never considered authoritative by orthodox Christianity, though they were widely circulated among the uneducated in that day. Islam absorbed these traditions without realizing the difference.
- All groups that self-identified as Christians were treated as one group - The Qur'an frequently addresses “The Christians” as a single theological entity. It makes no distinction between heresy and orthodoxy, ignores centuries of doctrinal clarification, and treats theological diversity as proof of corruption rather than development. However, by the 7th century when Muhammad lived and wrote the Qur'an, Christianity was already highly differentiated.
- Theological necessity forced misrepresentation - Once Islam asserted that Jesus is not divine, the crucifixion did not occur, and the Trinity is false, any Christian group affirming otherwise had to be dismissed as either corrupt, deviant, or as creating a false doctrine. Rather than engage orthodox Christianity based on its own beliefs, Islam redefined Christianity to match what it needed to refute (created a straw-man to knock down). This explains why Islam often critiques positions no orthodox Christian defends.
- Later Muslim theology inherited and codified the confusion - Later Islamic scholars inherited older Qur'anic critiques and rarely engaged primary Christian sources directly. Instead, they accepted the older assumptions as settled fact. As a result, even when Muslim scholars later encountered orthodox theology, the doctrinal framework of Islam could not accommodate it, so its misunderstanding persisted.

Christian Response

Islam often refutes a version of Christianity that never actually existed, while ignoring or misrepresenting actual historic Christian beliefs.

Belief That Muhammad Was Prophesied in the Bible

Islam teaches that Muhammad was foretold in the Bible, especially in the Torah and the Gospel. This claim is erroneous. It is not in error because Christians later removed such prophecies, but because the passages cited do not refer to Muhammad in their original linguistic, historical, or theological contexts.

The reason Islam needs for there to be biblical prophecies of Muhammad is because the Qur'an asserts that Muhammad was foretold in earlier Scripture. Once that claim was made, Islamic theology required such prophecies to exist. When none are found to actually exist, reinterpretation becomes necessary. Thus, this is not a historical conclusion but a theological necessity.

Places where Muslims claim the Bible predicts the coming of Muhammad:

- Deuteronomy 18:15-18 speaks of a coming “prophet like Moses.” Muslims often argue this prophecy refers to Muhammad because, like Moses, Muhammad was a lawgiver, he led a community, and he was not Israelite (he was, rather, an Ishmaelite).
- John 14 - 16 speaks of the coming of the *Paraclete* (“Helper”). Muslims argue that Jesus was predicting the coming of Muhammad. They believe that the Greek word *Parakletos* (Helper) was actually a corrupted form of *Periklutos* (meaning Praised One = Muhammad).
- Song of Solomon 5:16 uses the term “Altogether Lovely.” Muslims argue the Hebrew word *machmadim* in this verse refers to Muhammad's name.
- Isaiah 42 speaks of “The Servant of the LORD.” This passage is said to describe Muhammad because it mentions Arabia (Kedar), and it speaks of a servant bringing justice.

Christian Response

- The reason the interpretation of Deuteronomy is erroneous is because, in context, this explicitly refers to the Israelites. The prophecy establishes a line of Israelite prophets, not a foreign one. In the New Testament (Acts 3:22-23), this passage in Deuteronomy is explicitly applied to Jesus, not Muhammad.
- There is no manuscript evidence for the Muslim claim of the corruption of the word *paraclete*. Jesus' prophecy was for the coming of the Holy Spirit.
- No Jewish or Christian interpreter – ancient or modern – ever read Song of Solomon 5:16 as a messianic text, let alone a Muslim prophecy. *Machmad* was a common Hebrew noun, meaning “desirable” or “lovely.” Additionally, the *-im* ending is grammatically the plural/intensive suffix, not part of a proper name. This passage is poetry about human love, not prophecy.
- Isaiah identifies the servant in Isaiah 42 as Israel (Isaiah 41:8-9) or as the Messiah who restores Israel (Isaiah 49 - 53). Isaiah 42, as quoted in the New Testament, is said to be fulfilled in Jesus (Matthew 12:18-21). Muhammad simply does not fit the servant profile Isaiah develops across these chapters.
- Islam faces a serious dilemma. The Qur'an affirms the Torah and Gospel as revelation, but those texts do not contain clear prophecies of Muhammad. But rather than conclude the claim is false, Islamic theology asserts that the prophecies were hidden, that the meaning was altered, or that Christians misunderstood their own Scriptures. This results in reading Muhammad into texts, rather than deriving him from them.
- There is no pre-Islamic, Jewish, or Christian expectation of Muhammad. No Jewish sect expected a non-Israelite prophet after Malachi, no Christian community expected a future prophet after Christ, no church father references such a figure, and no manuscript margin notes suggest suppressed prophecies. A prophecy unknown to every reader until 600 years later is not a prophecy – it is a reinterpretation.
- Islamic readings on this topic start with Muhammad as the conclusion, then go backward to search for matching phrases. They completely ignore the original language, audience, and covenantal context. This is *eisegesis* (reading into the text), not *exegesis* (drawing meaning from the text). This is nothing more than common proof-texting.

View That Jesus Predicted Islam

Islam teaches not only was Muhammad predicted in the Bible, but more specifically that Jesus Himself foretold of a future prophet bringing a new law. Its belief that Jesus predicted Islam is erroneous because it rests on misreading Christian texts, unsupported linguistic claims, and theological assumptions imposed on the Bible, rather than on what Jesus actually taught in historical and textual context. The New Testament anticipates no further prophet after Christ.

Islam teaches that Jesus was a true prophet who preached Islam (submission to Allah), that Jesus foretold the coming of Muhammad, and that Christianity later misunderstood or altered Jesus' message. The reason it claims that Jesus predicted Islam is because that kind of interpretation is required by Islamic theology. They consider that Muhammad is the final, universal prophet, so Jesus cannot be the climax of revelation. Additionally, earlier prophets must anticipate him. Once these assumptions are in place, Jesus must be viewed as predicting Islam whether the texts support it or not.

Muslims also argue that Jesus predicted Muhammad when He promised the coming of the *Paraclete* (Helper/Advocate) in John 14 - 16. (This argument overlaps with the previous section. See the explanation of this above.)

Christian Response

The source of this argument is the Qur'an, not the Bible. There is no Gospel text where Jesus predicts the coming of Muhammad. The Muslim argument actually searches for a proof text in the Bible for confirmation of a doctrine it teaches. And when none is found, Muslim scholars simply reinterpreted an out of context passage in the Bible to try to back it up. This is reverse reasoning, not historical exegesis.

Additionally, Jesus predicted no prophet after Himself. He consistently presented Himself as the final and decisive revelation, the fulfillment of the Law and Prophets, and the unique Son who reveals the Father. What Jesus did predict was the coming of the Holy Spirit, His own return, and a judgment and resurrection. He never predicted a future human prophet correcting or superseding Him. In fact, Jesus explicitly affirms the finality of His mission in Matthew 28:18-20, and warns against later claimants in Matthew 24.

There is also a theological incompatibility. Islam claims that Jesus predicted Islam. However, Islam teaches that Jesus was not crucified, He is not the Son of God, and that Jesus' disciples misunderstood Him. These are simply not backed up by the Bible.

Also, there is no early Christian awareness of such a prediction. No apostle expected Muhammad, no church father mentions a coming Arabian prophet, no Jewish-Christian sect anticipated Islam, and no gospel manuscript even hints at such a figure. This is a prophecy that was never even proposed until the 7th century.

This argument reads Islam backward into the Gospels. It starts with Muhammad as the conclusion, searches for vague phrases (ex.; “after me,” “helper”), and ignores genre, language, audience, and context.

Finally, the Bible presents Jesus within Jewish messianic expectations and sees Him as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophesy, not as someone who is anticipating a future replacement. Additionally, it understands the Holy Spirit to be God's continuing presence, not a new prophet.

Chronological Mis-timings in the Qur'an

The charge of chronological mis-timings and mis-datings in the Qur'an refers to places where the Qur'an places people, beliefs, institutions, or events in the wrong historical period – often collapsing centuries of development into a single moment. From a critical, historical perspective, these mis-timings strongly suggest that the Qur'an reflects later Jewish and Christian traditions as they existed between the 3rd and 8th centuries, rather than the original historical settings of the biblical figures it describes.

From a historical standpoint, these mis-timings indicate that the Qur'an is not independent of later Jewish-Christian tradition. Rather, it reflects oral legends rather than primary sources. Biblical figures are reshaped to support Islamic theology, and that

history is subordinated to doctrinal needs. Following are the most prominent mis-timings found in Islam.

1. Mary (Mother of Jesus) Confused with Miriam (Sister of Moses)

In the Qur'anic texts, Mary is called a "Sister of Aaron" (Surah 19:28) and also a member of the "family of Imran" (Mary's father's name according to Surah 3:33-36). The problem is, Miriam (the sister of Moses and Aaron) lived around 1300 BC, while Jesus' mother Mary lived in the first century A.D. These women are separated by over 1,300 years.

To counter that criticism, Muslims argue that "Sister of Aaron" is actually an honorific title. However, the Qur'an explicitly places Mary in Aaron's family line, and no Jewish or Christian source ever uses "sister of Aaron" as a title for Mary. In fact, Luke carefully traces Mary and Jesus' genealogy, and Aaron is not included.

2. Pharaoh and Haman Appearing Together

In the Qur'anic texts, Haman is presented as a high official serving Pharaoh (e.g., Surah 28:6, 38). However, Haman is a figure from the Book of Esther who lived under the Persian king Xerxes I in the 5th century B.C. The pharaohs ruled Egypt centuries earlier.

Muslims claim that this is a different Haman. However, there is no historical or archaeological evidence that the Muslim Haman exists, and the name and role of Haman in the Qur'an exactly matches Esther's Haman. The Qur'an gives no indication that this is a different person.

3. Samaritans Existing in Moses' Time

In the Qur'anic text, the Samaritan (as-Sāmīrī) leads Israel astray during the golden calf incident at Mt. Sinai. (Surah 20:85-95). However, the Samaritans didn't come into existence until after the Assyrian conquest in 722 B.C. Moses lived hundreds of years earlier. The Samaritans simply did not exist at Sinai.

Muslims claim as-Sāmīrī is a personal name, not the Samaritan people. However, the word linguistically means "Samaritan," and there is no evidence of an individual with that name in Exodus. Again, the Qur'an projects a later group backward in time.

4. Inconsistency of the Title "King" vs. "Pharaoh"

In Qur'anic usage, Joseph's ruler is called "the king," while Moses' ruler is called "Pharaoh." This is often presented in Islam as a miraculous accuracy. The problem is, the Qur'an shows no awareness of Egypt's dynastic chronology. It uses Pharaoh as a personal name, not a dynastic title. Later passages portray Pharaoh speaking and reasoning like a Near Eastern tyrant from the 3rd and 8th centuries, not a Bronze Age monarch. This is not precision, but represents theological stylization.

5. Abraham as a "Muslim" Practicing Islamic Rituals

The Qur'an claims that Abraham practiced Islam and taught rituals resembling later Islamic worship (e.g., Surah 3:67). However, Islam's theology, legal system, and rituals didn't even emerge until the 7th century A.D. Abraham lived around 2000 B.C. This inserts a fully developed religious system backward by nearly 2,000 years.

The truth is, Abraham worshiped within an ancient Near Eastern context, and there is no evidence of Islamic prayer, fasting, or creeds in his time.

6. Jesus' Infancy Miracles from Later Apocryphal Texts

The Qur'anic texts have Jesus speaking as an infant (Surah 19:29-30) and creating birds from clay (Surah 5:110). The problem is, these stories only appear in the Infancy Gospel of Thomas and the Arabic Infancy Gospel dated between the 2nd and 6th centuries A.D. The Qur'an has adopted later legendary stories rather than the earliest Christian sources.

7. Absence of Knowledge about Israel During the Time of Jesus

The Qur'an shows no awareness of Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, Synagogues, Roman occupation or theology debates regarding the temple. Instead, it reflects post-biblical religious disputes that were common between the 3rd and 8th century.

Christian Response

These many errors suggest non-biblical, legendary sources rather than divine revelation. Muhammad made two basic errors as he was creating the Qur'an. First, he took non-biblical stories he had heard during his travels and accepted them as reflective of what was in the Bible, but which were, in fact, later non-biblical legends. Second, he conflated biblical stories from different eras and included them in the Qur'an as if they were the same story.

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Conclusion

It is important to keep in mind that even though Islamic beliefs about Christianity are wrong, they are firmly believed by Muslims. They believe them because these teachings are either explicitly in the Qur'an, or are logically concluded by Muslim theologians based on Islamic theology. To believe any other way is, to them, inconceivable. After all, they believe the Qur'an was dictated directly from God.

Thus, to interact with Muslims will typically require a lot of patience and a willingness to work through the reasons why their beliefs about the Christian faith are wrong. But if the opportunity arises to do that, this knowledge can have a profound impact.