

Answering Islam's Five Main Objections to Christianity

Story by Debra Smith

Then they said to one another, “We are not doing right. This day is a day of good news, and we remain silent. If we wait until morning light, some punishment will come upon us.” 2 Kings 7:9a

The Good News of Jesus is powerful and effective for bringing Muslims to salvation, declared Daniel Massieh of Open The Gates Ministries—and Christians have a responsibility to share Christ openly with Muslims, Daniel continued. In January at the CC Missions Conference in Murrieta, CA, Daniel shared his testimony of conversion to Christ from Islam (summarized on the previous page and available in book format from Open The Gates) and challenged believers to eschew silence about the Gospel in favor of confidence in God. Contrary to many Christians' expectations, Daniel added, many Muslims are eager to hear the Good News. “The harvest truly is plentiful,” Daniel said. “If you can respond to five common Islamic objections to Christianity, you are equipped to lead Muslims to Christ.”

When witnessing to Muslims, Daniel continued, it's vital to speak clearly, simply, and kindly. “We cannot attack Muslims when we talk with them. We must speak in love.”

Love is patient, love is kind.

1 Corinthians 13:4a (NIV)

Daniel said that sharing Christ effectively with Muslims simply involves knowing the Gospel and understanding the way that many passages in the Qur'an actually support biblical truth. These five misunderstandings blind many Muslims to Jesus, but they are not difficult to refute using the Qur'an itself.

1. The Bible is Corrupted

Background: The Qur'an mentions three different parts of the Judeo-Christian Scriptures. It asserts that God gave them all.

- **Torah/Taurat, or Law:** “It was We¹ who revealed the Law (to Moses); therein was Guidance and Light” Q. 5:44² (see also Q. 6:91; 21:48³).
- **Zabur, or Psalms:** “...We did bestow on some Prophets more (and other) gifts than on others: and We gave to David (the gift of) the Psalms” Q. 17:55 (see also Q. 21:105).
- **Injil, or Gospel:** “It is He who sent down to thee (step by step), in truth, the Book, confirming what went before it; and He sent down the Law (of Moses) and the Gospel (of Jesus) before this, as a guide to mankind” Q. 3:3 (see also Q. 21:7).

Conclusion: Muslims generally believe, therefore, that the Bible came originally from God.

Objection to Christianity: Because of discrepancies between the Bible and Qur'an, most Muslims believe the Bible has been altered.

Response: The Qur'an, however, says that

- **The Bible is a reliable record:** “And if you, Muhammad, are in doubt concerning that which We have revealed unto thee, then ask those who have been reading the Book⁴ (that was) before thee” Q. 10:94. If the Bible was changed, *When? Where?* It had to be still accurate around A.D. 600 when Muhammad received this command to consult the Bible—and thousands of biblical manuscripts already existed, scattered throughout Asia, Europe, and Northern Africa. Changing all copies hidden and stored everywhere, by that point in time—and altering them in exactly the same way—would have taken a great miracle!
- **God's Word cannot be changed:** “There is none that can alter the Words (and Decrees) of God” Q. 6:34 (see also Q. 5:48; 10:64; 15:9; 18:27).

2. 'Trinity' Means Three Gods

Objection to Christianity: Most Muslims mistakenly believe that Christians worship three gods. Many even think the Christian Trinity consists of Father, Son, and Mary.⁵

Response:

- While seeking to refute the Trinity, the Qur'an affirms that **God is both 'Word' and 'Spirit':** “Christ Jesus the son of Mary was (no more than) an apostle of God, and His Word, which He bestowed on Mary, and a Spirit proceeding from Him: so believe in God and His apostles. Say not ‘Trinity’” Q. 4:171.
- **God is awesome and complex.** His three-ness and His one-ness describe different aspects of Him—much as a triangle has both three-ness (points) and one-ness (as a single shape).
- **God is all-powerful and unlimited by human constraints** (Q. 2:20, 189). Analogies do not come close to explaining Him adequately. But they help reveal how something can simultaneously be one and three, without contradiction, in different ways.

3. God Cannot Have a Son

Objection to Christianity: Having a Son would entail physical procreation and would violate God's *Tawheed*, or oneness. “Say: ‘He is God, the One and Only; God, the Eternal, Absolute; He begetteth not, nor is He begotten; and there is none like unto Him’” Q. 112:1-4 (see also Q. 19:35; 23:91).

Response: “Son of God” is a metaphor that describes a unique relationship between two aspects (Father and Son) of God's single essence.

- “**Son of Egypt**,” similarly, means a man from Egypt—not a man begotten from the marriage of Turkey and Iran.
- **The Qur'an itself uses metaphorical language for Jesus**, calling Him a “Word” from God. “Behold! The angels said: ‘O Mary! God giveth thee glad tidings of a Word from Him: his name will be Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, held in honour in

this world and the Hereafter and of (the company of) those nearest to God” Q. 3:45.

- **The Arabic language has two words for “son”:** *ibn* (metaphorical), and *walad* (literal). Jesus is a Son in the *ibn* sense.
- **The Qur'an affirms that God could have a son, if desired:** “Had Allah wished to take to Himself a son, He could have chosen whom He pleased out of those He doth create” Q. 39:4. Though Q. 6:101 appears contradictory—implying that it would be impossible for God to have a son—Q. 39:4 remains.

4. Jesus is Not God

Objection to Christianity: Saying that Jesus is God is blasphemy. Jesus was a prophet equal to Muhammad.

Response: Islam asserts that

- Jesus was born of a virgin (Q. 3:47; 19:16-21)
- Jesus was righteous (Q. 3:46; 6:85)
- Jesus was sinless (Hadiths⁶: Bukhari and Muslim)
- Jesus performed miracles (Q. 3:49; 5:110)
- Jesus spoke during infancy (Q. 19:29-31)
- Jesus was strengthened/supported by the Holy Spirit (Q. 2:87)
- Jesus was God's Word (Q. 4:171)
- Jesus was a Spirit from God (Q. 4:171)

The Qur'an and Hadiths do not make these claims about Muhammad. It seems, then, that Jesus reflected God's perfect character and love in a way Muhammad didn't. If the two were equal, why did Muhammad not experience, do, and be such things?

5. Jesus was Not Crucified, and Atonement is Not Necessary

Objection to Christianity:

- Atonement is not needed, because salvation comes by works. “To those who believe and do deeds of righteousness hath God promised forgiveness and a great reward” Q. 5:9 (see also Q. 11:114; 29:7).
- One person's sin cannot be transferred to another. “Who receiveth guidance, receiveth it for his own benefit: who goeth astray doth so to his own loss: No bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another” Q. 17:15.

Response:

- The Qur'an is inconsistent, claiming once that Jesus' crucifixion was only a trick (Q. 4:157) and elsewhere that He really did die and be raised (Q. 3:55, M. Asad translation).
- The Qur'an affirms that Jesus Himself knew He would die and be resurrected: “‘So Peace is on me the day I was born, the day that I die, and the day that I shall be raised up to life (again)!’” Q. 19:33. Why would Jesus make this claim if He wasn't going to do so? If He did die and rise again, *Why? For what purpose?*



Photo by Adrian Rodriguez

A Christian shares biblical truth with a Muslim woman.

- The Qur'an affirms substitutionary atonement when it recounts Abraham's near-sacrifice of his son.⁷ “We called out to him, ‘O Abraham!’ ... And We ransomed him with a momentous sacrifice” Q. 37:104-107. If God cannot accept a sinless sacrifice as a ransom in place of a sinful person, why did He do so in Abraham's case? ↪

¹Qur'anic references to “We” do not imply any kind of plurality in God. The Qur'an frequently uses an ancient literary technique called the “royal plural” to speak majestically of God.

²The Qur'an translation quoted herein is that of Abdullah Yusuf Ali.

³Qur'anic references can be looked up online at <http://www.islamicity.com/quransearch/>.

⁴“The People of the Book” is a common Qur'anic collective for Jews and Christians, who already possessed their Scriptures (Book) during Muhammad's lifetime.

⁵This belief likely stems from the idolatry of the Collyridians, an ancient group of heretics who worshiped Mary. Jeremiah 7:18 and 44:7-19 may refer to a similar teaching.

⁶Hadiths are collections of stories about Muhammad's sayings and doings. Bukhari and Muslim are the names of the authors who recorded the particular hadiths in which Muhammad spoke of Jesus' sinlessness.

⁷In the Qur'anic version of this story, the son nearly sacrificed is Ishmael, not Isaac. The son's identity, however, is not important when sharing Christ. What matters is how the story points toward and illustrates Christ's substitutionary atonement on the cross.

Open The Gates Ministries

<http://www.openthegates.org>

info@openthegates.org

888-673-6775