

What's the Difference? Islam

What Every Christian Should Know

- Islam - the world's second largest religion, estimated 1.907 billion Muslims worldwide. It is the youngest and fastest growing religion in the world. If it continues to grow at it's current rate it is projected to be the world's largest religion by 2050.
- **History**
 - Story of Islam originates in 570 AD in the town of Mecca, what we call Saudi Arabia with the birth of Muhammad.
 - Muhammed is troubled by polytheism in Mecca at the Kaaba, which housed 360 deities.
 - In 610 AD, at the age of 40, toward the end of Ramadan he claimed to experience a supernatural visitation, from a Spirit that claimed to be the angel Gabriel.
 - After this visitation, Muhammed is suicidal. Fears that he was visited by *Jinn*, an evil spirit.
 - Galatians 1:8 - But even if we or an **angel** from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, **let him be accursed**.
 - Muhammed's ongoing "recitations" over a period of 22 years eventually make up the Qur'an or Koran.
- **Basic Beliefs of Islam**
 - Every Muslim must hold to six articles of faith:
 1. **Faith in Allah.** The central doctrine of Islam is that God is one and that no one may be associated with his deity. To associate someone, like Jesus, with Allah by calling Him God's Son is to commit the unpardonable sin of shirk (see Surah 4:48).
 2. **Belief in angels** like Gabriel, whom they claim transmitted the Koran to Muhammad. Each person has two angels assigned to him or her – one to record the person's good deeds and the other to record the person's evil deeds. Muslims also believe in evil spirits called jinn, from which we get the word "genie."

3. **Acceptance of the Koran.** Muslims teach that only the Koran has been preserved in perfection; Jews and Christians have corrupted the rest.
4. **Acceptance of Islam's prophets, with Muhammad as the greatest.** The Koran says Allah has sent prophets to every nation, proclaiming the truth of the one true God. In all, 124,000 prophets have been sent. Most are unknown, but many include biblical characters such as Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and Jesus. Muhammad is the only prophet who is for all time; he is called "Seal of the Prophets."
5. **Belief in predestination** – that is, everything that happens, good and evil, is predestined by Allah's will.
6. **Preparation for the Day of Judgment**, in which each person's good and evil works will be measured, resulting in heaven or hell. Only Allah knows – and has predetermined – who will go to heaven and who will go to hell. Hell is not an eternal place of torment, but a place where evil is purged from its inhabitants.

- **Religious Duties**

- Every Muslim must practice at least five fundamental religious duties. These are known as the Pillars of Religion, and they are:
 - **The confession of faith** or Shahada: "There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet." Sincerity in voicing the confession is essential. If a Muslim repudiates the Shahada it nullifies his or her hope of salvation.
 - **Prayer (Salat).** Muslims must recite 17 cycles of prayer each day. These cycles usually are spread over five times while the supplicant faces Mecca – dawn, noon, midafternoon, dusk, and two hours after sunset. The noon service on Friday is the only time Muslims are expected to gather together at the mosque.
 - **Observing Ramadan**, (2024 - March 10th - April 9th) a month of fasting throughout the daylight hours to commemorate the first revelation of the Koran to Muhammad. During the day, Muslims must refrain from food, drink, smoke, and sexual relations. After sundown, all of these pleasures may be enjoyed until sunrise the next day.
 - **Almsgiving or Zakat.** Muslims are required to give 2.5 percent of their currency, plus other forms of wealth, as determined by a complicated system that purifies their remaining wealth.

- **Pilgrimage, or Hajj, to Mecca**, Muhammad's place of birth. Every Muslim who is physically and financially able must make this trek at least once in his or her lifetime. Pilgrims must wear white garments to eliminate all class distinctions. The process of visiting several sacred sites usually takes more than a week.
- A sixth religious duty is sometimes associated with these: **Jihad, or Muslim holy war**. When the situation warrants it, this duty requires Muslims to go to war to defend Islam against "infidels." Anyone who dies in a holy war is guaranteed everlasting life in heaven and is considered a martyr for Islam.

Purpose

The ultimate goal of Islam is to subjugate the world and then rule it according to Islamic law. Islam claims to be the restoration of true monotheism and thus supersedes both Judaism and Christianity. Islamic law teaches that conversion may be achieved through persuasion or subjugation, but some hold that if these fail, unbelievers (or "infidels") may be eliminated if necessary. As such, hostility toward non-Muslims is accepted and even encouraged in some Islamic cultures, based on passages from the Koran such as, "O, true believers, take not the Jews and the Christians for your friends. They cannot be trusted. They are defiled – filth."

Jesus vs. Isa

Jesus vs. Isa (the Jesus of the Koran)

*When comparing Jesus and Isa,
we can see a clear difference by exploring three questions:*

Who is He?

<u>Jesus</u>	<u>Isa</u>
Virgin born; conceived by Holy Spirit (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:18-23; Luke 1:35).	Virgin born; created in womb of Mary by Allah; creation similar to Adam's (Surah 3:59; 19:20-22; 21:91).
Son of God (Matt. 3:17; John 10:30).	Son of Mary (called by this name 23 times in Islamic scriptures; for example, Surah 34:45). Allah is not a father and has no sons or daughters; to say so is <i>shirk</i> , the unpardonable sin (see Surah 19:88-92; 112:3).
Eternal (John 8:58; John 17:5).	Created from dust, as Adam was (Surah 3:59).
Co-equal, co-eternal with the Father, Holy Spirit (John 1:1-14; Col. 1:15-20; Phil. 2:5-11; Heb. 1:1-13).	Only a man, a prophet. It is <i>shirk</i> , the unpardonable sin, to ascribe deity to Jesus. Allah is not <i>Trane</i> (Surah 4:171; 5:73; 116).
God (John 1:1; John 10:30).	Not God (Surah 5:17, 72-3, 75). Jesus was an apostle of Allah (Surah 4:171); a messenger only (Surah 5:75; 19:30).
Greater than any man (Matt. 12:42).	A great prophet, not as great as Muhammad. Jesus was a worshiper of Allah (Surah 3:51; 9:30).
Messiah / Christ (Matt. 16:16-7; John 20:31).	Messiah only to the Jews; will proclaim Islam and establish it on the earth at his return.
The way, truth, and life (John 14:6).	Preached the truth (of Islam).
Savior of the world (Luke 2:11; John 4:42; Acts 5:31).	Prophet of Allah; human messenger.
Sinless (2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15).	Righteous; obedient to Allah, as all prophets were (Surah 3:45, 49; 4:158).

What Did He Do?

Jesus	Isa
Became flesh, retaining His deity; adding humanity (John 1:14).	Was only flesh. Created from dust by Allah (Surah 3:59).
Called God His Father (John 5:18; 8:54; 20:17).	Called Allah his Lord and worshiped him (Surah 5:75).
Performed miracles to demonstrate His authority as Messiah and to provide a foretaste of the kingdom of heaven (John 2:11; Acts 2:22).	Performed miracles as "signs from the Lord" (Surah 3:49; 5:110).
Died on the cross for our sins (1 Cor. 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:21).	Did not die on the cross. Opinions vary as to what happened to him (he hid while one of his companions died in his place; Allah made Judas Iscariot to look like Jesus and take his place; Simon of Cyrene took Jesus' place). Atonement for sins not necessary (Surah 17:15; 35:18).
Rose physically from the dead (Matt. 12:38-40; Rom. 1:4; 1 Cor. 15:4-8; 1 Peter 1:18-21).	Did not die.
Ascended into heaven after His resurrection and is seated at the Father's right hand (Matt. 26:64; Mark 16:19; Acts 7:55-6).	Called into heaven by Allah at the time Christians say he was crucified. Opinions vary as to whether he remains in heaven today or was sent back to earth, where he died a natural death.
Will return physically and visibly once day to establish His earthly kingdom (Matt. 24:30-1; Rev. 19:11-21).	Will return one day to proclaim Islam and establish Islam on earth. Will defeat Antichrist, kill all pigs, break all crosses, and establish 1,000 years of righteousness. Some expand on this and say he will then die and be buried beside Muhammad.

Jesus vs. Isa

What Difference Does It Make?

Jesus	Isa
Sin is humanity's problem and results in spiritual and physical death (Rom. 3:10, 23; 5:12; 6:23).	People are not fallen by nature. Sin is not humanity's problem; ignorance of the teachings of Islam is the problem.
Christ's finished work on the cross provides forgiveness of sin and eternal life by God's grace through faith (John 3:16; 5:24; Rom. 4:4-5; Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5-7).	Allah would never let his prophet die in such a way. Forgiveness of sins and eternal life are achieved by submitting to Allah and performing good deeds; atonement is not needed (Surah 11:114; 17:15; 35:18).
Jesus is the only way of salvation (John 14:6; Rom. 3:24-26).	Jesus was only a man – a good man, a prophet, and a worshiper of Allah (Surah 3:51; 19:30).
Salvation is offered freely to all (Rom. 10:13).	Allah forgives whom he pleases and punishes whom he pleases; from mankind's perspective, our eternal destiny is fatalistically determined (Surah 11:114).
Believers are eternally secure based on the promise of God to save us and the power of God to keep us saved (John 5:24; 10:28; 1 Peter 1:3-5).	Jihad is the only eternal security (Surah 3:157).
God deals graciously with people; worship is never forced (Matt. 11:28-30).	Worship may be forced upon people (Surah 2:193; 9:29).

Comparing Christianity and Islam

What the Bible says about God:

There is one true and living God, who exists as three distinct, co-equal, co-eternal persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. While the Bible is clear that there is one God (Deut.6:4), the Scriptures also call the Father, Son and Holy Spirit God (e.g., John 20:28; Acts 5:3-4), and in some places the three persons of the Godhead are depicted together (Matt. 3:16-17; 2 Cor. 13:13; Eph. 1:3-14; 1 Peter 1:2). God is personal, knowable, approachable, and loves all people.

What Islam says about God:

The one true God is Allah. He is a distant God, unknowable and unapproachable. He does not love all people, only those who do well. He is the author of evil as well as good since he predestines all things. He is not triune but singular, and no partner is to be associated with him. To associate a person to Allah – such as by calling Jesus the Son of God – is to commit the unpardonable sin known as *shirk*.

What the Bible says about Jesus:

He is the virgin-born Son of God, conceived by the Holy Spirit (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1:35). He is the eternal God, the Creator, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and Holy Spirit (John 1:1-14; Col. 1:15-20; Phil. 2:5-11; Heb. 1:1-13). Jesus died for our sins (1 Cor. 15:3), rose physically from the dead (Matt. 12:38-40; Rom. 1:4; 1 Cor. 15:4-8; 1 Peter 1:18-21) and is coming back physically and visibly one day (Matt. 24:29-31; John 14:3; Titus 2:13; Rev. 19:11-16).

What Islam says about Jesus:

He was one of God's prophets or messengers, but inferior to Muhammad, who brought Allah's final revelations to man. The Koran denies that Jesus is the Son of God, and any Muslim who believes in the deity of Jesus has committed the one unforgivable sin called *shirk* – a sin that will send that person to hell. Muslims do believe Jesus is the Messiah, was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life and is coming back one day – to establish Islam throughout the earth. They do not believe He died on the cross, but was called to heaven by Allah.

What the Bible says about the Bible:

The Bible is the inerrant, infallible, inspired Word of God, and is His sole written authority for all people (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

What Islam says about the Bible:

The Bible is corrupted and untrustworthy. Islam claims the Koran is the literal Word of God, received supernaturally by Muhammad from the angel Gabriel. It supersedes the Bible, which also was given by Allah. The Koran does assert, however, that the teachings of the Koran are in harmony with those of the Bible: "We have sent down to thee the book (the Koran) with the truth, confirming the Book (the Bible) that was before it, and assuring it." Yet the Koran and the Bible clearly contradict in countless ways. For example, the Koran teaches a unitarian God; the Bible, a Trinitarian God. The Koran says Jesus was just a man; the Bible, that He was and is God incarnate. The Koran stresses salvation by works; the Bible, salvation by grace through faith in Christ.

Comparing Christianity and Islam

What the Bible says about salvation:

Christ's death at Calvary completely paid our sin debt so that salvation comes by grace through faith in Jesus (John 3:16, 5:24; Rom. 4:4-5; 1 Cor. 15:1-4; Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5).

What Islam says about salvation:

The Koran teaches, "The true religion with God is Islam." This means salvation is achieved only through submission to the teachings of Islam. Forgiveness is based on good works and Allah's choice of mercy. The Muslim's chances for heaven are good if he or she: 1) accepts the Muslim God Allah and his apostle Mohammad; 2) does good works and all that is required of him by Allah; and 3) is predestined to Allah's favor. Islam teaches that Christ was neither crucified for our sins nor resurrected; therefore salvation cannot possibly be attained through faith in Christ. [According to Islamic tradition, Jesus was called into heaven and Judas was crucified in His place.] In short, the Muslim concept of salvation is Allah's predestination. The Koran teaches, "All things have we created after a fixed decree ..." Further, "God leads astray whomsoever He will; and He guides whomsoever He will."

What the Bible says about sin:

Sin is the violation of God's perfect and holy standards. All people are sinners (Rom. 3:10, 23) and are under the curse of sin – spiritual and physical death (Gen. 2:17, 3:17-19; Rom. 6:23). Only faith in Christ and His work on our behalf frees us from sin and its consequences (John 3:16, 5:24; Eph. 2:8-9).

What Islam says about sin:

Sin is lack of obedience to Allah. Man is sinful by act only, not by nature. Original sin is viewed as a "lapse" by Adam. Man is not really "fallen" in his sin nature; he is merely weak and forgetful. The most serious sin is that of *shirk*; for example, considering God as triune. Sin is thought of in terms of rejecting right guidance. It can be forgiven through repentance. No atonement is necessary.

What the Bible says about heaven and hell:

Hell is a place of everlasting conscious existence, where the unbeliever is forever separated from God (Matt. 25:46; Luke 16:19-31; Rev. 14:9-11, 20:10). As for heaven, all believers have God's promise of a home in heaven, will go there instantly upon physical death, and will return with Christ from heaven to earth one day (Luke 16:19-31; John 14:1-3; 2 Cor. 5:8; Rev. 19:11-16).

What Islam says about heaven and hell:

Muslims believe in heaven and hell. Allah predetermines the eternal destiny of each person, and the hope of salvation for the Muslim is based on works, although no Muslim has the absolute assurance of heaven. Islam teaches its followers to prepare for the Day of Judgment, in which each person's good and evil works will be measured, resulting in heaven or hell.