

OUM ABDULAZIZ, EX-CHRISTIAN, USA (PART 2 OF 4): JESUS IN CHRISTIANITY

Rating: 4.0

Description: She continues her research on divinity of Jesus through Christian resources.

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I looked at some of the “proofs” put forward to claim divinity for Jesus (peace be upon him). Some claim that the miracles he performed prove his divinity, but close examination shows that the miracles performed by Jesus (peace be upon him) were also performed by others. (Walking on water - Exodus (14:22); raising the dead - I Kings (17:22), II Kings (4:34, 13:21); healing the blind and lepers - II Kings (5:14, 6:17, 6:20); multiplying food - II Kings (4:1-7, 4:43-44); casting out devils - Mathew (12:27), Mark (9:38), Luke (11:19)) It is clear that the apostles knew these miracles were achieved only by the power of God.

“Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs which God did through him in your midst.” (Acts 2:22)

And those healed understood this also and glorified and praised God (Mathew 15:31, Luke 13:13, 17:15 and Acts 4:21). Jesus himself supplicates to God before raising Lazarus from the dead begging God to make this a sign for the people **“that they may believe Thou (God) hast sent me.” (John 11:42)** Jesus (peace be upon him) tells his followers that if they had faith they could do as he does (Mathew 21:18-22), that others will be able to do **“greater works than these”** (John 14:12) and warns that even **“false christs and false prophets will arise and show great sign and wonders.” (Mathew 24:24)**

It was also necessary to reflect on why, in Christianity, Jesus (peace be upon him) must be divine. Why must there be the deification of any man? Mainstream Christianity teaches that Jesus must be divine if his death is to be sufficient for the redemption of all men's sins. So, I had to ask, did God die then? No, was the answer I heard. Only the man Jesus died. Why then is not the death of any man sufficient? Christianity teaches that all men are imperfect because they inherit sin from their father Adam, but Jesus was free of this stain of sin because he had no father. The deeper I looked into these arguments, the more they crumbled away beneath me.

Was Jesus (peace be upon him) not born of a woman? Did Mary not descend from Adam and Eve, who both sinned before their Lord? To believe in the concept of an

original sin, which is passed down from generation to generation, is to believe that Adam and Eve sinned and were never completely forgiven. How can a just and loving God hold me accountable for iniquities I never committed? How can a compassionate and merciful God hold me responsible for aggressions that I had no power to prevent or suppress?

I did not find that Jesus (peace be upon him) or any of the prophets who preceded him in the Bible taught this concept of original sin. Jesus (peace be upon him) taught the pure nature of the child.

“Let the children come to me...for to such belongs the kingdom of God.” (Mark 10:14)

God’s ways are just.

“If a man is righteous and does what is lawful and right...he is righteous, he shall surely live...If he begets a son who...has done all these abominable things; he (the son) shall surely die...the son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father for the iniquity of the son.” (Ezekiel 18:5-20)

“Every one shall die for his own sin.” (Jeremiah 31:30)

Why should the statements of God “**visiting iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation**” found in Exodus (20:5) and Deuteronomy (5:9) be taken literally when there are plenty of other verses that contradict them, such as

“The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor the children be put to death for the fathers; every man shall be put to death for his own sin.” (Deuteronomy 24:16)

It was very interesting for me to learn that in Islam, the blame of tempting Adam is not placed on Eve. Islam teaches that both Adam and Eve were misled by Satan and sinned. Then, they cried:

“Our Lord! We have wronged ourselves. If you forgive us not and bestow not upon us Your Mercy, we shall certainly be among the losers.” (Quran 7:23)

“And their Lord pardoned them.” (Quran 2:37)[\[1\]](#)

God tells the Muslim:

“No person earns any sin except against himself and no bearer of burdens shall bear the burden of another.” (Quran 6:164)

In the New Testament epistles, however, a new doctrine takes form, the doctrine that Jesus (peace be upon him) gave himself up as a physical “offering and sacrifice to God”

(Ephesians 5:2), that it is not merely God's Mercy but rather **"the blood of Jesus...(that) cleanses us from all sin" (I John 1:7)**. And that **"without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins."** (Hebrews 9:22) I cannot reconcile myself to this doctrine for several reasons, mainly because this doctrine of blood atonement is pagan in nature and cannot coincide with a God who is both Almighty (i.e., able to forgive whomever He wills) and All-Loving. Jesus (peace be upon him) spoke of himself as "the bread of life" in a parable where he compares himself to the manna sent down from heaven to Moses, saying, **"He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood...will live forever."** But Jesus (peace be upon him) goes on to explain that he is not talking of the physical body. **"The words I have spoken to you are spirit and life."** (John 6:48-63) I began to feel that perhaps Muslims were correct in saying that modern Christianity is a religion about Jesus and Islam is the true religion of Jesus.

The doctrine of blood atonement was the gospel of Paul (II Timothy 2:8), a gospel about which he says, **"I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came (to me) through a revelation."** (Galatians 1:12) Paul never met Jesus (peace be upon him) nor did he study under Jesus' disciples. He says,

"I did not confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him 15 days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James...and I was still not known by sight to the churches of Christ in Judea. Then after 14 years I went up again to Jerusalem." (Galatians 1:16-2:1)

The more I read about the early church from Bible scholars, the more troubling this became to me. Paul went out to preach his gospel of Jesus (peace be upon him) among the Gentiles. He attracted increasing numbers of followers and his own apostles. Paul's preaching was not the same as the preaching of the Jewish Christians, the original followers and disciples of Jesus (peace be upon him), and this was causing great division in the early church. The people were saying "I belong to Paul." or "I belong to Apollos." or "I belong to Cephas." (I Corinthians 1:12) Paul eventually separated with the disciples Cephas, Barnabas and the followers of James, the brother of Jesus, accusing them of being **"not straightforward about the truth"** and having **"acted insincerely."** (Galatians 2:13-14) Paul reprimands the Corinthians for listening to the other gospels of Jesus (peace be upon him) (II Corinthians 11:4), and says of himself **"I think that I am not in the least inferior to these superlative apostles."** (II Corinthians 11:5)

Learning some of the history of Christianity in the early centuries was startling and eye opening for me. There was no early consensus of essential doctrine. Endless theories were argued to define the nature of Jesus (peace be upon him), proposing everything from an exclusively human Jesus to an exclusively divine Jesus to every possible combination in between. The religion was building up around the personality of Jesus (peace be upon him) and without a "book" for guidance, more and more attributes were added to Jesus' reputation. The influence of the existing pagan societies on this new faith was profound, especially from the sun worship cults of Rome, Persia, Greece, Babylon and Egypt. The Roman Emperor was considered to be the manifestation of the

Sun God on earth. Eventually, the church adopted the Roman Sun-day as the Christian Sabbath. December 25th, the traditional birthday of the Sun God became the birthday of Jesus. The symbol of the cross became the banner of Christianity. The cross had long been a symbol of redemption among the pagans and the “cross of light” was the emblem of the Sun God, too. The doctrine of the Christian trinity developed at this time. Holy trinities are found in many of the cults of the time among the Babylonians, Hindus, Romans, Persians, Egyptians and Chaldeans. At the end of the second century, the word “trinity” begins to appear in Christian writings. The trinity as approved by the council of churches in 431 AD included Mary, the mother of Jesus, but she was later replaced with the Holy Spirit because some theologians were having trouble with the concept of “mother of God.”

Another subject which was of great interest to me was the Islamic claim that the Bible itself predicted the coming of the Prophet Mohammed, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him:

“...the Prophet who can neither read nor write (i.e. Mohammed) whom they find written with them in the Torah and the Gospel...” (Quran 7:157)

Footnotes:

[1] “Then Adam received from his Lord Words (of inspiration). And his Lord pardoned him. Verily, He is the One Who forgives, the Most Merciful.” (Quran 2:37)

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