# “Why Don’t Jews Believe in Jesus as Messiah?”

**Do Jews still observe Old Testament practices like burnt offerings? If Jews believe in a coming savior, why does Christ not meet all of their criteria?**

I am not aware of any Jews who currently practice the Old Testament sacrificial rituals. This is at least partly due to the fact that the temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D. and has never been rebuilt to this day. If, at some point in the future, the temple IS rebuilt, then we may indeed see some of the orthodox Jews begin practicing the various Old Testament sacrificial rituals once again. But I seriously doubt we would see anything of this kind prior to a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem.

Most Jews no longer believe in a coming Messiah. Of the three main branches within Judaism, only orthodox Jews tend to hold to this hope and they do not conceive of Messiah as divine; he is merely a human being. As for why Jesus does not meet their criteria, there could be many possible reasons offered. However, much of it is probably due both to (what I would consider) a misunderstanding of the Old Testament conception of Messiah, as well as simply to ignorance and misinformation about Jesus’ credentials as the promised Messiah. As Louis Lapides, a Messianic Jew and Christian pastor, points out in Lee Strobel’s book *The Case for Christ*, most Jews have never bothered to actually investigate the evidence supporting Jesus’ claims to be Messiah.

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn
Probe Ministries

# “Did Egypt Once Worship the One True God?”

**Recently I heard somewhere, that there was an early period of time when Egypt worshipped our one true God. The person who said this, said it may have occurred immediately after the Exodus. Can you give me any support or documentation for this idea?**

Thanks for your question. Most likely, the person who made this comment was referring to Amenhotep IV (Akhenaton), the “heretic” pharaoh of the Eighteenth Dynasty, who began to rule about 1380 B.C. He moved his capital from Thebes to a city he called Akhetaten (i.e. Tell el-Amarna). G. Herbert Livingston writes, “The new pharaoh replaced the high god Amun of Thebes with Aten (Aton), the sun disk, and replaced his throne name with Akhnaton (Ikhnaton)” (*The Pentateuch in its Cultural Environment*; 40).

Although some scholars refer to Akhenaton as Egypt’s first monotheistic pharaoh, it’s important to understand that his “monotheism” was definitely NOT the same as that of the Hebrews. The god Aton was essentially identified with the physical disk of the sun; the God of the Bible is not to be identified with anything in His creation (see Exodus 20:1-6). Livingston writes, “Aton was purely a nature entity and, curiously, the pharaoh continued to regard himself as a god, too” (119). Thus, Akhenaton did NOT worship the one true God. He was not a biblical monotheist.

However, your source is correct about the time period in which these events occurred. As previously noted, Akhenaton began to reign about 1380 B.C. Although there is some room for scholarly disagreement, the Exodus likely took place around

1446-1436 B.C. Thus, Akhenaton would have become pharaoh shortly after this time.

Almost any book on ancient Egyptian history will mention Akhenaton. I took some of the information above from the following source: G. Herbert Livingston, *The Pentateuch in its Cultural Environment* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1987).

Hope this helps.

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn
Probe Ministries

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# "How Do I Help This Young Teenage Wiccan?"

**My husband and I are taking care of a 15-year old girl while her dad and step-mom (who are Christians) are on vacation. However, she just recently moved in with them. Previously she was living with her mom in another state. We were discussing Christianity with her last night and asked her what she believed in. She stated she believed in reincarnation and Wicca. Also, she doesn't believe in Satan which is really a contradiction. She says she went to the public library and checked out books on Wicca and studied them and she can cast spells. Of course, her dad and step-mom are not aware of her beliefs or that she practices Wicca. I searched your website using the word "Wicca" and read all of the articles so I understand some of what it is. However, I'm not sure what approach would be effective in ministering to her about**

**Christianity and where to point out that Wicca is a false-religion. Are there other articles on your website with more information on Wicca specifically and how to minister to someone with these beliefs? What suggestions do you have? What scriptures can I point her to?**

Whoa. You DO have your work cut out for you, don't you?

If I were you, I'd go beneath the girl's Wiccan beliefs to the heart issues that drew her to Wicca in the first place. Wicca is appealing because it offers the lure of personal power, and it is particularly appealing to those who are feeling powerless. Which would seem to describe this young girl whose parents have divorced and she's being shuttled between them. . .? Personal power is the draw to be able to cast spells for those who perceive themselves as personally powerless.

Since she's a teenager, she's not interested in lectures, but longs to be heard and listened to. She's dying for real conversation with someone who honestly cares about her. So I would ask her, "Tell me about what drew you to Wicca in the first place. How did you hear about it? Tell me about the spells and why that's interesting to you."

Ask the Lord to open opportunities for you to tell her about what the true God is like—tenderly loving and kind. Wiccan teachers tend to bash the image they hold of the Christian God, not understanding who He really is. People who are drawn to a loving, kind goddess are really looking for the feminine side of God, which we can see in the Psalms and in Jesus' lament over Jerusalem. You may be able to ask her about her understanding of the Lord Jesus, and if she's open, you might be able to tell her about not only His personality and how He proved His love for her, but—amazingly—He promised (and delivered!) personal, supernatural power for those who trust Him! There is FAR more power in Christ living His life through us, empowering us supernaturally, than any spell or charm in any witchcraft book ever penned.

It's not surprising that she doesn't believe in Satan; Wicca doesn't believe in an evil entity. It's really about pantheism, with a non-personal deity that permeates everything. Unfortunately, not believing in Satan doesn't keep him from attacking people. Those who refuse to acknowledge a personal devil are more vulnerable to spiritual warfare than anybody.

I found a couple of articles on the web you may find helpful. The first is from Leadership U., Probe's sister site, on teen witchcraft.
http://www.leaderu.com/theology/teenwitchcraft.html

The second is from the Christian Research Institute on "Witnessing to Witches."
http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Estates/6535/wittowit.htm

I do hope this helps. I pray God will empower your words and let her see His love flowing to her through you.

In His grip,

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

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# "How Do I Show Jehovah's Witnesses That Hell is Real?"

**I'm having problems dealing with some questions given to me by Jehovah's Witnesses. Can you please help me?**

**The J.W. asked me the following: "Paul had a vision of Christ, right? So if Christ is God, then why does Paul say no one has seen God when he himself saw Christ and fell off the horse?"**

**How do I show Jehovah's Witnesses that hell is a real place of torment and fire? They insist that the soul dies and that everyone goes to the grave, known as Sheol or hell.**

**How do I show to Jehovah's Witnesses that more people go to heaven than the 144,000 people of the book of Revelation?**

JW's are probably referring to John 1:18 which states, "No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only…" What this means is that no one has ever seen God in His full glory and splendor. Throughout the Bible, God has revealed himself in temporary, physical and veiled form which we can withstand. These are called theophanies. Such examples are Isaiah 6, Exodus 3, and Genesis 15. Jesus is God the Son clothed in flesh which Philippians 2:5-11 makes clear. So although we have not seen God in the fulness of His glory, we have seen temporary theophanies of God. Paul saw the glorifed Christ and what happened? He was blinded. To see God in the fulness of glory would destroy us. Paul saw, although not in his total glory, the glorifed Christ. That is why he was blinded.

> *How do I show Jehovah's Witnesses that hell is a real place of torment and fire? They insist that the soul dies and that everyone goes to the grave, known as Sheol or hell.*

First of all, when one dies, his soul exists after the body dies. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5:6 that we prefer to be absent from the body and at home with the Lord. In Matthew 10:28 Jesus states, "Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell." So there is such thing as a soul that survives the body. Hell is a real place. In Luke 16:19-31 Jesus tells the story of Lazarus and the rich man. JW's will say this is a parable. Even if it is a parable, it still tells a story about what is true. What does the story symbolize? Their explanation is not consistent with the text at all.

*How do I show to Jehovah's Witnesses that more people go to heaven than the 144,000 people of the book of Revelation?*

Concerning the idea that 144,000 go to heaven, ask this question. The 144,000 come from the "Sons of Israel" or the "Tribes of Israel." A word study shows that when that term is used, it is referring to literal Jews. This would eliminate a vast majority of JW's. Also Revelation 7:9 shows a multitude from every tribe and tongue. So heaven includes more than 144,000.

Hope this helps.

Patrick Zukeran
Probe Ministries

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# "You are Intolerant, Arrogant, Loud-Mouthed Bullies"

**Re: Your article on Wicca. I'm using the same measure that so called "Christians" use to condem others: the Bible. I do not see better people here. I see a bewildering growth of intolerance, and what is worse, of arrogance. My recent contacts with "Christians" have exposed me to a movement of arrogant, loud mouth bullies. I'm am not judging your heart Sir, but your aggression towards other groups. Christians are not to judge others, that is God's job. Christians are to love their neighbor as they do themselves. They are to hate what is "bad", not who is "Bad".**

**I think that Mr Grimassi's letter shows that he is a better**

**“Christian” then you are Sir. I’m not a Wiccan, but from what I have seen from your narrow side, I would rather involve myself with the type of gentleness displayed by this Wiccan man, than with the spiteful arrogant status-worshiping bullies who call themselves “Christian.”**

Please take an honest look at what you have done. You begin your letter by complaining about the behavior of so-called Christians (who may, of course, not really be Christians at all). But why should you consider yourself justified in writing such hateful things about Christians? After all, even if some so-called Christians have behaved badly, why should you have the right to behave the same way?

Just look at some of the hateful things you’ve said about Christians in your letter: You refer to Christians as intolerant, arrogant, loud-mouthed bullies (but I personally know many Christians who are not like this at all). You conclude by lumping all Christians together and denouncing them as “spiteful arrogant status-worshiping bullies”.

Then you say that you’re not judging my heart, but my aggression toward other groups. But what is it that you’re doing? Aren’t you demonstrating the same aggression toward Christians which you say I’m demonstrating toward Wiccans? Indeed, isn’t your unprovoked aggression against me even WORSE than my alleged aggression against Wiccans?

Actually, I sincerely bear no ill will toward Wiccans at all. Not the slightest bit. Raven Grimassi and I had a very cordial e-mail exchange about my article. Like you, I had a very high opinion of the way he expressed himself in his letter to me. He was very kind and courteous in every respect. And I did my uttermost to be just as kind and courteous to him.

Now about judging, it’s important to understand that Jesus does not condemn all human judgments. If you carefully read Matt. 7:1-5, you will see that what Jesus warns against is

hypocrisy. As Jesus says in v. 5: “You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.” The assumption, of course, is that once the plank is removed, the brother will see clearly enough to judge his brother rightly and without hypocrisy. Indeed, if Jesus forbid all human judgment, it would be impossible to administer church discipline against sinning Christians within the church (something which the Bible clearly commands us to do).

But that’s not all. The Bible also urges Christians “to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints” (Jude 3). Paul tells Titus that church leaders “must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it” (Titus 1:9). These passages tell us that truth in doctrine is important and that we need to stand up for it, even refuting those who oppose it. Does this make Christians arrogant? Does this make Christians spiteful bullies? What is my defense against such accusations? Simply this.

What if Christianity is true? What if, as Jesus Himself claimed, there is no other way to God but through Him (John 14:6)? What if people who reject Christ, or who attempt to find salvation through some other religion, really will spend eternity in Hell? Would it be truly loving not to warn people of this potential tragedy? Would it really be loving not to attempt to persuade them to embrace Christ while they still have opportunity? Would it really be loving to say nothing at all? For my part, I honestly don’t think so.

Our ministry exists to share with others the arguments, evidence and reasonableness of biblical Christianity and to try to convince them that no other religion will ultimately save their souls. If Jesus really was who He claimed to be, then (in my opinion) it would be very unloving indeed to simply let people perish and not try to convince them to give

their lives to Christ before the day of final judgment. The Bible warns us that we will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ and that those who have rejected Him will perish eternally. Frankly, I don't want this to happen to anyone.

I will pray for you.

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn
Probe Ministries

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# "What Do You Think of Willow Creek?"

**What do you think of the Willow Creek church model that so many churches are following?**

Thank you for your thoughtful question. It is a common question today in light of the success that Willow Creek has enjoyed in the Chicago area and the emulation of that model around the world. The same concerns have arisen around Rick Warren's Saddleback Church in California. (He is also the author of the best-seller *The Purpose Driven Life.*) Before I go much further in my response to your question I should let you know that I am an elder in a church that, in general, looks favorably on what these churches are attempting to do, although I have reservations about some of the particulars in their implementation. With that said, I should add that I believe that it is unwise to ever try to replicate what another church is doing in a wholesale manner. This indicates a dependency on technique over trust in God's Spirit to build His church in a given location.

As is usually the case, this issue has to do with deeper concerns than just the music that is heard on Sunday or the preaching style of the pastor. The question at the heart of the issue is whether or not God has ordained both the *forms* of worship, teaching, and church structure, or only the *functions* of the New Testament church. I tend to think that scripture focuses on the functions of the church and that we are free to establish culturally appropriate forms to accomplish them with. As we like to say at our church, we are not a seeker church, a Willow Creek church, a charismatic church, or a Bible church. We are a church that incarnates Christ in the town of McKinney, TX. Our goal is to help people follow Christ, and we will use music, teaching styles and programs that accomplish that task. Our teaching will be biblical and challenging, touching both the hearts and minds of our congregation. We desire to use the best music, both old and new, in genres that speak to the people walking through our doors.

The outcome over the last seven years has been encouraging. People are trusting in Christ and being baptized, they are growing in knowledge and grace, they are giving sacrificially and becoming involved in missions, and they are reaching out to the community in significant ways. Our numerical growth has been significant, but the spiritual growth of individuals is what has encouraged me the most.

If you are interested in reading more about the relationship between form and function within the New Testament church, let me recommend a book that might be helpful: *Sharpening The Focus Of The Church* by Gene Getz (Victor Books, 1984).

Sincerely,

Don Closson
Probe Ministries

# “How Does Christians’ Singing Hallelujah Differ From Hindu Chanting?”

**In discussing chanting with a Hindu, I stumbled when he pointed out that we Christians also repeat God’s name when we sing “Hallelujah, hallelujah….” So are we repeating vainly? Of course not. If we are praising God, he claimed, so are they.**

**How can I make my point against chanting but still justify our glorification of God singing “Hallelujah”? Also he pointed out that they are praising God like we also praise God in Psalms.**

It seems to me that a few points can be made to distinguish what Christians are doing from what Hare Krishnas and other Hindus are doing.

1. “Hallelujah” comes from two Hebrew words meaning “Praise the Lord” (i.e. *Hallelu Yah*). When we say Hallelujah, we are praising the Lord. This seems different from simply repeating the name of a particular god over and over. We are praising the Lord, not simply repeating His Name.

2. Although this may not be true for all of those engaged in repetitive chanting of the name of a god, nevertheless, for many of these people such chanting is intended to focus the mind and help induce an altered state of consciousness in which one “realizes” that “All is One,” “All is God,” “I Am God,” etc. This, of course, is not what Christians are trying to achieve when they praise the Lord. Thus, the intentions of Christians in praising the Lord are very different from the intentions of some Hindus in repeating the name of a god.

3. Hindus and Christians typically have very different conceptions of "God." Even if we both refer to the Supreme Being as "God," we mean something very different by this term. Hindus are typically pantheists or polytheists; Christians are monotheists. Thus, we have very different ideas or definitions about what (or who) "God" is.

These three differences, at least in my opinion, make it very difficult to equate what Christians are doing when we praise the Lord with what Hindus are doing when they engage in the repetitive chanting of a god's name.

The Lord bless and keep you!

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn
Probe Ministries

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# "I Disagree with Your Judgment of Conversations With God"

**Mrs. Bohlin,**

**My name is _____ and I am a devotee of the Conversations with God philosophy. I noticed you are not a fan of the books or beliefs in the *CwG* series . I respect the fact that you have an opinion on this and express it openly, however, your claims that the books are "false doctrine of devils" and "very unsafe in anyone's hands" are not supported. Why do you feel they are "evil" and dangerous? Perhaps because people may change their**

**minds about religion after reading them? If this is so, you say that your religion does not allow freedom of thought nor disagreement with your beliefs. You proclaim that the Bible is God's ultimate truth and that any writings against the holy scripture (even the Qur'an, which includes both the New and Old Testament) are "wrong". Correct me if I am mistaken, but isn't your God's wish that each person come to her of their own volition? If nothing but obediance to pre-set rules is required, what then is the purpose of life?**

**I wonder if you are aware that most sections of the Bible were written as many as 200 years after the ascension of Jesus. That leaves a lot of room for error, especially in light of the fact that the Bible was written by humans (whom are inherently imperfect according to your beliefs). Are you familiar at all with a Red Bible? It is a copy of the Bible where all direct quotes from Jesus are printed in red and all other words in black—more than 90% of a Red Bible is black print. This means that over 90% of the Bible is subject to the opinions and cultural influences of those who wrote it. It is said in *CwG Book Two* that even this most recent missal from God is not entirely pure because any human will "filter" the message through his own perception (Neale Donald Walsch is no exception).**

**Thank you! Namaste!**

Hello _____,

> **…however, your claims that the books are "false doctrine of devils" and "very unsafe in anyone's hands" are not supported. Why do you feel they are "evil" and dangerous? Perhaps because people may change their minds about religion after reading them?**

Let me put it this way. Let's say someone has a recipe for brownies that her mother gave her, which she got from her mother, and which she got from HER mother. But this person

starts tinkering with the recipe. Instead of baking soda, she puts in arsenic. They're both powder, and you don't use very much of either, so what's the problem? The problem is that brownies made with arsenic kill people.

At Probe Ministries we come from a definite position on the Bible: it really is true, and it really is without error, and it really is the word of God. We don't believe this because we've just been taught it; we believe it because there is such strong evidence for it. There are a number of articles on our Web site about the reliability of the Bible. If someone writes something that claims to be spiritual truth, and it contradicts the Bible, then either this other writing is false, or the Bible is false, but they cannot both be true. As I've already said, we place our faith in the validity of the Bible, so our position is that books such as *Conversations with God* are evil because—even if they say a lot of nice and true things—they make false statements about God, about truth, about sin, and about the consequences of departing from what is true. In the exact same way that eating arsenic-laced brownies will cause physical death, "swallowing" books like *CwG* can cause spiritual death, which is separation from God.

People changing their minds about religion is not a problem; that's how ALL of us here at Probe came to become believers in Jesus Christ. We all changed our minds. But when people discard what is true and embrace a lie as a result of reading books like Walsch's, THAT is a problem. Or, when people don't even know what is true but they embrace the lie, that is also a problem.

> **If this is so, you say that your religion does not allow freedom of thought nor disagreement with your beliefs.**

Actually, biblical Christianity gives a lot of room for disagreement within the confines of what is true and important. And it is very clear that no one can force another person to believe or conform from the heart, even to what is

truly true. If this were the case, God would never have given us as His creation the gift of choice, which includes the freedom to think whatever we want. I can tell you, as a biblical, orthodox Christian, that Christianity very much allows you as an unbeliever to believe whatever you want and to disagree with me as much as you want. You have that right.

What you—and I, and everybody else on the planet—don't have the right to, is to be free from the *consequences* of believing wrong things. Such as believing that gravity can be suspended at will. Or believing that arsenic and baking soda are interchangeable. Or believing that a person can violate what God has said in His word and there are no consequences.

> **You proclaim that the Bible is God's ultimate truth and that any writings against the holy scripture (even the Qur'an, which includes both the New and Old Testament) are "wrong".**

Excuse me, but the Qur'an may contain points and *elements* from both the New and Old Testament, but that doesn't it make it holy scripture.

> **Correct me if I am mistaken, but isn't your God's wish that each person come to her of their own volition?**

First, God has revealed Himself to us as masculine. It is just as disrespectful to call Him a "her" as it is to deliberately call you "George" when you have revealed yourself to be "Jane."

Second, you are absolutely right about His desire that we turn to Him in faith. However, Jesus also told us that no one can come to God unless He calls us to Him first. This is because we come into the world spiritually dead—it's like getting a radio with no antenna. It takes a miracle for anyone to hear Him calling to us.

> **If nothing but obedience to pre-set rules is required, what then is the purpose of life?**

I would respectfully disagree that “nothing but obedience is required.” The purpose of life is to enjoy God, to love Him, to bring glory to Him, and to walk out His plan for our lives. The kind of obedience that pleases God comes from a heart that is tuned to Him first. God’s desire is that we be in a love relationship to Him. That’s very different from a callous God who demands we jump through hoops to please Him. I would suggest that that kind of God is a caricature and not the true, living God.

> **I wonder if you are aware that most sections of the Bible were written as many as 200 years after the ascension of Jesus.**

And I’m wondering if you know where this information came from. There are skeptics who dismiss the early dates of the New Testament because they don’t want to believe in the validity of the New Testament documents. There are also plenty of biblical scholars who accept the evidence for first-century dates. People believe what serves their presuppositions. Did you know there are people who deny the Holocaust happened? Does that make it go away? Those who insist on later dates for the New Testament, and who deny the authorship of all the gospels and epistles, do so because they have an agenda.

> **That leaves a lot of room for error, especially in light of the fact that the Bible was written by humans (whom are inherently imperfect according to your beliefs).**

I would say that the Bible was PENNED by humans, but this book makes the amazing claim to be the very word of God, who “breathed” His words into the minds and spirits of the human writers. And its remarkable internal consistency, combined with the fact that there is so much fulfilled prophecy, not to mention the power to change lives as testified by millions of people, is strong evidence that it really is the word of God. God would be very interested in making sure that His communication stayed pure, don’t you think? And since we still

have the original languages (still spoken today) with thousands of copies of the biblical documents that we can go back and check, there is good reason to trust the Bible. What evidence do you have for error?

> **Are you familiar at all with a Red Bible? It is a copy of the Bible where all direct quotes from Jesus are printed in red and all other words in black—more than 90% of a Red Bible is black print. This means that over 90% of the Bible is subject to the opinions and cultural influences of those who wrote it.**

Yes, I have a Red Letter Edition. This is something an editor produced. It doesn't mean that the rest of the Bible is any less the word of God than what Jesus said. And yes, the human personalities and cultures of the writers are identifiable, but that doesn't prevent God from expressing His thoughts perfectly through those writers. He's a very big God. <smile>

> **It is said in *CwG Book Two* that even this most recent missal from God is not entirely pure because any human will "filter" the message through his own perception (Neale Donald Walsch is no exception).**

We all filter EVERYTHING through our own perceptions. But that doesn't change the truth of what's in the Bible. There are several questions we must ask when we read the Bible: far more important than "What does this mean to me?" is "What does this mean? What did the author intend to communicate?" There are ways of answering those questions that allow us to be fairly certain, much of the time, that we're getting a pretty accurate handle on what was meant.

We all have our filters, but it's not that hard to remove them. What kind of filter do you use when you read the label on a medicine bottle? I would imagine that, like me, you don't try to figure out "what does this mean to me?" but "what did the doctor intend here?" and it's usually not very hard to

figure out.

I find it very interesting that Neale Walsch appears to makes the claim that this is a communication from God. If that were so, why does it contradict what God has already said in black and white? And if one takes the position that we can't trust what's in the Bible because of all the alleged errors and cultural filters, what CAN we trust? How do we know what is true? Why should we believe Neale Walsch's writings? Why should we believe anything at all?

**Thank you! Namaste!**

And I honor you as a creation of God, made in His image, and much beloved by the God and Father of us all.

Blessings,

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

Posted April 2003

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# "Why Do Muslims and Christians Fight and Kill Each Other?"

**Dear Mr. Closson,**

**Thank you for your information about Islam and Christianity. But I want to know, why have Muslims and Christians always fought and killed each other? What factors are involved?**

The easy answer is sin. As Paul says in the book of Romans,

“…for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God…” A more complex answer is that the two world religions have mutually exclusive truth claims about the nature of God and the person of Jesus Christ. For one to be true the other must be false. However, individual Christians who encounter opposing truth claims should heed the words of Peter and share the hope we have in Christ with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15). The New Testament gives no justification for doing violence to any human being because of his or her beliefs. Our example is Christ, who humbled Himself even to the point of dying on the cross rather than to strike back at his enemies.

The example of Muhammad is quite different. He was a military leader and was actively engaged in having his enemies assassinated. The Koran teaches that those who leave the faith are to be killed, as are those of other faiths who reject the authority of Islamic rule. The aggressiveness with which Islam conquered previously Christian territory in the eighth century pretty much guaranteed a difficult relationship between the two people.

Please don’t take this as an excuse for unjust violence done in the name of Christ. Nor does what is written here take into account the possible right of nations or governments to protect their people from outside invasion or violence. What I am mainly talking about is the response of individuals to the existence of opposing truth claims.

Thanks for the thoughtful question!

Sincerely,

Don Closson
Probe Ministries

# “Why Do You Lie About Islam?”

**Why do you say lies about Islam? You have to be fair when descriping other religions to Christians otherwise you are a liar.**

**You said that in Islam no one can make relation with God and that’s not true. Everyone can make relation with God, moreover the topheads of islamic organizations can’t claim they are better than common people cuz it’s a pure heart issue in the first place.**

**You said in Islam God is unknown and that’s tricky cuz for sure we know him but we didn’t see him,so we know him morally not physically.**

**You said the prize is after death, and that’s the greatest lie, cuz the rule that every Muslim know is, bad relationship with Allah(God)=discomfort in life, good relationship=comfort, contentment, and help of Allah. You said that everyone need forgiveness even Mohammed and that’s not true, the truth is that we all need surplus from Allah cuz our good work can’t reward blessing of Allah in life let aside the paradise.**

**You claim that Allah in Islam doesn’t love anybody, however he loves the devouts. Is that enough, or you want me to say more?**

**If you are innocent and said that by mistake then correct it and contact me, if you want to misguide your people, it’s up to you and Allah will judge you.**

Thank you very much for taking time to read the article on Islam, and especially for writing to us. We appreciate you. And we do honor your request that we be fair in what we say about religions beside Christianity. If there are errors in

what we have said, we are certainly open to correction.

As I read your message, I noted the following objections to the article on Islam:

1. That there is no true relationship with God in Islam.
2. That God is unknown in Islam.
3. That salvation consists in the blessings that come after death, rather than during this life.
4. That everyone is in need of forgiveness, even Muhammed.
5. That God is not described as a loving God in the Koran.

I can understand why some of these statements would be offensive to you. Let me do my best in trying to respond to each of them.

First, that there is no true relationship with God in Islam. In reading over the article, I couldn't find this precise statement. But I did find the statement at the end of the article that "the New Testament . . . reveals the only source of acceptance before God in His love and grace, expressed through the sacrifice of His Son Jesus Christ . . . ." This is the clear testimony of the New Testament, and of Jesus Christ himself, and of his apostles. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father (God) but by me" (Gospel of John 14:6). The apostle Peter said, "Salvation is found in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). The name he referred to is Jesus Christ. This is a difficult statement to accept, I know. But it is the clear teaching of the New Testament, which also tells us that God is "the rewarder of those who earnestly seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). In other words, if we earnestly seek the truth of God, He will reveal it to us. And we believe that truth includes the teaching of Jesus Christ concerning his being the way to a relationship with God.

Second, that God is unknown in Islam. I did find the statement

in the article that in the Koran, God is ultimately unknowable. I can understand your reaction to this statement. But it was intended to reflect the orthodox Muslim doctrine of mukhalafa (difference) and tanzih (removal or making transcendent), which implies that God's essence is not really knowable to us . . . that the attributes or characteristics ascribed to God in the Koran are descriptions of his actions or deeds, but not of his nature or essence. This may not be widely comprehended by Muslim people, but it is a reflection of Islamic teaching. You can consult for reference the book entitled *The Call of the Minaret* by Kenneth Cragg (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 42-43.

Third, that the "prize" is after death, and not in this life. I couldn't really find a statement like this in the article. Actually, the New Testament teaches that there are many blessings that flow from our relationship with God through Jesus—both in this life and in the next. But obviously, knowing God does not shield us from ever experiencing pain and sorrow during this life. But it does assure us of the comforting grace and mercy of God, both now and after we die.

Fourth, that everyone needs forgiveness, even Muhammed. I know that among some Muslims, Muhammed is viewed as a nearly perfect man. And he obviously was a very great man. But the Koran itself testifies to his imperfection, and his need to ask forgiveness from God. See the following Koranic texts: 40.55; 41.19; 48.2. According to the the New Testament, all of us stand in need of God's forgiving grace. At one point it says, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23), and at another, "For the wages (penalty) of sin is death (eternal separation from God)" (Romans 6:23). This last text goes on to say, "but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." In other words, eternal life (which includes forgiveness of our sin, as well as fellowship with God) comes to us as a free gift. At another place the New Testament says, "For by grace are you saved, through faith;

and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8-9). As it says in the Gospel of John, "Yet to all who received him (Jesus Christ), to those who believed in his name, he (God) gave the right to become children of God" (Gospel of John 1:12).

Fifth, that the Koran does not speak of God as a God of love or as a Father to his people. I know that one of the names of God in the Koran is "Al Wadud" (the Loving, Compassionate one). I believe it is used of God only twice in the Koran (11.90 and 85.14). Yet I think it is clear that this title falls short of the Bible's description in I John 4:8 that "God is love," as well as the many examples of God actually extending his love to sinners. For example, "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). "This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins" (I John 4:10). Actually, the great Islamic theologian al-Ghazzali taught that this title for God refers only to his objective acts of kindness or expressions of approval. In his work Al-Maqsad Al-Asna he says, "He (God) remains above the feeling of love" (p. 91) and "Love and mercy are desired in respect of their objects only for the sake of their fruit and benefit and not because of empathy or feeling" (p. 91). In light of this, I would have to stand by the statement in the article that in the Koran God is not spoken of as a God of love or as a Father to his people (a title never attributed to God in the Koran), as He is in the Bible.

Mr. _____, I do appreciate very much your writing to us. My purpose is not at all to offend you personally, but to encourage you to evaluate the teachings of Jesus in the New Testament, and to compare them to the teachings of Muhammed in the Koran. My wish and prayer is for God's blessing and grace on your life.

Sincerely,

Richard Rood