

THE TRUE RELIGION (PART 2 OF 8): THE RELIGION'S NAME

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Description: The second chapter of the book "The True Religion." The meaning of the word 'Islam' in comparison to other religions.

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The first thing that one should know and clearly understand about Islam, is what the word "Islam" itself means. The Arabic word "Islam" means the submission or surrender of one's will to the only true God, known in Arabic as "Allah". One who submits his will to God is termed in Arabic a "Muslim". The religion of Islam is not named after a person or a people, nor was it decided by a later generation of man, as in the case of Christianity which was named after Jesus Christ, Buddhism after Gautama Buddha, Confucianism after Confucius, Marxism after Karl Marx, Judaism after the tribe of Judah and Hinduism after the Hindus. Islam (submission to the will of God) is the religion which was given to Adam, the first man and the first prophet of God, and it was the religion of all the prophets sent by Allah to mankind. Further, its name was chosen by God Himself, and clearly mentioned in the final scripture which He revealed to man. In that final revelation, called in Arabic the Quran, Allah states the following:

"...This day have perfected your religion for you, completed My favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion..." (Quran 5:3)

"If anyone desires a religion other than Islam (submission to God), never will it be accepted of him." (Quran 3:85)

Hence, Islam does not claim to be a new religion brought by Prophet Mohammed into Arabia in the seventh century, but rather to be a re-expression in its final form of the true religion of Almighty God, Allah, as it was originally revealed to Adam and subsequent prophets.

At this point, we might comment briefly on two other religions that claim to be the true path. Nowhere in the Bible will you find God revealing to Prophet Moses' people or their descendants that their religion is called Judaism, or to the followers of Christ that their religion is called Christianity. In other words, the names "Judaism" and "Christianity" had no divine origin or approval. It was not until long after his departure that the name Christianity was given to Jesus' religion.

What, then, was Jesus' religion in actual fact, as distinct from its name? His religion was reflected in his teachings, which he urged his followers to accept as guiding principles in their relationship with God. In Islam, Jesus is a prophet sent by Allah, and his Arabic name is Eesaa. Like the prophets before him, he called upon the people to surrender their will to the will of God (which is what Islam stands for). For example, in the New Testament it is stated that Jesus taught his followers to pray to God as follows:

“Our father in heaven, hallowed be your name, may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” (Luke 1 1:2/Matthew 6:9-10)

This concept was emphasized by Jesus in a number of his statements recorded in the Gospels. He taught, for example, that only those who submitted would inherit paradise.

“Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 7:21)

Jesus also pointed out that he himself submitted to the will of God.

“I cannot do anything of myself. I judge as I hear and my judgment is honest because I am not seeking my own will but the will of Him who sent me.” (John 5:30)

There are many reports in the Gospels which show that Jesus made it clear to his followers that he was not the one true God. For example, when speaking about the final Hour, he said:

“No-one knows about the day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, not the son, but only the Father.” (Mark 13:32)

Thus Jesus, like the prophets before him and the one who came after him, taught the religion of Islam: submission to the will of the one true God.

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